

—SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKER'S POWER

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POLITICS 64

Once every few years we are invited to exercise our 'democratic' rights. We are asked to choose a new set of rulers. The choice is strictly limited. Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee both speak the same jargon. Both think the same platitudes. Both have the same tram-lines in their brains. Prosperity. Expansion. Production. Efficiency. Competition. Discipline. Work. And power for themselves, of course.

Both were chosen and groomed by their local party caucuses. Both are sensible, responsible, middle-of-the-road chaps, their heads stuffed with sensible, responsible, middle-of-the-road prejudices and cliches. Exports. Trade-gaps. The needs of the country. Law and order in industry. Defence.

Both were vetted by their respective party machines. No heretics here. No muted sound of an independent or rebellious thought. Both party machines are in the hands of practised and self-interested minorities for whom politics is the second oldest profession. Eton, Oxbridge, Sandhurst, the City - or a lifetime of double-talk and resolution-mongering in the service of the Trade Union bureaucracy - are the open sesame to the corridors of power.

The party machines are slick in the art of popular manipulation. Ideas don't count. Ideals are a drawback. Images count. Prime Ministers are sold like toothpaste or detergent. 'Have you MacHarolded your teeth today?'. 'Home washes whitest'. 'For a scientific clean-up, use Wilson'. 'Someone isn't using Grimmond'!

Programmes and promises vary marginally. Basic aims and values are the same. Forget the posturing, the shadow-boxing, the political hangovers from the past. Today, the parties all stand for the same great objective : modernising capitalism - a twentieth century face-lift to the ugly and endless reality of exploitation. In practice this spells speed-up, motion study, rationalisation, sackings, science and technology in the hands of those who manage production, 'better' organization, more organization, 'efficiency', new managerial techniques, snooping, black-lists, hierarchy, incentives, differentials, the integration of each person into his particular little niche in the great bureaucratic pyramid, domination at work, control in leisure, manipulation in consumption, 'education', fair shares, a place in the rat-race for one and all. With Conscription and the Bomb, of course, to 'protect' the lot against covetous neighbours, who believe in exactly the same things.

Mr. Wilson reassures Big Business on television. Firms introducing automation will be financially rewarded. 'An efficient Labour Government is just what you need'. Not a word about the lives and jobs of those

displaced by the machines. Mr. Wilson can also wave the flag. He talks of strengthening 'our' conventional forces, to enable 'our' Navy to assist in 'ad hoc U.N. operations'. Who doubts what these 'operations' are or what kind of 'fires' they are likely to be called upon to extinguish? As for conscription, it is now a four-letter word - and the police will soon be 'swooping' on all those who use it. Meanwhile Young Socialist sections are disbanded. Dissidents are expelled. Shadow minister of Labour, Ray Gunter, openly threatens the 'vested interests of the trade unions'. He makes no bones about how he'll cope with workers in struggle.

Suddenly all seems to change. 'People matter'. Our participation in politics is solicited. For years we've hardly seen our 'representatives'. Today they grovel before us, begging our votes, promising us the moon and sixpence. For years they'd excluded us from decision-taking in every way they could. Tory and Labour councils refused to answer our questions about Civil Defence. Mounted police met us when we protested about Suez, rents, unemployment, or the Bomb. They've used their law, their courts and their judges in vicious attempts to intimidate us. Today, for a few weeks, we are offered an illusion of sovereignty.

The parties all tell us what they will do for us. None tell us what they'll do us for. At what cost - at whose cost - their promised 'prosperity'? How many will fall by the wayside as they usher in their mechanical millenium? Since when were production and organization the be-all and end-all of human endeavour? And since when were the real decisions in our society taken by 'the Honourable Members', anyway?

So the election is a fraud. What then can revolutionaries do? In a previous issue (vol.III, N^o 1) we outlined our views. In this issue we publish two texts which seek to develop them, in a practical way.

One text is from a Committee of 100 group in Exeter. It calls for a campaign to expose the fraud of capitalist democracy. It advocates the mass spoiling of ballot-papers as the best means of political protest. The other text is the preliminary statement of the 'LONDON WORKERS ASSOCIATION', a group recently formed to sponsor a candidate in the General Election who would speak up, honestly and fearlessly, on behalf of working people, radical opponents of the Bomb, and all others who are politically disenfranchised. This group calls for 'a massive vote of no-confidence in all the political parties and in the whole parliamentary system'. Let those who are opposed to the Warfare State and all it stands for stand up and be counted!

We see nothing incompatible between these two methods of struggle. We pledge our support to both these campaigns and to any others that may be waged along similar lines. The notion that there is only one correct approach, only one correct policy, only one correct method of struggle - or only one great teacher (or group of teachers) - is extremely sectarian. It is moreover itself totalitarian, a percolation even into the ranks of revolutionaries of the increasingly authoritarian and monolithic ideas of the society in which they live.

We feel, on the contrary, that it is through the constant interaction of many different methods of struggle that we will together advance towards our common objectives. Together, let us explore every channel open to us, probe every weakness of the state, seize every chance of telling people what we believe in, and in the process build firm contacts for the struggles that lie ahead.

We are few. In this election, if we are to compel a real discussion of our ideas, if we are to present them as a real and not as an abstract alternative, we must concentrate and not diffuse our effort.

What matters to us is WHAT is said. Provided the message is clear and forthright it matters little whether one calls for a vote, for abstention or for a spoilt ballot-paper. Political impotence is too high a price to pay for the preservation of doctrinal purity. The main thing is to get the message across, boldly, effectively and imaginatively. The message itself is quite simple. 'You are robbed, manipulated, swindled, bullied, conned. You are threatened with annihilation. You are asked to threaten the people of other lands with a similar fate. The laws, the cops, the judges - and in the last resort the Bomb - protect the boss and his right to rule. Parliament is a fraud. The state is their state. The parties won't fight for you. They are part and parcel of the system. No one will fight for you. Your fate is in your own hands. Isn't it time you tumbled to it all? Are you prepared to act, together with others who think like you?'

It is high time these things were said - and HEARD. If they are true they are sure to evoke an echo.

SOLIDARITY

Are you a subversive? Are you a disrupter? Are you fed up with traditional politics? Then what you need is a subscription to 'SOLIDARITY'. Send 9 shillings to Bob Potter, 197 Kings Cross Road, London WC1, and make sure you get the next 12 issues of 'Solidarity' and Solidarity Pamphlets. In our next issue we hope to document in detail the attitude of the 1945-51 Labour Government to strikes and to the use of troops. This is essential election material. Make sure of your copy now. And if you can help us sell on Easter Monday please let us know immediately.

We are receiving a steady stream of requests for back issues. The lot are out of print except the last two issues and vol. II, N° 10 (the 'Black Paper' on Canon Collins, which should still prove useful). If you have any unwanted spares, please return them to us now. We'll pay your postage and credit your account.

And would all those with unsettled accounts please cough up. Writing reminders slows us down and drives our treasurer mad. We need to receive loans - not to make them !

