


solidarity



*for workers'
full control*

Kingsnorth News

Parsons knows!

Social Security?

C.A.V. Lucas

South London

No 8



6d

CARRY ON

KINGSNORTH

Down by the river Medway that pile of bricks and steel, known to people that don't work there as the Kingsnorth Power Station contract, and by those who do, as the eight-hour-a-day prison, continues to grind its way towards completion. With two thirds of the job completed the usual redundancy fever is in the air, especially amongst the 600-odd men interned by International Combustion Ltd. in the maximum security wing called the Boiler House.

When any major construction site is nearing completion sackings become an inevitable fact of life, due to one of the more inhuman aspects of this socially unjust system we live in. When the boss has no further use for us, we are thrown on the scrap heaps until - if we are lucky - our labour is needed again. Most of us tend to look at the prospect of being unemployed, and its economic consequences to ourselves and our families, as being an unchangeable part of the nature of things. We passively accept our miserable redundancy compensation and sign on the dole.* And there we wait in the hope that the people who control the industry will decide that they need another Power Station built.

This system which deliberately plans unemployment and deprives people of their natural dignity by humiliating them in the dole queue and destroying any real purpose in our lives other than that of slaves to the god profit motive, is as unchangeable as the English weather and will continue to be so until we the workers in our own communities decide how many Power Stations need to be built and these based upon the expanding power requirements of our factories, our hospitals, our schools, our homes and so on. We should not allow this irrelevant minority of individuals who produce nothing themselves but live off the wealth we collectively produce to decide our requirements and the rate we should expand our production.

CONTROL FROM INSIDE AND OUT

The self-appointed controllers and so called leaders of men, whether they be employers, politicians or trade union bureaucrats, continue to tell us that they are in a better position to know what is in our best interest. Their only motive is to justify their own existence or to hang onto their wealth and the power that goes with it.

Who is in the best position to know what is in our best interests? You or someone whose very existence depends on depriving you of your right to decide your own destiny?

* See article in this issue on Social Security. (S.S. Men)

In every area of our lives we encounter people who want to control us for a variety of ulterior motives and the Kingsnorth contract is no exception. There is the management who for obvious reasons attempt to maintain strict control via the goon guards and a long list of petty restrictions on our individual liberties totally unrelated to the job, and yet if we followed their orders to the letter like the dumb robots they are always trying to turn us into, the Contract would never/be completed, due to the bad planning and complete lack of organisation on the part of the management. A good example of how helpless is management is when we the workers collectively decide to work to rule, the job quickly grinds to a halt and chaos ensues. But while we still retain the ability to maintain partial control over our own lives, we must be ever watchful for the increasing attempts both at work and elsewhere to control our minds with the ultimate objective of turning us into mindless machines. Unfortunately even within our own ranks we have our fellow workers in the form of petty officialdom in the Unions attempting to control our ability to make decisions sometimes much more effectively than the management itself.

THE BARRISTERS

About three years ago one of our prominent Executive Council members who is also a professional Shop Steward was campaigning for re-election; his theme was that he was against all forms of blacklisting, and of course he presented himself as a blacklisted militant. In actual fact anyone who knows him or has worked with him over the last ten years would know that no management would have any reason for blacklisting him. In fact when he was offered the opportunity of a job by other left wing militants he refused and was honest enough to admit to some that the time out of work gave him the chance to get round the sites and talk to the people who were going to help him in his election campaign. He also boasted he was going to force Ernie Patterson to break the blacklist operating at Kingsnorth. After a time Patterson got Hughie Barr a job at Kingsnorth on conditions, Hughie says, that he didn't cause any trouble, Ha, ha, ha.

Within a few weeks Hughie got himself elected as the deputy Steward with pure science and this was the signal for a whole number of mythical militants to leave their jobs, which no doubt were coming to an end anyway, and come to Kingsnorth.

Most of those militants were either Greenwich Branch members or members of the C.P. or fellow travellers; every one of them carries with him a reputation of activities dating back to the year dot. But very few of them have had any militant activity at all in the last ten years, if ever, instead most of them have C.E.U. minor official's positions such as Branch Sec., London Divisional Delegate, etc. The role they play on the sites is to conspire with Hughie Barr to predetermine the decisions made at site level at all monthly meetings.

The Barristers have also assumed other forms of authority such as Site Safety Committee or Rescue Squad. Barr's dad, the infamous Count De Mealy elected himself as squad leader, an unheard-of position for a voluntary job. Together with his side-winder the Out-of-Work Film Star they attempt to drill the Rescue Squad like a Battalion of

the Household Cavalry.

There have been reports of private meetings between these two reptiles and the management where they make suggestions as to how the job will be run (in the interests of safety of course).

At a recent monthly union meeting one of the lads brought up the subject of safety and pointed out that when an accident occurred on the site and the alarm bell was rung, it was not always possible to hear it all over the Boiler, due to the excessive noise of men working on steel in a comparatively small area. He proposed that in order to help the rescue squad locate an accident as quickly as possible, the men engaged on work of a noisy nature should stop work during the period that the alarm bell was ringing which would normally be a few minutes. The proposal was a simple logical one which would have little effect on our welfare. Before anyone had a chance to discuss its merits, the Barristers moved into action. The Count de Mealy who holds a number of official positions in the Constructional Engineering Union and unfortunately suffers from that incurable disease of an "over-inflated ego" or in laymans terms is full of "piss and importance", broke out in a long dialogue of nonsense concerning the Site Safety Committee. He claimed that it was the Safety Committee's job to recommend this type of suggestion to the management. He then went on to prattle about it would be out of order for the rank and file to even discuss the proposal.

The member was then asked to withdraw his proposal and under pressure from the Barristers he reluctantly agreed. This comparatively minor decision concerning site safety, an everyday issue, highlights a very sinister process that has taken place at Kingsnorth. This continued attempt by this small band of institutionalised reformists who call themselves the leftwing of the C.E.U. and socialists to take away the right of the rank and file of making their own decisions at the monthly trade union meetings is just another manifestation of control.

