# SOLICITED SOLICITED FOR WORKERS' POWER

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# ATIME FOR ACTION

The government has acted. It has imposed a wage freeze backed up by legal sanctions. Those at the bottom, like the railwaymen, will remain at the bottom, their little wage packets 'frozen' stiff. Those at the top - MPs, judges, top service and union brass, who've all just had a rise will have their rather bigger packets frozen too. Inequality will be frozen in the name of socialism.

And now planned sackings. 'Socialist' sackings. An entirely synthetic crisis to ensure 'redeploy-ment' and 'modernization'. Drastic steps to make 'our' industry more competitive. As usual, all this is on our backs. Our bosses are having a field day. Profits have rarely been better. Mean-while shop organizations are being destroyed, whole factories (like ENV) shut down. Hard-won rights in production are being sacrificed piece-meal. And with the full connivance and support of a Labour government, who for good measure, has brought in legislation to intimidate trade unionists. What more could a boss ask for?

The TUC won't act. Years ago it was built so that one section of working people could support another. Then it became part of established society. Its despicable role during many recent strikes now brands it as an open enemy of all workers in struggle.

The union leaders won't act either. They are too busy sitting on government bodies, talking productivity, threatening militants within their own ranks, manipulating conference votes and decisions, defying the wishes of their own members, and dreaming of the 'socialist' Honours List.

It is time for some honest words. For a little direct action. It is time we spoke up and started acting for ourselves. Stopped giving 'critical support' to those who perpetually 'betray' us. Stopped building fake 'left wings' in the Labour Party, led by phoney messiahs. Stopped mystifying our own supporters. Stopped trusting the Foots, Ormes, and Mikardos who for all their left squeaks and squawks will come grovelling back to the fold at the first crack of Harold's whip.

It is time we stopped believing Frank Cousins will save us. His record on the Bomb is bad enough. Remember how fast he travelled from absolute opposition to the Bomb to a ministerial post where he was responsible for Aldermaston? In relation to the Incomes Policy, he has sat on the fence for so long the iron has entered ... his soul.

The government must be resisted. If a single trade unionist is fined or gaoled or persecuted in any way for defending the rights of his brothers, thousands of others must rally to his support. An injury to one is an injury to all. The government's challenge must be met by the organized might of the whole working class. But this is not enough. Those in the firing line in industry must refuse to be intimidated. The objective of the legislation is intimidation. It must be defeated. We must be prepared to fight. It is the only way. To give in is to lose.

A London Shop Stewards Defence Committee\* has emerged in response to the events of the last few months. It represents a fairly wide crosssection of active militants in the London area. Similar committees have been formed on Clydeside and elsewhere. If the LSSDC gets properly off the ground it must (and has begun to) come into conflict with the Trade Union leaders. In this confrontation, to retreat would be fatal. Too many potentially excellent workers' organizations have already committed suicide when faced by the hostility of union leaders (amongst others combine committees in the power industry, aircraft industry and motor industry). To vacillate, to engage in too many 'tactical manoeuvres' is to lose.

The present 'crisis' is really much more than a crisis in the leadership of the Labour Party. It is a crisis in which some of the basic assumptions of modern politics will be questioned. Thou-

Individual affiliations (5/-per annum) and affiliation from union branches and shop stewards' committees (£1.0.0 per annum) are welcome. For further details write to the Secretary, Chris Davison, 83 Greyhound Road, London N.17.

sands who were urged to vote Labour will begin to question the relevance of parliamentary institutions, or at least the value of paying the political levy to a Party busy preparing the most vicious anti-working class legislation we've had for a generation. The 'crisis' presents an opportunity for a serious discussion as to the nature of the Labour Party and for a serious campaign on the issue of workers' management.

The 'crisis' will also dictate some practical measures. It is time we got organized to defend our rights. Organized on class lines and at rank-and-file level. Organized within a given factory and between factories in a given area. Organized within a given industry and between industries. Independently organized. It is time we challenged the sacred managerial 'rights' of employers - whether private or state rights which our so-called leaders. consider sacrosanct - rights to speed us up as they please and then to sack us as they please.

Labour is the source of all wealth. Work is our livelihood. Bosses and governments can't manage our industries without treating us like cattle. It is time we thought of managing them ourselves.



#### CHURCH MILITANTS

We welcome the magnificent rumpus in Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton, on Sunday, October 2, 1966. The demonstrators, several of whom are known to us, did an excellent job. They publicly exposed Wilson's duplicity in relation to Vietnam - and by doing it in a church they publicly exposed the Church's duplicity in relation to politics. They showed the Church to be an integral part of established society. The demonstration was a political act of the highest order. The choice of place and time could not have been bettered.

Those who have broken with traditional politics have again shown that only they can now carry forward the revolutionary tradition. For years now none of the marxist groups (whether 'vulgar' or otherwise) have done anything like this. While the Vietnam Solidarity Committee alters its meeting places and overprints its leaflets to please the Commissioner of Police - and while the SLL parades asking Wilson to arm the Vietcong - the real militants show what can be done here and now. The new tradition is being forged in action. The record is impressive: Trafalgar Square (September 1961), Wethersfield (December 1961), Moscow (July 1962), RSG 6 (Easter 1963), King Hill (1965-66). May Brighton be but a prelude to further radical actions of this kind.

## VICTORY AT KINGHILL

#### andy anderson

The King Hill Campaign has now been indefinitely postponed. It has been a great success. After 12 months of struggle, the main objectives have been achieved.

The K.C.C. has rescinded the rule excluding husbands from living with their homeless families in Part III accommodation at King Hill Hostel. The rule limiting a family's stay to a maximum of three months will not be applied in future. The living conditions at the hostel have been improved. The huts have been redecorated. Marley-tile floors have been laid. The solid-fuel cooking stoves are being replaced. Some 30 or more properties have been acquired by the K.C.C. for housing homeless families.

There is no shred of doubt that all this has come about as a direct result of relentless pressure. Hitherto the K.C.C. had treated homeless families as second-class citizens, and the living conditions at the hostel were among the worst in the country. Kent held the national record for the largest number of children of homeless families taken annually into care. For over 14 years the rules about 'no husbands' and the 'three-months limit' had been ruthlessly applied.

During the twelve months of the campaign, not a single child was taken into care, husbands lived at the hostel in force, often in open defiance of Court Orders, and not one of the many families who overstayed the three months was evicted.

The campaign's success is no mean achievement. Its driving force was the feasibility of success, persistent activity, and determination to see it through no matter how long it might take. The campaign took many new and varied forms. So much heat was turned on individuals and groups in authority (from County Councillors and Council officials to Cabinet Ministers) - and we so embarrassed them by local and national publicity - that eventually they were only too glad to seek a real solution.