THE LONDON WORKERS ASSOCIATION

The London Workers Association has been formed to sponsor and support a candidate in the coming General Election who will represent the interests of working people. The members of the Association are convinced from their own experience that none of the traditional parties will do this job. None challenges our existing society in any fundamental way.

All the traditional parties take it for granted that the rich and privileged should continue to live off the backs of working people. They take it for granted that we should tolerate a system under which we produce all the wealth while others who own or manage the factories, railways, mines and land reap the fruits of our labour.

They take it for granted that those who possess wealth and power should direct our lives - hiring and firing us at their will, and deciding what we should produce, in what amounts, for what purpose and at what cost to ourselves.

The traditional parties all accept without question that there should be rulers and ruled, governors and workers, and that the State, the Army and the Police should be paid to defend the legal robbery of the many by the few.

All the traditional parties stand for nuclear policies and military alliances. All are prepared to threaten the working people of other lands with nuclear annihilation. All are prepared to accept conscription. All participate in the deception of Civil Defence. None will denounce the provision of secret shelters for the self-appointed few. All are prepared to vote vast military budgets and to support standing armies which will be used for protecting investments abroad and for strike-breaking purposes at home. All are prepared to use the Official Secrets Act to bolster up this whole monstrous deception.

WE ACCEPT NONE OF THESE THINGS.

We believe, as countless working men have believed down the centuries, that society could do perfectly well without employers, without landlords, without policemen, without Royalty or titled gentry, without soldiers and without politicians - without all the hordes of hangers-on and parasites who do no useful work but live off our labour. But life could not go on without the daily toil of working men and women in all sorts of jobs, making, maintaining or transporting the means and necessities of life. We further believe that the working people of all lands are brothers and that should refuse to fight one another any more in the interests of their respective rulers.

We are convinced that only when the workers both own and manage production itself will the problems that beset us all - peace and war, human freedom and dignity, decent living standards, housing and jobs - be solved in the interests of the vast majority.

The propaganda of all the parties tries to teach us that Parliament and voting is the 'democratic' way of changing society. This is demoralising nonsense. It is nonsense because Parliament is a fraud (the real decisions are not taken there) and it is demoralising because it discourages people from struggling for themselves and tells them instead to rely on leaders who will solve their problems for them. We are convinced that nothing worth while was ever achieved except when working people mobilised themselves to obtain what they wanted.

Finally we believe that struggle against the employers and their state is the only way in which we can defend and advance working class interests. The logical end of this struggle is for the producers to take the running of society into their own hands.

We want a society in which all men - whatever their race or colour - will have a right to live in peace and will actively participate in running their own affairs, but where no man will have a right to live off the back of another. Such a society - which has been the dream of working men for centuries - is entirely possible of achievement. What is required is an end to servility in the face of authority and a will to struggle. If enough want it and fight for it - it will be ours.

In this election our candidate will advance these ideas. That will be his only purpose in standing. He won't ask for your votes, claiming to be able to solve your problems for you. The real solution to your problems lies in your own hands. Our candidate will ask you to express a massive vote of no confidence in all the existing parties and in the whole parliamentary set-up.

It is now time to fight for our emancipation through our own efforts.

Support for our candidate in this election will tell the whole country that some of us are ready and willing to take the first step.

London, February 1964.

ALGERIA TODAY

BY

MARVIN & BARBARA
GARSON

(who have recently travelled
widely in Algeria)

FOR UNITY

of thought and of action

For the realization of our revolution's
objectives.

For socialist construction:

THE SINGLE PARTY SYSTEM

The FLN expresses the profound aspirations
of the masses, which it guides on the path
of success for the realization of their
aspirations.

You who can read, EXPLAIN this
to those who cannot.*

Algeria is of course an underdeveloped country: family agriculture, negligible industry, late trains and unpredictable electricity. Yet in other respects it is surprisingly advanced. After only a year and a half, Algerian public life - press, Party, official meetings, speeches - have already reached a point of degeneracy which required a generation and a half to achieve in the Soviet Union.

The newspapers are full of articles like this: '... Although we were already familiar with the forceful personality of the President (Ben Bella) and the unshakeable strength of his convictions as a militant, we were impressed once again by the deep sincerity he showed throughout the interview he granted us, by his total confidence in the destiny of our revolution and our people, and by his certainty and faith in victory in the new struggle of socialist construction.....'**

The trade unions oppose all strikes and speak of 'the labouring masses, who have merited the confidence of our revolutionary government...'*

* Published by the Tizi-Ouzou FLN.

** 'Le Peuple', Algiers, December 5, 1963. This introduction, by the way, is longer than the interview itself.

*** Editorial in 'Révolution et Travail', organ of the Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens, November 28, 1963. Bertolt Brecht meant to be ironic when he said: 'the government declares that it has lost confidence in the people. It has decided therefore to dissolve the people and elect a new one.'

Members of the FLN Youth Organization are marched in uniform to demonstrate solidarity with the Viet Cong or to greet Chou En Lai, names the bewildered children never heard of until they got their marching orders.

Party officials tell you with a straight face that 'to be an official of the Party is to be among the best elements of the nation. It is to be one who has led the struggle against colonialism and now continues to set the example in all spheres of life, to guide and inspire his brothers - do you follow me or shall I speak slower ?'.

An FLN Youth official proudly told me that he had organized a tree-planting campaign 'in solidarity with the National Tree-Planting Day' (even though it was the wrong season for tree planting in his region and the trees would die). 'A failure if you only consider the trees,' he said. 'But a great victory from the psychological point of view'.

The parody is most complete when it comes to the Party. According to the Algerian Constitution, the FLN Party 'defines the policy of the nation and inspires the action of the state; it controls the action of the National Assembly and of the Government'. Yet, although the Government has been in power a year and a half the Party has still not held its first congress to find out what its line is.

The early history of the Party reads like a joke. On July 21, 1962, the Party did not exist. On July 22, its Political Bureau was proclaimed. On August 3, the Political Bureau was installed as the Government. On August 13, finally, a member of the Political Bureau was put in charge of forming the Party.

In Russia, the phoney rhetoric and elaborate organizations are the corpses of bodies that were once alive. In Algeria, the leaders are determined to skip stages... by giving birth to a corpse.*

The Party and press talk a great deal about 'mobilizing' the population. Fortunately they talk more than they act. If you ask a Party official what the Party does, he will give you his set speech about 'animating and guiding'. If you press him a bit, if you ask what the Party had done here, what it has 'animated' or 'guided' in this town, this week, or this month, he will look bewildered for a moment. Then he will go right back to the patter he knows by heart. In fact all the Party does is to find jobs for friends and relatives (a strong Party recommendation assures a government job).

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES: THEORY & PRACTICE

All this reflects the preoccupations and style of work of the new economic bureaucracy. Determined to model Algeria's economy after that of the 'socialist countries', they have already remodeled public life in that image. It will be a long time before economic organization catches up.

* The 'law of unequal and combined development' ?