It has become quite clear over the past few months by the lack of any lively discussions on issues that really affect us, that our meetings are being turned into a mere formality and means for the Barristers to get a blank endorsement of decisions already taken by them before the meeting even started.

THE BUBBLE HAS BURST

The men on Kingsnorth are under no illusions about Hughie Barr and his band of C.E.U. actors. For three years they have listened to his hair-raising stories of militant action, and for three years everytime a situation has called for action Hughie and his band of "mythical militants" have manipulated the action into the procedure of the Union where it died. Unless he gets himself elected as the Assistant General Secretary of the C.E.U. this time he's had it as a Shop Steward, he and the Barristers, will be forced to return to their true vocation that of actors or perhaps they could get work as Pantomime Artists.

One thing is certain, if Hughie is elected the Barristers will need a new prompter or scriptwriter.

EQUAL PAY FOR FOREMEN !

Not long ago a strike was called at the C.A.V. Lucas factory in Birmingham (involving foremen, chargehands, etc.). The strike was for an increase in basic wage in line with the accepted differential between production workers and supervisory staff, following an increase that had just been granted to production workers. These men were quite rightly not going to wait for the management to give them the increase at their convenience.

The strike ended when the men were sent back to work with nothing by one of their 'revolutionary' union representatives, one Roger Rosenwall of the A.S.T.M.S. As it turned out the men were granted what they wanted in the end, but at the management's convenience.

KEEP BRITAIN WHITE COLLARED

Many of the lads on strike were also members of the relatively newly formed union, the ASTMS, headed by that friend of the working class, Clive Jenkins of Daily Mirror and mohair boiler suit fame. The ASTMS was formed following the realisation by white collar workers of the need to bargain collectively. It has not as yet been recognised by many companies and C.A.V. was among them. The strike soon turned into one for union recognition. The claim of the men was soon forgotten, and the race for control over them, conducted between at this stage the union and the employers, began in earnest. It was not long before production had stopped at Lucas and the company was losing money hand over fist. The government were getting worried so they sent in their Knight in Shining Armour, the D.E.P. (Dept. of unemployment and productivity), and the now familiar sordid sell out saga began.

THE SORDID SAGA

The D.E.P. at the instigation of the government called in the TUC, and the TUC called on Mr. Jenkins, general secretary of ASTMS with a view to ending the strike. Mr. Jenkins, no doubt after a rank and file meeting over cocktails at No.10 with two prominent members of the ASTMS, Harold Wilson and Ian Mikardo (president of the union), graciously stood down and sent out a directive to the union representatives to get the men back to work. And sure enough back they went.

THE MAN MOST LIKELY TO ?

The man who sent them back to work WITHOUT the claim being satisfied was a district official of the ASTMS, 'revolutionary' Roger Rosenwall who is also a member of the executive committee and the National Industrial Policy making group of International Socialism. This group debated at one time whether or not to support any of its members in

their role as T.U. officials. Roger threatened to resign if the meeting decided against working with the unions. As it turned out the motion was defeated and the possibility of International Socialism breaking away from involvement with the Trades Union bureaucrats was avoided. Can it be that this organisation changed its strategy yet again to appease the establishment. And is Roger Rosenwall the man most likely to be seeking high office in this newly-formed middle class protection racket called the ASTMS, and perhaps become one of I.S.'s and the unions' jointly sponsored parliamentary candidates? To put it more simply - just whose side is this man on?

THE HOLY TRINITY

A group of men struggled - albeit for a purely economic demand. They got nothing, instead they were victims of the behind the scenes power struggle taking place between the one in three, three in one holy trinity of the employers, government, and union, all fighting for the honour of who should hold the gun at the worker's head.

J.T.F.

WHATEVER NEXT

Who ever would have thought it, the foremen went on strike
The firm involved was Lucas, believe it if you like
It happens with the others, wherever we may go
But when one mentions Foremen, Oh Dear, Oh Lor, Oh No.

The motor car's a blessing, and thousands find a job
But right or wrong they have their strikes, to win a few more bob
The railmen too have joined in, they also need the 'Dough'
But just to think of foremen, Oh Dear, Oh Lor, Oh No.

One reads about the nurses, a raw deal they have had
The doctors too have threatened, the whole world's going mad
And now we have the Firemen, their money too is low
But surely not the Foremen, Oh Dear, Oh Lor, Oh No.

The Dockers are a worry, they hold the exports up
And then there are the Busmen, they have been sold a 'Pup'
The whole thing gets distorted, reporters make it so
When they report the Foremen, Oh Dear, Oh Lor, Oh No.

While Acton's Foremen pondered, the strike was laid aside
An interim of thirty five bob had now restored their pride
When our lads here were called upstairs, my goodness what a blow
They were told by 'Bodd' no doubt, Oh Dear, Oh Lor, Oh No.

Now this is what we are faced with, wherever will it end
The managers are frantic, it drives them round the bend
Bur now our story's ended, or perhaps it's just begun
Where do we stand with Foremen, when their case is lost - or won.

From News Sheet No. 97, November 1969
C.A.V. (ACTON) JOINT SHOP STEWARDS COMMITTEE

C.P. STRATEGY STOLEN BY I.S. - OR HOW TO MAKE REVOLTING FOREMEN

The article printed below was sent in to us by a reader of Solidarity South London. He has been in a position in the past to observe some of the more macabre changes in policy of the group of 'revolutionary socialists' mentioned in the introductory piece above. International Socialism as it is called has as one of its slogans, WORKERS CONTROL. The reader may judge for himself.

International Socialism has once again excelled itself. Few industrial workers know that left-wing groups have plans for them because they rarely see these budding revolutionary leaders. But nevertheless a secret strategy has been discussed in the Vatican at Cotton Gardens and that latterday Ramsay McDonald alias 'Cliffhanger Gluckstein' has pronounced his papal Bull and the faithful spring to obey. It appears that the new plan will be based on the May events in France, (the catalyst concept).

