

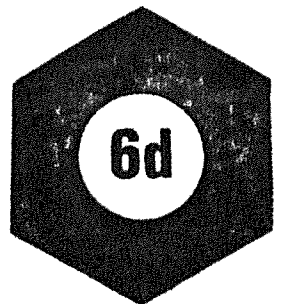
# **solidarity**



***for workers'  
full control***

**Dungeness Reactors  
Brown & Green Blues  
Kelloggs for Breakfast...  
Borough Market Waste  
LSE Close Up  
A Halfpenny Change at Kingsnorth?  
May 1 WAS May Day  
Another Circus**

**No 3**





# SOLIDARITY (SOUTH LONDON)

## DUNGENESS REACTORS

This is another report by a member employed by Balfour Beatty on the Dungeness "B" Power Station Site, Kent.

It describes some reactions to our work and another side to the Class Struggle. At a time when Government bosses and unions are seemingly united in their attempts to increase production at any price; many workers are in fact penalized for producing too much, because sometimes it conflicts with the individual employer's ability to make the maximum profit.

Contractors in this industry are often employed by the CEGB on a time-plus-materials basis, therefore it is sometimes in their own self-interest that a job lasts as long as possible even at the expense of the CEGB and their fellow contractors and, in the long run, the Workers.

Balfour Beatty are the main contractors concerned with the building and civil engineering work on one of Britain's first nuclear power stations.

The struggle continues at Dungeness. After our last report in SOLIDARITY there was an immediate reaction from the TGWU shop steward, Mr. Challis, who went round the site putting up posters to the effect that anybody who bought a copy of SOLIDARITY was a nutcase. Unfortunately for him sales of SOLIDARITY No.2 have trebled on Dungeness.

One can easily understand why Mr. Challis doesn't like the idea of SOLIDARITY - not only the journal but the idea itself. He will always be remembered on this site as the shop steward who agreed management should be allowed to introduce a system of selective overtime, "selective" in the sense that the management selected both the time and the individuals who would work.

Some of us were a bit puzzled by what motive a shop steward of all people could have for supporting selective overtime. We didn't have long to wait! Yes, you guessed it! The following weekend the management selected Mr. Challis to work on a job other members had been employed on all that week.

When Mr. Challis was asked why he had worked on other men's work over the weekend, he replied that the management specifically

wanted him to do this job because he worked much slower than the other men on the job, therefore the management were able to obtain a better price from the sub-contractors! (???)

While we agree with the management that Mr. Challis does work much slower than most of us, it is obvious he is not so slow when it comes to using his position of shop steward to put money into his own pockets at the expense of site organisation and job control.

#### MORE REACTORS

About 40 copies of SOLIDARITY No.2 were sold at Dungeness on the first day of publication. The article 'Daggers Drawn at Dungeness' provoked an immediate interest from both workers and management and more copies were immediately ordered.

However, the management, apparently worried by the growing interest in SOLIDARITY among their workers, decided to do something about it. They put one of the layabouts in the office to work using the photostat machine to produce copies of 'Daggers Drawn At Dungeness'. They hoped in this way to cut down on further sales. It had the opposite effect, however, because, what with that and the good work done by our self-appointed advertising manager, Arthur Challis, we were able to sell another 40 copies, making a total of 80 copies this month at Dungeness.

#### BURK'S LAW

One good thing that's happened on this site since our last report has been the transfer of Amos Burk, the ex-General Foreman to another site at Becton Gasworks, Essex. Most of his time here was spent making rash promises to some of the more gullible chargehands, promises that did not materialise - paywise that is. In fact, Burk's sole function on this site was to organise the cutting down of the target bonus system.

Workers on the Becton Gasworks site would be well advised not to listen to Burk's promises. Burk's Law at Dungeness was definitely 'Divide 'em More to Keep 'em Poor'.

#### THE BOSSES' UNION

On Dungeness and all other power station sites there are always large numbers of contractors and subbies employing the same unions and skills. The employers have an unwritten agreement among themselves that any employee who has been previously employed by any one contractor on that site will not be employed by the others, except on the recommendation of the previous employer. This helps to keep out the militants and it also has another function. Many contractors pay very different wages for the same work and skill. If workers had the freedom to choose the higher-paid jobs the contractors would find themselves in competition with each other for labour and the wages would be forced up.

Balfour Beatty operate this practice to the letter. Any employee contemplating leaving to join another contractor on this site finds Balfour Beatty on the telephone putting the black on and generally discrediting him, when he may be just trying to better himself in some way. They tend to regard the freedom of the individual on this site as labour poaching - some fair game!

### CONCLUSIONS

We feel it's about time the workers at Dungeness looked into this question of how labour is hired and fired. If we let management do all the deciding on this question we can expect our wages and conditions to get worse. We should be thinking of organising ourselves as workers against the bosses' union. We can only do that when we begin to take decisions for ourselves.

If workers at Dungeness wish to use SOLIDARITY to express their dissatisfaction with the set-up, if they wish to express their ideas for changes they will be welcome. We do not believe in political parties nor do we wish to recruit bodies to a power structure to be manipulated by an elite. We believe that we the workers should take all the decisions affecting our daily lives.

pp. Workers of Dungeness

### INTERNATIONAL COMBUSTION LTD, DUNGENESS

We reported last time that the workers on the I.C.L. contract were on strike. Two steel erectors refused to sweep up when ordered to do so by the management. The workers went out on strike but the men remain sacked.

The issue here was quite clear. The management were operating their famous Flexibility Agreement which involves skilled men doing a variety of different jobs, including sweeping up.

Flexibility means for the steel erector complete dilution of his skill and his eventual extinction as a grade of labour.

The two sacked men were both members of the Constructional Engineering Union and the union official for this area is Fred Copeman the 'Kent Dandy'. Fred is a well known supporter of what the employers describe as flexibility and you couldn't get anyone to handle a case of victimisation who was more flexible than Fred!

Flexible means 'easily bent', and Fred has always been prepared to see us all bent over double - it won't solve our problem but it helps to solve his. The only thing flexible in industry seems to be us! The bosses and government need us all bent over with our trousers round our ankles so they can have their way with us. It's about time we started bending them.

## SOLIDARITY - BALFOUR BEATTY DISPUTE

We take a very serious view of the Balfour Beatty management's wildcat action in copying our literature without permission. Have they never heard of copyright? This part of the case is with our Legal Department and already 39 QCs have been briefed.

A more serious aspect is the breach of demarcation. Normally, involvement in a who-does-what dispute we would have avoided like the Parliamentary plague. But it is now before the TUC Disputes Court, and Mr Feather is handling it personally.

Angry members of SOLIDARITY have held special meetings all over the country. The three London groups have been in continuous session. Comments have been ominous. "If employers reprinted the South London Group's propaganda on a large scale," said one member, "it could lead to industrial anarchy. We'd then need a National Federated Structure."

On hearing the news, another member said, "Oh, my God!" (He has since been expelled.) A third member said, "This is the most serious situation we've faced so far, and we don't rule out the possibility of unofficial action."

The Communist Party and the International Socialists issued a joint statement to the Press and TV. In it they said, "Unless someone somewhere finds something of ours worth reprinting, we could go out of business. So we are lobbying MPs. Meanwhile, if SOLIDARITY calls an unofficial General Strike, we shall demand it be made official."

Although Balfour Beatty have so far made no comment, Mr Clive Jenkins of ASTMS has been seen on the Dungeness site handing out recruiting leaflets to directors and executives as they clock in.

As we go to press, it has just been reported that a SOLIDARITY delegation is meeting Barbara Castle at the Ministry of Unemployment and Promiscuity.