Most of the population still gets its living - miserably enough - from the private, petty-capitalist sector : Kabylie women by gathering olives; small shops, ten to a street, by selling identical items; street vendors by buying cigarettes by the packet and selling them by fives or even singly. Repair shops have the most primitive equipment. There are still hand weavers. Small peasants, with ten acres of wheat and some sheep, still constitute the majority of the population. These are the economic facts of life.

The government is of course unable to control this private sector. But neither does it fully control the 'modern' sector, the few industries and many rich farms which the French once owned. Between the old regime of the colons and the probable future regime of state-socialism, the system called autogestion (self-management) leads a precarious existence. In theory, Comités de Gestion (Management Committees) composed of workers, and elected by the workers, run the farms and industries abandoned by the French. In practice, auto-gestion is neither real workers' power nor a clever fraud. It represents an opportunity for workers' power which the workers have not seized.

In the spring and summer of 1962, the French left Algeria en masse. The government tried to convince them to stay, but by October it was apparent that they had gone for good. The new-born Algerian state did not have the competent cadres to administer the vacant properties. In many cases, especially in agriculture, the workers simply went back to work without the boss. In others, the local Préfecture assembled the workers, chose a manager among them, and told them to do their best.

In March 1963 the situation was 'regularized'. The vacant properties were declared 'nationalized under workers' management'. A set of decrees* legally defined the Comité de Gestion and described a standard procedure for elections. A state-appointed 'Director' was attached to each enterprise to 'represent the interests of the State'. (In theory the state's function is to collect revenue from each enterprise, for investment in new industries, and to give aid to the poorest regions. In practice the size of the state's share has not yet been set, because the government hasn't yet elaborated specific development plans).

In many enterprises the Director is the real manager. In others the Director is only a figurehead or hasn't even been named yet. There the 'Comités de Gestion' keep the enterprise running fairly well. I was told several times 'We've had no trouble. We'd all been on the job under the colon. So we knew just what to do'. These committees were simply keeping the thing running. The will to decide on new processes, to plan for the future either on a local or a national level, to see the enterprise as a thing which men dominate and control over a whole period of time rather than a thing which manipulates men each day - that is what is lacking.

* Drafted by Michel Raptis - that's right, *PABLO*, the Pablo - like it or not.

THE PARALYSIS OF WILL

While the workers keep the farm or shop running on the old basis, the government's bright young men are preparing development plans. Agents of the Office National de la Réforme Agraire have received instructions to prepare a detailed five-year plan for each auto-gestion farm. The Ministry of Agriculture cautions its agents not to be 'bureaucratic': once the plan has been drawn up in the offices it should be fully explained to the workers of the farm concerned. The plan includes not only the physical equipment of each farm but also the size of the labour force and the level of skill that will be demanded of it. A meeting of Réforme Agraire officials in Oran (whose transcript I was allowed to see) anticipated that there would be trouble explaining to the workers the need to 'reduce the number of permanent workers to reasonable limits' - i.e. why there would have to be sackings !

In most places, then, the workers are organized democratically... to follow in effect the orders of the departed colon. In others, they are organized democratically... to carry out the plans of the Ministry of Agriculture. In neither case are they exercising domination over the enterprise. They are doing without the foreman but not without the boss.

The real villain of the piece is not Ben Bella or the Bureaucracy-smothering-all-spontaneous-activity-and-initiative. There is plenty of administrative heavy-handedness, of course, but in many places the administration hardly exists. Here the workers are largely on their own. They are free to elaborate a plan of their own for the future of the enterprise, or to link up with nearby 'Comités de Gestion' to plan for the municipality, or on a regional basis. But they do not have the will.

The real cause of this paralysis of will and initiative is the century of French colonialism and the seven years of bloody repression that have left the country thoroughly exhausted. The paralysis is reinforced by the 'Party-knows-best' strand in official propaganda. People who risked their lives in clandestine struggle now just want a job, and peace, and quiet. They are prepared to leave it to others to solve their problems. They don't want to be mobilized by State or Party. Nor do they want to mobilize themselves. It is impossible even to organize neighbourhood committees to paint over the OAS slogans which are still common in the big cities. Blocks of flats now completely inhabited by Moslems have 'Vive Salan' in huge black letters over the main entrance. The tenants are apparently waiting for the inscriptions to fade.

In this general atmosphere the 'Comités de Gestion' will not present much of an obstacle to the growth of a bureaucracy in the State economy. The government is committed to keeping auto-gestion - at least in name - in the former French properties. But it has said nothing about encouraging auto-gestion in the new industries it is building with the surplus value drawn from the auto-gestion sector. It is most likely that the new industries - food processing, textiles, diversified light and medium manufacture - will be run as autocratically as British Railways or the National Coal Board.

As the great majority of the population, now in the petty-capitalist sector, is gradually sucked into the new state enterprises, the relative importance of the auto-gestion sector will steadily diminish. Auto-gestion will remain in the former French enterprises, but the state-appointed Director will assume full powers where he has not done so already. Thus auto-gestion will have been nothing but an episode of the early period of the 'new' regime, when the state had not yet the instruments and institutions to handle the economy and only the workers themselves could keep things running on a day to day basis.

"CONVERTING THE LEADERSHIP"

The only current of opinion that opposes the steady bureaucratization has no roots in the countryside and very few in the cities. Paradoxically, and unfortunately, its major source of influence is in the government itself. The current runs an official, government-financed weekly, 'Révolution Africaine', which is distinguished by its fresh language and frank reporting (by contemporary Algerian standards). The editor, Mohammed Harbi, is said to have Ben Bella's ear and has been appointed a member of the Preparatory Commission for the First Party Congress, to be held this Spring. Michel Pablo and other Trotskyists, who support this tendency, hold medium level government posts.

Their analysis of the Algerian situation, in outline, is roughly as follows: private capitalism is no longer a strong possibility. Algeria will become either a Russian-style 'deformed workers' state' or a socialist democracy where national planning is in the hands of vigorous 'Comités de Gestion' organized at the national level.

'Révolution Africaine' is calling for a Congress of industrial Comités de Gestion. It asks for 'the creation of new types of permanent institutions ... inspired by the principle that the true role of the Comité de Gestion is to organize production and to be the basic cell of national planning'.* Diplomatically, but clearly enough, the magazine criticizes 'certain sincere partisans of socialism who are only acquainted with the system of general statification of the economy and its centralized, authoritarian administration. (They) are victims of the mystique of the plan'.** ... Without these prerogatives (to dispose of its own capital and elaborate its own plan) auto-gestion is emptied of its content and reduced to a system of simple workers' supervision over a statist, centralist and authoritarian management of the economy'.*** The tendency warns of the lessons

* 'Pour un Congrès Industriel', unsigned, November 9, 1963.

** Emphasis in original.

*** 'Nécessité d'une Doctrine Economique', by Ben Abdel Krim, October 26, 1963.

that must be learned from the bad results of authoritarian planning 'in the quasi-totality of workers' states, Cuba included.'

