

# **SOLIDARITY**

**FOR WORKERS' POWER**

**Volume 2 Number 4**

**6<sub>D</sub>**  
**—**

# REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS TODAY

A prolonged political apathy of the working class seems to characterise modern capitalist society. This contrasts with the activity of the masses in the 'backward' countries. Since Marxism is above all a theory of proletarian revolution in advanced countries, one cannot to call oneself a Marxist and remain silent on this problem. What does the modernisation of capitalism consists of? What is its link with the political apathy of the masses? What are the consequences of all this for the revolutionary movement today?

New and lasting features of capitalism should first be studied and described. We will analyse these in some detail in our forthcoming issues. The ruling classes have managed to control the level of economic activity and to prevent major crises of the classical type. The numerical importance of unemployment has greatly diminished. Looked at over a period of several decades real wages will be seen to be increasing, both more rapidly and more regularly than in the past. This gives rise to an increase of mass consumption which has become indispensable to the functioning of the economy and which is now irreversible. The unions have become integrated into the whole system of exploitation. They negotiate the docility of the workers in production in return for wage increases.

Political life takes place almost exclusively among specialists. The people are uninterested or frankly contemptuous about it. In no important country do political organisations exist whose members come in an important proportion from the working class or who are capable of mobilising the working class on political problems. Outside of production, the proletariat no longer appears as a class having its own objectives. *it never did* The entire population has entered a movement of private living. It attends to its own affairs. The affairs of society as a whole seem to have escaped its control.

For the prisoners of traditional schemas it would be necessary to conclude that there is no longer any revolutionary perspective. Traditional Marxism saw the objective contradictions of capitalism as essentially economic ones. The total incapacity of the system to satisfy the economic demands of the workers made of these the driving force of the class struggle. Although this analysis corresponded to certain manifestations of capitalism at a certain period of its development, these ideas

must be re-examined in the light of contemporary experience. The 'objective economic contradictions' disappear with the total concentration of capital (as in countries controlled by the Stalinist bureaucracy). But even the degree of State intervention practiced today in the West is sufficient to keep within narrow limits the spontaneous imbalance of the economy.

Wage levels are not determined by objective economic laws but by the actions of men. The class struggle plays an important role in this respect. It has its own dynamic which modifies the actions and consciousness of both workers and bosses. Wage increases, provided they do not exceed increases in production, are quite feasible for capitalism.

The traditional view is also false philosophically: objectivist and mechanistic, it eliminates the actions of men and classes from history, to replace them by an objective dynamic and 'natural' laws. It makes of the proletarian revolution a reflex against hunger from which it is unknown how a socialist society could ever result. But it has even more serious implications. The understanding of the capitalist economy and of its crises is seen as a task for specialised technicians. The solution of these problems then becomes a question of objective economic transformations, to be performed from above, and needing no autonomous intervention of the proletariat. The working class is reduced to the role of infantry, at the disposal of the revolutionary generals. This view can only be what it has been in the past: the foundation of bureaucratic politics.

If the fundamental contradiction of capitalism is not to be found in 'the anarchy of the market' or in its 'inability to develop the productive forces', where is it to be found? It is in production and labour itself. It is contained in the alienation of the worker. It is the necessity for capitalism to reduce workers to simple executors of tasks, and its impossibility to function if it succeeds in so doing. The contradiction lies in capitalism's need to achieve simultaneously mutually incompatible objectives: the participation and the exclusion of the workers in relation to production - as of all citizens in relation to politics.

This is the only real contradiction of contemporary society. This is the ultimate source of its crises. It cannot be alleviated by reforms, by increasing the standard of living or by the elimination of private property and of the market. It will only be eliminated by the institution of collective management by the working class of production and of society. This real contradiction within capitalism is experienced daily by the working class in the course of production. This is the only possible foundation of a socialist consciousness. This is what gives the class struggle under capitalism its universal and permanent character, whatever the level of concentration of the productive forces.

(continued p.27)

# THE SEAMEN

## I. CONDITIONS TODAY by Bro. Larry Petersen

You have seen him in the street  
Rolling round on groggy feet.  
You have seen him clutch the pavement for support.  
You have seen him arm in arm  
With some girl of doubtful charm  
Who was leading Johnny safely into port.

Too many have the image of the Merchant Navy the way this rhyme puts it. Years ago it was partly true and we still have a few ravers and would-be pirates.

The modern set-up is this. The Merchant Navy is a closed shop both for the employers and employees... the British employees at least. The employees are split up into two groups: men and officers.

The men must all be members of the National Union of Seamen (£3 entrance fee, 2/- weekly dues). The N.U.S. has the highest number of paid officials of any union. All are appointed, not elected. Nepotism grows from appointments, not from elections.

There are no shop stewards or Union representatives sailing on ships where the work is done. Strikes are illegal and punishable by law. Simple days off punishable (2 days for one and can be doubled up). Overtime rate is 9d. lower than so-called hourly rate.

Many of the men have little faith in the Union. Militants are denied the right to work in the industry. The men are closely watching

the National Seamen's Reform Movement.\* They see it as their only hope of a movement close to their own way of thinking.

The N.S.R.M. was formed by far-seeing men to combat ignorance of Union procedure and policy, and the impossibility of getting these changed.

The officers are mates, engineers and wireless operators. Too many are not in any organisation or Union. There is too big a gap between men and officers. Closer co-operation is needed both on ship and at the negotiating table. Both have the same boss: the shipping company.

Very few of the ship owners are known as such. Several are majority shareholders in a few select Companies. Just who owns who is hard to say but gradually dog eats dog. Monopoly seems to be aimed at. As far as the men are concerned the owners are represented on shore by the Shipping Federation and on ship by the Master.

The Shipping Federation runs the hiring halls and operates a pool of seamen. The seamen are in

---

\* The N.S.R.M. is not a separate union but is dedicated to reform by democratic methods. It stands for Ship Committees and Delegates and Union hiring halls, something very different to what is in practice today.

two groups, Established and Unestablished. The Established seaman is paid £2.10.0 per week (on top of dole) for a guarantee of 2 years work. He has to agree to go where he is told. He gets more leave than the Unestablished.

The Unestablished only get the dole while unemployed. They get no promise of employment but can refuse to sail with some bad master or mate, or on some sub-standard ship.

To get a job all men must sign form Pc.5, which is an agreement to abide by the decisions of the Maritime Board. This body is made up of the Unions concerned and representatives of the owners. Contamination creeps in here. No ordinary Merchant

Seaman is ever on the Board, only appointed paid officials.

To legalise everything, the seaman signs Articles. This is an agreement required by law which immediately puts him within the jurisdiction of the Merchant Shipping Act. This act, brought in in 1894, has been altered three times, each time to the detriment of crew members.

Only when we have the right to elect delegates and hold Committee meetings on ship will the Merchant Navy have gone a little way towards equality with their fellow workers.

## 2. RANK-AND-FILE ORGANISATION by G. Foulser

In the summer of 1960, the recently formed National Seamen's Reform Movement had all the enthusiasm - and the fierce differences - that are part of the early period of any movement with a worthwhile cause and a mass basis.

A good deal of our early troubles were the result of inexperience. Shoreworkers have nearly all had experience of the way workers' meetings, organisations and other activities are run. They have nearly all taken part in these activities themselves. But in 1960, more than half the seafaring population knew nothing of such things.

This inexperience (due to blokes shunning N.U.S. meetings out of disgust and frustration) was more than

counter-balanced by what all we seamen possessed and still possess: a knowledge of the injustices endured by seamen throughout their working life at the hands of the ship-owners and their lackeys of N.U.S. officialdom.

The seamen had a burning grievance and are of a militant nature to boot. The blow up was bound to come. When it came, a movement to give expression to seamen's feelings was certain to command mass support. The outcome was the N.S.R.M.