A Government spokesman said, "The effects of copying SOLIDARITY could be very serious for the nation's economy. We are setting up a Court of Enquiry and a White Paper will be published in 1984."

### SOLIDARITY BOOKS & PAMPHLETS

THE WORKERS OPPOSITION by Alexandra Kollontai. A full account of the anti-bureaucratic struggle of 1919-20 within the Russian Bolshevik Party. 80 pages. 3/6d.

THE KRONSTADT COMMUNE by Ida Mett. The full story, at last, of the 1921 events. The first proletarian uprising against the bureaucracy. Contains hitherto unavailable documents and a full bibliography. 68 pages. 3/-.

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

# BROWN AND GREEN BLUES

I work in a small factory that manufactures laundry equipment and machinery. Although very much part of a fairly sophisticated combine, Brown and Greens is very much representative of the thousands of small firms who, in their day, have made enormous profits on the backs of cheap labour in conditions which can only be described as primitive. This article is about just one of these in the so-called affluent car-factory town of Luton.

The Industry is shared among Spencers and Brown & Greens (both parts of Clore's Sears Holdings and Bentley Engineering Group), and various Canadian and U.S. concerns like Westinghouse and General Motors. The industry employs some 1,000 engineering workers of various descriptions. There are two reasons for its attraction to monopoly interests like Clore. One is the constant ready market for presses for the public utilities, hospitals and prisons, and the other is the ever-growing slot-coin and launderette field. But despite the growing market, the main feature on the manufacturing side recently has been a general rationalisation with all the resultant redundancies. Clore's Sears Holdings now control ASM (Achille Serre), Bentley Engineering, Spencers and Brown & Greens - in fact nearly the whole of the British sector.

## CONDITIONS

What we in fact deal with here is a small part of that empire. As in most federated firms, conditions are primitive in this sweat shop, which shows one of the most alarming rates of labour turnover in so-called "affluent" Luton.

It doesn't need a thorough knowledge of the Factory Acts or Safety regulations to see that here almost every law governing workplace conditions is contravened.

The main building, which houses stores, machine shop, tin-smiths, welding and fitting areas, not to forget sprayers, is either very cold or very hot - you've got no choice here. Ventilation is non-existent. As most of our fabrications are galvanised, the resultant fumes from welding have no exit - no extractors are installed in the roof. Not only that - where the testing areas for dry-cleaning machines are, the highly toxic "perks" (carbon tetrachloride) emits a vapour that is unpleasant and dangerous to those working in the heavy fitting area.

Electrical equipment and points are of three different amperages. The points are badly sited. This results in a profusion of power lines going in all directions, and, with the thick welding lines, makes the place look like a TV studio in complete chaos. Drop any heavy metal load and the probability of your becoming a burnt cinder is high.

On top of this you can add the obstructions and lack of gangways. To wheel a heavy load from one end of the shop to the other is simply not possible. You've got to negotiate through a tool store, a heap of sheet metal, over two sets of narrow steps, across a yard, and through a general melee of benches and irate fitters whose work you've probably tipped over.

If you want to shift a heavy dry-cleaning machine you must use roller bars; at least the presses are more fortunate as they have a crane and gantry.

Bad conditions and even more confined space apply in the foundry also. All foundries are pretty filthy, but this one has altered little since it was built. To its present occupants, Pakistani and Polish in the main, it must be a living death or Hell on Earth.

How many people would contemplate grovelling knee-deep in sooty black sand or breaking your back in antiquated floor casting? But you do have a choice - you can be shaken to pieces on those wonderful Russian-made pneumatic moulding machines instead! For a casual visitor, a few minutes spent breathing in the sulphurous smog-like atmosphere is enough. Come around when they start casting - the taste is at its choicest!

It is known throughout the town that many a victim's been claimed. It's not hard to see why when the roof is very low and, again, there's no proper extraction. The bulk of the moulders and fettlers are only too glad to get home by 3.30. But wait - this is not a concession. They have completed their allotted piecerate quotas and have probably slaved away since 7.30 am.

Another area that merits some note is the welding and fabrication department. This consists of a small corner of the main building and a small garage. Here everything's manhandled into a ridiculously congested area. No flame-proof flash-guards are provided. Arc-welding units and cables trail across gangways. Top this with the usual rush of trying to earn bonus on almost impossible times and you've got all the prerequisites of slave camp conditions.

### BONUS

Much of the discontent centres round the bonus system and loss of earnings due to management inefficiency. The fitters' bonus operates in the main on a percentage basis. That is, each finished structure is allocated a time and your percentage is worked out on the difference between this and the time you actually take.



The earnings aren't exactly lucrative when you don't have the parts to build the machines with, thanks to sheer mismanagement of stores. Or when you're faced with a line of half-completed machines standing idle and losing money for the blokes.

As earnings are based on the incentive principle, the methods of applying pressure are limited in the main to a complete withdrawal of labour. Go-slows or working to rule could in some cases jeopardise the bonus payments. We, as well as the management, know well that the Luton factory of Brown & Greens could suspend making ASM machines and have the section moved to the midlands, where identical machinery is assembled for the group. The present demand by customers could be satisfied. It's no accident a rumour is currently circulating around that the ASM section's been given to June/July to prove it's a running concern. For us the choice is limited and work-to-rule can only be used to effect with much foresight.

### SHOP-FLOOR STRENGTH

In the factory are 150-odd workers, organised by the AEF. In common with other small federated firms, shop-floor strength is weak and ineffective. One or two incidents show why.

When a Wolf industrial drill was lost in the sheet metal department a while back, there was uproar from management, who were seen to be nosing around the shop floor. Lockers were searched and blokes were questioned. They said it had been nicked. On leaving the building for my dinner break I was stopped by the shop steward from the machine shop. He pompously informed me I wasn't allowed out the main gate and must use the side entrance.

I was marched down a double line of shop stewards; one personnel man, Philpotts, frisked and checked me. Shop stewards now perform the role of works police.

Next morning, there appeared on the notice board a letter addressed to Scrivvy, the Convenor, congratulating him on the fine job he and his sturdy mates did in acting as works police! The management - Philpotts - also admitted that the drill was found underneath a piece of scrap tin!

For some considerable time, the engineers' toilets have been cleaned out once a week by a contractor. But of late the toilets have been in a state not fit for even humans. One steward complained to Philpotts, who told him to clean the toilets himself. He did just that - and in his own time! The fool even went to the Convenor for a tin of Harpic - how low can you get in being servile?

An idea sprang up that the toilets used by staff should be occupied. The effect of this was an immediate reaction from the management, who weren't used to this type of protest. Apart

from the usual panic-stricken antics of calling the stewards up to the office, and threats of withdrawing 'wash-up time' (five minutes), they posted a notice asking the engineering workers to inform on their mates who are seen 'damaging' the staff toilets. Nevertheless on the positive side the toilets were cleaned and new industrial soap dispensers installed, as well as extra toilet paper. After four weeks the toilets are beginning to look as bad as they were before - clearly the signal to occupy the executives' loo next!

It isn't remarkable, I suppose, that the Convenor's on first-name terms with the management, particularly Philpotts, the personnel man. Shop stewards, militant yesterday, are brain-washed today - with the exception of one or two blokes. These, while under no illusions about the roles of some union officials and of their fellow stewards who are integrated into the phoney set-up, reflect the view that until their members think in terms of not relying on the shop steward for every mortal thing and start thinking for themselves, there is not much they can do. Years of isolation and lack of contact with other factories, except at the shop stewards' quarterly meetings, has probably helped the demoralisation to set in. It's true they tend to forget that the answer lies right within, where they work and live, among the blokes themselves. There is an undercurrent of resistance if only they could see it; the one or two genuine stewards can still have a chance to channel this and set up the vehicle for the next offensive. Brazier and other managers at Brown & Greens are only dominant as long as they see a weak shop floor. There is no substitute for good shop floor strength, no matter how militant a steward 'appears' to be. The older workers can remember a time when there was a continuous running battle with this old firm; they saw fit to leave their shop floor in the hands of the ambitious 'bright sparks', now turned respectable.