This analysis is clearer and more sympathetic than that of the more spectacular oppositions: the Kabylie revolt of Ait Ahmed, the boy-scout 'maquis' of Dra-el-Mizan, or Mohammed Boudiaf and his Parti de la Révolution Socialiste.

But the Trotskyist program for action is pathetic. It relies on 'convincing Ben Bella', a 'healthy element' surrounded by evil ministers. The left current hopes to bring Ben Bella around before the coming Party Congress in order to pull off a coup of sorts at the Congress or just before. All sorts of former militants who have been out of politics either because they 'mistakenly' opposed Ben Bella in 1962 or because they are sickened by the present state of the Party, would suddenly be declared Party members. The new, invigorated Party would go out to the workers and peasants to encourage them to take real economic power into their hands.

But while the left current pins its hopes on the conversion of Ben Bella, the nascent bureaucracy can rely on the simple, deadly logic that flows from underdevelopment: 'Algeria must develop her economy. The "socialist" path has worked in Russia. It will work in Algeria. It's so simple. You just appoint someone to be in charge of textiles, or railroads, or youth. He makes the decisions. And people follow them.....'

WAYS TO PUT OFF YOUR LANDLORD WHEN YOUR RENT IS DUE

Always send back his bills; you can spot them without opening the envelopes. Mark them 'addressee unknown', 'in hospital', 'in gaol', 'not at this address', 'undeliverable'. Confuse your landlord.

If he comes in person tell him you sent in the rent that morning. When he comes the second time tell him you had the wrong address on it and it was returned to you and you mailed it off again just before he showed up. When he comes the third time, tell him his office has it and what does he want. Let him and his cronies spend a few days searching their office.

Or you can send their bill in with a note saying 'enclosed please find the rent'. Leave the outside envelope slightly ripped open. When the landlord or agent arrives to tell you you left out the check, be indignant. Tell him his firm misplaced it or tell him you think someone stole it. Perhaps his partner. You claim will create distrust and dissension in their ranks.

Of course the best and most honest way to put him off is to tell him you don't think he deserves the rent. Quote Engels 'On the Housing Question'. Then throw him out.

(Reprinted, slightly amended, from 'Newsletter of the San Francisco Housing Strike'. First published in 'Strike', vol.I, N° 2)

EVICTON IN TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The following article was written by a dustman and a railway worker, 'Solidarity' readers in Tunbridge Wells. Their story is of more than local interest.

A few weeks ago, the Tunbridge Wells Working Group of the Committee of 100. turned to a new type of direct action: exposing the local housing racket.

First a word about our Working Group. It consists of a good mixture of anarchists, left-wing socialists, syndicalists, marxists, readers of 'Solidarity', and even a few Communist Party members. All of us are active in CND or YCND, as well as in the Committee. In addition we meet once a fortnight under the heading of an 'anarchist' discussion group. At these meetings, ideological differences and events such as the 1917 Revolution, Kronstadt, the General Strike and the Spanish Civil War are discussed, analyzed and fiercely debated. In spite of - or because of - this, we manage to achieve a surprising unanimity in action.

Until quite recently nearly all our activity had been in the anti-nuclear field. Although most of us have been connected with local politics in one way or another it is only with our latest action that we have come near to gaining real mass interest and support.

We came up against the housing problem in a very direct way. I was emptying the dustbin at 124 Upper Grosvenor Road early in October last year. Mrs. Hilden, the occupier, asked me if I knew of any accommodation as she, her husband, 16-year old daughter and 4-year old son were under threat of eviction.

Mrs. Hilden's home had been sold with vacant possession and she was not protected under any rent act. Mr. Hilden, a labourer, had been out of work following an accident and was drawing the dole. His daughter Sandra was earning the princely sum of 1/9 per hour from sweated labour in a nearby laundry.

Our first concern was to try and find them suitable accommodation. This proved almost as difficult as finding an honest politician. Tunbridge Wells is a commuters' town, and the only houses being built are for private sale at a minimum of around £4,500. £5 per week for two drab rooms is considered a normal rent. Luxury flats stand empty for want of a purchaser while new office blocks abound. There are at least 50 houses standing empty (during this time no rates are payable). Meanwhile evictions take place.

The full realization of this scandal drove us into action. Although we knew we would achieve nothing through the 'normal' channels, we decided to go through them just the same. This was partly to demonstrate to a few doubters that this method was useless and partly to safeguard ourselves against the usual blah. If we had started with direct action, some official would have argued the old 'if only you had come to see us first' line. So we did.

We went to see the Housing Manager. At first he refused to discuss the subject. Eventually he excused himself by telling us that there were at least a dozen worst cases in Tunbridge Wells, and that there were 1,300 people on the housing list. This was just what we wanted to know.

Several times, during the ensuing month, we pressed the case onto the Housing Committee's agenda. Each time the answer was: 'There is nothing we can do. There are worst cases, you know'. We took the problem to several Labour councillors. They said: 'It's disgraceful'; or 'We'll do what we can'; or 'Leave it with me'....., and then either forgot about it or were 'defeated' in the Council, by the Tory land interests. It was perhaps a little too much to ask those in these positions to risk losing them by being outspoken. Perhaps it was too much to have expected the Labour Party to support us. Anyway, we got busy compiling our own list of empty properties for use as ammunition. We even sent a resolution to the Town Clerk. The resolution was even echoed by the local Young Socialist branch. We don't know what the Council did with the resolutions, but we can guess.

Meanwhile the Hildens were living in appalling conditions. The family was first supposed to be out by December 8. But they stayed. The electricity supply was then cut off and the family had to spend Christmas by candlelight. The N.A.B. appeared to go out of its way to be as bureaucratically unhelpful as possible.

Final notice of eviction came on January 1 - a nice New Year's gift. The Hildens decided to make a stand, if only to let people know what was going on.

January 8 found Number 124 locked and barricaded. On the previous night nearly 1,000 leaflets had been distributed through letter-boxes in the area calling for support for a demonstration.*

* The leaflet pointed out: 'An Englishman's home may be his castle but unless the Englishman concerned has enough money, and/or friends in the right places, it seems to be a castle which it is impossible to defend.'..... 'This affair concerns all tenants: those behind with the rent; those waiting for a council house; those threatened with eviction. And it concerns all who desire social justice, democracy and freedom. Join us now: we can beat the bailiffs; and we can show the Council and the Government that we need houses more than offices and Bingo halls, and that we mean to get them.'

Just before 12 noon when the bailiffs were due to arrive, a Committee of 100 banner 'AGAINST EVICTION' was hung from the upstairs window and some 20 people assembled in front of the door with posters saying 'Homes, not offices' - 'Houses, not bomb-shelters (for Top People)'; and 'Is the Council in the land racket too?'. Several of those present had clearly left work in order to demonstrate.

Television cameras moved about the front lawn, reporters interviewed anyone who looked important, and a crowd of neighbours congregated outside the front gate. But where were the bailiffs?