In our last report on the campaign (vol.III, No.12) we described the events up to November 1965. This is briefly what has happened since then. (1)

During November the K.C.C. continued its attempts at intimidation. High Court writs were served on mothers who had overstayed the 3 months. The Council wanted a Court order to evict them. In the Maidstone High Court, on November 23, the case of Joan Daniels was the first to be heard. Her husband Stan so successfully presented their joint defence that proceedings had to be adjourned until January 8... when they were again adjourned to the London High Court. The K.C.C. had decided to make Joan Daniels a test case.

At the end of November Roy Mills and Brian Lomas were released from prison amidst a lot of ballyhoo from the Judge about Dingley Dell and the spirit of Christmas. During December and even on Christmas Day there were demonstrations and pickets outside the Maidstone home of Dr. A. Elliott who, as County Welfare Officer, was chiefly responsible for the administration of King Hill and had been the main advocate of evictions and 'discipline'.

On January 2nd, 1966, a vicious article about Roy Mills appeared in 'The People'. Most of it was maliciously untrue. An action for libel was begun immediately, and is still proceeding. The Friends of King Hill have pledged themselves to see this through.

January 8: while some of the Friends were running a party for about 120 King Hill children, others, with some of the children's parents, were again demonstrating outside the home of Dr. Elliott.

During January the first issue of the 'King Hill News' was produced. Although it contained 8 pages of news and information mainly for residents, copies were sent to all those who had shown an interest in the campaign. Two further issues were later produced.

Throughout February, Mrs. N. Lynch, the 'social worker' at the hostel, unsuccessfully continued her mischievous attempts to drive a wedge between the Friends and the residents.

(1) For a detailed account of the early phases of the campaign, see 'KCC versus the Homeless', a joint 'Solidarity' and 'Socialist Action' pamphlet (1/6 post free from Heather Russell, 53A Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent).

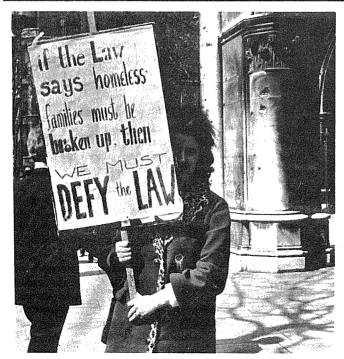
In March 1966 the K.C.C. resumed their attack. Writs were served on twelve King Hill husbands. On March 29, at the High Court in London, the K.C.C. were granted injunctions restraining these men from even visiting their families except between 10 am and 8 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The K.C.C.'s evidence took the form of affidavits from the 'helpful' hostel staff (Mesdames Lynch and Lipscombe) and two Council officials. Injunctions were also granted to the K.C.C. restraining Jim Radford and myself from visiting the hostel. The only 'evidence' here was supplied by the ubiquitous Nan Lynch. She claimed that we visited the hostel solely for 'propaganda purposes'!

After the hearing most of the husbands continued their successful defiance and in fact proceeded straight back from the Courtroom to the hostel! For a time some of them disguised themselves by wearing hoods on entering and leaving. This made it difficult for the hostel staff to identify them and help send them to prison for 'contempt of Court'.

On April 2nd, another Open Day was held at the hostel. MPs, Kent Councillors and the Minister of Health (the minister responsible for the accommodation of homeless people) were invited. They all had 'good' reasons for their absence. But eight members of the St. Pancras Tenants Association turned up. They announced their intention of giving full support to the struggle. A private detective in the pay of the K.C.C. mingled with the people. He seemed embarrassed when pointed out during a speech from the platform.

The case of 'K.C.C. v. Daniels' began in the London High Court on April 25. This was the test case the K.C.C. hoped would enable them to evict the 33 families who had overstayed the 3 months. The case dragged on until May 3rd, with the K.C.C.'s lawyers scraping the bottom of their slimy barrel of innuendo, sarcasm and smears in an attempt to discredit the Daniels family. The K.C.C. got the possession order they wanted but it was a hollow victory. Mr. Justice Browne made it quite clear that this case was not to be used as a precedent in actions against hostel residents unless alternative accommodation had first been offered and refused. During the trial Councel for the K.C.C. repeatedly expressed amazement at how the Friends had managed to secure and publicize various internal K.C.C. documents and correspondence.

On May 22, more than 100 people, including 30 from the hostel, marched from Kentish Town station to the home of the Minister of Health, Kenneth Robinson. Posters demanded action from Robinson to get Roy and Stan released from prison and to compel the K.C.C. to rescind the 'no husbands' and 'three months limit' rules. The police attempted to direct the march to a spot 250 yards away from the Minister's house, on the other side of the road. They were neatly out-manoeuvred by a very simple tactic. A message passed down the column and as we passed the Minister's house everyone 'dispersed', turned right, crossed the road, and individually converged on the Minister's doorstep. Several people made speeches over the loudspeaker.





April 1966. Families from King Hill Hostel demonstrate outside the Law Courts, London, during the trial of Mrs. Joan Daniels.

Six days later, during the Whitsun weekend, Robinson opened his front door to find hostel residents Marie and Cyril Mallabone and Charlie Pitkeathly sitting on the grass verge, not 10 yards away. They had ground sheets and sleeping bags and were surrounded by a sea of posters. The largest of these announced that they were holding a three-day fast in protest at the Minister's continued refusal to use his statutory powers (2) to change the King Hill situation. During the three days, thousands of leaflets were distributed to Mr. Robinson's constituents, many copies of the booklet (K.C.C. versus the Homeless) were sold - many of them to Robinson's neighbours - and hundreds of duplicated letters were signed and pushed through the Minister's front door. The press and television gave wide coverage.

On June 7, Roy Mills, Stan Daniels and Ron Moore were brought before the High Court. The K.C.C. wanted them committed to prison on the grounds that they had been seen at the hostel at 7.30 am on March 29 ( An injunction had been granted to the K.C.C. on October 4, 1965, 'restraining' these three and eleven other husbands from living at the hostel). Despite the fact that the hostel Warden corroborated Roy Mills' claim that he had special permission to be in the hostel because of his wife's ill health, Roy was committed to prison. Ron Moore had to give various undertakings. Stan Daniels, who had now moved out of the hostel into a new home and was too ill to attend Court, was nevertheless committed to prison. A warrant was issued for his arrest. Three days later he was taken to Brixton gaol on a stretcher. The press again gave wide publicity and the image of the K.C.C. took another sharp knock

On June 12, over 90 people (including many from the hostel) met at Lambeth Town Hall. We marched to Brixton prison to protest at the gaoling of Roy Mills and to demand his release. A special leaflet was distributed. It was in the form of an open letter from Mildred Mills (who marched with four of her six children) to Kenneth Robinson, the Kent County Council and Mr. Justice Blaine, the judge responsible for sending her husband to prison 'sine die'.