What will happen is this: revolutionary students will leaflet factories and endeavour to make contact with workers inside. They will proceed to ply them with drugs or beer* and elicit hard facts about the internal set-up on the shop-floor. This information will appear in Socialist Worker (irrespective of whether it harms the militants inside). The idea behind all this is simple, it gives academics overseas the impression that I.S. has a strong industrial base. But at home the plot is even more subtle. Industrial workers in a different locality will read the odd Socialist Worker and likewise assume that the group has something to offer - urged on by slogans about workers' control and encouraging reports of rank and file action elsewhere - they may be influenced into taking action themselves. No doubt the paper will urge them on and one of the Industrial Teachers** will instruct them how best to conduct the struggle.

Eventually they will be confronted by their local district officials who will urge them to return telling them in a very light-hearted manner of course, that a) their action is unconstitutional, b) that they should return to work immediately, and c) that if they don't he'll lose his bloody job! The workers always sensitive to any attack

* or an L.S.E. dolly.

** possibly Shaggy Shagall.

on the working class by the union bureaucracy are touched by this last plea and return to work on some vague promise or other. Now the central part of the strategy can be revealed - the district official will be an I.S. member ! The idea of course is to discredit the union hierarchy and precipitate a struggle for democracy in the unions. The important thing is that the official must never openly reveal his membership of I.S. for if it ever got out that he was one of 'them' I.S. would be discredited as well. We feel that I.S. is breaking new ground and we await the outcome of this novel scheme.

Gone are the outdated ideas of Marx, Engels, and Trotsky - the I.S. can never be accused of being afraid to tackle the problems of Modern Capitalism. I.S. is extremely fortunate in having amongst its leaders industrial experts who have had many years of active service on the shop floor. Among these outstanding militants are such people as Jim Higgins (How many wild cat strikes he must have led in the G.P.O.) Duncan Hallas (reputed to be a minor in his youth) Paul Foot (who eagerly awaits Daddy's 1 test exploits on behalf of British Imperialism in order that he can analyse from 'inside') (Daddy by the way is Lord Caradon ***, and of course Roger Nosewell A.S.T.M.S. organiser. This comrade is reputed to have thought up I.S.'s latest attempt to produce a meaningful industrial strategy. It is rumoured that the first intervention will be at Lucas, Birmingham. It appears that Nosewell will try to organise a strike in one of the 12 component factories there and if he is in any way successful he will arrive on the scene and order the men back - the men will know that he is only carrying out his orders (like any humble S.S. officer did at Auschwitz or Belsen) and that it is against his wishes. This will infuriate the militants who will then spread the strike so that the whole car industry will cease production. A cunning plot indeed - the trouble is that far from being a new idea it is one of the oldest in the book. The C.P. have been doing it for years - they and their mates like Lawrence Daley and Hughie Scanlon have failed to win the workers to Revolutionary Socialism by such methods. Ah Well !

The main flaw seems to be that strikers have the strange notion that ' revolutionary ' union officials aren't much different from the right wing sort. Perhaps they should have placards saying " Back to work - it's unconstitutional " painted in red letters and give a facial expression which clearly indicates that they don't want the members to heed the advice of the unions executive and of course success would mean that the officials would be sacked but that's life.

Despite our criticisms we welcome the interest shown by I.S. in the field of industry - no one can claim they are afraid to change their minds about certain issues (even if they don't always bother to explain why). Once they clearly supported Hughie Scanlon - later they called for rank and file control of the Engineers strike which of course would have been against the brother. Never mind Eh ! 2/- each way you can't go wrong.

Our latest snippet is that Editor Roger Protz has been ordered to omit all references in Socialist Worker to any activity in the Lucas

***to be fair Michael Foot is his Uncle !

Birmingham factories. We agree with this because last time they wrote about G.E.C./A.E.I. Workers Control Scheme the bosses got to know about it, so it's a sound idea from the point of view of security.

We can't help feeling however that a strike involving foremen is unlikely - and that's the sort of strike it would have to be to involve an A.S.T.M.S. official. Just one last point is I.S. a Lucas shareholder ?

C. Jenkins, A.S.T.M.S.

(in his personal capacity)

OTHER SOLIDARITY GROUPS AND CONTACTS :-

London (West)	c/o M. Duncan, 15 Taylor's Green, London, W.3 (are just about to print Issue No.2)
London (North)	c/o H. Russell, 53A Westmoreland Rd. Bromley, Kent
Aberdeen	c/o I. Mitchell, 3 Sinclair Rd. Torry, Aberdeen (Issue No.3 contains articles on Consolidated Pneumatic Tool Co. Housing in Aberdeen, Tech- nology and Workers' Control)
Central Scotland	c/o Les Morris, 13 Woodlea, Kincardine-on-Forth (Fife)
Dundee	c/o Forbes Brown 444 Perth Rd. Dundee
Edinburgh	Tom Woolley, 14 West Preston St. Edinburgh
Clydeside	c/o D. Kane, 43 Valeview Terrace, Bellshyre, Dumbarton (Have just reprinted pamphlet, Revolutionary Organisation - price 10d, postage paid)
North-West	c/o 102 Carter St., Moss Side, Manchester 13

PARSONS KNOWS

The two articles following were sent in to us by one of the readers at Kingsnorth.

Yet again a group of workers have been forced out on strike at Kingsnorth Power Station - that great obsolescent technological masterpiece which is still under construction in the swamplands beside the River Medway in North Kent. This time it is the men employed by C.A. Parsons & Co. Ltd. who have downed tools. They have downed them because of the knavery of the management of this particular company. As a direct result of this the great turbine hall with its four huge but only half-completed generating sets - which the Parsons' workers were assembling - now lies silent like some great mausoleum awaiting the body of a maharaja.

As the readers of this paper know only too well, this is by no means the first strike that has occurred at Kingsnorth; nor will it be the last. In fact most construction workers now almost take it for granted that when a new project - be it a power station, an oil refinery, or a cement works - starts up there is bound to be a long initial struggle between them and the managements of the various contracts over wages and related matters.