By 12.30 pm. the Press and T.V. were getting restless. They wanted a sit-down, a punch-up, a sex angle, anything with action and they wanted it fast. At about 12.45 a solitary copper turned up and told us the eviction was 'postponed'.

We knew what sort of smooth trickery 'authority' is fond of. We made plans for a 24-hour watch on the house and selected a local coffee-bar as HQ. While some stayed on, others had to return to work. Some went off to collect sleeping bags and blankets.

None of these arrangements were needed however. Just before 4 pm., when the picket was at its weakest (reduced to 5), a group of 8 coppers was seen collecting at the bottom of the road. By the time they, and the bailiffs they were accompanying, had summoned enough courage to confront us the picket had grown to a dozen, and neighbours had gathered round. The relation of forces was however inadequate for anything more than a token obstruction.

After the usual exchanges a window was forced and the bailiffs entered. The 'barricade' (consisting of a tub, a sink and a gate-post) was dismantled by the police and the personal belongings of the Hilden family were removed item by item. A family was made homeless.

Mrs. Hilden refused to go to a Reception Centre. She had been to one before. To go to one of them would have meant splitting up the family and getting rid of the two dogs, as well as putting the family in an even worse position for any future home of their own.

We are helping to pay for temporary accommodation in a boarding house for them, while looking for a permanent home. There was considerable working class solidarity. Donations have been received from individuals, from a whip round at the local factory, and from 31 electrical workers at the telephone exchange. Several workers donated £1. A collection at a building site raised £8.10.0. The demonstration aroused a great deal of interest among working class people here. It got publicity on BBC TV and radio and a very fair featuring on Southern Television, where one of our comrades put our case. It achieved front-page headlines in the local press (Kent and Sussex Courier, Jan. 10, 1964). We feel we have done more for the cause than if we had fasted for Oxfam or held a silent vigil to impress the local middle class with our sincerity. Our next step is to hold a public meeting. We also hope to see the development of a tenants' association, run by the tenants themselves, that is really capable of hitting back at landlords and bailiffs, at the indifference of the council and at the injustice of the whole property racket.

Brian Rose and T.J. Burton

THE SHOP STEWARDS

another experience ...

The 'Letter from a Shop Steward' (in the last issue of SOLIDARITY) needs to be criticised, and in a way that may depress some people. To avoid too much defeatism we will refrain from a point by point challenge and, instead, attempt to express the true situation, which we claim to know by virtue of having lived it.

If anything like the situation described in the article applied to the shop-stewards' movement today, it would be wonderful. No problems would stand in our way and we could go forward, building up workers' power brick by brick on established foundations.

Just think of it! Older workers who have learnt all the lessons, passing on their wisdom to dead keen young stewards who present themselves in ever-increasing numbers. A completely united front of shop stewards faithfully representing, reporting back and consulting the men with scrupulous regularity. Due consideration to minority opinion. Meetings during working hours for as long as the stewards wish. Management becoming increasingly scared and on the defensive. Well organised joint action with other factories in the industry, trust, or area. All poised and ready to go right forward and take over the control of industry, which apparently could be assured at one stroke!

What a pipe dream (and incidentally what a contribution such organisation could have made to movements such as Nuclear Disarmament). It seems a pity to have to wake up and tell the grim truth. Possibly the article could have served some theoretical purpose, or even imparted some vision, if presented in an abstract or hypothetical form; but to present it as fact, with the mere reservation of it being "slightly starry-eyed", is not good enough. In the light of that article the tenuous resistance and sacrifice of the few remaining militants would appear to be both adventurous and unnecessary, and the book of union rules either non-existent or a power for good.

Unfortunately the number of older militants who still hold faith in any kind of militant action, are few and far between. This is understandable because they have been confused and betrayed so often. It will be necessary in the future to prove to them that some form of organisation can really stand up to the employers.

The article mentions that little is known of the history of the shop-stewards' movement. On the question of loss of faith, we can contribute from our own living memory. When the first militancy of the labour movement came up against a compromising bureaucracy and the workers suffered their first major betrayal, militants began to look to the communists for a lead. At this time the Communist Party appeared to believe in struggle and contributed considerably to the building of the shop-stewards' movement. But just as they were beginning to win the confidence of the workers they also decamped from the struggle and concentrated on building centralised leadership, capturing positions, and only taking part in those activities which could be capitalised upon from the Party point of view. After such added confusion it was natural that workers should lose faith and begin to look to the material possessions of an acquisitive society as the only sure sign of advancement.

Today in fact, a vast mass of factories are unorganised. Very little is being done about it. In places, conditions which could be described as semi-feudal remain unchallenged. There is no membership drive. Even in some of the factories where there is a high percentage of T.U. membership, there is very little or no shop stewards' organisation. The general idea is to look after No.1 first. This can be directly traced back to the lack of any determined resistance to victimisation. There are certainly no streams of young stewards being trained. The only sizeable pressure on employers to improve conditions is that determined by the supply and demand of labour.

Where effective organisation still exists it is mainly in firms or industries which have been well organised for a considerable time. No doubt we would find things taking place there which could possibly be related to those described in the article. But whether such shop organisation is developing and challenging management with any persistent drive is most doubtful. We do know however that in those firms where the workers show signs of developing any kind of militancy they are viciously attacked in a most sweeping and thorough manner by the employers' organisations, often supported by the police and other such weapons of the state, not to mention ex T.U. organisers acting as strike-breakers.

Some of the modest demands of old-established shop organisation tend to help the management with their problems rather than to make inroads into their power. The modern methods of forward accounting and long-range planning persistently discipline production to ensure a steady and high rate of profit. There is no such constant pressure behind the workers demands. Neither do wage increases, which are tied to minimum standards of living, bear any real relationship to profits. Most workers do not as yet understand how much profits have risen and how little their wages, in comparison.

Most shop steward committees and area organisations are constitutionally tied to District Committees. They suffer from the constraining effect of union rules. The union officials, including those Communists who have managed to obtain positions of ascendancy, hate the militants almost

as much as the employers do. To the officials, militants mean struggle (rather than procedure) and insecurity (rather than good safe jobs). These officials are prepared to use every rule in the book, and any device, including collusion with the employers, to rid themselves of the menace of the real militant.

* * * * *

The employers' organisations are not afraid of official union procedure. They work on the principle of maintaining a number of lines of defence and orthodox union organisation is no challenge to these defences. Strong united action, capable of coping with the tactics of the union leaders will be essential in the crucial struggle for power.

The shop stewards' organisation in general is becoming moribund because whenever it confronts the employers it is isolated within its own factory. Much wider solidarity is essential. And yet apart from the raising of funds, neither the area organisation nor the union officials do anything to mobilise support for those in struggle. The union officials (who, let us never forget it, are paid by the workers) should in such circumstances work for active assistance from other factories in order to build up a pressure to match and surpass that of the employers. But they don't. The employers are united and the workers isolated.

