

solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

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: the settlement

ITALY: car workers' struggle

Lenin and workers' management

Sheffield: Party and Police

FORD: the settlement

The 3½ week long strike of 46,000 Ford manual workers ended on March 20. The dispute was enormously costly for the Company. It lost something like 5,000,000 man-hours of production (which is well over three times the 'best' previous figure for a whole year). The value of lost production to the Company's British and the Continental sections was around £40 million.

The fact that the Ford management were prepared to take losses of this magnitude emphasizes a point that Solidarity has made many times: the length to which management is prepared to go - and the losses they are prepared to incur - to maintain domination within the factory.

The struggle was notable for its solidity. For the first time in Britain, production was brought to a complete halt. The Company was even forced to lay off over 4,000 blacklegs.

The day-to-day organization of the struggle at Dagenham was entirely in the hands of the Shop Stewards' Committee. There should be some criticism of the way they used this power. At Dagenham there were only three mass meetings for the whole duration of the strike. The publications of the Shop Stewards adopted an extremely cautious and 'pussy footing' line in relation to the full-time trade union officials. Nevertheless the dispute showed a number of welcome developments. One of the most important was the unconditional help given to the strikers by large numbers of students, in the field of typing, duplicating, and producing a steady stream of posters and leaflets. The posters, made in Poster Workshop, added an exciting new dimension to industrial propaganda. It is an example which should be followed.

The worker-student liaison which developed is potentially a very potent force. While the workers' traditional hostility towards students has not gone at Dagenham, it has certainly weakened. There is a big future in such an alliance, and not only in the purely industrial field. The aid of revolutionary students should be welcomed by militants, providing it has no strings attached.

The conflict had a number of other positive features. It broke down the artificial barriers which have divided militants in different factories, unions and shifts. The links created during the strike will play a significant role in the coming months and years. The course of the struggle had the effect of severely shaking up a number of virtually moribund shop stewards' committees, although by no means enough of them! It did this at Basildon, which has long been noted for its passivity. Its convenor was one of the few to vote against the strike call of February 24.(1) There was a

(1) An example of the 'collaborationist' attitude common at Basildon was an article written by a leading member of the Joint Works Committee there in the February 1968 Newsheet of the Shop Stewards' Committee at Basildon No. 1 Plant. (continued on page 2)

revolt at a mass meeting and the men overwhelmingly voted to strike. Throughout the dispute they remained one of the most intransigent factories and were only with great difficulty persuaded to return to work.

In many ways the strike followed a normal course, most of the men sitting it out at home. There was little attempt to mobilise them. The Stewards' Committees received telegrams of support from the other factories of the Ford empire, in Belgium, Germany and Holland, and from Renault workers at Flins. The Company dragged out its usual tired old threats to remove production elsewhere. Militants had the usual experience of seeing 'left-wing' officials making militant noises after a long day's negotiation with the management. (2) Picketing was well organized. Many lorries were halted. Supplies of coke, oil and oxygen were stopped at Dagenham, and busmen refused to run buses to the factory gates. There were numerous other examples of effective organization.

Before becoming too euphoric over the new 'militancy' of the union leaders, however, it is important to remember that the strike started as a

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- (1) (cont'd) "If the stewards can operate from an office, why not elect less stewards and elect them all as Plant representatives instead of departmental representatives. These shop stewards could then be taken off production for their period of office and be on shop stewards duties for a full working day. The Convenor could be elected first by a ballot in the Plant and the rest of the stewards could be elected afterwards by another ballot.

"The Company has put forward another idea, that leading stewards should hold bi-monthly meetings with the Managing Director. The stewards at the moment are not prepared to give support to this idea but because worker participation at all levels is one of the trends of the times, I have no doubts that something will develop from this idea in the future.

"If worker participation at all levels is a modern trend, should we now be saying that all candidates for shop steward elections must have certain academic qualifications.

"'O' level and 'A' level in shop stewardship. The training methods could be standard throughout the Trade Union movement and the 'O' and 'A' levels recognised by all unions.

"Shop stewardship is a skilled vocation and no Trade Unionist should be allowed to operate as a steward until he has acquired the necessary skills."

- (2) Jack Jones, General Secretary of the T.G.W.U. is reliably reported as saying that the only argument that Blakeman, Ford's Director of Labour Relations, understood was "a kick in the balls". While we would agree with the principle, there is unfortunately no record of him putting his precept into action. Meanwhile, Blakeman has been appointed by ex-'left' Messiah Barbara Castle to join ex-'left' Will Paynter and George Woodcock on the Commission for Industrial Relations.

result of an unofficial call by the convenors of the 24 Ford plants.(3) The dispute was only endorsed by the A.E.F. and the T.G.W.U. some days later (eventually 8 other unions declared the strike official). If the two major unions had seriously opposed the agreement while it was being negotiated there is no doubt that the proposals would never have been agreed. The dispute would never have taken the form it did.

The actions of the leaders of the two 'left' unions were confused. The 'return to work' formula to which they agreed (the actual agreement will not be formally signed until the middle of April) still contained penalty clauses (albeit modified to reduce the amount of money at risk by £10 per annum per worker, and other provisions which to a certain extent limit the management's powers to arbitrarily decide the amount of the penalty).(4) Much more dangerously the new agreement also contains those parts of the old agreement which laid down a blueprint for 'a continuous improvement of efficiency in Company operations'. In plain language this means speed-up (5) combined with a further reduction in the right of workers to decline to work overtime, a right which is already pretty limited, or to resist arbitrary transfer without significant notice from job to job or even plant to plant, or even from one shift pattern to another totally different one.