Our work at sea, as far as dry-cargo and tanker jobs are concerned, necessitates an ability to learn quickly, to use initiative, and to improvise. Because of this, we were able to develop our structural orga-



nisation for strike purposes well enough to make trade union history.

After the second 1960 strike, we faced the problem of day-to-day building and consolidation of our organisation - without the impetus of a dispute to carry such activities through as swiftly as we'd have liked. An added problem in many ports was the seamen's genuine dislike of staying ashore... even for such a worthwhile cause as helping build the N.S.R.M.

Our experience then was of riff-raff taking over N.S.R.M. branches after the original Branch Strike Committees had shipped out. This happened in several branches. The reign of a mob of 'performers' in various branches did not last long, however. It showed us, though, that we had to educate ourselves, all of us seamen, in order to properly control our own representatives.

Another problem, needless to say, arose over political and other divergences. This became rather serious early in 1961. It weakened us to some extent - but only among ourselves. As far as the shipowners were concerned, we were completely solid against the common enemy. No one knew it better than the shipowners. They knew we were getting ready to 'hit the bricks' again in the midsummer of 1961 for our demands.

June 1961 brought us new Agreements in which our pay and hours demands were conceded in toto. If anything could have shown seamen the value of militant solidarity, and their own power, the June 1961 Agreements did so.

The N.S.R.M. branches presented rather a patchy picture at that time. The divergences had caused apathy in some ports, London among them. Once again the chairmanship of Jim Slater

aided by the homogeneity of his Geordie colliermen, kept the North East coast ports actively perfecting their organisation and trying a new tactic - that of using the N.U.S. constitution where possible. Regarding this last point, not only the Geordies but all the major U.K. ports did their share. The 1961 Annual General Meeting of the union was attended by a number of delegates who fought for the rank-and-file seamen and for their right to representation while at sea. They showed the seamen's feelings on these matters very effectively. A large part of the credit for the E.C.'s surrender this year on Shipboard Representation is due to those N.S.R.M. members who were delegates to the 1961 AGM, not forgetting the boys who backed them with poster parades outside the main entrance.

The picture at sea changed after June 1961. Crew and officers aboard the cargo jobs and tankers \* agreed that the N.S.R.M. had proved its worth by getting the pay and hours breakthrough. In 1960 a Ship's Committee depended, for its founding, upon an active militant. In July 1961 I saw the lads themselves preparing to start their own committee aboard the 'British Navigator'. This was just before I left her (she was going deep sea and I had to stay in the U.K. at the time).

Since about last September the Government's restriction of imports has caused a scarcity of jobs for seamen. The N.U.S. mob decided this gave them the opportunity to get the hatchet out with impunity. The late unlamented G. Scott abused his powers as General Secretary last December and expelled Paddy Neary, Chris Ashton and Joe Peacock (3 N.S.R.M. militants) from

---

\* I've never sailed in passenger jobs - where conditions are very different.

the N.U.S.... in their absence and on undefined charges.

Scott's treacherous action boomeranged. All differences forgotten, rank-and-file seamen rallied to the support of Neary and his 2 fellow-militants. The N.S.R.M. was possibly even more united than in 1960.

Scott snuffed it the following month. He left behind him a shaken mob of N.U.S. officials. Hogarth, the bloke who took over as Acting General Secretary of the N.U.S. is a good example of what I mean by shaken.

Since last January 1962 Hogarth has made two bad slip-ups. One was his use of the N.U.S. journal 'The Seaman' to smear Jim Slater by implication in a red-baiting article about the N.S.R.M. - Jim being a candidate in the ballot for the new General Secretary of the N.U.S. Hogarth is himself a candidate in the ballot, and his contemptuous disregard for trade union practices, and union members' rights brought him the spotlight of a few 'Tribune' articles. I notice that the highly arrogant vilification of rank-and-file militants, seen in the previous issues of 'The Seaman', is almost non-existent in the June issue, which almost resembles a trade union journal (gawd help us! What are we coming to!).

After antagonising the majority of rank-and-file seamen, Hogarth altered his tactics. In doing so, he made his second big blunder. He decided that he'd give way on Ships' Committees; this would ease rank-and-file pressure considerably and would help him in the ballot for Gen. Sec.\*

---

\* Balloting goes on over a six-months period from March to September 1962.

If Hogarth had that idea, he's lost it by now. He's helped the rank-and-file movement win further support. Our 1960 aims were:

1. £4 a month increase
2. A 44-hour week
3. Ships' Delegates
4. A democratic union

In two years, we have achieved the first 3 points. The rank-and-file movement has done more in two short years for an all-round betterment of seamen's conditions than the N.U.S. hierarchy had achieved in its 50 years of licking the shipowners' boots.

As I write, N.S.R.M. activity is increasing once more. Our movement is now working with a unity and maturity that are very satisfying to see. The London N.S.R.M., for a while moribund as a branch, is in very active operation once again.

This year seamen are going after more pay, a 40-hour week, increased overtime and a decent pension scheme. We intend to let the shipowners know how we feel regarding these demands by demonstrations and marches on the day of the resumption of previously postponed negotiations. We will also be doing our best to establish liaison with portworkers, whenever possible.

We are all sweating on the result of the September election. In a fair ballot, Slater would win one hand, kneeling. The phoney N.U.S. electoral set-up makes Hogarth the favourite - what with men having to register at their branch before they can vote (what about those on a Persian Gulf shuttle-run?) and the amazing anomaly of men with so many years N.U.S. membership getting 4 votes while a young seaman, five years in the union, gets one vote only - things like that are nothing in the N.U.S. constitution!

I'm not joking when I say that even in Franco's Spain the workers could get some representatives, however distorted, on the leading positions in the fascist syndicates (until discovered and gaoled!). But we British seamen have never managed to beat the N.U.S. rules and get a

genuine seaman on the E.C.! As for branch officials, they're all appointed by the E.C.!

September will show what direction the seamen's struggle will next take. Whatever seamen decide to do after, they will achieve it only through the struggle of their rank-and-file movement.

-----

Bro. George Foulser has been a merchant seaman for over 25 years. During the great seamen's strike of July 1960, he walked off the M/V 'Wheelsman' (one of Rowbothams coasting tankers) and was elected Chairman of the London Strike Committee. He later had an injunction served against him by Shaw Savill's. During the second strike, a few weeks later, he edited a rank-and-file seamen's paper called 'Seamen's Voice'. He described the background to these two disputes in a special article published in 'Agitator' (vol.I, No.1).

Bro. Foulser is the author of a very interesting book ('Seaman's Voice', MacGibbon & Kee, 1961, 18/-) in which he vividly describes the lives and struggles of merchant seamen. We strongly recommend this book to 'Solidarity' readers.

-----

## R.S.P.C.T. \* CLINIC

Dear Doctor,

My son keeps attending Labour Party meetings. He dreams of building 'left wings'. He has already been expelled several times. Is he ill? How long will it last?

Yours, etc.

+ + +

Dear Madam,

This is a clear case of political necrophilia. It will last a lifetime. He is doomed... fortunately!

Yours, etc.

Dear Doctor,

Our Father who lives in Clapham is suffering from a violent purge. All the kids are getting it. Is it catching? What can I do about it?

Yours, etc.

+ + +

Dear Madam,

This is a sad case of political dys-entrism. It is very catching but they don't all die. Try defending Clause 4, and changing the leadership.

Yours, etc.

\* Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Trots.



# THE MAN without a country \*

I am the working man,  
The man without a country.

All nations,  
Kingdoms,  
Republics,  
Empires,  
Rest upon my shoulders:  
For I am Labour!

I sail their ships and planes,  
I watch their citadels and towers,  
I run their presses,  
I drop their Bombs,  
I spread their gasses,  
I starve their enemies,  
I furnish the corpses for their  
faiths and victories.

My blood is the crimson of their  
flags -

By me their glory lives,  
From me their power comes.

I make them all,  
I keep them all,  
I guard them all,  
I, the man without a country!