The only time District Committees work for some inter-factory solidarity, is when it suits the purpose of their own bureaucratic leaderships. Such 'actions' are then quite artificial. They lack timing, impact and interplay. They are used merely as a vehicle for letting off steam, or as a show of 'strength' in support of those aspiring to leadership. This serves no real purpose in the eyes of the workers, who feel they are being manoeuvred. It does not contribute to their shop organisation or to their power within the factory.

Although this picture may appear depressing compared with the previous article, it contains little which is new to the industrial worker. We must face the truth. Much of what we desired and worked for has gone to the melting pot (though not thereby entirely lost). The truth is known and at least people are not now as gullible as they were. Nor are they so reverent to authority. New pressures are constantly building up and we can perhaps look forward to fresh impulses and social surges. In the meantime increasing solidarity in action should obviously be the keynote.

* * * * *

But what of the future form of factory organisation? Can there be a blue-print for this, any more than there can be a closely defined road to socialism. The choice is obviously with the people, whether to go forward or slip back to barbarism. We hope that as time goes by more and

more of those who wish to go forward will be driven to act positively. The social advance of the future will depend on the sum total and chain reactions of such positive actions, taken anywhere, and at any time. Who can dare prophesy on the interplay of so many variables?

If some form of inter-factory organisation, really able to withstand a major attack of the employers and win through without compromise, could be built through solidarity in action then that type of organisation would stand out as a shining example and receive the confidence of the workers. We must point out however that any such victory would be against the interests both of the union leaderships and of the traditional organisations, and that they would do their best to prevent it.

The offending article in some respects attempts to be a blue-print to workers' power. But it sees considerable advances being made without any serious interference from the employers or the bureaucracies of the union, the Labour Party and the Communist Party. This is impossible and most misleading.

LES & GRACE JACOBS.

SONG OF JUSTICE

I (Tune: Bless 'em all)

Oh, I perjured myself in the box at Old Bailey
As I had my orders to do.
To get an indictment, the charge was incitement,
Next time we might try something new.

CHORUS

Charge a few,
Charge a few,
Just a couple will do.
To make an example,
Frame up a small sample,
The law's made for us not for you.

II

Though the beaks give us every assistance they can,
The public is on to our lies.
Rhino whips are in sight now,
We don't look so right now,
The brick dust has caught in our eyes.

III

Oh, I swore on the bible that I would be liable,
For all of the lies I would tell.
Should they be discovered, I knew I'd be covered,
For Brooke treats his boys in blue well.

LETTERS

I'll try to send you a report on the situation in Chicago soon. This is probably the most backward and gangster-ridden city in America (for instance, a friend of mine was almost murdered while poll-watching for an opposition candidate in the City elections) but it is finally beginning to break.

The Vicelords, a 5,000 strong Negro street gang, have begun to become active in the civil rights movement, which is the opening of a shift of the movement toward a base of unemployed youth - at which point all hell is going to break loose.

Four Vicelords have been framed on a charge of conspiracy to commit murder and will get 2 - 10 years apiece, but it is common knowledge that they are being punished for working for an anti-machine candidate in their ward and that defence witnesses were intimidated.

The Cobras, the second largest gang in the city, have also become active in civil rights struggles (the sight of these people practicing "nonviolent resistance" is beginning to make the cops a bit nervous).

T.C., Chicago.

* * * *

We hope the civil rights movement will broaden and deepen so that it will truly be a lever for social change. However at this

point it has the backing of the Federal Government and it is church-ridden; first by the negro ministers and now by the white men-of-the-collar who would, with some exceptions here and there, settle for negroes to be integrated into this beautiful world of ours just as it is. They want negro cops, negro generals, negro jailors, etc.

Of course there are also the Black Muslims who are the black fascists and they want a black state with all the trimmings.

Very few talk of human solidarity or point out that the average white man is also exploited, that unless men of good will no matter where and no matter what colour work for the social revolution, civil liberties will always be in jeopardy for some people in this exploiting society.

E.J.W., New York.

* * * *

Please consider the elimination of childish obscenities, which does absolutely nothing to further our case and does a great deal to destroy confidence in our case and our abilities.

H.F., Exeter.

* * * *

You will probably agree that RSGs are by now pretty old hat. They have lost their immediate appeal. I cannot help sympathising with the general public in the view that High Society's fornications make better reading.

J.P., Woodford Green.

* * * * *

'Solidarity' is a big step toward what a radical journal should be: a chronicle of life on the job. Some of the articles are a little too technical and detailed forme, but others - on the Turin strike and the shop stewards, for instance - were fascinating.

I've got one criticism. As a former member of an Orthodox Trotskyist organization, I fully appreciate and in fact enjoy all the anti-Trot jokes. But most of your readers probably don't know (or care) about the difference between a Pabloite and a Healyite. All this gives people the impression that you are primarily a split from the SLL. This is especially bad since Trotskyism is primarily a split from the Communist Party. And the CP, of course, is primarily a split from the bourgeoisie.

M.G., Berkeley, California.

* * * * *

As a subscriber to 'Solidarity' I want to protest at the pointlessness at best, of your gloat over the Profumo affair in volume 2, n^o 11.

Is the political consciousness of any worker or any Socialist nourished by revelations of the sex-life of one (or 100) Top People? We might have a government or party composed of 100 per cent monogamists or even monks. If anything, the energy thus conserved might make them still more efficient in the defence of capitalism! So viva la dolce vita!

Your motive, of course, is not commercial, like that of the News of the World etc. But I suggest that an implied contempt for capitalist 'morals' cannot help playing into the hands of the puritan, 'clean-up' wing of official society itself (Times etc.) whose ascendancy would do nobody any good nor remove the causes of prostitution.

And do the workers want to witness a whore-hunt? And ought they to? The Street Offences Act, for instance, has merely diminished such little freedom of choice as rank-and-file whores formerly possessed and (like automation in industry) has increased their servitude.

In other capitalist but less hypocritical countries, the only question Profumo's colleagues - or the voters - would have asked him is 'Does your sex-life lay you open to security leaks or to political inefficiency?'. By analogy, that is the only sort of question which ought to interest, say, the comrades of a shop-steward or some activist committee-man. By analogy again, who cares what the editors of 'Solidarity' do at night, so long as their partners aren't Special Branch police women?

B.D., Christchurch, Hants.

* * * * *

In the editorial of vol.III, n^o 1, you discuss whether the Executive tampered with the Judiciary. As good libertarians you are surely not opposed to such practices - between consenting adults in private?

M.G., London.

* * * * *

Riddle for chess players: Why are trade union leaders so often knighted? Because they move by going one step forward and two round the bend.

E.M., Reading.

THE GENERAL ELECTION

A group of active members of the EXETER Committee of 100 have produced a document called "GENERAL ELECTION 1964". They have constituted themselves a 'working group' to implement its main ideas.