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- (3) The full ramifications of the proposals which led to the strike only came out through a leak of the Agreements to the Dagenham shop stewards in January 1969. They promptly duplicated several hundred copies of this document. Without this initiative it is likely that the whole agreement would have gone through without a hitch, since before the leak there was unanimity by the members of the N.J.N.C. in favour of it.
- (4) It is worth reprinting the Company's definition of actions which come within the orbit of penalty clauses (from Memorandum on the definitions of 'unconstitutional action' produced by the Fords Labour Relations staff on January 21, 1969). "Reaching of the agreement can take several forms and the following types of coercive or sympathetic action taken to further a complaint or grievance, or to influence a dispute outside the agreed procedure, would constitute a disqualification from the Income Security Plan:
1. Withdrawal of labour;
 2. Overtime ban;
 3. Concerted restriction of work output, whether by quantity of work produced, quality of work produced, or the range of work undertaken.
- Thus, refusal to work overtime or collective unwillingness or inability to achieve new work standards can mean the loss of over £20 a year under the new agreement.
- (5) There have been persistent rumours that the speed-up involved an increase of the speed of the fast (Cortina) track at Dagenham from 60 to 80 vehicles an hour. As a worker on the fast track I find it very difficult to imagine how they will be able (even given cooperation) to increase production by this amount. It is physically impossible.

Another section of the old agreement significantly left untouched was the 'disciplinary action and appeals procedure' which is not only outrageously unfair (even by the low standards of British 'justice') but would still further increase the power of the full-time officials.

The final settlement might be called a betrayal if the officials could ever be described as being on the side of the men. As it was, the settlement came as no surprise to any reasonably intelligent person. It was forecast in the last issue of Solidarity. The facts are that both the major unions involved (either together or separately) have already signed a number of agreements which include penalty clauses. For example in January of this year the A.E.F. signed an agreement with Swan Hunter. Late last year the A.E.F. along with 11 other unions signed an agreement with the Upper Clyde Shipbuilding Group. In 1967 an agreement was signed covering the Henry Wiggins Rolling Mill at Hereford. Lastly an agreement was signed at the American owned Continental Oil Refinery, at Immingham. All of these included various forms of penal clause. Already the Ford settlement is being used as a blueprint for the introduction of similar agreements at Vauxhall's and by the employers in the London Docks.

THE END OF THE STRIKE

The way in which the strike was called off was interesting. By declaring the strike official, the union leaders were able to take over control. In this they were in general aided by the Shop Stewards' Committees of the various plants, who made the usual mistake of deluding themselves and the workers about the real intentions of the officials.

On March 18, amid great fanfares, the 'return to work' formula agreed by the trade unions was announced. On the 19th, as a sop to the workers who had actually been on strike and who would have to work under the new agreement, mass meetings were held at the various main locations.

Dagenham was a typical example of the type of 'democratic' procedure adopted. The meeting at the Leys Baths was attended by over 5,000 workers. It was convened by the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee and was opened by its Chairman. He was followed to the plinth by no less than seven full-time officials, all of whom spoke in favour of the settlement. There were no speakers against the deal. No discussion of any kind was allowed. The back-to-work resolution was then put. It was no surprise that it was carried, although a minority of about 10% voted to stay out.

There were similar situations in the other factories. At Halewood there was a sense of mass outrage. There was even a demonstration against the settlement, which had to be bulldozed through a mass meeting. The men at the Basildon Tractor Plant voted overwhelmingly to stay out. But after they had been informed that the main location would be returning to work they had to give in. As it was, they voted to stay out for four more days as a protest.

A very potent factor in the return to work was the direct misrepresentation of the terms of the new agreement. Firstly by the playing

down of the fact that the crucial efficiency and disciplinary sections of the original agreement had been retained. Secondly by boosting (as a part of the settlement) items which were nothing more than wishful thinking by the unions. For example wage parity with Midlands car workers. It was suggested that this was just round the corner. In fact the management has made it clear that it will not even consider a settlement before 1971. The other red herring raised was the principle of 'mutuality', which involves the joint agreement of worker and management before the establishment of new work standards. This was put as if it was imminent when actually all that has happened is that the T.G.W.U. has stated that it 'intends' to press for mutuality. Both of these points are extremely important, but will only be achieved as a result of further struggles by Ford workers. They were presented at the mass meeting as if they were almost part of the settlement.(6) Thus misinformed (as well as being misled) by the unanimous crowds of victory, the men returned to work.

The situation is not all black, however. There can be no doubt that Ford was badly hurt. This always warms the heart of Ford workers. The situation inside the factory after the return to work is quite different from what it was before. During the first week the men in the press shop had to be sent home for refusing to work with blacklegs. There were quite a few punch-ups in which scabs got their just deserts. The fact that Ford have received a bloody nose is seen by many militants as a real opportunity to develop struggle inside the factory and it is likely that the company is in for a rough year, penalty clauses notwithstanding. Ford's difficulties in achieving production targets and meeting demand should be seen as the men's opportunity.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

It is an oversimplification to say that all trade union officials are the same. Some are aware of their specific role in society, others are not. But whether left or right they have their own particular interests and they are consistently opposed to organization directly controlled by the workers. Such organization threatens them as much as it threatens the boss. It is ironic that both of the latest heroes of the left, Scanlon and Jones, are closely associated with the Movement for Workers' Control. It is laughable to hear Jack Jones who is General Secretary of the T.G.W.U. for life advocating workers' control as a panacea. Like many others, they seem to be for workers' control everywhere except in their own spheres. The whole campaign is a diversion from the real problems of workers. Firstly because it is mystifying: the term means all things to all men, everything from participation on the Boards of firms, to the encroachment into management by the trade union hierarchy - a not very inspiring prospect. I do not deny that there are many good militants in this movement with whom I would not disagree. But they find themselves with strange bedfellows who have totally

(6) A similar line was put in Leaflet No. 13 produced by the Ford (Dagenham) Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, dated March 19, 1969. This was produced for the mass meeting and contained not one word of criticism of the new settlement.

different concepts and objectives. The real context of a struggle for workers' control is the fight at work against the boss and the need to strengthen job organizations directly controlled by the workers.