I feed the Race,  
I clothe the Race,  
I house the Race,  
I am agriculture,  
Industry,  
Transportation,  
Commerce,  
And Art.

I am fire and steam,  
Light and electricity,  
Civilisation and Society,  
For I am Labour,  
The wizard gold producer,  
The raw material of wealth,  
The exhaustless source of  
Dividends,  
Interest,

Profit,  
Rent,  
Taxes and riches,  
The Aladdin's lamp and the Frank-  
enstein of Capital.

I shoulder the State,  
I carry the Church,  
I build the Union,  
I make them all,  
I keep them all,  
I guard them all,  
I, the man without a country!  
I am love and life  
I am bread and liberty,

The womb of thought and truth,  
The mother of Democracy,  
The father of Freedom,  
The Nemesis of Slavery  
For I am Labour!

All that you hold is mine.  
But for me  
Your fields were wilderness,  
Your mines: dark caverns in the Earth,  
Your railways: streaks of rust across  
a silent desert,

Your mills and factories: mausoleums  
of dead and powerless steel -  
Your palaces and temples, mints and  
banks: the homes of ghosts and worms,  
Your fleets: lost derelicts on port-  
less oceans drifting.

Without me all is nothingness.  
I am the living soul of the  
machine,

The maker,  
Keeper,  
Guarder of it all -  
I, the man without a country!

\* \* \*

\* From the Llano Colonist. First published in Sylvia  
Pankhurst's 'Workers' Dreadnought', on 15.9.1923

# TROTSKYISTS AND *barrow boys*

On a Saturday I am usually to be found at one of London's markets, rarely finding any bargains, but happy walking among the colour and bustle of the streets. The cries of 'bloody 'andsome cauliflowers', or the street sellers 'I'll not charge you five shillings, four shillings, three shillings - no - only two and six pence; 'ere 'ave two for three bob' has never failed to amuse and delight me. Holiday times usually find me at the nearest market town, looking over junk and livestock. And quite often I have taken foreign friends to London's Petticoat Lane and its cries of 'who'll buy my gold? who'll buy my silver?'.

However, it was not until I read a document written and signed by several Young Socialists (1) that I realised my enjoyment of street markets was possibly an indication of moral degeneracy. It hadn't occurred to me that there was a moral difference between selling a banana from a greengrocer's shop, or flogging it from a barrow. I must have been wrong. According to these Young Socialists 'the demands that the employment of youth in such occupations as the liquor trade, billiard and gaming saloons, betting and street-trading should be prohibited, must be supported by all Socialists'. Yet there must be many a youthful seller of cockles and whelks who feels he is plying a more useful trade than he would be if he were working in a missiles factory. And many a young man pulling up beer behind a bar, and chatting with the customers, must be far happier in this job than he would be pressing buttons in an automated workshop.

I wondered whether the Chamber of Commerce had not infiltrated this section of the Young Socialists. If the document had only added the sale of contraceptives, including That Pill, to the list of prohibited trades, it would be possible for them to form a Popular Front with many religious groups.

---

(1) 'YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM'. A suggested Transitional Programme. May 1962. Many Young Guard supporters have recently received this long document. Its sponsors, 19 Young Socialists, hope it will 'be published as a Young Guard programme for youth which will not only unite the Left (see p. in the Y.S. but which will also provide the basis for attracting thousands of young people into the movement'.

We also hope that Young Socialists will make the (considerable) effort to read this programme carefully. Will these soapbox slogans conceal the bureaucratic blueprint? Will 'thousands of young people' swallow this synthetic stodge? Or are they all (fortunately) too 'backward'?

The document aims at rallying youth behind the Socialist Movement. To do this it is felt that the problems of youth must be dealt with specifically (2) and set apart from those of the rest of society. Some years ago, when my age entitled me to belong to youth organisations, I caused consternation in a discussion circle, busy dividing society into age groups, by stating that I was of approximately the same age as Princess Elizabeth (as she then was). Being of a different class, however, I had nothing (other than age) in common with this royal personage.

This may be an extreme case. However, for socialists to concentrate so much on dividing up society according to age groups, or sexes, is rather stupid. A working class youth has the same interests as an adult of his own class. He has little in common, and quite different class interests, from youth of the ruling class.

Turning to leisure, the 'suggested transitional programme' demands 'the municipalisation of all sports facilities and the nationalisation of the football industry'. One envisages some future Dr. Beeching or Lord Robens of the football field, busy proscribing this club or that, closing down this or that Division and demanding greater productivity per footballer or else...

To the Socialist whose mind is not tied up in the bureaucratic tangle of administration, it is clear that under socialism those who wish to take part in sport will do so in their own way, will form their own teams and play whom and when they wish. The attitude of these Young Socialists reminds me of the Bolsheviks of 1921. Alexandra Kollontai remarked of them that if a few comrades desired to watch our feathered friends, a special department would have to be set up. The whole project would then gradually become so smothered in red tape that the comrades concerned would lose all enthusiasm.

So far as the Army is concerned, the document makes the proposal that 'all military schools should be taken out of the hands of the reactionary officer caste and placed under the control of the trade unions.' Bill Carron in the place of Earl Montgomery? Walter Padley ruling the roost at Sandhurst? The document also calls for 'Trade Union rates of pay for all servicemen' (servicemen had obviously not been consulted concerning this last proposal. Today's T.U. rates would mean that most servicemen would have to work overtime... or take a second job). The object of all this 'reorganisation' is apparently to enable the Services to fight capitalism! Roll on the British Workers' Bomb!

---

(2) 'A durable youth organisation presupposes a struggle on behalf of youth and this struggle on behalf of youth presupposes a youth programme. Such a programme must answer the specific problems of youth, organising and leading it...' etc., etc....

The document goes on to say that youth are exploited at work, but denied the right to vote. Does this mean that once youth are allowed to go to the polls they will no longer be exploited? Are adult workers not exploited?

All socialists will support the argument of these comrades that piece-work is 'reactionary in general' and that night-work or shift-work put particular strain upon the worker. However, the document only calls for the prohibition of this type of working for those under 25 years of age. Do piece-work, shift-work and night-work cease to be reactionary when one attains the age of 25 years?

The document states that all workers under the age of 25 years should be given one month's holiday a year. Many workers over this age feel that they too should receive longer holidays than the present week or fortnight.

No doubt the Young Socialists concerned will explain this part of their document as 'tactics'. The aim, after all, is 'to lead, organise and educate youth' and to 'find those specific paths by which the millions of youths in the factories, mines, schools and universities can be brought (? by whom) into the fight for socialism', etc., etc... Others would call all this sheer opportunism.

These Young Socialists point out that education under capitalism is concerned with a continuance of the social system. 'The schools and universities are in reality the greatest ideological weapons in the hands of the capitalist class...' 'It is not the intention of this system to teach young people to think and understand. Precisely the opposite'. To counteract this, the document demands more universities and the extension of higher education. The content of socialist education is not discussed.\* Apparently it is felt that everybody should be provided with an equal opportunity of losing the ability to think and understand!

It is of interest to note that while demands are made for free access to all sports fields, stadiums, museums, libraries, theatres and cinemas for all young people, no demand is made for free entry to dance halls, funfairs, bowling alleys or swimming pools. Nor is it suggested that music lessons and instruments be provided freely, or canvas and paint, or dancing lessons. The authors of the document possibly consider that to enjoy oneself is also an indication of moral degeneracy.

The whole conception that persons in their early twenties rank as 'youth' is a middle class attitude. The middle class male takes several years to qualify for a profession, and then several more before he can make enough money to keep a wife and family 'in the style to which they are

---

\* Or, at best, only in terms of 'the development of independent critical thought linked to an understanding of historical and natural phenomena.'

accustomed'. A working class man is usually married and a father by the age of 25 years. He has more in common with those ten years older than himself than with those ten years younger. I doubt whether women of either class would regard themselves as 'teenagers' at the age of 25. In most cases they have assumed the responsibilities of adulthood.