On June 14, the Ministry of Health headquarters was the object of what the press called 'an audacious raid'. Just after 1 pm, six soberly dressed members of the Friends of King Hill, each carrying a large bundle of papers, entered the three Ministry buildings at the Elephant & Castle. The 'papers' were closely-typed foolscap sheets. They bore a strange resemblance to the internal circulars in use in the Civil Service and were headed "The Homeless in Kent" - a summary of the King Hill situation. There followed, in officialese, a detailed account of the cause and purpose of the campaign.

The six Friends calmly and systematically worked their way from the top floor of each building (the 16th in one case) down to ground level. A few days earlier two Friends had 'cased the joint', inviting themselves to lunch in the Ministry canteen. During the 'raid' they entered each office, showing an uncanny knowledge of the in-tray, out-tray system. With a few deliberate exceptions, every officer (from the highest large-lush-carpet, mahogany furniture grade to the lowest lino-floor, drab, cramped, six-position desk grade) received a copy of the 'circular'.

There were a few incidents. One high-ranking officer came out into the corridor, and in a very posh voice called 'I say!' after one of the Friends. The Friend thought the game was up. But the officer only wanted to point out that one side of his 'circular' was blank, that it had happened before, that it was a damned nuisance and that something ought to be done about 'that bloody duplicator', and could he have another copy, please? In his relief and haste to comply with the request, the Friend nearly gave the game away. He dropped his pile of leaflets.

After the job had been completed, it dawned on a few Ministry officials that they had been hoaxed. Perhaps the 'give-away' was to be found in the last paragraph of the 'circular':

'It is not expected that Ministry employees will allow themselves to be influenced by facts, as put forward by the Friends of King Hill, who openly admit that they are prepared to defy the law if necessary in order to prevent homeless families from being broken up or evicted. Leaflets on this subject which are proferred in the vicinity of the Ministry should be refused'.

At 8 o'clock the same evening, a dense rash of stickers about the Minister of Health and the Kent homeless appeared on the walls of one of the staircases and along one of the corridors inside the House of Commons. The police violently manhandled two of the Friends, a girl and a man. The man was put info a cell until the House rose.

Earlier that day the Minister of Health had made a statement in Parliament about King Hill. It was in the form of a written answer to a question about the hostel from Hugh Delargy, MP. The statement was blatantly dishonest. The Friends immediately issued a detailed reply, in the form of an open letter to Mr. Robinson. Copies of the Minister's statement and of the open letter were sent to MPs and to the press. Copies are still available for anyone who wants any.

<sup>(2)</sup> National Assistance Act 1948, Section 36.

On July 1st, Stan Daniels was brought from prison and again had to face Mr. Justice Blaine in the High Court. After making a formal apology through his Q.C., he was released. What alternative did Stan have but to apologize? He'd been ill with a duodenal ulcer and other complaints for 2 years. He had spent the previous three weeks in the prison hospital. He, his wife and his 3 young children had been rehoused only a few days before his arrest. His help was badly needed at home. He had no alternative but to say that he was 'sorry' for something he patently did not regret.

On July 10, about 100 people, nearly half of them from the hostel, met at Notting Hill station and marched to the home of Roy Jenkins, the Home Secretary. A letter with several hundred signatures was delivered, demanding Home Office action to secure the immediate release of Rov Mills who was still in prison. Several speeches were made and the demonstrators then dispersed. But they did not go home. At a pre-arranged time and in twos and threes they converged on 10, Downing Street. In a matter of minutes, some 200 people were standing outside Wilson's home. Our crowd attracted others. policemen on duty were taken complete y unawares. After we had knocked at the door  $\ensuremath{\text{cf}}$  No.10 and been told that the Prime Minister was not at home, we held a meeting on his doorstep. Before police reinforcements could be called, several short speeches had been made. This can't have happened very often before.

Roy Mills was released on July 14. He had been in prison for  $5\frac{1}{2}$  weeks and had adamantly refused to apologize to secure his release. In fact he did not apologize to the High Court even then. He gave an undertaking not to return to the hostel.

Shortly after this Roy and Mildred Mills and their six children moved out of the hostel to a large, well-decorated, detached house in Tonbridge. The house is owned by the K.C.C., who lease it to the local council, who rent it to the Mills family.

During the summer months about 30 of the long-stay families have been rehoused. People who had hitherto been considered by the K.C.C. to be the main 'troublemakers' (e.g. Stan Daniels and Roy Mills) now have decent homes. The K.C.C. was really in quite a dilemma. Either they did not rehouse these 'troublemakers' (and the 'trouble' persisted at the hostel) - or they did rehouse them (and everyone saw that 'trouble-making'paid off). This should encourage homeless

people in other parts of the country to face up to intimidation and threats by the authorities. There are places used for Part III accommodation (for example in Birmingham and Leeds) where the rules and living conditions are as bad or worse than what we first found at King Hill.

The success of the campaign is due to many factors. The homeless people had had enough and were prepared to go a long way in their struggle against being treated as second-class citizens. They were prepared to fight back persistently. They were prepared, if necessary, to break the law. The ideas and methods of those helping them (Solidarity, Socialist Action, various anarchists and others) were both extremely radical and extremely flexible. Our ideas fused completely with the instinctive reactions of the homeless themselves. The marxist groups were all left on the sidelines. The National Association of Tenants and Residents (a communist party front organization) not only did not help, but cought to prevent a full discussion of the King Hill issue at one of its Conferences on the grounds that 'it was not on the agenda'. In a struggle of this kind the assistance' of such groups is often the kiss of death as it inevitably puts a brake on the movement and channels the struggle along traditional and ineffective lines.

On November 30, 1965, Mr. Justice Lawton had stated that 'the Courts are not sounding boards for political and social grievances'. The campaign has shown how successfully they can be used for precisely this purpose! Mr. Lawton had claimed that 'it was essential for the administration of justice in this country and for the proper administration of Acts of Parliament that orders of the Court should be obeyed'. The repeated and open defiance of such orders by the husbands has secured the triumph of a higher justice and of a higher and more humane morality.

If husbands are now allowed to live with their families at King Hill Hostel it is because of the sacrifices of such men as Brian Lomas, Roy Mills and Stan Daniels. When thousands of other people refuse to recognize the legality of orders which reduce their status as human beings the foundation will have been laid of a higher order and of a better society.

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and SOLIDARITY PAMPHLETS

10/- for 12 (sixpenny) items,

# BUSES AND PEOPLE

betty reid

This article was written by a clippie, who has worked on the buses in Scotland for over 20 years. For further details of Betty Reid's story, see 'Busmen on the Move' ('Solidarity' vol. IV. No. 1).