A 'SOLIDARITY' supporter in Exeter writes "The document has had a very good reception here. Labour Party supporters in C.N.D. are very much on the defensive. We have all the so-called unilateralist candidates on the run. Gwynnyth Dunwoody, daughter of Morgan Phillips, is Exeter's prospective Labour candidate. While claiming to be a 'unilateralist' she refuses to meet C.N.D. because of what we have done to other candidates!

SOLIDARITY is pleased to publish this document in full, with most of which we are in full agreement.

THE GENERAL ELECTION AND THE LABOUR PARTY

The last election was in October 1959, less than two years after the foundation of CND, which made little impact. Even those Labour candidates who claimed to be "unilateralists" failed to make unilateralism a real issue. Since then CND has grown considerably and the Committees of 100 have sprung up. It has now become clear that the attitude of CND and the Committee is regarded by many as very important. The matter has been thoroughly discussed throughout the movement.

Opponents have argued that "democratic" channels are open and should be used. Yet the Committee of 100 was formed because of inadequacies in the present system. CND, although arguing for "an independent presence" for the Campaign, fails to mention that a

Labour candidate is compelled to sign a contract of obedience and loyalty to the Party, and that although the candidate may claim to be "unilateralist" he will not, if elected, vote against a 3-line whip on nuclear weapons policy. Personal ambition was often enough to maintain discipline in the present parliament. But the leaders use flattery, bribery, or threats when necessary.

Those prominent in CND who work for the return of a Labour Government will link the Campaign with the Party in the public mind. On the other hand the absence of a definite promise from a candidate to vote against 3-line whips on nuclear weapon and germ warfare policy, should produce an automatic declaration of no support for such a candidate. *

The Campaign and the Committee should be most careful not to bear any responsibility for anything the Labour Party (or any other) may do, e.g.

- (a) Support for NATO and/or multi-national nuclear forces
- (b) Closer military links with U.S.A. **
- (c) Use of Polaris or any other foreign nuclear weapons
- (d) Permitting Polaris Base facilities to U.S.A. ***
- (e) Continuing germ and chemical methods of warfare, etc.

The view now being canvassed that the Labour Party is opposed to "the independent British deterrent" is completely naive because this policy merely transfers reliance on the British weapons (no longer viable) to the U.S.A. weapons and alliances.

The 1945 Labour Government consented to the bombing of Hiroshima, developed 'our' atomic weapons, and took Britain into NATO. As the Opposition, the Labour Party has merely called for more efficient ways of producing and delivering weapons of mass murder. Labour leaders have called for more stringent measures to be taken against 'sitters' and the "Spies for Peace". The main challenge the Opposition has made to the Government over the past months has been that it has not kept enough secrets from the people! The present policy of the Labour

* In our opinion, even such a 'promise' would not warrant support. Revolutionaries should use the election to point out, by every possible means, that the real decisions are not taken in Parliament and that nothing can be solved by institutions of this type (Editor 'Solidarity')

** Or with any other nuclear power (Editor 'Solidarity')

*** Or to any other nuclear power (Editor, 'Solidarity')

Party on nuclear weapons is not even marginally preferable to that of the Tories. *

By itself, the rejection of the British independent deterrent merely ties Britain more effectively to the NATO alliance. Those are the policies of the Labour Party. The fact that some Labour M.P.s are 'unilateralists' makes not the slightest difference to those who really oppose nuclear weapons. The Labour 'unilateralist' realising the impossibility of reforming the party bureaucrats, long ago settled for the spoils of office. To some, unilateralism never meant anything anyway; others have become 'practical politicians', deliberately distorting Labour and CND policies in their pronouncements, so that there appears to be no difference between them.

The M.P.s who voted against the Defence Estimates meekly asked to have the whip restored. "Tribune" is no longer "the paper that leads the anti-H bomb campaign". At a meeting in Exeter earlier this year Anthony Greenwood claimed that the policy of the Labour Party was now about the same as that of CND. Anyone who was at his recent meeting in EXETER will remember the bitterness with which Sir Richard (Call me Dick) Acland attacked the Committee of 100. The man who regarded himself as the original ban-the-bomber has now decided that as a matter of 'practical politics' it is better to concentrate on getting Christianity injected into Labour's bureaucracy! These are the people who are going to fight for our policy under a Labour Government!

EXPOSE THE GENERAL ELECTION

It is ridiculous to attempt to make too sweeping generalisations about the Committee of 100. There was no unified Committee attitude at the beginning (e.g. to non-violence, the state, etc.) and now there are differences within and between the Regional Committees. Nevertheless there has been a developing revolutionary consciousness of the sort of society that produces the bomb. We have seen the role of the press, the uniformed and secret police, the courts and the politicians in relation to our campaign for civil disobedience. In all fields, the fraudulent nature of our 'democracy' has become clear to members of the Committees, to members of the wider anti-nuclear movement and to people outside both. **

* See page 3 of SANITY, December 1963.

** As Austen Albu, M.P. for Edmonton, is quoted as saying (Guardian, 10.12.63) "the executive has acquired nearly a monopoly of the information on which policy is based. As a result the executive has now developed an attitude of almost insolent secrecy."

Our job must be to help create an awareness that the people's desire for peace will never be realised through the present political and social set-up.

We must not hesitate to expose the General Election for the farce it is. It is unnecessary to make a detailed analysis of the political parties and their role to realise that it is not the electorate which 'elects' people to parliament. It is not even the members of the parties. In the Labour Party, regarded by some as the most democratic party, no candidate can be supported unless he is endorsed by the National Executive, which in turn is largely made up of the nominees of trade union bureaucracies; no M.P. remains one if he defies the Party whips - the publicity, cash, Party label and personality build-up just won't be his at the following election. Neither do Party members have any effective say in determining policy - conference decisions are only accepted when the professional politicians feel like it. Even Parliament itself is a farce. Matters of major importance are 'debated' when the decisions have already been taken - that is if they are 'debated' at all! No democracy was involved in the decisions relating to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the development of the A-bomb, and H-bomb, to NATO, Thor bases, Polaris or to any other landmark on the road to nuclear annihilation.

If we do not intervene in the election, people may well assume that we tacitly accept this whole process, that, whilst we may disagree on policy, we agree with the way in which this policy is arrived at and implemented. But we cannot accept a process that made the Committees necessary in the first place.

We cannot stand for direct action and at the same time remain silent when all the propaganda machines are getting people to participate in the most indirect and ineffective action conceivable - voting in a General Election. It is no use arguing that our system is that little bit more democratic than the rest. There are differences between our system and that of the U.S.S.R. - these are the academic differences studied by learned professors and budding careerist politicians; they are not differences that are significant for those who want to remove the threat of war.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A CAMPAIGN

The long-term objective of a campaign exposing the Election would be the development of a movement of mass direct action. We should also have a specific (and, admittedly, symbolic) aim for the Election itself.