The most disturbing statement in this document is not the proposals put forward, although these clearly reveal the authoritarian conception of socialism held by many so-called 'lefts'. What is disturbing are the ominous sentences about 'the armoury of a correct political programme which seeks to find the specific paths by which various sections can be brought into the movement...', and about 'the imperative need for those who agree with this programme to work together for the common objectives', and the warnings that 'all those who, for their own private organisational or factional ends, refuse to enter into this work are guilty of weakening the Socialist Youth Movement'.

In other words, he who is not for us (the self-appointed Messiahs) must be against us. In due course, he will have to be eliminated. In the meantime, no discussion or criticism of these ideas can be allowed. This would clearly indicate a personal or factional position!

H. MANN

## UNITED FRONT ?

We have been accused by representatives of Tribune and V.F.S., the C.P. and Y.C.L., the S.L.L. and 'Keep Left', S.R. and 'Young Guard', Socialist Current, the New Left and Socialist Fight (both factions) of splitting the LEFT.

This unanimity is as gratifying as it is unprecedented. In maintaining and strengthening these newly forged links, we feel 'SOLIDARITY' has a special role to play.

'WORKERS' OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

## SCHOOLS FOR NON VIOLENCE

OVERHEARD AT GREENHAM COMMON:

'What happens if they open fire?'

'Go limp and refuse to bleed!'

A GOOD JOB  
THE FUSS' LL  
SAVE SIX BOB  
FOR RUSSELL.



# TO SIT OR STAND

This article was specially written for 'Solidarity' by Harry Forrest, a supporter in Exeter. It was later produced as a leaflet by the South West England Committee of 100.

'Is it proper to conduct civil disobedience and seek to bypass the "ordinary democratic processes"?'. This question was put in the Old Bailey to the six defendants.

The vast majority quite sincerely hold the illusion that the ballot box is of major importance, and that it permits them, however indirectly, to participate in Government processes. Among them are some five million trade union members who pay their political levy and vote Labour. It may be difficult for us to follow their reasoning, but they are not easily deflected.

We are acknowledged as the organizers of every other type of activity (especially illegal). We could, through election demonstrations, make contact with these millions of workers, who might then be more willing to listen to the case for industrial action in the struggle against the Bomb.

From the outset we should declare that we are not out to rival the traditional Party machines. Rather should we regard each contest as a demonstration for the public presentation of our case.

Many will ask what control we can exert? What guarantees have we? Will not our candidates become corrupted like the others? Our safeguards lie in our belief that no elected person can achieve what we want. We can only do that ourselves. Massive direct action will still be our main weapon. The fact that we will stand candidates who believe just that, and ACT ON IT, will shake the Establishment and strengthen our movement.

In building a new type of society renouncing war, there is no time to prevaricate, manoeuvre, and wait on the empty promises of corrupt parties.

To place any reliance on Labour Party candidates who say they are 'unilateralists' can only, as in the past, lead to frustration and despair. These poor creatures are obliged to obey orders from Party leaders.

People say we are undemocratic because we seek to 'force' the views of a minority on the majority. Like so much of our cherished folk-lore, this is untrue. Where is the democracy which allows a conscript soldier to make a choice, a taxpayer to opt out, or a rate-payer to decide civil defence matters? We have no real choice in these matters. We must do as we are told because 'authority knows best'. The truth is that it is the Establishment who force minority views on the majority.

If a referendum were held to decide major questions of policy as in Switzerland, things might be a little clearer. But in the present bureaucratic set-up, with its secret police, political trials, security screening, etc, we have the right and urgent duty to protest with every non-violent means at hand. The Government is at a loss to understand us, because we argue from morality, and are prepared to suffer severe penalties from a vicious State Machine.

Labour Party leaders can only be moved in terms of electoral victory or defeat. They use dishonesty, coercion, and immorality as common coin. Nearly every M.P. becomes corrupted. Only a handful can be found to risk a parliamentary career by voting against nuclear weapons. And even they don't join the Committee of 100.

Our candidates, if elected, would expose the fraudulent 'democracy' of Parliament. Some might refuse to take their seat. Others, as 'M.P.s' might lead the direct action demonstrations, especially those against the corruption of Parliament. They would have to be prepared to go to prison with the others. We could nominate any one of the six sentenced at the Old Bailey. Above all our candidates should be independent of the bureaucratic party machines.

Gaitskell and his friends fear our intervention - which is the ONE factor which can now prevent their assuming government office soon. They have threatened expulsions. Splendid! Let them proscribe C.N.D. Many sitting on the fence will be knocked off. If Labour Party politics is their choice, let it be known. It would be far better to know the truth about the strength of our support. It would also give each elector a clear and open choice, and an alternative to the CON/LIB/LAB 'establishment' candidates.

Gaitskell and his T.U. friends can get all the Conference decisions they want reversed. Let us welcome their threat to split the Labour Party wide open. Of itself this would solve nothing, but it would create a new political climate in Britain and make possible a breakthrough of democratic assertion, i.e. massive direct action, in place of the frustrating sham of 'official politics' we know so well.

The Committees of 100 are the greatest 'do-it-yourself' movement this country has seen for many decades. Breaking through the bureaucratic strangleholds is a job no one can do for us. But perhaps the strongest argument of all for having independent candidates is that the logic of events will force the movement developing around them to develop a coherent policy on all the other political and social problems of the day in which ordinary people are denied any say whatsoever.

# make the most of your telephone!

The problem of communications is one that concerns many socialists today. 'Solidarity' has received this report from a GPO worker. We print it as our contribution to the problem.

Two classes of telephone subscribers are recognised by the GPO: ordinary subscribers (not very profitable) and privileged subscribers (a more paying proposition). Privileged subscribers include doctors and hospitals, but also less essential (or quite useless) groups such as Cabinet Ministers, police and businessmen, both at their offices and at home.

An ordinary subscriber pays £8 rental per year, plus so much per call. Until four years ago this gave him the same facilities in an exchange as a privileged subscriber (who pays £12 a year plus so much per call). Now, however, while a privileged subscriber has a private unselector \* on the line finders \* which enables him to get through in the shortest time technically possible, an ordinary subscriber has to share 5 uniselectors with 48 other subscribers. If 5 ordinary subscribers all chose to phone at once (a thing only likely to happen in the busy hours) 43 people would have to wait.

In certain areas all calls go through those green-painted iron boxes, at street corners, in which lines to the local exchange are shared out at the rate of 5 per 20 subscribers. This further reduces one's chances of getting a call through at any given time.

## CUT OUT SWITCHES

The equipment racks of most exchanges contain selective devices known as cut-out switches for use in 'national emergencies' (such as General Strikes, 'Solidarity' Schools, and Reception of the Four-minute Warning). If thrown, these switches cut out all except one or two shelves of equipment.

The people on these shelves are of course our friends the Cabinet Ministers, police, etc. In a 'national emergency' all subscribers could phone an exchange but the only people they would be able to contact would be the select few. These would be able to phone any ordinary subscriber. Coin-box kiosks could be used as usual (because of their 999 service). Inter-kiosk phoning would still be possible.

\*

First pieces of equipment through which an incoming call has to pass.

There are two main reasons for the cut-out switch: 1) to conserve current in the event of power failure, and 2) to prevent an exchange from becoming choked with calls. The device has great strategic importance. As far as we can ascertain it has only been used on a few occasions such as the death of King George VI and other local disasters, such as floods, etc. On the first occasion engineers threw the switches in certain exchanges where the number of calls ('Have you heard the good news, there's going to be another Coronation?') were jamming the equipment. They were reprimanded but as they had a valid technical reason, no case could be made against them. This reprimand seems to emphasise the essentially strategic nature of the cut-out device, which should only be used on orders from above.

#### TELEPHONE TAPPING

Telephone tapping is carried out at an average rate of 25 lines per exchange, per week. The avowed purpose is for 'service checks'. These are formally concerned with the number and duration of calls, not with their content. This information is 'necessary' for proving costs of disputed phone bills and planning new exchanges, etc. It is also used for cases of malicious use of telephones.