There is something very inspiring about the confidence of youth. Young people have a tremendous enthusiasm that makes anything seem not only possible but easy. Their high spirits are infectious. They make light of difficulties and regard obstacles not only as things to be overcome but as added thrills in the exciting game of life. But as a clippie on Glasgow Corporation I no longer find their attitude inspiring or infectious. I find it terribly depressing, because I know how soon it will turn to disillusion.

For years now I have been watching the same sad little play, enacted week after weary week. The youngsters come on to the job, keen, enthusiastic and eager to begin. They are the right sort of youngsters, bright, cheerful and willing - just the sort of people who are needed. And within a few weeks they are gone. Vanished without so much as a word of farewell. Sick and tired and completely fed up. Utterly disillusioned. The whole process rarely takes more than three or four months. It literally makes me feel sick to watch it happening.

Why does it happen? What exactly is it that changes these eager young workers into dispirited, discontented drudges. The answer is simple: It can be expressed in a single word: conditions. Everybody on the job knows this. Working conditions on Glasgow's Public Transport are a public scandal. But the Union officials cannot or will not see it. I have been to union meetings week after week and protested against the steadily deteriorating conditions. I have tried to impress the desperate need for improved conditions and it has been a hopeless task. They will not, they cannot see it. If I painted the word 'CONDITIONS' in scarlet letters a foot high and

held it up in front of their noses the union officials would still refuse to see it. Their indifference is so thick you can feel it. It is a solid wall and you can knock on it until your hands are sore and your head aches and still not get through to them.

I remember one young girl in particular, though she is typical of hundreds. She loved dancing. She was crazy about dancing. It was her greatest interest in life. She told me that nothing, absolutely nothing, would ever make her give it up. She had gone dancing every week for ages, and now that she was on the buses she intended to go every other week, when the shift she was working left her free to do so. Nothing would make her give it up.

I knew otherwise. Experience had taught me. I told her that I would ask her again, in three months, whether whe was still going dancing. And at the end of that time, I asked her - and her answer was what I expected. She had not been to a dance for over a month. She was always too tired. Before another 3 months were up, she had left.

That is how it is if you work on Glasgow's Public Transport, in this year of 1966. The job demands your whole life. It leaves you nothing. Whatever your hobby, you are almost certain to find that you will have to give it up. If you are keen on a particular sport, that, too, will have to be sacrificed sooner or later. Any clubs or associations to which you may belong are going to see less and less of you. The list is endless. Eventually nothing is left. It is an absolute disgrace that people should be expected to put up with such conditions in this day and age.

I believe that sooner or later something must and will be done. I try to persuade others to believe so, to stay on the job a bit longer. I tell them that eventually we must get the better conditions that we are entitled to. I tell them that the five-day-week has got to come, and that the running times will have to improve. Sometimes I convince some of them, and they stay for a little while longer. But in the end they all get tired of waiting, and leave. Or they develop a 'couldn't care less' attitude, take time off, come in late, and eventually get sacked. People get cynical in this job and you can't really blame them. Even the fourty-hour week which was supposed to have been granted at the end of last year is still 'under discussion'.

Naturally the standard of service provided by Glasgow Corporation public transport has deteriorated to an alarming extent. This in turn has led to a worsening of relations between the bus crews and the travelling public. The weary and sorely tried passengers take out all their anger and resentment on the even more sorely tried and weary green staff, who are forced to act as a buffer to absorb all the complaints that should really be directed at the management. The short-sighted attitude of the public in blaming it all on the crews is one more reason why the crews get fed up and turn it in. To a tired, fed-up and flustered conductor it is often the last straw, and when the bus runs in the conductor walks out. The whole thing is a vicious circle that gets. steadily worse.

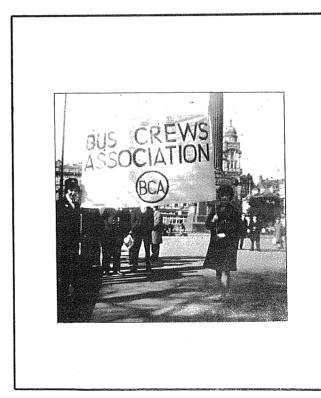
Before the war there was a famous slogan: 'We want that extra passenger'. The official attitude has certainly altered since then. Now the department don't seem to care if they lose dozens of passengers. The point has been reached where people will do anything to avoid having to rely on Corporation Transport. The enquiries I have made among my neighbours reveal that many of them prefer to go out the back road and travel by company buses, which are warmer, cheaper, and more reliable. Others who have only a fairly short distance to go now make a point of walking. That way they know that they will get there. Others share cars. And while the Department are thus driving away hundreds of passengers some nit has the bright idea of sending out little reminders to all conductors telling them how vital it is to make sure that every single fare is collected because the revenue of the whole Department depends upon their doing so.

What is happening is nothing less than the complete rundown of what is both a vital public service and an industry on which the jobs of 8,000 people

depend. Already the point has been reached where people will not go out in the evenings unless they have their own transport. They will not take the risk of having to wait fifty minutes for a bus to get them home. Yet those who should be taking action are doing nothing. If a factory employing several thousand people in this city were to close down, there would be protests and deputations and petitions to prevent the catastrophe. But because it is not a factory but a public transport system people just sit back and watch it happening.

Something must be done, and done quickly. The services must be restored so that the public are able once more to rely on their buses. Conditions must be imporved so that the right sort of people will be attracted and stay on the job. The situation in which the Green Staff and the travelling public are constantly at variance with one another must be reversed. We must restore our former pride and confidence in ourselves and in the job.

This is what the B.C.A. was formed to do and with your help we can do it. Join us now in making a stand against the indifference and the cynicism that have beset us for so long. Why remain outside? You have nothing left to lose. Add your efforts to ours, and we shall win all the sooner. Join with us now and be part of the victorious group who will bring us pride in our job and confidence in ourselves



Ip 11- 14. Never V Wagerera -en.

## MURDER AT FORDS

This article describes a cold-blooded killing, the logical consequence of the smashing of job organization at Dagenham. In previous issues we have described the efforts of the Ford Motor Company to get the older men off their books by literally driving them into the ground. This article describes how this policy was only too successful.

Industrial struggle is not about the struggle for political control over shop stewards committees. Or about the success of this or that wage claim. Or about the percentage of union membership within the plant. Struggle is about whose will prevails within the factory (bosses or men), about the totality of life within industry, about the speed of the line, about tea-breaks, about time allowed in the lavatory, about the quality of the food, about the protection of militants and of the old and infirm. Destroy job organization and all these things are affected. Without job organization even such 'rights' as laid down in national agreements and in the Factory Acts and similar legislation mean nothing.