Perhaps the best idea put forward so far is to campaign for people to spoil their papers. This, in itself, is nothing revolutionary, but it would help to publicise our campaign and guard against tendencies

to be too vague and general in our propaganda. Abstention however is not sufficient because there is always an abstaining minority - thus we encourage action instead of apathy. We could conduct a campaign along the following lines:

1. Thousands of leaflets would be produced exposing all aspects of the fraud of 'democracy', showing that the Parties stand for the same thing and calling for direct action. The more resources we have, the bigger variety of approach. We could have separate leaflets on R.S.Gs, on Civil Liberties and "Security", on all the lessons we have learnt in the struggle against the Bomb. Special leaflets could be aimed at industrial workers and at people at school, who have not the right to vote anyway. We could produce a fuller pamphlet giving a longer statement explaining our attitudes.
2. We would aim at maximum impact with posters. Public buildings and even polling booths might be covered. We could 'decorate' the posters of the Parties - a fair share of each, of course!
3. The use of loudspeaker vans would be very helpful. We could also run our own meetings, indoors and in the open air.
4. We would seek to compel the candidates to answer our questions on the really important issues, which they naturally seek to avoid.

CRITICISMS

Certain criticisms of these ideas are more frequently made than others. One of them is that there are differences between the Parties and it is better to have the lesser of two evils. For instance, it is said that the Labour domestic policy is better than the Tories!

The record of the 1945 Government shows that its policy at home was no better than that on the Bomb. To give just two examples, it used conscript troops to break up dock strikes, and when nationalising industries, it merely replaced one set of bosses with another.

Labour's present domestic policy is no more hopeful. We can't just look at it in a quantitative way. You can have full employment in a prison. More schools, under the present system, merely means more people who will be trained to fit into it. Labour politicians aim to manipulate the electorate in the same way that the Tories do. Bob Mellish, M.P. for Bermondsey, recently told Labour Party members that, whilst income tax would have to go up under a Labour Government, he certainly wouldn't say so in public. Transport House advises candidates to be deliberately vague when answering questions on incomes policy! But, even supposing that a Labour

Government would be marginally better than another Tory one the effort spent in securing it would, if channelled in the appropriate direction have a much greater effort in leading towards successful direct action. There has been a tendency to suggest that we should not carry out a campaign along these lines until we have produced a blue-print for the "new society". This approach is entirely wrong. We must certainly not be afraid of stating the principles around which we believe a really democratic society would have to be organised.

The new society will not be brought into existence by our election campaign and to predict the set-up to the last detail would be contradictory to our intentions of urging people to act themselves to bring it about. More important than issuing blueprints is a campaign to get the democratic and anti bureaucratic principles of the new society applied to concrete problems and movements today - only in this way can we move towards it. We should stress the need for direct action, with safeguards against bureaucratic tendencies, in other fields than in the struggle against the Bomb.

This last point may lead to the criticism that such a campaign bears no relation to our immediate objective of nuclear disarmament. Ideas in the movement have not stood still. In the Committee of 100 particularly, few people have any illusions about our 'democracy'. The Bomb and its social context are inevitably linked up. Nobody in the movement now believes that it is enough to get more people to shout "Ban the Bomb". Many CND members see their most fruitful field of action in the Labour Party. Those of us who have learned different lessons should not be afraid to proclaim them. It is far better that we run our own campaign instead of confining ourselves to cynical comments about the Labourites. CND exists to unite people on issues around which they are prepared to unite. It does not exist to paper over different approaches with useless compromises. Let us be realistic and recognise that there cannot be a campaign for the election that is both unified and effective. Some people are already throwing themselves headlong into the Labour Party election effort.

We put forward this statement of our ideas in the hope that it can act as a rallying point for an alternative campaign.

CONCLUSION

Some people who sympathise with much of what has been said will still be holding back. They think that the suggestions are perhaps a trifle frivolous, unrealistic, or are leaving us wide open to misrepresentation. If this attitude had prevailed, there would never have been any marches, sit-downs or revelations by the "Spies for Peace".

At each stage in the development of the anti-nuclear movement there has been an attempt from outside and, in response, from within our own ranks, to "contain" us and make us more "respectable". We hope that the ideas outlined will help to put us once more on the offensive.

When the election is over, the electoral machines take a holiday and the mass cynicism receives a boost from the first acts of the new Government, Labour or Tory. Our consistency will not let us down, for we shall then be able to point more effectively to the need for direct action. Our campaign does not end with the return of a new crowd to the national gas-house.

This is not the time to hold back or sit still. The Bomb is still with us - it is central to everything we have said.

This General Election presents us with a golden opportunity to further the case against nuclear weapons, to use the direct action method to expose the fraudulent claims of the parties, and to show that the present system of "representative" parliamentary government is specially devised to prevent people from having any real say in important matters of policy.

HARRY FORREST

ALAN HOLLINGUM

TONY CLARK.

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about ourselves

Delayed again - but busy as usual. We've just published our sixteenth pamphlet 'BUSMEN, WHAT-NEXT?'. It promises to be an all-time best-seller. The first 1,500 sold out within a fortnight. We've reprinted a further 1,000 which are going well. A number of welcome orders have been received from TGWU bus branches. One branch secretary has already sold 130 copies and writes: 'It's the best piece of working class literature I've seen for years.'

Our supporters have been selling in garages and depots in London and the provinces. But only 20 of London's garages have so far been covered (and there are well over 100). We badly need volunteers to help us with sales (Friday mornings - 10 to 12.30 - is the best time). The busmen's struggle is at a critical stage. It is essential that the ideas of independent rank-and-file action and unity should be fully discussed.

We have also reprinted 'SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM' (10d. post free). This completes our programme of restocking the shelves for the period of the General Election.

Andy Anderson's 'HUNGARY '56' has been delayed due to technical difficulties. Be patient a little longer. It will certainly be out in the next few weeks (at 3/6 + postage). Please order now and pay in advance if you can.

We welcome the publication of two new papers with rather similar outlooks to our own. They are 'STRIKE' (Freedman, 1492 Hunter Avenue, ~~W~~C, Columbus, Ohio, USA), and 'PROTEST' - The Radical Voice of Youth' (Anton Simmons, 56 West End Lane, London NW6 - 6d. monthly).

We also welcome the formation of new 'Solidarity' groups in Durham and Manchester. We hope others will be formed in the near future and would like to hear from interested readers. We must emphasize that all 'Solidarity' groups are entirely autonomous.

We understand that Vance Packard's latest book - 'The Naked Society' - gives details of all the electronic and other devices used by business tycoons, bureaucrats, private and official dicks and their like to snoop on employees, trade unionists, subversives, peaceniks, criminals, and 'brother' capitalists with interesting trade secrets, etc. We've recently been at the receiving end of some specialised attention of this kind (because of our trade secrets). But this is Britain and it's all rather amateurish. The letters are steamed open but the cops are short of glue (one just bends the envelopes and they pop open). The phone tapping is noisy. The trailing is rather conspicuous. The snooper at the anti-conscription meeting stood out a mile. Ah, well, Mr. Wilson and his 'scientific revolution' should jazz all that up no end. In the meantime would our men in the key ministries please only communicate in code.