Every week a list of number to be checked is sent to the local exchanges from the Central Checking Exchange for the area. This sheet is supposed to be kept under lock and key but is of course usually left lying around. Connections are made between the main frame and the Central Observation Panel, from where connections to the Central Checking Exchange are made. The plugs on the main frame are left in until further orders are received. The workers in the local exchange know nothing of what is going on at the checking point. Tapping by police, etc, for political reasons (of course only with the Home Secretary's permission) is thus carried out with great ease and comparative secrecy.

#### PROGRESSIVE ASPECTS OF AUTOMATION?

One of the more important facts about the telephone service is the way in which more and more exchanges are becoming automated. As is well known, technological changes bring about new relations between men and provide new content to their activity. But there's another side to this particular coin. Centralised institutions demand the active cooperation of those who use them or at least the tacit acceptance of their basic objectives. When these are lacking, centralisation spells potential disorganisation. Automated telephone services lend themselves to two particularly reprehensible types of activity.

The first procedure is the 'C.S.H.' (Call Subscriber Held) technique, well known to bookmakers' fans and to strikers, particularly in the USA. A number is dialled in the usual way and when the person replies, the caller, instead of pressing button A or B, just leaves the telephone off the hook.

In a kiosk, this is made less noticeable if the receiver is returned to its stand, but propped up with a small piece of wood at one end. This, we are told, requires some practice. The procedure makes the other person's line useless.\*

At this stage one of two things might happen: the person called could use another phone to notify the exchange that his line is dead. Or the fault will first be noticed in the exchange, where, after nine minutes, a 'Call Subscriber Held' alarm bell will ring. Whichever happens an engineer will first find the seized switch on the final selectors (very easy). He will then trace it back to the first rack of equipment (increasingly difficult). Here he will plug in a telephone. No conversation being heard he will attempt to call the holding subscriber. On receiving no reply he would put the 'howler' on. This might be ignored or stifled in a home, and most passers-by would not notice it, coming from a kiosk. If the howler attracts no attention, an engineer would eventually have to be sent to the holding phone, to attend to the 'fault'.

The engineer would then release the line held by manually stepping out the 'first code' switch (these are the switches which deal with the alphabetical part of phone numbers). All these steps are comparatively easy, provided only one subscriber is holding another. But when people find it necessary to act collectively, fairly large numbers of them - say 40 or 50 - have been known to hold a single number. Carefully circumscribed chaos has ensued. If lines are held at night, no engineers would be on duty in most exchanges. In unmanned exchanges - usually small country ones - no alarm would be noticed.

The second serious drawback to automation in the telephone services is that it permits whole local exchanges to be put out of action, should anyone have such evil designs. This has been done by the so-called Permanent Glow technique.

A whole exchange can be made unusable if all its 'first code' switches are seized. The number of these switches is based on the average maximum number of calls expected at a peak period. It may be only 400 (in a 10,000 lines exchange in the suburbs) though more in the city. These switches could be 'seized' if people started dialling unobtainable or non-existent numbers and holding the call (by leaving the phone off the hook). The technique has been operated as follows: a known one-line number is phoned; the call is held; accomplices then phone the same number and on hearing the 'engaged' tone, leave their phones off the hook. When a certain

---

\* Here is why: when a number is dialled, rotary switches are set in motion in the local exchange, in the exchange called and in other exchanges through which the call will go if it is a long-distance one. When the two plungers are not depressed on the hand-set, the whole set-up is frozen. No one can get through to the other line.



number of switches are held in this way, a Permanent Glow alarm will light up, due to increased current consumption. This alarm is then extended from any unmanned exchange to the nearest manned one, from which engineers will be sent. Bells will ring all over the place. Engineers will try to persuade large numbers of absent callers to ring back later, as their desired numbers are unobtainable. If no response is forthcoming and if more and more switches are seized, manual stepping out might have to be used. This of course would be a flagrant interference with callers' rights! Or perhaps, on secret orders from above, the secret cut-out switch might be used.

Relatively small numbers of people have been known to put relatively large numbers of lines out of action by means of relatively small numbers of C.S.H. calls. It is possible for such a group, by concentrating on the first two numerals of a group of 200 consecutive subscribers at a given exchange (say, 3200 - 3399 or 7800 - 7999) to put them all out of action. Generally there will not be more than 20 switches to a given pair of numbers. By holding only 20 numbers beginning 32, 33, etc., the other 180 subscribers will be cut off from incoming calls. If there are fewer than 20 switches the 'number unobtainable' tone will be heard after the particular number of switches have all been used up.

The most vulnerable subscribers in this respect are Private Board Exchange (P.B.X.) subscribers. Their communications have been disrupted when several have dialled and held the same number until one of them received the 'unobtainable' tone. But who and what are P.B.X. subscribers? Why, our old friends the merchants, bookmakers, Cabinet Ministers and their allies, the police, who all have miniature exchanges on their premises. Just as Transport House does! The police also have private (non-GPO) lines and short-wave radio to maintain communications. This is just in case 2 - 200 evil-doing beatniks should choose to pay their respects via the 'personal' numbers of their stations.

A final reassuring thought for those with consciences. None of all this applies to manually operated exchanges. 999 is always a manual board call. The dastardly techniques described in this article cannot therefore interfere with genuine 999 calls.

Happy dialling! We're going back to smoke signals!

We understand that some supporters of the Committee of 100 blacked out the American Embassy's telephone communications last May, when the Americans resumed testing. They used the number GRO 9000. The USSR is also threatening to resume tests. Their numbers are: Embassy (BAY 6451, 6411 and 7281); Consulate: (BAY 3215 and 3216); private lines: Comrade Soldatov, ambassador: (BAY 3620); and his grey eminence, Comrade Lozanov (BAY 3628).

# THE SHAGNESS MONSTER OR THE LABOUR PARTY ILLUSION

Having received information that the Young Socialists were having their annual rave at a holiday camp on the Lincolnshire coast, we decided to send two star reporters: \*\* (alias Peter Crotty) and \*\* (alias Colin Seal). This is what they had to say.

Travelling on Labour Party grants and by de-nationalised road haulage, we found the whole camp swarming with Trotskyists, State Caps, Pabloites, SPGBers and even some workers (had they booked the wrong week by accident?), all living either politically or financially (like us) off the rotting corpse of Social-Democracy.

The whole week had been organised well in advance. There were two and sometimes three meetings a day, to which everyone could go to be harangued by the leaders, and in which 'controversial' political questions and arguments could be put by the Party's tame Trots. Only the morning meetings were well attended, because here one could sleep off the effects of the previous night's orgy. Other meetings were only attended by 'right wingers'. An exception was those on organisation, which were also attended by the S.L.L. (sorry, 'Keep Left!'), there to stress their devotion to the Party and their fervour for canvassing. 'Counterblast' voted a certain Mr. R. Protzky 'Mr. Young Trotskyist 1962' for services of this nature.

Most people, workers and women went to privately organised meetings in their chalets. The purpose of these meetings, we believe, was to start a mass 'Tiny Trots' movement in the near future (about 9 months' time).

Everyone went to hear Gaitskell (even us), for the heckling was of excellent quality. An unofficial sit-down reception in the aisles had been planned for him by Committee of 100 supporters, in the event of his being carried out, shoulder high, like last year. But after John Hill had knelt down and prayed to platform, our leader left hurriedly via a back exit. Some of us were disappointed.

To maintain the democratic and unbiased traditions of our paper, our reporters were asked to find out what other people thought of the rally. First, a rather furtive group, skulking at the corner of a bar: they all agreed that it was 'a great rave, plenty of drink, plenty of cunt, and perfect as long as nobody found out you hadn't paid'.