Today, scepticism reigns among the younger workers, who don't delude themselves about their shop stewards' phoney loyalties. Tragically, most do not stay in the factory long enough to effectively create genuine shop-floor resistance, based on what they feel, say or do.

With the amount of fitters leaving during the month of April, it was inevitable that production of the dry cleaning machines would stop as a result. Seeing the situation had deteriorated to the extent that it had, the lads had a weapon that could have been used to maximum advantage. All could have handed in their notice at the same time.

### REDUNDANCIES

Nineteen staff and general grades were recently made redundant, most with a month's notice. The reasons were given as economic and reorganisation of admin services. However, if you delve deep enough you'll find that for the past year or so the new 'top dogs' from Bentley Group headquarters in Leicester have been systematic lly pushing out all the Luton-based staff men from key

positions, and replacing them with "more reliable" people. Overnight, fully-qualified men with long service were being given the heave-ho, alongside those with comparatively short service.

These were not even on the basis of "last in, first out". It was evident the target was Brown & Green men as opposed to the ASM people who took over the company. Noticeable, too, was the dropping of one or two people known generally to "speak their mind".

Reaction from the shop floor generally was stunned silence. A short while ago rumours were rife that the dry cleaning section had been given till June to become solvent. No one apparently contemplated the thought that a move of some sectors to Leicester would be imminent.

Very few seemed prompted to think of the eventual fate of someone having to retrain and suffer the usual disruption that moving house involves. Many of those 19 would be too young to be entitled to a pension.

We did wrong in not resisting redundancies, and these are some of the reasons. Why should we leave the hiring and firing to those few interests whose prime aim is to extract maximum profit? Why should we stand being pushed about or rejected like mere cattle? Most of us who are left behind will be forced to work twice as hard, in some cases performing parts of the functions done by those who were chopped.

We could have effectively mobilised support for non-cooperation, refusing transfers, and could have devised a form of working to rule in some sections without hazarding the incentive earnings. We had a golden opportunity to make it as hard as possible, and damned expensive, for those ponces of a management, and union officials, to get away with this.

It must have stuck in the throats of a few of us, when the Convenor starred in a presentation ceremony to "Old Charlie", a purchase officer who got chopped. How hypocritical can one get in professing trade union beliefs and at the same time doing the dirty work of management by "softening the blow"? The management stood around, as to be expected, with suitably smug expressions on their dials. Another distasteful job done for them by an obliging Convenor.

Oh, by the way! Scrivvy, the Convenor, got his reward - he's in charge of the toolroom in place of another skilled man who got the chop.

ISAAC WOLFSON

# KELLOGGS FOR BREAKFAST

## DINNER & TEA

Six o'clock in the morning. I should have got up... It is now six thirty and I feel shattered. Staggering down-stairs, I get dressed, have a cup of tea. I have now got a problem on my hands, whether to have another cup of tea and run down the road, or leave now and walk. The solution comes from the radio: "The time is now five to seven".

I dodge out, down the deserted street and realise the transition has begun from the living man to the scampering ant. Through the bare council estate, down the tree-lined road of the private estate and onto the High Toby. The scene springs to life with the east-bound traffic for Fords and the west-bound for East London and the City. I try to focus my still slumbering eyes in the direction of Barking to see if the cockroach is coming. There is no sign of it yet and it's beginning to rain.

My move is to get under the tree. The old boy opposite me is not so fortunate and he stands in the rain. I wonder who he is and where he works. He's not coughing now like he did in the Winter. I don't want to be like him when I'm his age. But the chances are that I will be, assuming I live that long.

### PEACE WORK

Ah ha! The cockroach. "Morning!" I say, and slump into the front seat. I suppose this is a throwback from the days when I used to want to sit up the front on the trolley-bus to Ilford and pretend to be the driver. "I see you didn't lay in bed for peace", says Felix in his West-Indian vernacular. "Not on pay day" I reply, forcing a smile, and off we go. Winding through Dagenham, all the troops pile in and we go thundering on through the rain.

We used to have some very bad coaches. We lost many a days pay in protests of various sorts before we got these better ones. The drivers get an incentive payment for arriving on time. This spurs them on to hog the centre lane of the A.13 for eight miles, reducing the passengers to nervous wrecks. Our driver is a cross between Merlin Stoss and one of Hell's Angels. The flarestack beckons us down the road at Coryton and, wouldn't you know, its stopped raining!

### ALL CHANGE

We pull into the coach park and pile out into the mud. After picking our way round the puddles, we exchange our identity for a number as we clock in. Since there are no canoes available, we do a hop skip and

jump across the lake in front of the changing huts amidst complaints all round: We change into our working gear.

"Righto lads!" We look round and are greeted with the familiar spectacle of Kennedy, the fitting supervisor, looking like a deserter from the U.S. Marines. "Bollocks!" is the chorus. He vanishes, leaving the door open, only to return later and yell out again. We are leaving now anyway and it's a relief to escape from the embarrassment of this man and his 'Boys Own' mentality.

#### ROUTES TO THE 'TOP'

I'm in the test-gang and we are fortunate, if that's the word, to have an engineer in charge of us rather than a foreman. The average foreman has suckholed his way up from fitter, first, by becoming chargehand and then, by process of familiarising himself with the 'higher echelons' or bigger bastards, he gets made foreman. He then consolidates his position by wearing field-boots with his socks rolled down and by making sporadic raids on the khazi to capture fitters mates who have wandered over a minute earlier than the rules allow.

The supervisor of our section, Gordon Scott, took an even quicker route to the 'Top' by getting made foreman when the fitters were out on strike last summer. So you can imagine the great respect we all hold him in.

The engineer, Brian Williams, is qualified and, theoretically, should not have the sense of insecurity that is so manifest in most of the supervision who are largely opportunists relying on their arrogance to get them through the day. Nepotism is rife. We're all wise to the fact that it's not what you know but who you know that counts, so I won't expand upon that.

#### ON THE JOB

We already have our job and get stuck into it. We are able, on the test gang, to start and finish a job. Thus, in some way, we can associate ourselves with the whole operation. Through management's incompetence, too many jobs are started and left. This gives the worker a sense of frustration.

As we've said before, the conditions on site vary from those in the Arkansas Dustbowl to the Mekong Delta, and we have had to fight for every penny of condition payment gained.

At dinner time we have to be careful not to get captured near the canteen and if you wish to go to the khazi about 12.15, you will probably be waylaid by a predatory creature with a yellow band round his hat who is aiming to take your name and number.

#### STABLE TABLE?

You pay 2/6d. for your cutlery and take your choice from various culinary mysteries. After hunting for salt and pepper to give it some flavour, you get into your nosebag. My table is a stronghold of the Communist Party. Discussion usually results in them calling me a political pendulum who only goes on the Trade Union protest marches so I can steam into some progressive thinking slag.

They say I am not a militant, but a 'Dodgement'. Well militants are militants for various reasons. They are politically motivated or mercenary. A few are lazy. Some are genuinely seeking not a 'political' but a social justice in their immediate environment, rather than become a tool in the hands of Party leaders. They realize that this industry has yielded good wages in the past through militancy and keeping strong the spirit of unity and solidarity amongst the workers. Just look at nurses or back street factories to see where being reasonable and going through procedure gets you.