We are glad to report that we are getting an increasing response from within the factory, particularly from the PTA plant, but we still have a long way to go. In the very near future we intend to produce a pamphlet on what has happened at Fords. Offers of help, finance, and help with sales would be very welcome. We have spent a lot of effort in describing what was and is the situation at Dagenham. What we now want to do is to contribute towards changing the situation there. The pamphlet will, we hope, be a first step.

As we entered the FTA after the sacking of Francis we had to hand in the signed form which declared our intention to be good boys. When the starting hooter sounded we found that the lines were set at a speed that did not conform to the labour strength. As the numbers of men increased after the first week, so the speed of the lines was increased likewise.

The supervision were having a heyday. They were boasting that they now had the men where they wanted them. Very quickly the tasks became intolerable. The men were forced to a running pace, supervisors had to jump to keep up with them.

After a few weeks the time and motion study men arrived on the lines. These people had been drawn from the worst types in most cases, many of them were known to be 'Judases' who had taken their thirty dirty pieces of silver. One of these characters used to stand watching an operator for days at a time; he would then move in and strip this man of every spare second and possibly deduct a few more. These timings were often impossible to achieve and labour turn over in the PTA reached a record of 35%.

Management in the PTA were a very strange lot. Mr Boxall for instance used to strut around like a fan-tail pigeon in full fettle with his lips pursed and his little chest blown up. He growled at the supervisors, and many consider him to be mainly responsible for the bad conditions that followed the sacking of Francis and which reached their peak in 1964.

#### DEATH ON THE LINE

At approximately 4.15 am on the night shift on the night of September 11 to 12, 1964, Tommy Turner collapsed on the line which assembles Cortinas. One of his mates noticed this, quickly stopped the line and attempted to help the sick man. He was sent back to his job by the supervisor who then dragged Tommy to the side of the line, placed another operator on the fallen man's task and restarted the line. Only then was a message sent to the Medical Department who later arrived with a stretcher. Owing to pallets staked high at each side of the line it was found impossible to reach him, so a 'stac-a-truc' was sent for. It was some 13 minutes before the sick man reached the Medical Department, by which time he was dead.

Many weeks later the PTA shop stewards committee was informed by management that 'Turner would have died in any case; he had a medical condition'.(1)

Cn September 13,1964, there was a meeting at the Leys Hall, Dagenham, called by the PTA shop stewards committee. It had been publicised by handbills headed 'What's Wrong with Fords (PTA) Plant'. The agenda was to deal with the deterioration of working conditions and trade union organization. There was also mention of T.U. officials and MPs attending the meeting. Due to the death of Tommy Turner the meeting was packed. It started with a minute's silence in memory of the dead man. Otherwise the meeting was a farce. It was nothing more than an attempt to bring pressure to force the men to pay their union dues! It was found that only 10% of those present were up to date with their dues.

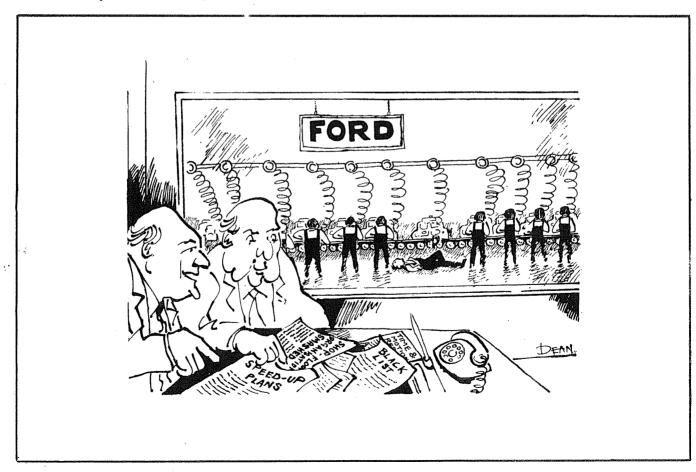
The case of Tommy Turner is not the only one of this nature. This brutal case clearly shows up the frame of mind and attitude of the Ford supervision. To this day no one in PTA trusts management. Those who drove the men in 1963-64-65 are still in charge of the lines. These stupid people are now frightened men. With the economic crisis coming it is to be hoped that the Company will sort them

out. Shop stewards generally have behaved admirably under very bad conditions. You have no cause to condemn these men who hold down this invidious task. You also have no cause to criticize Party members for their inactivity. Their position on the shop floor has been highly dangerous: they would have been made scapegoats like Bill Francis. So, wherever you are, Kevin, we still consider you the best fighter for our rights. Keep your pecker up. You have nothing to regret. You did your best for the unfortunate Ford worker.

Solidarity is now widely read in PTA although at shop stewards meetings this material is suppressed and pushed under the table.

'OLD UN'

(1) If true, why had this man been working for so long at one of the most strenuous jobs in the whole factory? What a comment on the system! Moreover, really urgent treatment might have helped him. But that would have meant stopping the line for a few minutes. Production and profits come first!



#### POEM

circulating in PTA plant

In Dagenham there is a Plant, it's called the P.T.A. Where men are whipped and tortured for many hours a day, To satisfy the hungry Yanks who grab what they can get, And make their mighty profits, from blood and toil and sweat.

We have an annual visit from a man named Henry Ford, I think he's some American that we keep on the board, For as he steps out from his car and leans against the door, 500 factory servicemen lie prostrate on the floor.

'Welcome, Dear Sir, Welcome' is the speech made by the brass As Henry calmly wipes his shoes on some poor fucker's arse, 'The men are pleased to see you and as I am their Head Please step this way and mind your feet don't fall across our dead.

'We've made a few more millions and I hope it pleases you, I'm sure that you will see to it that we all get our due'. Henry lit up his cigar and smiled at all around, Then sacked the poor old bastard who fell dead on the ground.

'We've got to speed this line up, don't give me tales of woe, My daughter's in the pudding club, and I am short of dough.'





#### REVIEW

'Militant Trade Unionism' (a re-analysis of industrial action in an inflationary situation) by V.L. Allen. Merlin Press.

This hastily written book is an odd mixture. It begins with a competent, but laborious description of the role and function of trade unions. It then goes on to expose the fallacies of the traditional solution to economic difficulties: attacking the living standards of the working class. Then follows an account of the successive crises the British economy has faced since the war. This shades into a resume of the measures taken by the present government.

Allen's refutation of the Labour government's case for their wage policy is convincing (although all this has been done better elsewhere). His sociological explanation of the lack of militancy of the trade union bureaucracy is inadequate. It is followed by a warning on the dangers inherent in the drift towards a Corporate State.

Allen's heart is obviously in the right place. He advocates that unions should adopt more militant policies. But he shows no real awareness of the rank-and-file agencies which could mobilise working class resistance to both employers and Government. As a result the book remains disappointingly academic. It is unclear to whom it is addressed, unless to the 'left wing' of the bureaucracy.