Next we asked some trade union delegates ('politically active' workers) what they thought about the fight between the 'right' and 'left' wings. The general opinion was that they were both O.K.... as long as they supported Gaitskell. This led us to the reluctant conclusion that at least some workers would still have to be 'taken through the experience'. This task was delegated to Socialist Review entrists, on the understanding that we could take over when they had finished.

In the course of our visits to various chalets, we met three London girls who proudly confessed that they hadn't been to a single meeting. They showed complete contempt of all authority, religious or civil. Here we found 'political' salvation.

The foreign students we questioned has their own opinions on the rally. One thought that all British 'Socialists' were hypocritical: they talked and passed resolutions but did nothing concrete. Another said openly, at a meeting on the Common Market, that previous meetings had been so boring that all he could do was sleep. To his way of thinking, the Labour Party was dead, and firmly buried on the side of the ruling minority. They were both disgusted with the insular attitude of both 'traditional' politicians and 'professional revolutionaries' in relation to the problems facing the colonies and ex-colonies.

Insularity was, we feel, the key-note of the rally. It was all in Y.S. cloud-cuckooland, completely isolated from the working class and from any genuine socialist shop-floor activity. No one discussed conditions of work. Nor was any concern shown for a fact that should really concern this type of socialist, namely the promised day when Wall Street had, at last, been able to have its Great Slump. No one worried that T.U. bureaucrats were again encroaching on the management of disputes at Fords. Could it be that the leadership was becoming disillusioned in the rank and file, instead of vice versa?

The one universal concern was to stay in the party at all costs. Other preoccupations were to take over the party machine, or to re-enter the party after expulsion. All sought to discredit any organisation which dared exist outside the party. One of the tactics used here was the substitution of the words 'Labour Party' whenever the Labour Movement was meant.

They say that we (or any other group) cannot exist outside the Labour Party, THEIR Labour Party. If they mean that we cannot ignore the twelve million workers who, once every few years, give cynical electoral support to the Labour Party (without expecting a Labour Government fundamentally to change their way of life), they are right. But if they mean that we cannot work outside the ranks of Gaitskell, the 'right', 'Tribune' and the Trots, they are dead wrong. The twelve million ARE the Labour Movement - the others (all squabbling for the 'leadership') are only the bureaucratic machine.

The entrists never clearly define what 'work in the Party' means. Their idea of 'working within the Party' means attempting to take over the apparatus by fighting it on its own ground and according to its own rules, which fight is doomed to failure. It provides, of course, full employment for the bureaucrats and plenty of room for skilled manoeuvre, from which the 'masses' can be duly excluded.

Going to Labour Party halls, rallies, meetings, with the intent of 'changing the leadership', of using the Labour Party as a platform, of 'disillusioning' the other people present, or even (shame!) of encouraging people to act for themselves, is bad enough. It only necessitates physical participation. There is no need for the additional hypocrisy of giving the Party electoral support, and publicly toeing the party line while admitting amongst your own faction that this line is so much shit. There is no need for what is worse still, namely canvassing (i.e. telling people to vote for a party which you know is not socialist) with the avowed intention of later informing them of the true situation (if you are not too busy forestalling your own proscription or expulsion).

The whole attitude of the Trotskyists at Skegness was one of mediaeval religious mania. They sincerely believe that there is no salvation outside the Labour Party, and that excommunication (sorry, proscription or expulsion) will condemn them to a fate worse than death - the necessity of joining the sordid, everyday, real fight where it really matters, at the place of work.

We can only hope that when at last the old dog dies, its fleas will die with it.

## SOLIDARITY PAMPHLETS

- No.3. WHAT NEXT FOR ENGINEERS? A discussion of problems confronting engineering workers, by Ken Weller (AEU Shop Steward). 8d.(p.f.)
- No.6. THE MEANING OF SOCIALISM. by Paul Cardan. The case for workers' management of production. 10d. (post free)
- No.7. THE WORKERS' OPPOSITION. by Alexandra Kollontai. A fully annotated account of the 1919-1920 struggle in the Russian Bolshevik Party. 74 pages. 2/5 (post free).
- No.8. THE B.L.S.P. DISPUTE. The story of the Acton strike. A documented exposure of the union leaderships. by Ken Weller. 10d.(p.f.)
- No.9. THE CIVIL DEFENCE FRAUD. by Andy Anderson. The story of one man's challenge to the Authorities. 8d. (post free).
- No.10. 'THE 100 VERSUS THE STATE' (produced jointly with the ILP). The socialist implications of mass civil disobedience and direct action. 8d. (post free).

# Marxian clap-trap ?

'I am not a subscriber to 'Solidarity' because I think its sub-heading 'For Workers' Power' is characteristic of that sloppy thinking which has got socialism into its present mess.

A 'worker' is generally understood to denote those people in the lower grades of the producing and servicing industries. If 'Solidarity' means to include under this heading people such as scientists, housewives, teenage schoolchildren, students, poets, musicians, old age pensioners, convicts, writers, doctors, dentists, sanitary experts, lawyers, accountants, librarians, metallurgists, prospectors, ballet dancers, teachers, surveyors, spacemen, philosophers, linguists, historians, economists, town planners, sociologists, psychologists, dieticians, editors and a whole host of practitioners of professional expertise upon which we all call from time to time, it should choose another slogan whose meaning was more immediately apparent.

If it means to exclude all these people it is indulging in a rather blatant and odious form of humbug which has no relation to socialism at all. It is also indulging in the sort of marxian clap-trap about a 'mystique' of the workers which any worker I know would be the first to repudiate in his own apposite vernacular.

'Workers' are people first and foremost, and this is an identity they share with everyone else in the community. To separate some of them from the rest simply on the grounds of their economic function may be interesting as an exercise in sociology but the relevance to politics is surely rather empty and was indeed exploded long before most of us were born.

Workers today already have more power than many of the groups referred to above. I don't want to see anybody excluded from the power to run the community, not even crooks or capitalists, for the moment you deny the right to exercise power on a shared basis to any one group in the community you are - pace Stalin's Russia - half way along the road to excluding everybody but the ruling group. By all means get rid of monster capitalism (although I would prefer small scale capitalism up to, say, twenty workers per capitalist, to Khrushchev's Russia any day of the week) but don't go on treating the 'workers', whoever you really intend them to be, as a special case. Our problems go far beyond this pert old fogey kind of classification. We are all victims today. We are all prisoners. But let us at least free ourselves of outmoded illusions and misleading and confusing double talk.

John Papworth, London S.W.5



# We don't think so...

Yes, 'we are all victims today'. If by this J.P. means that Bomb and Bureaucrats lord it over the lot of us, he is right. We are dominated by institutions over which we have no control. Rules, regulations, patterns of thought and p tterns of behaviour are imposed on us which are both absurd and against our basic wishes.

How did we get there? Power and wealth are in fewer and fewer hands. Decision-taking and doing the work are poles apart. This started in industry but has now spread everywhere. It riddles political life. It riddles culture... and even consumption. It gives rise to a wide-spread sense of hopelessness and eventually to apathy. Both of which, of course, only make things worse.

But both East and West the conditions of production compel industrial workers to organise collectively for the defence of collective interests. They have to resist, at shop floor level, to remain even 'fragments of men'. The more bureaucratised the industrial structure, the more their struggles relate to the nature of work itself, and to who should determine it. The more concentrated the industry, the greater the potential scope of these struggles.

Throughout history minorities have always ruled through their domination of the productive machine. Who controls production, controls society. None can be free as long as any are exploited. If the working class can win this 'struggle for democracy', if it can impose and retain its own management of production, it will make possible a new society. Men free in production could be free in all aspects of social life. New and meaningful institutions will arise, completely controlled from below. This to us is the meaning of socialism. And this is why we believe in workers' power.

But what about the others (those not organised collectively at work)? Many will participate, as equals, in the building of the new society, for they too will benefit from it. Others may oppose it.