Even the 'left' has fallen over itself to contribute to the illusions of workers in their ability to change the spots of the trade union leaders. The Morning Star hailed the new left-wing alliance. The Socialist Worker (March 29, 1969) stated that ". . . men like Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones can be made to respond to some extent to pressure from below". The S.L.L. and its front organization (the All Trades Union Alliance) had a simple solution: the election of S.L.L.'ers to positions of power in the trade unions! (The S.L.L. has only once been in a position to influence trade union officials: in the N.A.S.D. in the late fifties). As with all vanguard organizations the needs of the workers were subordinated to the needs of the officials and of the political organization.(7)

The tactics which Ford workers should pursue include keeping up pressure on the Company so that its production losses cannot be recouped and it therefore remains vulnerable. At the same time every effort must be made to improve the communications of militants at the factory, national and international level. The present situation is one of great opportunity. The task is to grasp it.

Solidarity will do everything in its limited power to give unconditional help. It seems urgently necessary for Ford militants to come together to discuss common action which should include the production of a paper and the setting up of an organisation of militants within the factories. We would like to hear the views and proposals of other Ford workers.

Mark Fore.

SOLIDARITY GROUPS

ABERDEEN, c/o Roy, 138 Walker Road, ABERDEEN.

BOW STREET, see "About Ourselves".

CLYDESIDE, c/o D. Kane, 43 Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, DUMBARTON.

SOUTH LONDON, c/o A. Mann, 79 Balfour Street, LONDON S E 17.

HUNGARY '56 by Andy Anderson. The anti-bureaucratic revolution. The programme of the Workers Councils. 4/1d post free.

(7) See "Docks: breakaways and unofficial movements", in International Socialism, Autumn 1960.

WILL THE WORKERS MANAGE PRODUCTION?

LENIN AND THE WORKERS COUNCILS

The idea that those relations between people which are generated in the actual process of material production are the source of all other social relations (including authority relations) is perhaps the most fundamental idea put forward by Marx. Revolutionaries who define themselves as Marxists cannot therefore consider the issue of decisional authority on the shop floor as merely 'a very important issue'. Who manages production should be the key issue for those who accept Marx's theory concerning the genesis of society - and revolution.

We consider it important to make a few comments on how Lenin dealt with this problem in 1920. This is because many sincere and devoted revolutionary militants today would like to follow his example. They should be courageous enough to state openly whether they accept or reject the way in which he dealt with this particular question.

In March 1919, at the height of the Civil War, and in full awareness of all the objective difficulties confronting the Russian revolution, the Eighth Party Congress of the Bolsheviki adopted the famous 'Point 5' in an entirely new Party Programme. It read:

'The organizational apparatus of socialized industry ought to be based, in the first instance, on the Trade Unions. These ought, progressively, to free themselves from craft-like narrowness and transform themselves into large associations based on production and embracing the majority of the toilers in any branch of industry.

'Participating already, in accordance with the laws of the Soviet Republic and established practice, in all local and central organs of industrial administration, the Trade Unions ought, in the end, actually to concentrate in their hands all the administration of the entire national economy... the participation of the Trade Unions in economic management... constitutes also the chief means of the struggle against the bureaucratization of the economic apparatus.' (1)

Although management by the trade union bureaucracy is a far cry from management by Workers' Councils, it is also different from management by the State or Party apparatus. In 1919 it was the entire Party, and not merely some opposition groups, which committed itself to Trade Union management of production. It did this in a period of the most difficult objective conditions.

(1) I. Deutscher, 'The Soviet Trade Unions', p.29

During the next year no single specific type of management in Russian enterprises ensued. Four patterns in fact gradually emerged:

a) Management by an Executive Committee of workers, elected within the enterprise, employing the advice of an expert engineer or other specialist.

b) Management by a specialist engineer joined by a 'worker-commissar', authorized to deal with every aspect of the business.

c) Management by a specialist director and one or two Party members (with advisory capacity only and no authority to overrule his decisions).

d) Management by a small, well-knit group of Party members whose chairman was responsible to the Party, and whose authority could overrule that of the specialist engineer, the specialist administrator, the Works' Council and the local trade union branch.

It was the latter which gradually became more common.

In conditions of such a diversity of practices (many contradicting the programmatic ruling of the Party itself on the matter) it was no wonder that the Communist group in the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, convened in March 1920, put forward a proposal demanding the management of industry on collective lines. The proposals were formulated by M.P. Tomsy and published in 'Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' ('Economic Life'), No.54, March 10, 1920. The majority of Bolshevik delegates to that Council, most of them workers from enterprises, supported these principles. They were only demanding that the Party and the State implement in practice what they had pledged themselves to in resolutions.

On March 15, 1920 Lenin spoke several times to this group of Bolshevik delegates. He vehemently opposed the principle of collective management and insisted on the principle of one-man management, the manager himself to be appointed by the Party.

In reading the following words of Lenin (2) one ought to bear in mind that he is speaking to Bolsheviks, and more particularly to Bolsheviks who in their daily life worked among workers and honestly sought to transmit the desires, views and aspirations of these workers. Theirs was not an abstract, utopian demand, deduced from theoretical considerations and disregarding actual reality. Far from it. They expressed the views prevalent amongst those who actually worked in the factories, of those who were not 'atomized' (as Trotsky later liked to describe it) but were directly engaged in industrial production.

To counter the delegates' demand for collective management, Lenin produced the following argument:

'I refer you to the bourgeoisie. Whom shall we learn from, if not the bourgeoisie? How did they manage? The bourgeoisie managed as a class when it was the ruler, but did it not appoint managers?'