John Sullivan

# CNT IN CRISIS

We reprint below an article translated from the April 1966 issue of the French rank and file journal Informations Correspondence Ouvrieres! (1) The article gives the text of an agreement recently concluded between the fascist 'labour syndicates' in Spain and a section of the CNT.

In our opinion this development illustrates one of 'Solidarity's main themes: the tendency for trade unions to become an integral part of the system of exploitation. Under the conditions of modern capitalism this tendency is irreversible and is not to be explained by the 'betrayal' of this or 'hat leadership. Any organization which exists for a long period within capitalist society inevitably comes to terms with that society and ends up by contributing to its functioning.

We have in past issues of 'Solidarity' illustrated this tendency with accounts of class collaboration between union leaders and employers in this country and abroad. We have shown that the political affiliation of communist-dominated unions has not prevented them from behaving in essentially the same way as the 'right wing', which are openly committed to support for the present system. It would seem that the 'anarchist' tradition of the CNT has not saved its leaders from the common fate.

It is only fair to add that this agreement has been denounced by a number of CNT members and by various anarcho-syndicalist organizations abroad - in particular by Luis A. Edo, secretary of the Paris branch of the CNT. It is uncertain just how strong a tendency the CNT in Spain still represents, as it is impossible to know to what extent it has managed to maintain its illegal organization. It has been claimed that the people who signed the agreement were 'simple people' who were tricked by Falange officials. If true, this has important implications concerning the decay of political consciousness. On the other hand, a statement published by 'Le Monde Libertaire' describes those who concluded the agreement as 'several important CNT leaders' ... a statement which, if true, has even more serious implications!

Certainly no intelligent opportunist would today come to an agreement with the Falange. As the Franco regime draws to a close, the bourgeoisie is seeking allies among the working class organizations. A section of the CNT unfortunately seems willing to help and in the process to repeat the melancholy experience of collaboration with capitalist governments which took place during the Civil War. They seem prepared to make a deal with the liberal bourgeoisie, which opposes Franco. (2)

The CNT is now openly participating in a united front (the so-called ASO, or Alliance of Trade Unions) with the right-wing Social Democratic trade unionists of the UGT. For some time the CNT has been more or less openly collaborating with a number of tendencies in the bourgeois opposition. A section of the CNT is now cooperating with the Falange. Under the circumstances it is rather amusing to find 'Freedom' (May 21, 1966) asking if the CNT really is a revolutionary organization which 'should be supported by anarchists'. This naivete can only be matched by that of certain communists who, in 1956, began hesitantly to ask if Russia really was a socialist paradise.

John Sullivan

<sup>(1)</sup> P. Blachier, 13 bis, Rue Labois-Rouillon, Paris 19eme, France.

<sup>(2)</sup> See Lorenzo Torres: 'The Spanish Left: Illusion and Reality', The Socialist Register, 1966.

#### INTRODUCTION BY I.C.O.

Leaving aside the Stalinists, who believe in totalitarian unions dominated by the Party, some Spanish opposition groups are for a western-type unionism, of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions type, while many libertarians remain faithful to the ideal of revolutionary unionism. The ideas advocated by other opposition groups however don't differ much from the following declaration of principles, which, apart from a few small points, could have been signed by any of the 'free and democratic' unions of any Western European country.

To understand the real significance of this document, it must be remembered that it was the result of talks between high ranking officials of the vertical, government-sponsored unions, and some erstwhile militants of the libertarian CNT trade union movement (acting in their personal capacity?).

Nowadays modern capitalism finds in trade unionism a useful adjunct. Spain, which is modernising its economy, is no exception to the rule. The bureaucracy of the official, 'vertical' unions is now cautiously preparing the way towards 'free trade unionism'. The vertical unions (which organize both employers and workers in any given industry) are becoming useless. As the workers are no longer afraid, more flexibility and tact are needed. In the present circumstances some old libertarians have thought it worth getting involved in all this.

We have translated the 'preliminary resolution', the basic document of this operation, which as far as we know, remains confidential. Franco's press never mentioned it. And the opposition papers, published abroad, only refer to the document in hushed tones, to condemn the 'collaborationists'. Good! But what kind of unions does the Spanish opposition want?

## TEXT OF JOINT AGREEMENT

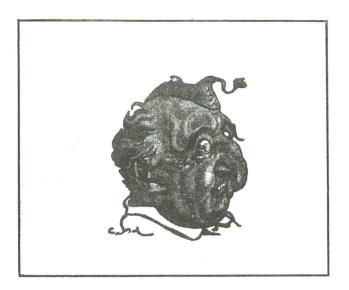
It is a common concern of all workers now to achieve the greatest possible unity and agreement and to help build a future free from past divisions and from their harmful consequences.

In order to achieve this, a group of militants of the old libertarian trade union movement participated in talks with some supporters of National Syndicalism. These talks were held at the Institute for Social, Economic and Trade Union Studies in Madrid. Their objective was to discuss the national task of making Spain a politically progressive, socially just and economically prosperous country. Ideological problems were left aside, as they were likely to divide the workers and to damage, not only the labour movement as a whole but the task workers felt called upon to undertake as part of their duties as Spaniards.

From the very onset, both groups were glad to discover many encouraging common points. Although there was not complete agreement on all subjects discussed, the differences seemed less basic and important than might have been feared.

The participants concentrated on finding ways in which trade union organization could be made more efficient and become the mouthpiece of the aspirations of all those engaged in production. Avoiding past disputes, the two groups summarize their initial agreement in the following points:

- 1. At a time when Spanish society needs new Institutions, the existence of several trade union movements with conflicting political ideologies would be a danger for the working class and for society as a whole. There must, therefore, be only one trade union movement, leaving the workers free to think or believe what they like according to their individual conscience. All workers engaged in productive work will automatically become union members, without political, religious or other discriminations which would diminish their sacred rights as human beings.
- 2. The basic principles of trade unionism are as follows:
  - a) the unions must have a democratic structure and must be managed by the workers themselves.
  - b) they must be independent from the government or any other official State body.



- c) they must also be independent from all political parties now in existence or likely to be formed in Spain.
- d) the unions must be separated from factory organization (now usually seen as part of the managerial apparatus. Ed. ICO) although this does not mean that there won't be institutionalized means of contact and coordination.
- 3. The workers, organized in their unions, claim a part in the management of those organizations known as 'Mutualismo Laboral' (Government-sponsored pension schemes, cheap holidays for workers, etc.). The management should be shared with the employers' organizations. The unions should also have a reasonable share in the management of all industrial firms; of all local, regional and national social institutions; of the nationalized industries; of national planning. They should participate in the executive side of policies of economic and social development and in all representative bodies concerned with management, consultation, and general legislation.
- 4. A strike constitutes a trial of strength and must therefore be replaced by some other way of solving problems of human relations. However, while the structures of modern society tolerate the anti-social excesses, characteristic of different systems of economic exploitation, the workers must have the right to strike in order to compensate for their position of inferiority when faced with possible capitalist abuses. This right could be authorised once the procedures for collective conflicts had been settled and after all the stages of conciliation and negotiation procedure had failed. Only in that case would strikes called by the union be legal.