Can all participate to an equal degree in the process of social transformation? Opportunities for effective action are less open to some. Old age pensioners are too frail! Convicts, too restricted in their movements! Ballet dancers too flighty! Dentists, too busy! Poets and spacemen not down to earth enough! Prospectors, too earthbound! Each and all of these can usually only find individual solutions. The problem is to find collective ones. Many will doubtless assist in the struggle of the working class: but not if they maintain their 'middle-class' identity, and seek a separate and superior status in the new society.

# about ourselves

As promised 'Solidarity' Vol. II, No.4 is out on time. This aspect at least of the paper is becoming more predictable.

We produced and sold 1200 copies of the Aldermaston and May Day issue. This extra effort to bring annual good cheer to new readers was well worth while. Vol.II, No.3 kept up the normal circulation of 850. The joint ILP-Solidarity pamphlet 'The 100 versus the State' also sold well on the march and after. The first 2000 went within a fortnight. A reprint of 1000 is going well. We sense here a support far exceeding our numbers. Our other contribution to the March was a reprint of the 'Workers' Bomb' songs (from our 1961 Aldermaston issue). With some notable exceptions, the Young Socialists seemed to enjoy them!

More recently, we produced a leaflet on the Cricklewood bus strike, which we reprint opposite. It was written by a young busman who was involved in the solidarity action. It describes an interesting new technique of struggle evolved by the busmen themselves. Within 12 hours of the end of the strike these leaflets were being distributed in the garages. Within 48 hours, 2000 leaflets had gone out to over 40 garages in the Greater London area. The true facts of the settlement were brought to many busmen in this way and press lies nailed (namely that the Cricklewood men had accepted the new schedules!).

Paul Cardan, one of the editors of 'Socialisme ou Barbarie' (the journal of our French co-thinkers) recently addressed a weekend school of our readers and supporters. Members of several other organisations attended. Many found the new ideas stimulating. Others defended their rigid orthodoxies.

In an attempt to spread our ideological subversion still further into the traditional 'marxist' left, we have recently held two debates: one with comrades from 'Socialist Current' (on 'Bolshevism and the alternative': as might have been predicted, parallel lines failed to meet), and one with comrades associated with 'Socialist Review'. This was the more interesting. We were promised a slump within our lifetime, and told the socialist perspective hinged on it. In their millions the masses would then (at last!) rally to the Labour Party. We were also accused a) of being sectarian, and b) of having members in the Young Socialists. The Young Socialists should be protected from 'Solidarity' wolves.\* We felt we did reasonably well in this second debate... particularly Tony Cliff. We await developments.

---

\* One felt some comrades tended to think of wolves as dishonest sheep in wolves' clothing!

# THE 266 DISPUTE

## how we won

On June 6, the L.T.E. tried to impose new summer schedules on London busmen. Some involved a considerable intensification of the work. The men objected. The strike at Cricklewood Garage was one result.

At Cricklewood, the worst hit route was the 266. On this route conductors were already sometimes taking £30 a day, compared with an average on other routes of £12 to £15. This may be good business for the L.T.E. but it means very hard work for conductors and drivers.

At the Hammersmith end of the 266 run, stops are very close together. This puts great strain on the crews. It is an unpopular route. The changes proposed meant even more frequent covering of this section. On the old schedules, 3 duties at Cricklewood Garage involved 4 journeys to Hammersmith in a day. The L.T.E. proposed to increase this to 5 duties. The suggested changes also included a shortening of stand-time. The union leaders were not prepared to challenge the new schedules, although the local branch was.

### THE STRIKE.

The new schedules were due to start on Wednesday, June 6. Strike action had already been threatened but had been postponed after conciliatory noises from the management. By June 6, the management had made no substantial concessions.

All crews (but one) at Cricklewood came out over the 266 dispute. Some (those on the 245 and 142 routes) also work the 266 route, in rota. Others (those on the 2, 16, 60 and 240 routes), although less directly affected, maintained the solidarity of the garage.

Many routes from other garages overlap the Cricklewood ones for variable distances. By mid-morning crews at Edgware, Hendon, Finchley and Stonebridge had taken action. The form their solidarity took was a refusal to work over routes normally operated by the strikers. This would simply have been blacklegging. The busmen turned their buses round on reaching the 'black' sections and returned, empty, to their garages. After enjoying the glorious June sunshine for a few hours, they would go back to the unofficial terminus and 'complete' the scheduled return journey. All this... and full pay too!

A mass meeting on Wednesday night decided to continue the strike the next day. The strike remained solid throughout Thursday.

At a meeting on Thursday night it was announced that the management had withdrawn its proposed schedules, and offered new ones. On the disputed 266 route, for instance, only 2 duties were to involve 4 Hammersmith trips. The mass meeting accepted these new schedules on the recommendation of the Committee that had run the strike.

### CONCLUSIONS.

The busmen have every cause to congratulate themselves. They have shown that they can take action into their own hands and WIN. They did not wait for months while negotiations proceeded on their behalf. Their action was immediate and united - the issue clearly understood by all. That was enough.

The dispute shows up the crudity of those, both 'right' and 'left', who say workers are only interested in wage demands. Workers are human beings too. They feel very strongly about the conditions of their work. Industrial disputes these days increasingly reflect this attempt by workers to control the job.

In some of the other garages, an isolated minority of 'revolutionaries' were calling for a full-scale sympathy strike. The busmen had no time for these theorists. The method chosen ensured that full control of the solidarity action remained throughout in their own hands. They did not let the union officials or the political agitators take the decisions behind their backs. By remaining 'at work' they maintained their lines of communication with each other and with the strikers. No unnecessary hardship was caused. If the strike had lasted, they would have been in a position to assist the strike funds, while maintaining strict control of the 'blacking' of affected routes.

Another of the issues was the length of the average working day. The first new schedules made this 7 hrs. 10 (for an eleven-day fortnight). The final agreement was 7 hrs. 1. But as one of the strikers told me: 'We're less concerned with a few minutes than with the kind of work to be done!'.

This was the first time the L.T.E. had ever agreed to a settlement while the busmen were still out. Managements often say they won't negotiate at pistol point. Cricklewood busmen have shown that this isn't true... if it's made quite clear that the pistol is loaded.

Colin Seal (Edgware Garage)

REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS TODAY. (continued from p.2)

These conceptions provide a framework for the understanding of the history and development of capitalist society which is none other than the history and development of the class struggle. This dynamic is historic and not objective, for it modifies constantly the conditions of its own development. It modifies the adversaries themselves. It gives rise to collective experiences and creations. The class struggle has determined, in an increasing degree, the evolution of technology, of production, of economy and of politics. It has imposed on capitalism, directly or indirectly, the profound modifications of its structure which we see today.

There can be few more 'unmarxist' patterns of thought than those which attempt to explain contemporary economy and politics in terms of 'laws' governing an entirely different phase of capitalist development. Equally 'unmarxist' are the assumptions that these 'laws' are absolute, analogous perhaps to the laws of gravitation, and that they cannot be profoundly modified by the action of men.

At the subjective level the modifications of capitalism show themselves in an accumulation of class struggle experience among the ruling classes and in the appearance of new capitalist policies. Capitalist policy was formerly regarded by Marxists as synonymous with impotence, pure and simple. It was dominated by the ideology of laissez-faire and limited the role of the State to that of a policeman. Today it recognizes the potential use of the State and constantly seeks to enlarge its function, assigning to it objectives (such as full employment, economic development) whose achievement is no longer left to the spontaneous functioning of the system. The ruling class tends to submit all spheres of social activity to its control. And thereby, whatever its state form, it takes on an increasingly totalitarian character.

On the objective plane the transformation of capitalism is expressed by an increasing bureaucratisation. This has its origin in production but extends and finally invades all sectors of social life. Concentration of capital and statification are but different aspects of the same phenomenon. And in their turn they bring important modifications to the functioning of the economy as a whole.