Let us pause here for a moment to reflect on this type of argument. What Lenin is saying here is nothing less than that revolutionaries should imitate the bourgeoisie in its methods of management - namely that those in political power (in this case a Party which defines itself as Socialist) should appoint a manager. That is, impose authority relations on the shop-floor, from the outside.

One cannot deal with this argument by saying that 'under the objective conditions existing in Russia at the time, Lenin was fully justified in his opposition to working class demands for collective management'. Isn't the fact that many workers and the majority of the Bolsheviks (v. 'Point 5') demanded collective management by election also an 'objective factor'? Why is Lenin's demand for one-man management by appointment more representative of the 'objective conditions' than the workers' demand for collective management?

Referring to the bourgeoisie, Lenin continues:

'We haven't yet caught up with them in their degree of development. They knew how to rule as a class, and to manage through anyone you please, individually, entirely in their own interests. At the top they had a small collegium and they didn't discuss basic principles. They didn't write such resolutions. They had all power in their hands, and regarded as competent one who knew his job. The workers have not yet reached that point, and in order to win we must give up our old prejudices. (What, precisely, are these 'old prejudices'? A.O.) The rule of the working class is reflected in the constitution, the ownership, (i.e. 'nationalization', or management by the Party or State apparatus. A.O.) and in the fact that it is we (i.e. the Central Committee of the Party. A.O.) who are running things. Management is quite another thing; it is a question of skill, a question of experience'.

This last statement is really an odd one for a Marxist. Can the function of management and supervision of production be considered as a purely technical affair, unrelated to the power structure, unrelated to the very question of power itself?

Today, the same question of the relation between management of production and political power is raised in Czechoslovakia, where the Russian occupation authorities demand that the Czech State and Party apparatus take a firmer hand towards all Workers Councils demanding the right to manage production. The 'Times' reporter writes from Prague (March 24, 1969) :

'...The (Czechoslovak) Party and Government have been feeling the effect of this new spirit of independence in the bitterly fought negotiations over the composition and power of Workers Councils in the factories. The Government is under extreme pressure from the Russians to treat the Councils as a potential threat to the 'leading role' of the Party in the management of the economy.... The Government is also insisting on the right to dismiss managements which it considers inefficient. This is being strongly opposed because the workers know from long experience that the central authorities have it in their power to produce statistics purporting to prove the inefficiency of managements which they consider inconvenient...'

Is it the 'inefficiency' of the Czech economy which prompts the Russian occupation authorities (as well as the Czech Party and State bureaucracies) to oppose, with every possible means and arguments, the demand of the workers to manage production through their own Councils?

The use of the 'inefficiency' argument against Workers Councils' management is not new. Lenin, in the speech we quoted earlier, went on to say:

'My third argument: competence. How can you show that it is possible to manage without being competent, to manage without the full knowledge of the science of management? It is ridiculous! What sort of system is it? Why all the words you have spoken here? In order to manage one must know the job and be a splendid administrator. Where does it say that for this reason we need collective management? The fact that we have few experienced workers proves the contrary: what follows is that collective management is intolerable'. ('Collected Works', vol.36, p.523).

As arguments about 'efficiency', the 'science' of management, the 'workers' incompetence to manage', etc., are bound to come up again and again, they should be dealt with here. The interesting fact is that when capitalist management really wants to increase efficiency it asks the workers for advice. After all, it is the workers who really know how production operates. The 'Business Supplement' of the 'Times' recently (December 30, 1968) published an article by Mary Bosticco ('When your own staff can solve a problem'). In it we find:

'Would it surprise you to learn that the best possible management problem-solver is available to you free of charge? It is there for the asking, right in your own company, and can tell you how to increase sales, how to streamline operations, how to increase productivity, and what is hampering progress. You state the problem - it provides the solution. But what is this unsung hero with all the answers? It is, of course, your own staff: the people who spend every working day selling your goods, making your products, pounding your typewriters. Your salesmen, the people who see your customers; the men at the bench - who come across the same snag day after day; the clerical staff, and everyone whose work is affected every day by faulty communication and poor management'.

It turns out (surprisingly?) that the ones who really know about production are the ones actually involved in it, and that when 'efficiency' has to be increased there is no way to do it without their cooperation.

However the 'efficiency' argument is beside the point, for the question of authority on the shop-floor is not concerned with efficiency but with power and with the authority relations in society as a whole. Lenin realized the simple fact that if the Party managed the State while Workers Councils managed production there would exist a situation of dual power which, in case of conflict between Party and Councils, could lead to the hegemony of the Councils, thus rendering the political bureaucracy obsolete. It was because of the potential threat to the authority of the Party that he had to come out against collective management, not because of 'efficiency' or 'objective conditions'. It is for just this reason too that the question came up again in Czechoslovakia and will be raised, eventually, everywhere.