The Dodgements are again divisible. There are the suckholes aspiring for promotion and the incompetant who sigh with relief when they clock out after masquerading through another day. There is the man who, having made his hole to live in, wants only enough to keep him until he retires.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE STEWARDS?

In some situations, money seems to be the only common denominator. Nevertheless, strong rank and file job control is the only way we're going to get and keep better wages and conditions and, at the same time, get and keep more dignity as men.

This site has been misled by our Union delegates who are puppets for the Yank bosses. So we ought not to expect anymore from them than we do from the management. But I must admit, some of the lads seem only too ready to take Ford, the site manager, at his word. If he threatened to turn the flarestack into a pumpkin, some would believe he could do it. And when Ford has said: 'If you don't do this by midday, you will all be sacked', time after time it's been swallowed. Even Cinderella didn't bottle out when given a time limit.

Ford is a very personable man and most of the stewards have fallen for his style, with the exception of Dave Hamley and Larry Clarke. The other stewards are featherbedded in their hut, frightened to make themselves unpopular with the management.

#### PAY UP!

Back on the site, it's now afternoon tea time. But we don't get any. The only place you will get a cup is in the office, the foremen's hut, or the stewards' hut.

After clambering about in the mud, rust and shit for a bit longer, we return across the site to clock out and collect our pay. I, like most people, dare not look at my Income Tax and wonder where it's going. Arms for Nigeria? Barbara's castles in the air? Paratroops for Anguilla? If they want to flush the Mafia out of British territory, why not raid Kellogg House in Chiltern Street, W.1.?

We get on the coach and I'm asked if I'll put my name down for the football team to play the staff. What next? A love-in at Kellogg House? I wonder what's on the Telly tonight?.....

# BOROUGH MARKET

## WASTE

There's quite a bit of monkey business goes on on the quiet here at Borough Market, the capitalist exploiters using their dirty system to work all they can out of us - and by us, I mean YOU as well ! The only thing is, through the muddle - minded managing of the management, they lose half the profit their system of exploitation allows them ! Anyway , more of that later.

The market sprawls over quite a large area, a right little den of dark dealings for such profit-gangsters as Bill ( The Fiddle ) Grimes and many others. One of the larger firms here is Dan Wuille & Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of Geest Industries, the Dutch-owned growers and distributors.

### MANAGEMENT - STAFF RELATIONS

At Dan Wuille's, when fully staffed, a dozen people work at the main stand, a three-storey warehouse, with another five on the flower stand. There's always some friction between the management and the porters, and there're usually some lively names thrown around, amply punctuating every sentence. These men can see clearly the true relation of management to themselves. An overtime ban's been in operation for quite some while now, backed by the TGWU - official union backing; that's something in these days of the Anti-Labour government, isn't it ! But , while the Bosses continue their policy of divide and rule, the struggle between "us" and "them" will continue to be a long and arduous one, the men, too often , arguing among themselves and blaming each other for management cock-ups !

The friction between the management and the office staff, however, is not nearly so profound as that between other members of staff, possibly because we work more closely with the management and therefore, strange as it may seem, do tend to identify ourselves with the management. But the fact remains that minor irritants can build up into major conflicts, and then, at last, the true position of management is revealed, and even to us the position is made clear.

The conflict may take many forms. More usually, it will arise out of the petty and the ridiculous, such as the dressing-downs we get if we're a few minutes late - even though the Office Manager is never on time anyway, and it's a known fact that certain people are " not available" at Covent Garden Head Office at that time in

the morning. And a fieldman at the Garden, or so it's said, frequently takes a two-hour lunch break. In one instance lately, Dennis ( The Menace ) Gray , the Office Manager, started bothering us all over some missing duster or other ! He said it wasn't that he'd lost the duster so much - it was just that someone'd been down his drawers. God ! Who'd want to go down his drawers ?

But the undercurrent of frustration caused by the management's peculiar organisation and administration of work often sets management and staff on a collision course for big trouble ! Something may seem all nice and quiet to some nitwit who's nothing better to do than scratch his bollocks up in Covent Garden, but to someone doing the job it's just a load of bloody nonsense ! - Talk about being led up the Garden path!

### MUCKING IN

Things have come pretty well to a head in the past few weeks. The cashier round on the flower stand has left, so the cashier on the main stand , Don Watson, is expected to do the work round there while a salesman takes the cash here. Then , as if that isn't enough, poor old Don, never one to complain, ever ready, willing and able to be sat on, has to come back to the main stand, enter all the cost tickets, or, at least those which the salesman, also ready, willing and able to be sat on, hasn't already entered, and then bank up ! We do get a few understandably disgruntled remarks from Don sometimes. But , like a mule, give him a good kick and they've got him pulling for them again !

We all get this carrot of " early days in the slack season " dangled in front of us these days. We're all expected to " muck in ". Our conscientiousness and the self - satisfaction we receive when we've done a good job of work is being taken advantage of ! Who reaps the harvest of our labour ? They do ! We just get a pat on the back and told what good boys we are, with an after-promise of a chance to "get on".

A few months ago, Derek Wilson, the Office Manager's assistant, was " promoted " up the Garden. He didn't stay long, though. He was squeezed out for daring to question one of the directors on why he'd been put on overtime " security duty " ( ie. going round the entire building checking all the windows , etc. ) without even being consulted. The work of cost/stock clerk has always been a two-man job , and still is. But Ray Wilson, who worked on this job with me, had to replace Derek, leaving one man to work the job. On top of his own work, though, Ray's expected to muck in and help me as well !

Of course , due credit must go to Den Gray, in that he does try and muck in himself - anything to keep the cheap labour going ! In the morning he's round helping Don, and sometimes in the afternoon he comes down and helps out with the bookwork. But he's more of a bloody hindrance than a help ! And the time he spends out of his office, we may wonder that he gets time to do his own work - but



then, that's what he's got an assistant for, as all his previous assistants have verified and as , I'm sure, will his present one.

### ROTTEN SYSTEM

What has further aggravated the work burden in recent weeks, as far as this job and others related to it are concerned, is the introduction of daily reporting of prices of South African deciduous fruit - you know, apples, pears and grapes and the like. This year, as a Branch, Dan Wuille and Co ( Borough ) has been taken off the South African Deciduous Fruit Board (DFB) panel, so our James St. branch is selling DFB produce to us so's we can resell it again . We have to report to James St. daily the prices we sell it for. And this, on top of the usual prices we have to read over to Head Office at the Garden, is causing so much extra work it's just not true; looked at from our point of view, it's nuts. The only trouble is, looking at it through their eyes, and at the system as they work it, it makes sense !

This way, James Street makes a bit on it; this Branch makes a bit on it; and because they not only sell direct to retailers, but also to other wholesalers here, goodness only knows how many other people have made their bit on it by the time it gets to you. In other words, making work to make the system work ! What's the point of making unnecessary work, shifting produce here and produce there, and fuck knows where else ? Well , I'll tell you. If they don't make work like this so they can all get their cut, then the system breaks down. They go out of business and we're thrown out of work.

This is how they create the illusion that without them, our managerial benefactors, we wouldn't be able to make a living. What a load of old cobblers ! It'd be different if we had control of the job. Then we'd show them.

The amount of wastage in fruit is bloody ridiculous. Some silly cunt up at Head Office recently bought up a few thousand cartons of Italian lemons. Lemons never do seem to sell very well at this branch, but, lo and behold, we get a thousand or so in. They've sold quite a few over the past few weeks, but now they're all going to pot!