These struggles in almost every case involve long strikes or lock-outs which result in a great deal of hardship being imposed upon the families of the workers concerned. Sometimes these strikes and lock-outs last for months at a time, and such is the state of distress of some workers that they have to give up the struggle and leave the constructional engineering industry altogether. Since these men tend to be young married men in their prime the industry thus loses the benefit of their skill and expertise with their departure.

This is the way it has been in the constructional engineering industry for decades; and even if a British government does eventually manage to bring out a bill banning 'unofficial' strike action, this is the way things will remain (or so it would seem) until there is a profound change in the general attitude of us construction workers towards our jobs.

OUTSIDE THE GATE

At the moment we are encouraged by trade unions, managements, and the general climate of opinion in this country not to involve ourselves too closely with the activities of our workplaces: we are encouraged to perform a specific task only, for which we are paid a wage by the hour; and after we have completed our daily stint (which has

been set for us by the management and in regard to which we have no say) we get on a bus or into a car and leave the job behind, both physically and mentally.

This attitude tends both to make the worker believe that his primary function at work is just to make money and to put him in a position in which it is easy to feel completely alienated from the construction project as such. In fact, most of the time construction workers, though they take great pride in their individual skills, are hardly conscious of what they are actually building. Because of this general attitude, when there is a serious dispute on a project - be it over wage-cuts or sackings - construction workers tend to down tools and go 'outside the gate'.

This is a very natural and understandable reaction on the part of construction workers. After all, they never feel part of the job, which is considered in a certain vague way to 'belong to the management'. The logic of a strike situation is therefore to bring the management to its senses, making them irrelevant by the workers withdrawing their services.

PARSONS KNOWS

Unfortunately for the workers managements know this only too well. And so when they want an extension of the time allotted for their contract, etc. they deliberately create a strike situation. This has happened quite a number of times at Kingsnorth, and each time the bosses of the state-owned C.E.G.B. (Central Electricity Generating Board) granted a time extension to their partners in exploitation, i.e. the managers of the various construction firms involved.

A very different situation, however, would result both at Kingsnorth and elsewhere if the construction worker began to feel that he had a real personal stake in the job; that he was not working for the mere purpose of drawing wages; that he and his job and the overall project were very much bound up together and were in fact inseparable. In such a situation the worker would identify himself more completely with the job (though in a different way from a member of the 'staff') and would tend to feel that the project was just as much his business as it was the management's. Consequently, if a given management created a strike situation the construction worker might not be at all inclined to leave his project solely in the hands of the management by going outside the gate. He would in all probability prefer to 'occupy' his place of work which in the final analysis was the product of both his and his comrades labour.

If workers began to adopt these tactics on construction sites, it would in all likelihood result in a profound change in the general attitude of the managements of construction firms towards their employees. They would almost certainly be far less inclined to create strike situations for their own benefit.

Such a radical change in the tactics of construction workers would, however, represent a complete reversal of our traditional attitudes towards jobs and employers in general. The notion of the employer

having the right to impose a dictatorial regime in a given industrial undertaking because he has financed the project dies hard.

FINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE

In the early days of industrial capitalism when the employer actually owned and managed a given enterprise there was perhaps some meaning to this notion. However, with the growth of private and state monopoly capitalism over the course of the past half-century or so there has in general been a more or less complete divorce between ownership and actual management. At the present time, for instance, the shares of a given industrial firm might be owned by a number of insurance companies, building societies, or even trade unions.

As a result of these developments the "guvnor" of today is almost always a bureaucratic management. Accordingly, our traditional give and take attitude towards the guvnor is now without foundation. No longer are we faced by a single identifiable owner-employer whose ruthless drive might even command a certain respect from individual workers. Instead we are dealing with what is usually an inept and corrupt managerial clique bent on its own survival and enrichment.

When the individual owner-employer was the order of the day their enterprises were generally very efficient from a capitalist point of view. But such enterprises tended to be small or relatively small, and so it was possible for close person to person relationships -- even if only on a formal basis -- to develop between employer and employees. With the growth of bureaucratic managerial administrations, however, close human relationships were seriously undermined within the framework of the giant industrial enterprises which resulted and in which the individual began to feel like a cog in a huge inhuman machine.

BEASTS OF BURDEN

Because of the general notion that workers have no right to be in a given enterprise except to work like dumb oxen (for which they are paid the barest minimum necessary to sustain themselves and their families), the management feels it necessary to employ a huge supervisory staff to 'control' the activities of its non-staff employees.

In the case of I.C.L. (International Combustion Limited), which is the biggest contractor on the Kingsnorth site, the workday begins with the sounding of sirens and the ringing of bells. This is immediately followed by a control force of green-overalled foremen, backed by a large anti-riot squad of white-overalled 'engineers' who descend upon the canteen containing up to 800 I.C.L. workers. By means of gentle persuasion and thinly-veiled threats these 'supervisors' eventually manage to drive the men out of the canteen. But the workers leave only reluctantly. They take their time putting on overalls and working boots. They stand in the drying room near the heaters if the weather is cold outside. Then they walk like men attending their own execution across a dismal patch of ground to the grim and uninviting boiler houses. Much of this behaviour seems to be subconscious. It is one of the few ways which construction workers can as individuals express their sense of personal frustration and alienation from an industrial

system which dehumanizes them and transforms them into oxen with clock numbers.

Over at the lifts which carry the workers to the various boiler floors the men gather in groups chatting about sport, sex, or about just anything other than the job. Then once again the canteen scene is re-enacted. The same horde of foremen and engineers descend upon the scene and begin driving the workers into the lifts like farm animals on the way to market. Sometimes the men are conscious of this parallel and actually moo and baa like cattle and sheep.