The same guarantees and requisites would apply in the case of a lock-out.

5. The unions seek to develop cooperative institutions both in the realm of production and in that of consumption. They see in these cooperative institutions a decisive means of achieving the necessary reform of economic structures and of fostering a new kind of ownership which will accelerate economic growth and render easier and more human the relationships between different factors of production.

#### CCMPLEMENTARY AGREEMENT:

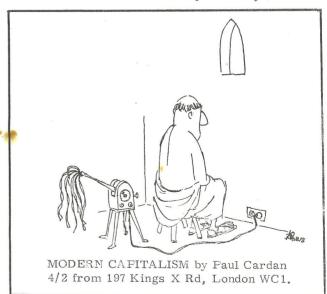
At the suggestion of the Libertarians it was agreed that this resolution be sent to the workers' sections of the UGT and of the Christian Democratic Movement, asking them to express their agreement or disagreement with the general line of the document.

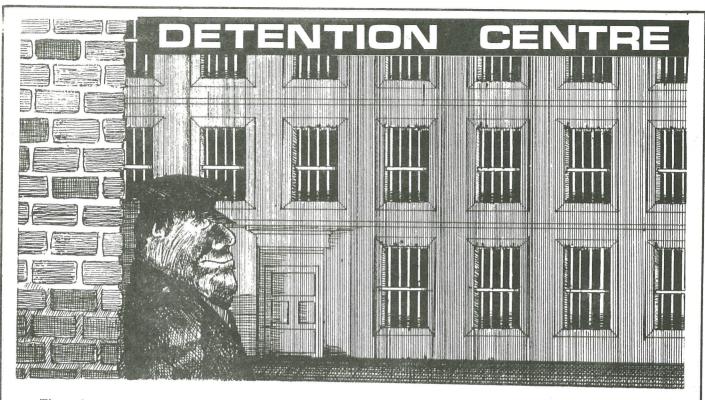
.If they accepted the resolution in principle, the UGT and the Christian Democrats would be included in the common task of obtaining definitive approval for, and of building the new structures and ways of action of Spanish trade unionism which would follow.

In order to give time to those groups invited to examine it, the resolution will not be presented to the Government for official approval until a month has elapsed.

Madrid, November 4, 1965.

ICO Note: This document was presented as issued by the National Committee of the CNT, operating in Spain. It was said to have been subsequently endors by delegates from different regions (except those from the Asturias and the Basque country).





Three issues ago we printed an article on the experiences of a Borstal boy (see Solidarity vol.IV, No.1). But Borstals are only a part of the system of repression of young people who depart from the norm. Another and rapidly growing aspect of this system is the Detention Centre. These institutions exist to administer a 'short sharp shock' and are the most rapidly expanding section of the penal system. In spite of this they are full to overflowing. The only reason there are not many more youths being given 'the treatment' is that there isn't room for them.

This article is reprinted from the <u>Bulletin of the Quakers Penal Affairs Committee</u>. It naturally doesn't say many of the things that we feel need saying, but what it exposes is bad enough.

We are not calling for the reform of the penal system - we are just trying to document what it is really like. Many of the activities of the 'reformers' and 'social workers' have made matters immeasurably worse. Thanks to their efforts young people are no longer being simply sentenced for stealing, say, a bottle of milk, they are sentenced for having long hair, living rough and being away from home, for not having regular work, for not having the right attitude to the authorities (including the social workers themselves). The system is now far worse than the old unreformed system. Youths can now spend years in and out of detention centres or borstals for a paltry initial offence. In future issues of Solidarity we hope to document the brave new world of oppression by social workers.

When some gentle Quaker magistrate sends a lad to a Detention Centre, what happens to him?

In 1962, a 19-year old member of CND was sent to New Hall Detention Centre, Wakefield. My husband and I visited him there, and have questioned him since, because he is a person whose word we can trust. He says that the circuit training was so severe that boys used to black out, - about 9 boys in the first week - they were put under the shower, and back on P.T. again. Boys near the

end of the course were set on to 'knock round' new-comers, e.g. banging his head on the floor during press-ups, or throwing him against the wall bars.

Because our CND friend refused to 'knock round' a newcomer, he was himself thrown against the wall bars by officers. His knee was injured, so that he had to have 7 days in sick bay, and 14 days 'light duties'. There was no proper doctor, only an officer who had taken a 1-3month course in Pentonville.

There were 4-5 attempts per month at suicide - e.g. by swallowing razor blades.

In addition to the extremely rigorous and repressive regime, punishments are given for any little thing - 'fatigues' of up to two hours for laying out equipment incorrectly, or omitting to say 'Sir'. Complaints to visiting magistrates can only be voiced in the hearing of an officer. Our friend heard a lad complain about an officer's bullying conduct. He was told it would be 'looked into'. Nothing was done and the officer took it out on the lad.

Another lad, sentenced for petty thieving, reported to us about Buckley Hall Detention Centre, Rochdale, 1964. In the first 5 minutes of reception he was thumped in the face: 'I'm the boss, do as I say'. P.T. was extreme, to the limit of endurance, the officers 'looking glad when you were in pain'. Bullying was encouraged by the officers, and lads were set on to newcomers. The officers treated you as if you 'were something that had crawled out from under the stones'.

In the latest Home Office sponsored survey ('Young Men in Detention Centres', Dunlop and Mc Cabe, 1965) a quoted comment on the officers is 'they treat you like animals, and expect you to treat them like gentlemen'. Some comments on the circuit training are: 'It is cruelsome for 'lose not used to it'; 'It sends you daft'; 'It is impossible for the weak'; 'It is too much for my offences'.

The truth of such experiences will not, I think, be seriously questioned by anyone who has any behind-the-scenes knowledge; but on talking to such people, including Friends, I have found that they push aside the matter because of the difficulties and danger encountered in 'deterring' aggressive lads. How aggressive, in fact, is the Detention Centre population now, even before the all-inclusive White Paper legislation came into effect?

According to this last Home Office sponsored survey, out of 107 Detention Centre inmates, only 18 were sentenced for any kind of violence; and of those 18, only TWO were sentenced for serious offences. The remaining 89 were sent to the Detention Centre for 'dishonesty', 'taking and driving away', 'driving while disqualified'. The officers described the typical inmate as 'immature, uncertain, badly brought up, stupid'.