Have you ever seen a shitty carton of fruit - and I mean shitty ! Yet look at the prices in the shops. Last year, in one go, over six or seven hundred 13 lb containers of Spanish tomatoes were thrown on the Council refuse lorry and carted away. A similar thing happened with over a hundred crates of Cornish spring green, of which not one was sold. Need I go on ? But just one afterthought. How many kids went without the Christmas tree they were promised last year because the prices were too high? Perhaps yours did ? Well, they burned a couple of hundred at the Borough ! You see they "wouldn't sell" because there were "too many artificial ones on the market". I wonder how many were burned or thrown away at other markets?

Christmas trees are to give pleasure to kids and food must be grown to feed people, not to line the pockets of the growers and the distributors of the food. Doesn't that make sense?

### PRICE REPORTING

It's because of this threat of waste and the more present threat of price variation that prices always have to be read over when they apply to consignment produce - i.e. produce sold on commission on behalf of a grower or importer. We don't usually have to read over prices of purchased produce that the firm's bought outright to resell; that's if we know it's been purchased. Sometimes, it seems, they don't know exactly what they have purchased ! In the case of some Jaffa citrus not long ago, we were reporting prices to the Garden and they were gaily returning prices to the Jaffa Board, the importers, as though the fruit was on consignment, and then it was discovered that it'd been purchased. What a balls-up!

But in the case of the South African produce, purchasing from another Branch of the same Company, you'd have thought it would've been more straightforward, wouldn't you ? But no ! We always have to report prices daily to James St. Why? Well you may ask!

James St. can't let Borough have the produce without invoicing us, for it, because Borough's technically a customer of James St. If they price the invoice at the time of consignment, then the Borough is going to lose out on any waste and , if the market falls, on the price that's been charged as well. Whereas, if James St. only prices it when the produce has been cleared at the Borough, then the price probably won't agree with the date on the invoice (i.e. the price of the produce on that date) because of price variation, and it's no use altering the date on the invoice, because then it'll be out of sequence with the invoice number. So what, you may say. Well , they have to be careful, because the big Fruit Boards always send round their own auditors!

The only thing to do, then, is report prices daily. Of course, on a rising market, they'd be able to price the invoice right away, since then there'd be no risk of loss. In fact, produce is often held back ( i.e. they pretend they haven't got it for sale ) on a rising market so they can make even more money on it. But there's no way of guaranteeing the market'll continue to rise, so, as far as pricing the invoice is concerned, they wouldn't risk it.

And now we're reporting prices of DFB produce purchased from James St., we've to be careful not to go and report the prices of DFB produce purchased from outside firms, or the Borough Branch gets invoiced for it, not only by the outside firm they actually bought it from, but by James St. as well. Our work's getting heavy enough, complicated by all this rigmarole, but we're not the only ones in trouble. ."

Den Gray is in a mix-up as well ! As the prices are reported over each day, so James St. is making out a daily invoice from that report. They keep coming in, but old Den doesn't know the sale to which each refers. In fact, as we're selling off over a dozen loads at once, each invoice could be for more than one sale! It all adds up to more work! Who still says we should leave it to management to manage the job?

### GOOD AND BAD 'GOOD IDEAS'

Sometimes, the management comes up with some great idea. Look how they use them though. Always to their own advantage! We never get anything out of it. Take the example of cold-stores. These should be used to preserve food when there is a glut for when it is scarce. But no - they even abuse this 'good idea'. Produce is put into store when there's a low market price and brought out when the price is higher. Are they cold-stores or gold-stores?

At the moment, they're selling a lot of produce ex-dock. Now this must obviously cut down the risks of wastage in the fruit, and also streamlines distribution of food. Sounds great doesn't it? My Aunt Fanny! What would happen if they sold all fruit like this? Why, we'd be all slung out of work, of course! But even if they only confined this method of selling to produce imported by the Fruit Boards, it would be enough to cut down quite substantially the porters' wages.

The only 'good' their ideas can do is to increase profits. If we had control, we could use these 'good ideas' to substantially reduce the work burden! As it is, the work burden caused by management bureaucracy is increasing! And it's no good relying on State control over the 'private sector' to safeguard our jobs, either, State bureaucracy is an even greater burden to bear. We must take control ourselves, of our own places of work - yes, OUR places of work - in order to control our own environment.

### SOLIDARITY IS THE KEYWORD

Office and sales staff are doing overtime every night of the week just now. We get paid for it, but what good's the money if you're all fucked out when you get home? Mind you, I say we get paid for it, but only those of us who don't allow ourselves to be taken advantage of!

One day last month, the work was so heavy that we were made even more late than usual. I put in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours overtime and, because I didn't get the sale report up until half-past six, Chris, the typist/telephonist, had to do  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours overtime. But a couple of days later I discovered that Den Gray had refused to pay her for it. What a bloody cheek, I thought. Den Gray had already gone home, and so I resolved to have it out with him in the morning.

The next day, I asked a couple of the men what they thought; they agreed that Chris should get the overtime due to her, but warned also of what Den Gray would say: that it was none of my business! I also asked Bill Morritt, the Branch Manager, but he didn't like to commit himself and sidetracked the conversation. When Den Gray came into the office, I attempted to talk with him. And what did he say? He said it was nothing to do with me, and another person's pay didn't concern me.

Since when has one worker not been the concern of another? What the management can get away with <sup>with</sup> one, it will try and get away with with all. Obviously, we must stick together and help each other, then, perhaps, we might be able to help ourselves. As the salesmen here can really only get on the produce what they can demand of the customers (e.g. a carton of Cape apples may cost one person 60s, but, to someone else, the same carton may cost 66s - sometimes the difference is even greater!), so we too are paid only what we are able to demand of our bosses. Solidarity is the keyword here.

#### DECISION TO TAKE ACTION

Anyway, he brushed me off without even giving me the time of day, and went running out of the office as though he was going to shit himself. This left it pretty clear to me the true nature of management. As far as bosses go, he hasn't been so bad. But we must never delude ourselves that the management can ever work on our side - that is, unless it is to their greater advantage to do so! We all felt pretty sorry for old Dennis when he collapsed in the warehouse last year, but you know, so what - Harold Wilson's got a throat ache!

Unless something was done about all this, he might try and stop all of us getting paid for our overtime. So that evening, I walked out at 5.30, leaving the stock unchecked, and left a note to Bill Morritt about what had happened and why I had done what I had done. And so he wouldn't be too put out, I wrote out a stock of the apples as per the book.

#### THE CRUNCH

All seemed to be well and as usual at the Borough Market that fine sunny, spring morning of Friday 18th April. But at Dan Wuiles, all was not what it seemed. Salesmen's sleepy eyeballs popped. Bill Morritt exploded round the warehouse hastily doing the stock. In his own words he was in a 'right tasty mood' that morning!

When Den Gray came in, he couldn't believe it! His vaunted position of authority was challenged! He couldn't have that, oh no! Why, we'd be telling him how to do his job next. What horrors! And the management set about to reassert itself:

Half-way through the morning, I was summoned up to Den Gray's office. Again, he said it was none of my business, and called it all 'airy-fairy'. He cried that I was 'just out to stir things up'.

I, in turn, made it clear that it was my business and that, although I had not known him not to pay my overtime before, and therefore could have no complaint in that respect, neither had I known him to refuse to pay overtime, and if he could get away with not paying one person's overtime, he might try and get away with not paying anyone else's.