When the lifts eventually deposit them at their respective boiler floors the men once more stand around on the galleries in smaller groups, continuing the conversations which they might have begun in the canteen. After a while these groups are dispersed into perhaps ones or twos or more by their section foremen. And so the day's work begins. But almost immediately sentries in the form of a gang of engineers and foremen under Elliot Mess Shepphard and Satchel Face Homden begin patrolling the stairways and floors watching for the tell-tale puffs of smoke from 'illegal' tea distilleries and for the odd worker (who might have spent two hours or more travelling to work) trying to creep away a few minutes before the tea-break hooter goes for a warm meal - a luxury one cannot obtain in the I.C.L. canteen.

ROBOTS' REVEILLE

When the hooter does eventually go the men pile into a canteen which is wholly inadequate both in regard to size and service by even the lowest catering standards. Ten minutes later the shrieking of sirens and the shrill ringing of bells suddenly lets loose upon the men once again. And so the whole process of the morning repeats itself with perhaps the added ingredient of booing, whistling, and caterwauling from the men as the foremen enter the canteen.

Any outside onlooker could hardly help coming to the conclusion that the Kingsnorth workers are prisoners of a system from which the only escape is death, a large pools-win, or a big accident claim arising from an injury at work, which is pretty frequent in this industry. Because they are human and not lifeless robots these men react to the way they are treated by the arrogant and pompous managerial kapos in numerous ways which vary from dumb insolence and deliberate disobedience to actually smacking them in the teeth at times.

The sheer incompetenc of the engineers and foremen on the I.C.L. site at Kingsnorth has to be seen to be believed. There are some able people, of course, on the administrative staff; but they are a very small minority. So incompetent are the remainder that they actually leave the engineering problems to the charginhands and the other workers in the various gangs to solve as best they can (which they usually do) and then try to cover up their own shortcomings and inadequacies by playing site policemen and reporting men even outside of their own sections for 'illegal' activities.

CONCLUSION

The choice before the workers is simple: either we carry on as dumb working oxen subject to the direct dictates of authoritarian managerial bureaucracies (both political as well as economic), or else we smash the social system of which they are part and create in its stead a libertarian social order in which the people would be the masters for the reason that our communities could be so organised around communication and production systems that they could all be personally involved in decision-making regarding the nature and rate of technological change of the local or regional economy.

We are living at a major turning point in history. All the signs indicate that the people of our times now have the opportunity to make a revolutionary jump forward that would quickly and radically alter both the social and physical conditions of our planet - for the betterment of all mankind.

Only we the workers can bring about such a fundamental change. No one can or will do it for us. We can continue to live in a world which is becoming increasingly perverted as its countless shortcomings and contradictions deepen and widen, and which at any moment might turn our motherland the Earth into one vast cemetery. Or we can smash this sick and moribund social order and take the reins of destiny into our own very capable hands. The choice is ours

SOLIDARITY PAMPHLETS

WHAT HAPPENED AT FORDS by Ernie Stanton (NUVB) & Ken Weller, (AEU). The story of the 1962 strike by one of the victimized stewards - 1/5d.

MODERN CAPITALISM AND REVOLUTION by Paul Cardan. For more information following on the discussion in the above article on the growth of bureaucratic organisation in our everyday lives. - 4/-, postage paid.

Also by Paul Cardan: The Crisis of Modern Society - 11d
Socialism or Barbarism - 10d

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

HUNGARY '36 by Andy Anderson. A detailed account of the first anti-bureaucratic revolution. The programme of the Workers' Councils. 4/1d.

The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike against GM 1936-37 by Walter Linder. Reprint of story of strike at GM, Flint (Michigan), including account of occupation of the Plant 1/4d

OF SHARKS AND MEN

A remark made by C.E.U. Shop Stewards Convenor, Hughie Barr at a recent Kingsnorth Power Station union meeting should bring home to every worker on the I.C.L. construction site how utterly unreal is the present air of pre-Christmas prosperity which is now enveloping the place. Neither the higher-than-last year bonus, nor the quantity of Christmas presents available on the site, nor even the thought of the Christmas holiday itself should be allowed to hide the fact that we are still on the same slippery tightrope that every construction worker spends most of his life balancing on in the course of trying to save himself from falling into the gaping jaws of man-eating managerial sharks.

SMASH AND GRAB

Barr's remark was about an income tax grab which occurred some weeks back. This strange affair began one Thursday evening when to their utter astonishment the great majority of Kingsnorth workers discovered as they were getting paid that their income tax deductions were absolutely massive - amounting in quite a number of cases to almost the total week's wages. One man, for instance, had £3 in his wage packet, yet another had only £4-10-0; while a man with seven children got only eight quid in wages.

All this occurred without any warning whatsoever. The first the I.C.L. workers knew about the stoppage was when they received their wages. Because this was Thursday evening and going-home-time, nothing could be done about the matter then. It was not surprising, therefore, that on the following morning the 'row' began. And what a chaotic situation the whole affair turned out to be.

CASHIERING THE CASHIER

As the workers came in on that Friday morning and exchanged their names for clock numbers, they immediately went to the wages offices for an explanation. But they were given no explanation - no reason whatsoever for such a vicious and dictatorial act.

The chief cashier pleaded ignorance. "But I didn't know anything either until the first wages were paid out yesterday", he bleated like a typical management con-man. When questioned further by a large crowd of shouting workers he admitted, however, that Porky Kenton, the Resident Clown, had the previous week been told by phone (from the I.C.L. head office in Derby) that there was going to be a big income tax stoppage. Then he was completely pole-axed when someone suggested that he himself must have known about the stoppage at least a day before the men were paid out; since the wage-sheets arrived from Derby on the Wednesday - when the wage clerks marked the amount of money due to each man on the outside of the wage-packets.

"I refuse to say anymore, nor will I give any of you a sub - Go and see your shop steward!"; the cashier then shouted above the din. So off the men went in search of Hughie Barr. But lo and behold! they discovered, as they had on many similar occasions in the past, that he was absent on that day.