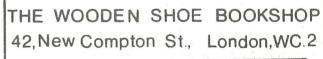
Therefore clearly the people subjected to the Detention Centre punishment were NOT at the time of their conviction of the aggressive type. That they left the Centre full of violent and resentful feelings is no argument for Detention Centres, yet this repressive punishment is now to be legally extended, without even the pretence of discrimination.

Magistrates may perhaps think, when sentencing, that between prison and Detention Centre, Detention Centre is the lesser evil. Prison is grim enough, but it does less damage to the personality. The inventors of the Detention Centre regime realized this when they wrote (HMSO April '64): 'The intention of Detention Centres is primarily deterrent. The object is to stretch the offender to the limit of his ability. This is far more taxing than mere conformity with a strict discipline'.

How did we come to introduce such a regressive regime into our penal system? Such a punishment originates from the Army, from which three quarters of the prison service officers come.

In 1952 the officers at a borstal for 15-17 year olds asked for the regime to be altered, so that it should be solely disciplinarian and deterrent, and therefore simpler to organize. In 1954 a second Detention Centre was opened, this time for 17-21 year olds. The public was told that this blitzkrieg short, sharp shock was to be applied only to tough aggressive thugs. In 1957 - a third Detention Centre. 1960 - three more. By now, 1965, there are eighteen, and the Home Office plans to convert more of the borstals into Detention Centres.

The White Paper says there is to be 'no change in the organization and methods of Detention Centres'. All this in face of 79% re-conviction rate. No wonder the Norwagian Parliamentary Committee was 'shocked by the military type discipline at British Detention Centres, the re-conviction rate being twice as high as at a Norwagian Centre where there is no military discipline'.





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## VIETNAM

### 1. SOCIALISM

#### OR PACIFISM?

This is the first of a series of articles on Vietnam by Solidarity readers and supporters.

As the war in Vietnam increasingly becomes a central issue, the uneasy alliance between socialists and pacifists which has been a feature of political life during the past few years must inevitably disintegrate.

Socialists have no alternative but to support all struggles against imperialism while remaining sceptical about the possibility of these struggles leading to the establishment of a democratic or socialist society. They cannot condemn all parties equally for their use of violence as the pacifists do. Socialists recognize that where the objective prerequisites for socialism do not exist (as is the case in all undeveloped countries) the struggle against imperialism should still be supported.

There is a difficulty in determining the precise attitude which we should take to particular national liberation movements: they arise out of circumstances different from ours and therefore we will find it impossible fully to identify ourselves with them. We can legitimately criticize the uncritical acclaim which some socialists have given to colonial nationalist leaders, but it would be a pity if socialists became so engrossed in internal polemics that they neglect to make the more basic distinction between the socialist and the liberal-pacifist position.

Anyone who claims that socialists can support only socialist demands rejects the whole tradition of anti-colonialism in the Labour movement. If there are almost no struggles which qualify for our support, what is the point of calling ourselves socialists or engaging in anything but purely educational activities? Those who

claim to be socialists but remain indifferent to such struggles reduce socialism to an abstract ideal, not as the culmination of peoples' real struggles in the real world.

A more sophisticated case for abstention states that struggles for national independence which in the past were worthy of support are no longer so, because of the involvement of the great powers. The Vietnamese are 'unconscious pawns in this world-wide struggle' (1) - therefore we are absolved from any duty of solidarity with the Vietnamese or any other colonial revolution. Peter Cadogan has stated that it is a slander to equate the Vietcong's struggle with that of the Resistance to the Nazis during the war. This attitude combines a highly romanticized picture of the Resistance with residual assumptions of European racial superiority. Both Bob Potter's and Peter Cadogan's attitudes are only possible for those who lack all sense of urgency about the dilemma of the countries under imperialist domination

The Vietnamese are not 'unconscious pawns' They are compelled to fight in conditions not of their own making, and to obtain arms wherever they can (in practice Moscow or Peking). Certainly this distorts and cripples their revolution, in the same way that the Resistance was fatally compromised by its involvement with the Allies, its only source of assistance.

This brings me to the crux of our differences with the pacifists. The fact that we both criticize Moscow and Peking should not be allowed to obscure the fact that our criticisms are not the same. They are in fact diametrically opposed!

The socialist criticism of Peking/Moscow is essentially the same as our criticism of Stalin's role in Spain. It is that their aid to the Vietnamese guerillas is limited, conditional, and aimed at serving the interests of their own foreign policy. The pacifist criticism of Peking/Moscow is that they send arms at all! They see the solution to the Vietnam war in a negotiated agreement, not in an American defeat.



Significantly, India is the pacifist's favourite example of a national independence movement. Here a bourgeois nationalist party was able to achieve independence from Britain, while keeping mass involvement in the struggle to a minimum and leaving an archaic social structure intact: conflict was channelled in the direction of communal massacres. But a movement like the Vietcong which can only exist if it retains the support of the mass of the population cannot stop short at mere formal independence, whatever the wishes of its leaders. While a regular army can be the instrument of a policy conceived by others, the Vietnam guerilla movement is not the unconscious tool of foreign powers. Within the limits imposed by the necessity of obtaining aid from Moscow or Peking the movement does pursue its own objectives. Socialists are aware of the limitations of these struggles but have no alternative but to support them.

However sceptical we may be about the successful outcome of the Vietnamese struggle and however little inclined to indulge in a romantic worship of violence we must recognize that the Vietnamese have no alternative but to resist American aggression. No socialist can criticize them for their resort to arms.

The pacifists' reiteration of their traditional refusal to distinguish between the violence of the oppressors and of the oppressed should encourage us to take stock of the condition of the Peace Movement.

It is beside the point to criticize today's Peace Movement for being ineffective. This assumes that the function of the movement is to achieve some external end. But the real function of the Peace Movement's activity is to reinforce the participants' self-esteem. The predilection of the remnants of the Peace Movement for rural demonstrations is extremely significant. The beauty of a rural demonstration is that one is relieved of the necessity of mingling with outsiders. The Peace Movement has become a semireligious cult with its own ritual, customs, and uniform. Rural demonstrations are the equivalent of Christian retreats. Certainly this kind of secularized Christianity is relatively harmless and is at least preferable to support for Billy Graham or adherence to Zen Buddhism. But it has nothing to do with the problems which ordinary people face today and it does not provide a suitable milieu for socialist activities.

A decomposing movement tends to produce strange and exotic growths. We have already seen the appearance of a Narodnik-Terrorist tendency ('Scots against War'). It is time for socialists to abandon this stinking corpse before the christians and the pseudo-anarchists are joined by spiritualists, phrenologists, and all the sad company of utopians. It may be difficult for many socialists to sever their connection with the pacifist movement - after all many of them came from it. But continued association with it is now not merely time-wasting but deeply compromising.

john sullivan

(1) Vietnam by Bob Potter (Solidarity pamphlet No. 20, p. 3)

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