Dennis obviously didn't like what was written in the note, and sulked quietly in his chair whenever he wasn't speaking. But again, he threw out the old carrot of 'early days'. I replied by making the following point: 'We are, as you have said yourself, contracted to work from 9 to 5. In the slack season, you let us go off early. O.K., we're grateful to get off early - it's up to you. But in the busy season, nothing's changed: we're still contracted to work from 9 to 5, and so as far as overtime is concerned, it's up to us. And if we work past our contracted hours, then we're fully entitled to get paid for it. I get paid, so why shouldn't Chris? If she doesn't get paid for it, then I don't see why she should have to do overtime. And I certainly won't until she is paid, while there is a doubt that you won't pay me.'

He said I should've told him I wasn't going to do any overtime, so he could've done the stock instead. Well, if he'd given me half a chance to speak to him on the Thursday morning, perhaps I would not have been forced to take the action I did. What would've been the point of telling him anyway, that is, from my point of view? What's the point of any action taken by workers if it's only going to be neutralised by the management or management blacklegs?

We talked an hour or more in all, after which time, things had quieted down a bit, and the conversation had been sidetracked somewhat. Bill Morritt told me to think it over for half an hour. But what was there to think over? Could anyone still say the overtime money was not her due? But anyway, after an hour's gobbing in there, that was quite enough, so I left it with them.

That afternoon, Den Gray phoned me to come up and hear judgment. He asked me what I had decided. What I had decided! To that I could only reply that I had already decided in what I had said and done, and the decision was his to make, on whether or not he was going to pay out the overtime. He didn't like it put like that. He said I was interfering with the smooth running of the office. So he gives me a week's notice. A week's notice for demanding payment of overtime!

Now the staff shortage'll be even more acute. The management donkeys will get a few extra boots up the buttocks, and that old carrot will be dangled in front of them, and they'll all continue to muck in, allowing themselves to be taken advantage of.

Chris is still doing overtime and not getting paid for it! Such is the value of solidarity. If we all had stood firm, something might have been achieved, but, as it is, management have won this round.

L. DOE

# LSE CLOSE UP

Since last month, for over 200,000 students at universities and colleges throughout Britain, the summer term has begun. Traditionally, this term's for examinations and tests, for winding things up, for looking forward to the end of the academic year in June, so you might think everybody'd have little time for anything else.

Yet only three weeks after term began, we've already had three strikes at my own college, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. While down the road the London School of Economics has hardly functioned at all with the boycott of classes, strikes, and now the repression of the courts.

## A WEEK OF STRIKES

Naturally, the LSE provided the main headlines. But there've been strikes at colleges all over the country that are still going on, mainly unreported. Take what happened at SOAS - three strikes in one week. First, on a Monday, a one-day student strike in token support of the LSE students. On the Tuesday the technicians - who keep the whole show going - came out for one day in a national strike called by their union, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS), for better pay and prospects. (The technicians are continuing their struggle with staggered strikes.) Then, on May Day, a handful of students showed their contempt for the education they're getting, and for the whole lousy system, by just not turning up. They were following the example of an ever-increasing number of workers who chose to take their lives into their own hands for a change - in spite of the bosses and Government.

With picket lines, empty classrooms, closed departments and increased political discussion at all levels, SOAS'll never be the same again. The self-satisfied facade has cracked a bit wider.

## AND AT LSE

The LSE struggle has been developing over the last few years. At present, the very discredited management (mainly bankers and businessmen with a wide range of commercial interests and investments) are holding out, continuing their repressive policies against students and junior teachers. The main action against them this term has been a boycott of classes by the students and a

minority of teachers; at this time of year this is more harmful to the system ( and calls for greater sacrifice by students ) than may at first be thought.

Though some more 'militant' students stained their copybooks with the majority because of their rowdy and 'violent' disruption of 'blackleg' classes, the basic divisions remain. Authorities and senior teachers are lined up against junior staff and the mass of students.

#### TEACHERS TOO

Workers know the bosses' tactic of singling out the most outspoken or energetic of strikers for punishment or the sack. LSE bosses are no different. They have taken out injunctions against 10 so-called leaders, and have sacked two young lecturers because they openly spoke out in support of the students' demands and actions - in particular, the taking down of the internal security gates earlier this year, which caused the now-famous closure of the school.

Strikes and boycotts will continue while LSE Governors and managers ignore the wishes of most students and of a growing number of teachers who, seeing themselves threatened, are now beginning to move.

#### AND THE TECHNICIANS.

The struggle has developed further. Some 40 technicians (ASTMS members) decided to support and join the actions of the students until the two lecturers are reinstated - independently of the union hierarchy. Clive Jenkins has now appeared on the LSE scene demanding an independent enquiry for the sacked teachers ( one is a newly-joined ASTMS member ). Jenkins needs to control his rank and file and also to recruit new source of dues from the staff (not to mention students eligible for ASTMS when they leave college). ASTMS membership at LSE has doubled to 100 (60 teachers, 40 technicians) in little over 10 days !

#### UNIVERSITY WITHOUT WORKERS

These struggles behind the privileged walls of the universities may seem hardly significant to most working people. And until students, teachers and technicians clarify their fight and join it to the one going on day in, day out, in countless factories and sites it'll continue to be fragmented and foreign to outside workers.

However, a feature of the struggle at LSE is the recent student picket against the delivery of materials (especially food). This was mostly successful - the canteens at one time forced to shut down completely and the running of the whole school made very tenuous. It was encouraging to see workers respect the student picket lines and drive away still loaded up, but it was a painful reminder also, that it is workers who hold the real weapons against the system, not the students.

To challenge the system, not just to tickle or shake it, needs a very great deal of consistency and fight. A new social order may not be very far away ( France, May 1968 ? ), but it won't be won at LSE or anywhere else that is far from the centres of real power - in Industry.

A.M.

SOLIDARITY is the paper of a rank-and-file action group consisting of industrial and white-collar workers and students.

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The North London Group also publishes a monthly paper (available from their address above). Contents of current issue include Aberdeen Paperworkers; Students' Challenge to Bourgeois Education; Vauxhall - Militants Beware!



# A HALFPENNY CHANGE AT KINGSNORTH

Kingsnorth is a power station in the course of construction at an isolated position on the banks of the River Medway in the wilds of Kent. Nobody knows this better than the 1,500 lads who work there. Recently, many of them have made valid comments and suggestions for future issues of Solidarity. Some have described how we could improve the journal by using cartoons and photographs. A fitters mate has written some verse which we publish (p.27). Others have submitted material for use in future issues. Communist Party members have offered us other advice and we welcome it. (Your comments will be answered.)

Some people have suggested that we continue this month with a further exposure of the main contractor's (International Combustion Ltd.) supervision. We get their point. But it must be pointed out that we do not attack individual members of supervision just for the sake of it. Our aim in the last issue was to expose the true role of supervision at Kingsnorth and the effect that authority has had on some of the characters employed to guard us, with the view to giving them the Boot when we break out.

The constructional engineering industry has the highest accident and fatality rate in Britain. On all major contracts a Safety Officer is employed by law. His job is to ensure that the work is carried out in accordance with the Safety Regulations. He is supposed to find and prevent accident hazards that always exist on a big site. But it's the employer who pays his wages, so his job very often seems to be covering up hazards rather than preventing them. To some extent, it's a case of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'.

International Combustion Ltd. employ a Resident Safety Officer, a Mr. Halfpenny. He is typical. His main interest in safety is the sale of Toe-Tector Boots from which it is believed he draws a substantial commission on sales. If you want to talk to him about Boots, he'll talk for hours. But try and talk about Safety on the job and he gets all embarrassed and finds he hasn't got time.