KENTON CAUGHT

Eventually some of the men found two of the junior stewards trying to convince a group of angry workers surrounding them that the correct amount of tax had been deducted. On being told by one of the men that the real crux of the matter at that particular juncture was not to do with the correct amount of tax but was about the actual huge deductions and the ruthless manner in which they had been made, the stewards ran away and hid themselves.

This quickly led to 'law and order' breaking down. Many workers refused to go out on the job. They stood around the wages office, in the drying room, and in groups around the tackle shed. By far the biggest group of all remained in the canteen noisily discussing the matter at hand. But walls have ears - more especially when they have management grassers listening behind them - and it was not long before Porky Kenton heard about the demonstration in the canteen. So collaring one of his chief Pinkerton men, known by the name of Scott, he eased his portly frame in through one of the smaller canteen doorways.

Immediately like a fly in a web he was set upon by one, two, three, and then the majority of men in the canteen. Kenton's mouth opened, his jaw dropped, and the cold steel glint in his reptilian eyes became colder still.

He was obviously amazed to discover that ordinary workers whom His Majesty O'Kenton normally treats with the utmost contempt had suddenly become highly articulate individuals who not only pulverized him verbally but left him in no doubt whatsoever that there would be real trouble if there was not a full explanation forthcoming of why the deductions had been made, together with the issue of £10 subs to everyone in need.

The outcome of that Friday morning's affair was that £10 subs were issued and the management put out a statement that said a mistake had been made in programming the wages computer in Derby so that insufficient tax had been deducted over most of the current financial year.

THE COLD WAR

The matter seemed more or less closed until the recent monthly union meeting when Poodle Barr informed his 'captive' audience (most of whom were there only because they had to wait for transport home) that Porky Kenton and the "other lads in the office" (Barr's words) believed that because the Simon Carves Ltd. managerial regime (which took over the site from their I.C.L. partners last year) was more 'efficient' than its predecessors, the I.C.L. managerial sharks up in Derby had deliberately created the income tax affair in the hope that it would cause trouble for Porky Kenton at Kingsnorth.

There is in all likelihood a great deal of truth in all this. But the one fact that Barr overlooked is that Kenton knew about the coming tax deductions at least one week before the men did. Kenton is very good at putting duplicated letters in the men's wage packets 'reminding' them about the time they are supposed to leave their places of work for meal-breaks, etc. It would have been a very simple matter for him to inform his employees about what they might expect when they next picked up their wages.

But no that would have been too human for this pompous bureaucrat - who in his little kingdom at Kingsnorth is as much a tyrant as were the feudal lords of 18th century France before the peasants and workers beheaded them. (Any bets on what his fate may be?)

All the workers at Kingsnorth know about the cold war between the Simon Carves managements and the bigger I.C.L. sharks. But for Barr to blacken one lot and whiten another is nothing less than a deliberate attempt on his part to mislead those whom he is supposed to represent into believing that they are the victims of an inter-company squabble. However, one can only expect this of Barr who is falling over backwards (or is it frontwards?) at the moment to make the coming redundancy at Kingsnorth as smooth for the management as possible. (If he is not awarded a putty medal for his services we will be more than surprised.)

The real truth of the matter is that the workers at Kingsnorth are not just the victims of an inter-company squabble, but are the victims of a social order which basically assumes that most people are born slaves - mere dumb oxen - who are quite incapable of regulating their own lives and must, therefore, submit themselves completely to the whims of their 'betters' at every factory, every construction site, every office, every university, and in every trade union and political organization.

SOLIDARITY (SOUTH LONDON)

The Journal for Rank and File Militants

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SOLIDARITY SOUTH LONDON c/o Jackie Shreeve,
44 Sturgeon Road, London, S.E.17

Letters and reports to James Fearnley at same address

NUTS AND BOLT

The Evening Standard reported last week that pieces of metal not of the same type as that used in the construction of the machine in question but believed to be bolts had been found inside a boiler under construction by Babcock and Wilcox at Aberthaw Power Station for the C.E.G.B. and has caused serious damage and delay to the completion of this particular contract. The implication was that this was the work of some sort of nut or other. In the same article trouble was reported at another power station at Eggborough where the same contractors were employed and where it was again the boiler that was causing the trouble, although 'foul play' was not here directly implied.

This piece seemed to suggest though that the corner-cutting and profit mongering on the part of the construction company referred to and the delay and damage that had taken place, should quite naturally be put down to some "anarchist", "commie", "red", "extremist", "nut" fringe of the men working on these two sites.

PERSON OR PERSONS UNKNOWN

Could it be that Babcock and Wilcox who have a virtual monopoly to build boilers on C.E.G.B. contracts and who are at present negotiating to try and make their monopoly even more secure, are because of their own crass inefficiency and bungling trying to cover up for their own mistakes by pinning responsibility on the nearest available scapegoat, on 'some person or persons unknown', so that they can get an extension of their contract time from the C.E.G.B. and thus avoid the sometimes harsh penalty clauses that follow if there is any long delay in completion where no 'factors outside their control' can be found and where fault is laid squarely on their own management's doorstep. The quick answer is yes, and of course whenever management or the employers bungle and a scapegoat must be found the golden rule is always - "pin it on the bloke or blokes least able to fight back". Naturally enough for these pen-pushing cowards the first target is the men on the job and only if that fails do they turn to their own ranks for the sacrificial victim.

STRESS AND STRAIN AT C.E.G.B.

The fact is that the C.E.G.B. is in a state of crisis, they are wondering whether they are going to be able to cope with the winter rush on supplies. What is even more disturbing for them is that one after another the boilers under construction on new power stations all over the country (the same faults have appeared at power stations at Didcott and at Reading) are breaking up like dry cheese because of

a miscalculation on the engineers' part of the metal fatigue that these boilers are subjected to when operational. It is no coincidence that the same company is involved in every report of these failings.