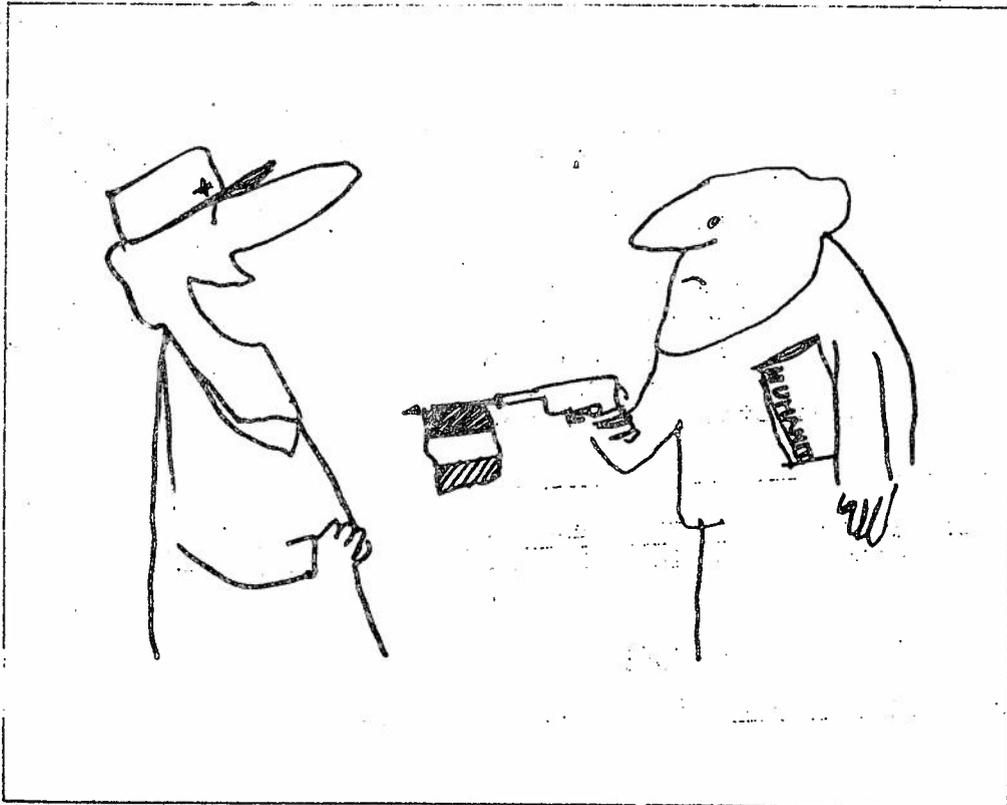
The post-revolutionary defeat of the Workers Councils (and of their power both in production and in society) raises important questions for revolutionaries today. These relate to the causes of that defeat. It seems to us that there were two major ones:

1) Many revolutionary workers, both inside and outside the Party, who had struggled to establish the rule of the Councils, took too long to realise that Lenin, as the personification of political authority per se (as distinct from an authority arising out of production) was potentially their rival. They considered him an ally.

2) The forces fighting for the rule of the Workers Councils did not produce (not even for themselves) a total scheme, or vision, of the organizational structure of the whole of society, derived from their views on the management of production. They left a vacuum in the realm of ideas concerning the social and political structure of the rest of society. Lenin stepped into this vacuum with the scheme of the political party managing production, society and the state. This contributed massively to the defeat of the soviet (in the real sense of the term) tendencies in the Russian revolution.

Unless the movement for self-management puts forward its ideas for the organizational structure of the whole of society, the political bureaucracy (however well-meaning it may be) will go on managing - not only production, but also politics and society as a whole.

A. O.



ITALY

THE STRUGGLE AT LANCIA

1968 saw a considerable upsurge in the Italian working class movement.

In February there was a very hard struggle at the textile mills at Valdagno (near Venice) in the course of which the workers besieged the management in their homes. Guerrilla-like actions were fought out in the streets and the statue of the founder of the factory was blown up. School kids of 12 and 13 actively supported the strikers. A near insurrection in the small town was put down with incredible police brutality. (1)

A little later a big strike took place at the Mirafiore Fiat plants at Turin, the most heavily 'policed' factory in Italy (barbed wire around the whole place, 42 heavily guarded gates, the most sophisticated methods of internal snooping, etc.). Despite the role of the union officials, the 70,000 workers won a partial victory. (2) This was the first large-scale movement at Fiat since the 'wildcats' of 1960-62.

At the Pirelli-Bococca rubber works in Milan there have been constant struggles throughout the year, during which rank and file committees have been created, whose motto has been 'organization without hierarchy'. Their most positive contribution has been the careful choice of issues on which a mass struggle could be envisaged. (3) At the Turin factory of the same firm the workers recently gathered in a mass meeting to decide on acceptable tempos and patterns of work and have succeeded in imposing them on the management. (4)

Throughout the engineering industry similar struggles for workers' control of the speed of the line have been fought and won. Italian workers are determined that their wage gains will not be made meaningless by subsequent speed-up, sackings or systematic under-manning. Attempts to re-impose managerial prerogatives in these areas are met with instant strikes.

At 'Indesit', one of the giant firms producing electrical domestic appliances, the trade union bureaucracy has met its severest defeat to date. The rank and file committees have succeeded in presenting lists drawn up in the shops. Mass meetings of the workers have elected revocable delegates and entrusted them with negotiating rights. (5)

(1) See 'Informations, Correspondance Ouvrières', No.74 (October 1968). Obtainable from P. Blachier, 13bis rue Labois-Rouillon, Paris 19.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., No. 78 (February 1969).

(4) 'Le Nouvel Observateur' (February 17, 1969).

(5) Ibid.

The common features of these and many other struggles have been a) a refusal to accept the unions as sole instruments of working class representation; b) the adoption of methods of agitation and propaganda which go way beyond those accepted by the traditional left (for instance joint meetings of workers and students, which publicly debate strategy and methods of support and solidarity; c) the creation of rank and file committees so that the control of disputes can remain firmly in the hands of the rank and file.

In the course of these struggles many new lessons concerning the functioning of direct democracy and the role of various political organizations (seeking to utilise working class militancy in order to recruit to their own particular outfits) have been learnt.

The following article is a translation of a leaflet distributed on October 5, 1968 by the Lancia Struggle Committee, a rank and file body recently created at the Lancia Motor Works in Turin. It refers to an only partially successful struggle waged in October 1968 by the workers of this big firm. British workers will recognize many of their own experiences in the text of these Italian comrades. The document is translated from the January 1969 issue of the French journal 'Lutte de Classe'.