In his office on the Firing Floor, he will show you all the latest Toe-Tector catalogues. Fashion Parades that would put a Paris Salon to shame are a regular feature. Dainty Erectors can be seen showing off the latest models. Nymph-like Fitters glide across the floor in

the latest light Boot that will never be worn on a construction site. Mr. Halfpenny, trying to look like Christian Dior, hovers over the models and prospective clients giving his expert advice. Yet we pay for the Boots, not the employer!

We don't underestimate the value in wearing Safety Boots. But, it's no consolation if there is an accident and one of us dies with nice new Boots on.

#### WHO SUPPORTS SAFETY?

A Chargehand Erector recently approached Mr. Halfpenny for his expert advice about the type of supports the foreman, Ron Scott, and engineer, Don Hunt, had ordered him to use. The supports were to hold boiler casing panels with a gross weight, when fixed, of two to three tons. In the chargehand's opinion, these supports were not strong enough. He also pointed out the failure that had occurred previously on a boiler. When similar supports had been used, and that the engineer was well aware of this.

The chargehand repeatedly appealed for the supports to be strengthened. Supervision, in the shape of Ron Scott and Don Hunt, eventually agreed to a partial strengthening. But this, as it turned out, was not enough.

The Chargehand and his gang carried out the erection of the panels. Then, the steel beam supporting them began to bend. The casing panels had now become a major safety hazard. The chargehand immediately informed the Safety Committee (made up partly of men working on the job).

#### OOZLUM BIRD ANTICS

The Safety Committee agreed that it was indeed a hazard. They reported the situation to Halfpenny at the same time pointing out that Don Hunt, the engineer, was responsible for it. Halfpenny agreed to the Committee's demand that he should accompany them to the office and insist on action being taken. But on arriving there, Halfpenny insisted on going in alone, saying: "I will sort this problem out myself." Many eyewitnesses saw him walk in the front door and immediately disappear out of the back.

At a meeting held later between the Safety Committee and management, the subject of the boiler panels was broached. Halfpenny was asked by the men's representatives on the committee who in his opinion was responsible for the hazard. He astounded the representatives by replying: "I cannot give an opinion as I have not seen the panels in question."

From this statement, and his earlier caper of playing the Oozlum Bird and disappearing up his own arsehole, one suspects that he is under orders from the management not to involve members of supervision in safety disputes for which they may have been responsible.

#### A HALFPENNY CHANGE?

As a postscript to this incident, it has been reported that Don Hunt is looking for the chargehand who reported the hazard - no doubt with victimisation in mind. A typical comment from the Gonk is also worth mentioning. When hearing about the incident some time later, he remarked: "I can't see what all the trouble is about. We bent the support

beams when similar panels were erected on No. 1. Boiler!" Using the Gonks logic, if you make a fuck up at the begining of the job, there's no reason why you shouldn't go on creating the same safety hazards throughout the entire construction of the Power Station.

While we except the fact that the management's interest in Safety is limited to costs, it's about time we started to think in terms of getting some change from Halfpenny. Perhaps the Government will help. They're taking halfpennies out of circulation this year.

#### NEW ROLE FOR CHARGEHANDS

ICL management are now attempting to give chargehands a supervisory role. A recent example of this development occurred when Kenton, the Resident Engineer, called a meeting of the chargehands in his office. He informed them that their respective gangs were going to the cabins too early and leaving them too late. He dictated that it was the chargehands duty to keep the men on the job until the authorised finishing time. He added that it was their duty to help supervision get the men out of the tea cabins on time by showing a good example themselves. Kenton supported this with the claim that the 6d. proficiency payment was made to the chargehands on condition that they took a more supervisory attitude towards the men.

To their credit; the chargehands replied that it was not their job to discipline their own workmates. They also made it clear to the management that the 6d. proficiency payment was paid on the basis of their technical ability to carry out the work. Kenton then began making veiled threats, to which the chargehands showed their contempt by walking out while he was still talking.

The chargehands were able to see through this trick. Management were trying to increase their control over the men and the job without the cost of employing extra foremen and engineers.

#### WHO IS A CHARGEHAND?

Throughout the mechanical construction industry, a chargehand has always looked upon himself as an ordinary workman having the same status as the men in his gang. He has no special relationship or false loyalties to management. (Unlike foremen and engineers who think they have until they get the bullet.) He sits in the same tea cabin as the men (again, unlike foremen and engineers) and he hangs his gear in the same changing hut.

There is no segregation, neither should he want any. His role on the job is to give some form of co-ordination and direction to the work done by the gang he is in. This does not mean that he gives orders in the authoritarian manner which supervision does.

All the members of the gang, including the chargehands, decide by collective experience the method to be used in the erection of a job. For safety and efficiency reasons, it is best that one man in the gang reads the blueprints and gives specific directions, Four or five men working at fair heights and independently of one another, would soon be in trouble if one of their number was not keeping an overall eye on the job. The management also find it convenient to give their orders to one

man instead of to each member of the gang. This does not give him any extra social status. You can be in the gang one minute, a chargehand the next, then back in the gang again. (The writer was a chargehand for a limited period on a previous job, proving that if he can get away with it, anybody can.)

### BE WARY!

What is most important is that the men see the chargehands in this way too. Clearly, it's in the management's interests to break up the present relationships between men and chargehands. The reason for this is not only the one already given, i.e. a means of providing them with extra guards on the cheap. It will also enable them to split us up and isolate one group of workers from another. This they always strive to do since it gives them the opportunity to control us more effectively. Giving the chargehands blue overalls was International's first attempt to isolate us. Kenton's teach-in was the second. The chargehands and the men should beware of other attempts in the future.

It is we the workers who have to use our initiative to keep production flowing. How long do we have to carry the dead weight of higher management and supervision who live off of our production and creative ability?

If we are dissatisfied with Governments, Bosses and I.C.L. management, Self-Management is our answer.

### IVAN ERECTION

### FOOTNOTE

Communist Party members have expressed concern about the article on supervision published in our last issue. Their complaint seems to be that they feel (we won't say think) our criticism of supervision was a series of character assassinations of individual members of the supervision...

It is inevitable that in defending ourselves we attack supervision in the same place they attack us, personal dignity. We distinguish between those members of the supervision who try to carry out their duties with the minimum of offensiveness and those other animals who use their position to exaggerate their authority.

We acknowledge Communist Parties as the unsurpassed experts on assassination, for example, see life of Joseph Stalin, esq.\* We would point out, however, that the article described the truth about certain supervisors. It was also an attempt to deal with some aspects of what Karl Marx called "Man's Inhumanity to Man."

We regret that some of the characters did not appear human, but we are not responsible for the dehumanizing effects that capitalist methods have on some sections of the communities in both the Eastern and Western countries\*\*.

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\*SOLIDARITY has produced a considerable amount of literature on the role of Communist Parties - for examples see p. 4.

\*\*See SOLIDARITY book MODERN CAPITALISM AND REVOLUTION (advert p. 22).

## ERECTOR'S RHYMES

### ODE TO A POWER STATION

On the banks of the River Medway, opposite Chatham Dock,  
There stands a mighty edifice as solid as a rock.  
This brick and steel colossus towering to the sky  
Is Kingsnorth Power Station - but can you tell me why?  
Surrounded by barbed-wire fences, symbols of bloody hate,  
Its Belsen-like exterior has Gestapo at the gate.  
Those strutting, jackbooted bastards for incompetence have no peers -  
Unless you come to I.C.L. and study the engineers!

Their staff canteen is very pleasant:  
Shiny floors, padded chairs, and the occasional roast peasant!  
The working men's canteen is a very similar venue:  
Wooden chairs, dusty floors, and burnt-out bacon menu!  
The variety of food would make an Italian blush:  
Cold egg sandwich, stewed tea - and being killed in the rush!  
Immediately after tea the foremen rush into action,  
Closing up the tea counter with sadistic satisfaction.