FOLLOWING APOLLO 12

It is only a matter of time before one of these boilers follows Apollo 12 causing serious injury to the men working on it, and when this happens no doubt the cry of 'saboteur' will again be heard in the board rooms of the C.E.G.B. and Babcock and Wilcox. Perhaps though for once these pin-striped buffoons will be right but as always for the wrong reasons. It will indeed be sabotage but not working class sabotage, instead it will be the much more prevalent version of this past-time, capitalist sabotage.

In Solidarity (South London) Issue No.6 the differences between the two versions of the sabotage game were pointed out. Whereas the working class variety seeks to establish and maintain the confidence and solidarity of ordinary working people and does not intend to take life, Capitalist sabotage is practised day in day out without so much as a whimper from the 'Crusading Mirror' or any other phoney representative of real working class sentiment. Capitalist sabotage is now and has been for years destroying human beings both physically and mentally on the shop floor and on the site by for example compelling its labour force to work in grossly unsafe conditions so that they can rake in theackers. (See Solidarity No.6. where in an article about Northfleet Cement Works we described how 11 people were killed within the space of 6 months - more have since died for the sake of keeping profits and breaking up job organisation through the use of sub-contracting).

IN SEARCH OF A SCAPEGOAT

The employers will search for any explanation of their own sabotage as long as it denies their own responsibility and keeps the profits soaring. As long as they do not have to face the daily risks of being killed or maimed by tons of flying steel all is O.K. Between now and Christmas at the very least one family will find itself without a father either because he has been killed or is in hospital. Only don't bother looking in the newspapers for it if you feel like sending a donation, because firstly you probably won't find it at all and if you do it will be three lines at the bottom of an inside page. If you want to know whether the Queen's corgi has got foot rot though watch the headlines: that's news!

To strike a more mundane note: if your electricity fails over the cold winter months you will probably find that the papers will search for some scapegoat other than the real one. It may be some 'crank saboteur strikes again' or some 'criminal strikers holding the country to ransom'. What it won't be you can bet your Christmas pudding is the contractors supping pink gins in the Carlton Club. The nuts they'll be cracking over Christmas and all next year and the year after will not just be the Brazilian variety, they'll be erectors' nuts and fitters' nuts, and if you try to get some compensation from either the employers or their strong arm boys the trades unions you will no doubt discover why the 'bolt' bit follows the nuts - you won't see them for dust.

If there are nuts in your broiler this Christmas you can be sure they will be wearing bowler hats.

James Fearnley

S.S.MEN

A man came out of prison with no job to go to. He went round to the Social Security Office to try and get benefit. But he was refused any money. When he asked for an explanation he was told it was because he was wearing a new suit. The suit was issued by the prison department.

WHY AGITATE

In SOLIDARITY we have written a great deal about the struggles for control at the point of production, on the construction sites of Kingsnorth, Dungeness, Kelloggs, on the factory floors of Fords and Vauxhall. At these places the working man is faced with the exploitation and oppression of a capitalist economy in a direct way.

We have written about forced redundancies, sackings, about victimisation, about men maimed and crippled by 'industrial accidents', the real cause of which is the desire to make more profit quicker.

We have tried to show how the men who actually run the job can avoid these things happening by organising themselves outside the organisations which seek to control them, whether it be the employer, the government or the unions. But until we are sufficiently confident and strong this will go on. What happens, though, to all these men who are dumped by the system after they have been used, and what happens to all those men and women who for other reasons are either not able to get a job because they are blacklisted and sacked, or for other reasons are unable to work as the state says they must?

The quick answer is that they go to the Welfare State for help. There they literally ask for the right to live and to be fed, they have to plead for what is everyman's right - subsistence; what they receive is usually only hostility and humiliation from people who literally hold the power of life and death over them.

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN AND INTO THE FIRE

The fight against capitalism does not end when a worker walks out of the factory gate. For the man who goes to claim supplementary benefit or national insurance is climbing out of the frying pan into the fire. Look around next time you are in one of these places. The pencil moustached mini Hitler behind the counter, the prying questions, the sickening waits, the snooping S.S. Inspectors. The bosses are still there and the foremen and the misery.

This is why we must fight them, this is why we must agitate and build up some sort of confidence amongst the people who have been abused by this society and are called scroungers for their trouble.

To fight against this second line attack of the system, against the degradation and humiliation we don't need yet another union or more sell-out representatives, or more tribunals. We can do it ourselves at the 'point of production'.

Miners bring up coal worth £13 each day five days a week, for this they get £13 a week. If they are made redundant they have to crawl for assistance. Whatever happened to the other £52? Let our motto be, 'don't let the bastards grind you down', and let's get it straight once and for all, this isn't WELFARE ITS WARFARE.

WELFARE OR WARFARE?

There can't be many people left with the illusion that more welfare state means more socialism. You could guess that from the word 'state'. More welfare state means more control. It isn't even a benevolent measure to benefit the working class. The capitalists need it even more. They need it so that the people they make redundant can have money to spend on the consumer goods their firms produce, otherwise demand would fall and upset their profits. Without the existence of social security shopkeepers, landlords and h.p. companies would go bust overnight.

It also prevents workers from becoming too angry about being unemployed and taking action for themselves because they are supposed to think how good of the state to give them charity. At the same time they ensure that no-one will choose to live on supplementary benefit by making sure you are no better off than you would have been at work - even if you used to get wages that were below their minimum scale. (This rule is known as the wage stop and was applied to 14,710 people in July 1965.)

THE OBSTACLE RACE

If you are single, able-bodied and under 45 they make sure you try your utmost to find some sort of job, even if it's one that no-one would do for even £100 a week by saying that you can't stay on supplementary benefit for more than four weeks. When your time is up you have the right of appeal but the appeal can take 4 to 5 weeks, during which time you will be given a lower grant from week to week at the discretion of the manager. If you win your appeal you find that you have been given yet another four weeks. But the trick is that the four weeks you waited for your appeal to come through goes to make up your extra four weeks, so you are right back where you started from and have to make yet another appeal.