Bureaucratisation implies the 'organisation' and 'rationalisation' of all collective activity from the outside. To the extent that it succeeds, it completes a process started by an earlier phase of capitalism, namely that all social life is made quite meaningless. It produces mass irresponsibility. Individuals begin to seek private solutions to social problems. This is the inevitable corollary of bureaucratisation.

The inherent objective, the 'ideal tendency' of bureaucratic capitalism is the constitution of a totally hierarchic society which is in constant expansion, a sort of monstrous bureaucratic pyramid where the



increasing alienation of men in labour will be 'compensated' by a steady rise in the standard of living, and where all initiative will remain in the hands of the organisers. This tendency can easily be recognised by anyone who cares to look at contemporary social reality. It coincides with the ultimate objective of the ruling classes: to make the revolt of the exploited fail, by diverting it into a chase after the standard of living, by breaking up working class solidarity through hierarchy and differentials, and by preventing all attempts at collective endeavour from below. Conscious or not, this is the aim of bureaucratic capitalism, the real meaning of the actions of the ruling class and a description of the reality in modern society.

The bureaucratic project must fail because it cannot overcome the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, in the sense that we have defined it. On the contrary, bureaucratic capitalism multiplies this contradiction many times. The increasing bureaucratisation of all social activities only succeeds in extending into all domains the conflict inherent in the division of society into order-givers and order-takers. It spreads everywhere the intrinsic irrationality of the bureaucratic management of production. It is for this reason that capitalism cannot avoid crises (that is to say breakdowns in the normal functioning of society). These may vary in kind and stem from very different immediate causes. The inherent irrationality of capitalism remains but finds expression in different ways.

It is only the class struggle that gives the contradictions and crises of modern society a revolutionary character. The present situation is peculiar in this respect. In production the struggle shows an intensity formerly unknown. It tends to raise the question of who will manage production, and this in the most advanced countries. But outside of production, the class struggle hardly shows itself at all, or only distorted by bureaucratic organisations. This political apathy of the proletariat has a double significance. It represents a victory of capitalism. The bureaucratisation of their organisations drives the workers away from collective political action. The collapse of traditional ideology and the absence of a socialist programme prevents them from generalising their critique of production and from transforming it into a positive conception of a new society. The philosophy of consumption penetrates the proletariat. But the apathy also has potentially positive aspects. Working class experience of the new phase of capitalism could lead it to a criticism of all aspects of contemporary life far more profound and total than anything it has done in the past. And from this could arise a renewal of the socialist ideal in the proletariat, at a much higher level than anything seen hitherto.

The ripening of the conditions of socialism goes on. This can never mean a purely objective ripening (increase of the productive forces, increased centralisation, increasing 'contradictions') nor a purely subjective ripening (accumulation of experience in the proletariat). It means the accumulation of the objective conditions of an adequate consciousness. The proletariat could not eliminate reformism and bureaucratism

before having produced them as social realities and having experienced them in everyday life. Today, workers' management of production (and seeing beyond the capitalist values of production and consumption as ends in themselves) can be understood as profoundly real and relevant.

All this imposes profound changes on the revolutionary movement. Its criticism of society, which is essential to aid workers to evaluate and generalise their everyday direct experience, must be completely re-orientated. It should seek to describe and analyse the contradictions and the irrationality of the bureaucratic management of society, at all its levels. It should denounce the inhuman and absurd character of contemporary work. It should denounce the alienation in consumption and in leisure. It should unveil the arbitrariness and the monstrosity of the hierarchical organisation of production and of all relations between men.

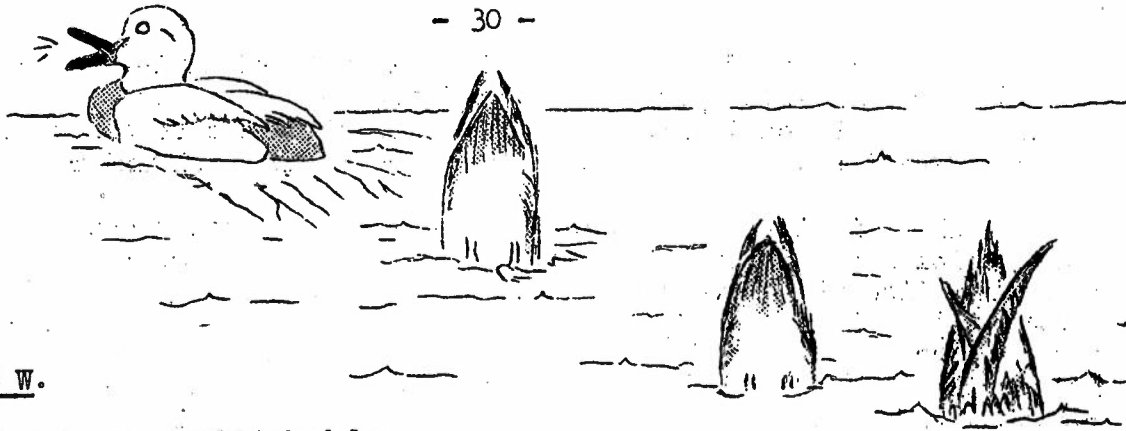
The central element of its programme of demands should be the struggle on the organisation and conditions of labour and of life in the factory. It should struggle against everything which tends to divide workers (differentials, hierarchical wage structure, etc). But it should do more. Under the conditions of modern capitalism the essential problem is how to pass from the struggle at factory level to a struggle against a whole pattern of society. The revolutionary movement will only succeed in this respect if it ruthlessly denounces all equivocation and double-talk on the idea of socialism, if it mercilessly criticizes the values of contemporary society and if it presents the socialist programme to the proletariat for what it really is: a programme for the humanisation of labour and of society.

The revolutionary movement will only be able to fulfill these tasks if it ceases to appear as a traditional political movement (traditional politics are dead) and if it becomes a total movement, concerned with all that men do in society, and above all with their real daily lives.

PAUL CARDAN.

## WHY NOT SUBSCRIBE TO SOLIDARITY ?

Don't leave it to the chance encounter. Get your copy regularly. A postal order for 9/-, sent to E. Morse, 68 Hill Farm, Whipnade, nr. Dunstable (Beds), will ensure you get the next 12 issues, post free.



## REVIEW.

DEMOCRACY AT WORK. Published by  
Common Wealth, 12 High St., NW3.  
(6d. or 3/6 for 6 copies, post free).

-----

This excellent pamphlet shows that Common Wealth is making a serious analysis of modern society. They base their conceptions on the facts of social changes which 'face the Left with a growing list of unanswerable questions, unfulfilled prophecies and contradictions which drive the Radical into a state of bitter confusion and sunder whole Left movements'. They point out that the basis of class society (and the key to the classless one) lies in the control of the means of production.

We agree substantially with the analysis itself. But we see the bureaucracy as the logical product of the concentration of power under capitalism, not as a different and unrelated phenomenon.

Within the framework of this analysis several further questions arise (just as they do within the framework of the 'traditional' analysis). Are the solutions to be reformist ones or revolutionary? And will consciousness arise through education or in the course of the struggle? Those who subscribe to these ideas should now jointly get down to discussing these problems.

## DUCK!

'On Sunday 6th of May, the pent-up frustrations and contempt felt by many Socialists for the hypocrisy of Gaitskell and Brown erupted into violent demonstrations at the Glasgow and London May Day rallies. We condemn the breaking up of a Labour Party meeting...'

'Young Guard', June 1962.

'The "barracking" of Messrs. Gaitskell and Brown at the Party's May Day rallies in Glasgow and London wasn't, repeat wasn't, a particularly bright idea.' '... It is necessary to take a strong line with those who advocate these methods...'

'Socialist Current', June 1962.

'It seems difficult to fix the blame for the negative and unhelpful shouting down of George Brown and Gaitskell at the recent May Day rallies in London and Glasgow'.

Letter in 'Socialist Review',  
June 1962.

'No member of the Socialist Labour League had anything to do with the disturbance'.

'Newsletter', May 12, 1962.