After this cursory glance at the Prince of all canteens,  
Come into the changing rooms, packed out like sardines,  
Full up with six hundred men and bulging at the seams.  
When it rains the roof leaks, and cobwebs line the beams.  
The toilet facilities on this site are a bloody disgrace,  
With no seats, evil smells, and rats around the place.

As we leave the dust and mud behind in our madly driven coaches,  
We stick fingers up at the Gestapo known as C.E.G.B. cockroaches.  
We leave the machine gun towers behind of Kingsnorth Power Station;  
It's hard to believe its being built in a democratic nation!

### I.C.L.'S CICERO

On I.C.L., to the C.E.U.'s disgrace,  
is an ex-steward erector named Satchel Face.  
Ernie Homden is his name  
but he's playing a double game.  
Foreman erector and traitor,  
his job is trapping the unwary erector.

When the boys go out to wet their whistles  
Satchel Face is hiding in the thistles.  
He gets the car number from the registration plate  
and the trap is set at the main gate.  
The engineers are there ready and willing,  
rubbing their hands to make a killing.

The merry erectors roll up all unaware;  
the spiders are waiting in their lair.  
The trap is sprung, their names are noted;  
Stachel Face stands there fat and bloated.  
He goes back for afternoon tea  
and congratulations from the R.E.

This is an example of I.C.L.'s creed -  
So watch out for this treacherous breed!

# MAY 1 WAS MAY DAY!

As we forecast, many thousands of workers stopped work on May 1st. This was one good reason to have the sort of celebration that the London May Day Committee had been planning for months. Nearly a thousand people, with a jazz band playing, singing, and a general atmosphere of enjoyment, walked from Tower Hill to Victoria Park, Bethnal Green. But this was despite the antics of the Communist Party who played their now familiar role and muscled in on the Committee's forethought and initiative for their own ends.

Earlier in the day, Tower Hill had been the scene of one of the biggest circus acts in the history of both the Communist Party and of another 'democratic centralist' group, the International Socialists.

## CHIEF WHIP

Kevin Halpin, the C.P. Sell-Out-Man, was there as the Ring-Master. He used a loud speaker to introduce each contingent of workers as they marched into Tower Hill behind their unions banners. With each crack of the introductory whip, he ushered them into position behind the "Morning Star" banner.

The Communist Party could not have chosen a better man. Kevin Halpin has had years of training in the sell-out technique. Remember how he sold out the Ford Workers in 1962? He conned them back to work, while he tried to make the "left wing" union officials fight.

The International Socialists, a motley group of clowns, who are in the unhappy position of being forced to face in every direction at the same time in their frantic efforts to build a revolutionary party, had hired a lorry as a platform. They had previously stated that their intention was to reject Parliament and support the London May Day Committee. (Though even to do this meant performing a somersault from their previous position of opposing the Committee.) But the sight of several thousand militant workers was too much for them! They were about to attempt the Double Somersault on a Tight-Rope. The London May Day Committee banner was quickly hauled down from the lorry, as the International Socialists' prospective Parliamentary candidate, John Palmer got onto it.

They then brought Little Bernadette Devlin into the ring; you probably remember her as the new Ulster M.P. who made such an impression in smart Harold's Circus at Westminster with her liberal maiden speech. However, it was quite clear from the atmosphere that workers were much more difficult to impress than MPs.

## WIRE CUTTERS AND WALKERS

Brian Behan, a great militant representing the London May Day Committee, followed her to the microphone and warned against going to Parliament, much to the dismay of certain I.S. members. He was cut short when a C.P. gangster, campaigning for Free Speech, stepped out of the crowd with a pair of wire cutters and cut the microphone wire, and the I.S. tight-rope.

The C.P. was now firmly in control. The Ringmaster, Kevin Halpin, lost no time in marching the majority of the trade unionists and International Socialists away from Tower Hill to a meeting at Lincolns Inn Fields, before going up the blind alley to Parliament. The International Socialists made a desperate attempt to take up a position at the front of the march, by using their new saint, Bernadette Devlin. But the C.P. quickly moved them out insisting that the clowns march behind.

At Lincolns Inn Fields the International Socialists tried again. Bernadette was brought up to speak. Kevin Halpin told her and them in no uncertain terms that this was a C.P. Circus and M.P.'s were not welcome as speakers. He then introduced the next Speaker, a £70-a-week Worker from Westminster, Stan Orme, M.P.

## THE BRITISH ROAD TO .....

On the whole it was a disastrous day for I.S. and a defeat for the Communist Party. Of the thousands of workers who marched with them from Tower Hill, only a few hundred eventually marched on to Parliament for the Finale.

Traditional politics, parliament, voting, marches to the Westminster gas works to lobby M.P.s, have for some years now been meeting with cynicism and contempt by the working class. Today, when there are clear signs that workers are not only turning their backs on all this tripe, but are beginning to look for a real alternative, we see the spectacle of the Communist Party trying hard to lead them back to conformism and the British Communist road to Parliament. That the International Socialists are flirting with them in this sort of activity is not merely a matter for regret. It must be condemned.

## THE POINT OF CELEBRATION

Later, when the London May Day Committee eventually got their loudspeaker going again, several people used the microphone to put their views to about a thousand who had remained. They said that the Committee rejected the concept that this was a strike against the White Paper, 'In Place of Strife'. This was a strike against the Government, the boss and the whole system. As far as we were concerned Parliament was for crooks and beggars. On this MAY DAY thousands of workers had stopped production - now we intended to walk to Victoria Park and celebrate.

At the Park an Open Air Theatre Group - Agit Prop - performed a very good piece depicting the G.L.C. tenants' struggle with the bureaucracy. Then pop groups went onto the open-air stage. People were dancing, singing, laughing, playing football, or just strolling around meeting old friends.

It was the best May Day celebration seen in London for a very long time. It will be even better next year.

ERNIE STANTON

## ANOTHER CIRCUS

As thousands of workers filed past TUC Headquarters on May Day, they saw it standing shut and empty. TUC bosses had shown their touching concern for the workers they allegedly represent by bugging off for the day.

The self-appointed leaders wanted the workers to beg the TUC General Council to call a national stoppage against Castle's proposed anti-strike laws. Some hope! The TUC has now replied in one breath both to the Government and to the moronic notion that the General Council should call a general stoppage.

The TUC proposes to wield the big stick against strikers itself! It wants unprecedented power to punish union officials that don't bash their members into line over strikes. This is for limited stoppages - God only knows what the proposals are for a general one!

### NO POWER TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

However, those who fail to learn from their mistakes are doomed to repeat them. The Friends of the TUC are calling another lobby, at the Recall Conference at Croydon on June 5. They may find their sweetheart at home this time - but the final answer will be another "get stuffed".

The TUC's only ever called one General Strike, in 1926. It called that General Strike in order to control it and so betray it. The cost to the working class of that betrayal remains incalculable.

The TUC has only one real master. Not the millions of us mugs who finance it, but the employing class, with its employers' State, whom it serves in return for titles and other honours. Woodcock OBE, Sir Tom O'Brien, Lord Carron, Lord Collison, Lord Ted Hill - etc. Plus untold union bosses who sit in power and affluence on Government boards.

In 1926 the Communist Party paved the way to the sell-out with its lunatic slogan, "All Power to the General Council". On June 5 it will try it again, accompanied by its litter of mongrel pups - Trotskyists, Maoists, and some Left union officials.

Workers don't need Communist Parties or TUC General Councils to tell them when their interests are threatened and when to hit back. To follow them leads only to confusion and defeat.

MARK HENDY