If they don't manage to get you back to work by threats of the four week rule and prosecution they step up the 'degrading process'. The recipe is to keep you waiting for hours until you are bored and hungry. Then they send you into the next room so that you think you will soon be out. But you soon realise you are only half way round the course so settle back into apathy.

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS WRONG

When you eventually get your money it may not be quite as much as you were expecting but don't question it because the golden rule is that the S.S. men are always right. This is because most of the rules are secret and you can't quarrel with secret rules.

You ought to count yourself lucky ever to have arrived at the right office as there can be up to 10 means tests at five different offices for different sorts of benefit. It's no wonder that half of the people unemployed don't claim. The state would probably collapse if all those entitled were to claim it - maybe that's why it's kept so secret.

DIVIDE AND RULE

The worst thing about the 'degrading process' is that it causes division just like when they try to isolate workers. Industrial action cannot be effective until people get together and it's the same in the supplementary benefit office. The S.S. men are cowards at heart. Just remember there are more of you than there is of them. People have been known to occupy the interviewing room and get their entitlement. Other people - much to the annoyance of the S.S. men - have marched up and down instead of meekly awaiting their fate. Whether you get together with other victims or just want to make your own point, it is best to go armed with information. This you can get from the recently formed Birmingham Claimants Union.

The B.C.U. is an association of national assistance claimants - unsupported mothers, unemployed, pensioners, long term sick, low paid workers, etc. who have got together to fight their own battles and in the hope that a movement can be built throughout the country. Their policy does include support for a national minimum wage, which we do not see as a very far-reaching demand, since it would quickly be devalued. It's not just money that we are after, but a change in the basis of control in society. But they do support collective and autonomous action by groups of claimants and are ready to supply information.

Birmingham Claimants Union, 2/9 Trafalgar Road, Moseley,
BIRMINGHAM 13. Tel: 021-449-5454

Many people have their own stories to tell of how they are able to get round the rules which the state makes to keep us all in tow at the SOCIAL SECURITY CAMPS (S.S. camps for short). Don't be stingy with this information. There are thousands of people who either don't know or who are too timid or broken by their interrogation techniques to try again. Write to us at the address supplied on the back and tell us. We will then print it. Also if you know someone who is up against the wall ask him if he will distribute leaflets in the office he has to report at every week like some sort of criminal. Together we might be able to get somewhere.

Jackie Shreeve
James Fearnley

STOP PRESS

THE PAY OFF AT C.A. PARSONS AND CO. LTD.

The second biggest contractor on the Kingsnorth Power Station site is C.A. Parsons & Co. Ltd. They are engaged in the erection of the turbines.

Since 1966 the skilled men on this contract have been paid an F.W.S. supplement each week of £5.17.0. This was to supplement the men's earnings above the then rate because it was agreed that a Bonus scheme could not be worked out on turbine erection.

Since 1966 there have been 3 national rises in the basic rate. Each time a proportionate amount has been deducted from the F.W.S. leaving the earnings now at the same level as they were in 1966. The men have also been on double day shift since 1966 and argue that payment for shifts and stoppages in shift pay when absent are not in accord with any agreement, if indeed any exist.

The Stewards have tried and tried through official channels to improve the situation to no avail, " we have therefore withdrawn our labour until a favourable offer is made by C.A.P.

To carry on this fight it takes funds for travelling expenses for pickets etc, and to help workers in acute distress. We appeal to you for help however small the donation.

All monies should be sent to:-
Mr. J. Walters, 29, Balfour Rd.,
Rochester, Kent.

At 11 a.m. on Friday 12th December the men on picket duty at Kingsnorth saw an Army tank transporter driven by army personnel, drive through the gates. No attempt was made to stop them because the pickets did not associate them in anyway with C.A. Parsons. They had apparently come from the Chatham Dean Barracks near Hoo and were members of the Royal Engineers stationed there.

They drove straight through the site to the Turbine Hall where under the supervision of C.A. Parsons and the staff of the C.E.G.B. loaded a Rota arm onto the Army truck. (The rota arm forms part of the 500 megawatt generating set, and a number of these sets have been installed all over the country by C.A. Parsons, most of them have since broken down due to bad design. Articles have appeared in the Telegraph and Guardian recently referring to this.)

As the Army Transporter was about to leave the driver was stopped by an employee of International Combustion Ltd., who informed him that the Rota arm he had just loaded was the property of C.A. Parsons and

that all of Parsons' employees were out on strike. The Driver stated that had he been aware of this before he would not have allowed the Rota Arm to be placed on his lorry without first seeking an authority higher than his company commander. Shortly afterwards an eye witness saw one of Parsons' engineers offer the Army driver a £1 note, but the driver refused.

The lorry left the site and took the Rota Arm to Chatham Dockyard where it was to be repaired. But word has it that someone rung the A.E.F. official who had the job blacked.

This little episode raises a whole number of questions. Normally Parliament and the Home Secretary are the only people who can give permission to use troops and vehicles for civilian use, and then only after a state of emergency has been declared. Was this done in this case? Or was it a case of someone in the C.T.G.B. or Parsons who knew someone in the army who could pull strings?

The other, and perhaps more important question, is one that SOLIDARITY has been raising for a long time now - i.e. the question of Job Organisation. Too much emphasis is placed on individual membership of Trades Unions and not enough on collective organisation at site level.

We understand that the super militant Poodle Barr of I.C.L. has been lurking round the pickets encouraging them with stories of his past record and offering them all the militant support they need, but apart from making indignant noises he does nothing. When pressed from his own members about what action should be taken to support Parsons men he replied we must first get the facts and then hold a committee meeting.

That's what the Daily Worker said when the tanks rolled into Hungary.

SOLIDARITY (SOUTH LONDON) PAMPHLETS

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N.B. new address: 44 Sturgeon Road, London S.E.17

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also outlines the methodology used in the study and the results of the data analysis.

The second part of the paper discusses the results of the study and the conclusions drawn from the data. It also discusses the implications of the findings and the limitations of the study.

The third part of the paper discusses the conclusions drawn from the study and the implications of the findings. It also discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research.

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