* * * * *

Workers, comrades,

The Lancia strike, which had lasted over three weeks, has ended in a compromise which leaves us all with bitter feelings. It will take us eighteen months just to regain that part of our wages lost in October. We have only won a 15 lira rise instead of the 40 or 50 demanded. On the subject of grading - nothing! Nothing on the other problems which launched us into struggle at the beginning of October. Even the little we have gained is guaranteed only by the words of a government official.

THE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIONS

We all know that the main responsibility for such an outcome to the strike can squarely be laid on the behaviour of the trade unions throughout the whole struggle. The four unions tried to end the strike at all costs before the opening of the Motor Show. They brought it to an end by bureaucratic methods, without even convening a meeting of the workers where all could have had their say on the terms of the agreement. But it is useless just to blame the unions and to rant against 'treason'. The workers of Lancia should learn from the strike. They should draw lessons which will serve in future struggles to avoid rotten compromises which weaken and divide the workers in front of the boss.

The Lancia strike was not an isolated incident. It was but a moment, an episode in the more general struggle waged by the Italian working class, regardless of victories or defeats, against the plan to reorganize capitalism in its entirety, on the national and international level.

The big capitalist enterprises, such as Fiat and Montedison, are concentrating themselves into ever larger groups, forcing smaller enterprises to reorganize and to integrate with them. In certain factories, this plan carries with it consequences such as reductions in hourly rates, internal reorganization and a general increase in exploitation. And everywhere, it is always the working class which suffers from the activities of the capitalists.

The trade unions, and the reformist parties which support them, instead of radically opposing this plan, accept that the concentration of capital should take place at the expense of the workers. They have recently concluded with the State and employers, an agreement which limits itself to giving a few more pence to the workers affected by the changes or made redundant, while leaving the bosses a completely free hand in the heart of each factory.

THE BOSSES' GAME

Lancia is destined to be absorbed by Fiat, either directly or through some intermediary company. Our old bosses - and our new ones - wanted us to come out of this strike defeated, so that they could impose on us within a few months more 'modern' and 'rational' methods of exploitation. They wanted to be in a position to manipulate the workers at will, displacing or sacking those for whom they had no use.

The bosses didn't want to see us out on strike. But once the strike was under way, they tried to utilise it for their own ends: the better to straight-jacket us.

The unions were implicated in the bosses' game. Instead of seeing the general aspects of the strike, they sought to isolate it in every way within the limits of one enterprise - as if the Fiat empire hadn't existed. The unions didn't want the strike. They have their own time-table for union conflicts, fixed with the State and the employers. Our strike didn't fit into this schedule. That is why we had to organize the struggle ourselves, in spite of difficulties due to being on short-time. Meanwhile the unions and the official factory committee continued (as if nothing were happening) with a negotiation on bonus which had been going on for several months, postponing till later any decision about whether to call a strike.

THE STRIKE COMMITTEE

We ourselves took the initiative in the struggle by withdrawing our labour in given shops. We began to organize a Strike Committee, capable, in liaison with the mass of the workers, of deciding the course and duration of the struggle. The most conscious workers knew from the start that it was necessary for the struggle to be directly controlled by the mass of the workers. For the first few days, we were successful in directly organizing the struggle, in getting our demands accepted, in holding mass meetings. But as the strike continued, the unions regained the initiative.

Firstly, they incorporated the Strike Committee into a 'Committee of Agitation', created in a bureaucratic fashion, whose tasks were limited to the soliciting of financial solidarity (certainly important) and to marches to the Town Hall. Then they isolated the leading militants, the most conscious workers, seeking to split them from the mass. But above all the unions succeeded in isolating the Lancia strike, by preventing its extension to other Turin workers, and also by refusing to take up joint action with other strikes in progress at the same time.

It was precisely this which stifled the attempts of the Pirelli workers, who had marched from Settimo to Turin, to meet the Lancia workers. It was because of this that not even a leaflet was distributed at Fiat's, to call for solidarity with our struggle. It was because of this that the suggested protest demonstration at the Motor Show, which would have had a resounding echo on a national scale, was sabotaged.

NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENT

Finally at a rump meeting in the canteen on October 27, a small group of workers gave the unions a mandate to negotiate with the management on the basis of a 15 lira rise. Once they had achieved their objective - being free to negotiate without having any accounts to give to the mass of the workers - the unions were soon able to put an end to a strike which they hadn't wanted.

We are all involved in the outcome of the struggle. The unions had made their choice from the start. But we were unable to come to a collective decision and to impose it on the unions. As the strike dragged on there appeared an attitude of passivity among certain workers, who were prepared to delegate their powers to the union. 'Let those who know more than us take over. They've had more experience. They know how to get themselves understood by the bosses'.

An increasing number of strikers therefore pretended to be ill, or looked for other jobs, or stopped coming to the picket lines and to the mass meetings. And for these same reasons the most conscious workers found themselves isolated from the mass.

THE STRIKE OVER, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES: HOW TO ORGANIZE

All this happened because we were not organized before the strike, inside as well as outside the factory. The strike which has just ended enables us not only to criticize the politics of the unions but to create the basis of an autonomous organization, capable of running the struggle according to the will of the workers and to turn it in a conscious manner against the common enemy: the capitalist organization of society. We need an organization capable of conducting the day-to-day struggle, continuously, against the increasing exploitation, the speed-up in certain shops, and the prison discipline which the capitalists are imposing on workers in the factory.

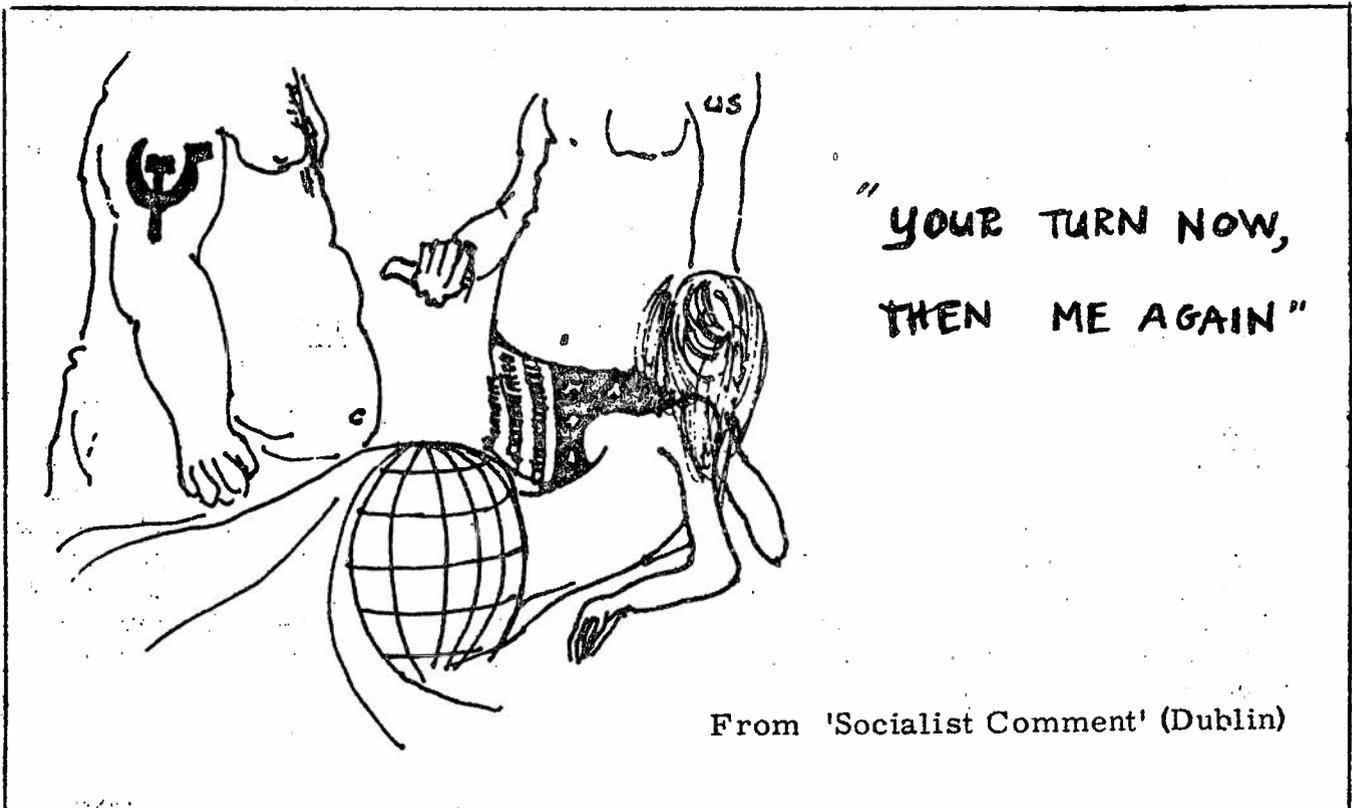
We all know that even if the strike has ended, the struggle continues in other forms. The future promises further clashes with the bosses. We must take into our own hands the running of future struggles, and strive to keep it there to the end. We must choose in a conscious manner the moment to struggle, when the bosses' strength is at its weakest, and our own at its greatest. We must learn to choose the forms of struggle which best conform to the given situation.

This should be done without delay. Time is on the bosses' side. We returned to the factory with our heads held high, we must not be crest-fallen now. With groups of students, with workers from other factories, and with other comrades, the groups of workers who were most active in the struggle have begun to establish permanent links among themselves, forming a Committee of Struggle which will be the embryo of the united and autonomous organization of the working class at Lancia.

Of course, this action cannot be limited to a single factory. We have seen during this strike that the workers in one factory cannot win when they find themselves pitted, in isolation, against a united capitalist class. Capitalist oppression permeates the working class and the whole of society.

The workers at Lancia must establish contacts from one shop to another. They should also forge links with the most conscious and active workers in all other factories in the neighbourhood and in other parts of the town. They must unite with all who struggle against capitalist exploitation, be it at school, in the countryside or in the various districts of the city.

The Lancia Struggle Committee.



From 'Socialist Comment' (Dublin)

REVIEWS

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN BRITAIN 1900-1921 by Walter Kendall,
Weidenfeld and Nicholson, £5.5.0.

This book deals with the origins and birth of the Communist Party of Great Britain and makes available in readable form a mass of material, much of it new, relating to the various elements of this complex process. Particularly interesting sections are those describing the struggle between the 'internationalists' and the reactionary leadership of the SDF/BSP during the 1914-18 war. For example 'Justice', the official organ of the Party (although the private property of H.M. Hyndman), not only enthusiastically supported the war but virtually egged the authorities on to arrest anti-war socialists, as well as implying that they were financed by the Kaiser! At the same time other leading figures in the Party were recruiting in the socialist movement for a 'Comrades' Company' to fight for 'King and Country'.

Other interesting sections are those dealing with the shop stewards movement during the war, both on the Clyde and elsewhere, and with its relationship with the small socialist groupings. There is an all too short account of the widespread mutinies in the British Armed Forces at the war's end. The threading together of all these disparate strands, along with many others, into a connected narrative is well done. But the claim of the book to be a full treatment of the period is weakened by its omission of any substantial treatment of the 'labour war' period (1907-1914) which played a very important, if unrecognized, role in the creation of a mature socialist movement.

The second part of the book deals with the actual formation of the CPGB. The author's thesis is that the artificial grafting of bolshevik organizational principles onto the British revolutionary left, and the subordination of an authentic British perspective to one determined by the Comintern - or more accurately by the CPSU (B) - has retarded the development of the socialist movement (which the author, incidentally, identifies with the building of a 'left' in the Labour Party!). The taking over of the British revolutionary tradition by Bolshevism certainly distorted it. The 'victory' of the Russian Revolution (and the effect of 50 years of bolshevik ideology on socialist thinking) is a problem which must be seen on a global scale and must be much more closely analysed.

The author fully documents the fascinating subject of the huge transfusion of Russian money into the socialist movement (something like £85,000 was poured in during the 18 months ending early in 1922). He describes its corrupting and distorting effect on the birth of the CPGB, but is much weaker in his analysis of the political factors involved. This part of the book is rather superficial. It wasn't just Moscow gold!

I recommend the book highly, but in view of its enormous cost, it should be begged, borrowed or stolen rather than bought. It is an important contribution to the very small body of material which deals with the revolutionary movement as it really was. It is ironic that the parties subscribing to 'scientific historical materialism' have so far only been able to produce individual or organizational hagiographies, when dealing with their own past and roots. Their objectivity is inversely proportional to the subject matter's proximity to their own problems.

K. W.

THE HUMAN SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY by Lucien Goldmann, Cape, 7/6.

Goldmann is a Rumanian-born Marxist, who has spent most of his life since 1934 in France; this book, first published there in 1952, contains a new preface written in 1966. Goldmann's work epitomises the virtues and severe limitations of the ultra-sophisticated section of the Marxist Left.

On the one hand there is a brilliant demolition of bourgeois ideology in the social sciences. Goldmann is able to show that the 'objectivity' towards which the leading sociologists in the West (he deals with such figures as Durkheim, Weber, Aron, Mannheim and Levi-Strauss) have striven reduces their inquiries to mere scientism (1) in the service of the status quo. By ignoring the dynamic aspects of history and society, by establishing untenable divisions between method/content, subject/object and by treating historical data as things and not as components of consciousness, these sociologists expose their 'objectivity' as being the ideology of the different periods of capitalism in which they lived.

As in other works by Goldmann, e.g. the essay 'Is there a Marxist sociology?', (2) the influence of Lukacs is apparent and acknowledged. Goldmann dismisses the charge that the admission of ideology into the human sciences leads to relativism. (3) He says that the sociology that can explain and locate other sociological systems as themselves both historical and social phenomena is the most scientific. In his opinion, Marxist sociology does this.

However, we must make severe criticisms of certain aspects of Goldmann's work. As a living confirmation of his own thesis, his own ideology emerges in the course of his work. His aim is to identify with proletarian consciousness, to ally himself with a proletariat that, recognizing itself as a class, sought to abolish all classes and identify itself with humanity as a whole, to become 'both the subject and the object of the social sciences' (p.51). But Goldmann soon shows that this

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- (1) Scientism: the application to human phenomena of the methods of natural science.
 - (2) In 'International Socialism' No.34.
 - (3) Philosophical theory based on the concept of the relativity of all knowledge.

vision of the fusion of theory and practice occupies him in theory only. For he confines this vision of the proletariat redeeming humanity to the past. 'In any case, for us it has value primarily as an ideal concept, not as a practical reality' (p.51). Goldmann has made this point more explicitly elsewhere, in his essay 'Criticism and Dogmatism in Literature' where he states: 'to continue to speak of the immiseration and the revolutionary orientation of the proletariat is quite simply to live and think a myth'.(4) Of course this flies in the face of his own thesis, by separating the subject of history from its object and by extracting the content of history from the method of apprehending it. But as Hegel said 'Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht' (5) and the events of May/June in France last year have found Goldmann's dilettantism wanting and condemned it.

On his basic premise a rickety structure of false consciousness is built. The purpose of the social scientist is not, as in Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, to understand the world in order to change it, but 'the search for truth as a supreme moral value' (p.60). Goldmann even has something good to say for modern capitalism. He speaks of its 'positive achievements, its raising of the standard of living, its regulative mechanisms, etc. (p.19)

Goldmann epitomises in many ways the situation of the Marxist in modern society. Inability to abandon outworn categories leads to their being confronted by a reality whose deepest nature escapes them, and to their being unable to analyse the revolutionary forces at work inside bureaucratic capitalism. Goldmann is one of the many who vindicate what Cardan said in 'The Fate of Marxism': 'a basic choice confronts us: to remain marxists or to remain revolutionaries'.(6)

I. M.

OBSOLETE COMMUNISM: THE LEFT WING ALTERNATIVE by D. and G. Cohn-Bendit. (A. Deutsch, 25/-, pp.256).

This book, although hastily compiled to meet the mass demand for such works which followed the events of May 1968, is nevertheless essential reading. It is an exciting piece of living history, written by articulate and active participants, one of whom became the spokesman for a wide layer of student revolutionaries. The original French version was called 'Le Gauchisme, remède à la maladie sénile du communisme' -- a witty and meaningful rejoinder to Lenin's denunciation of left-wing communism as an 'infantile disorder'. The English title is unfortunately quite meaningless.

Starting with the student revolt in modern industrial societies, the authors analyse the background to the March 22 Movement, the spread of the ideas of May to sections of the working class, the strategy of the

(4) In 'Dialectics of Liberation', p.129 (Pelican). Much of what we have said on Goldmann would equally apply to most contributors to this book, e.g. Marcuse.

(5) 'Universal history is the last judgment'.

(6) In SOLIDARITY, vol.4, No.3. This article develops at greater depth some of the points made in this review. Copies are still available.

bourgeois state, the Gaullist phenomenon and - in considerable detail - the role of the Communist Party and its historical roots in ideology and previous practice.

The authors' thinking is throughout clearly influenced by material published in 'Socialisme ou Barbarie', 'Internationale Situationiste', 'Informations, Correspondance Ouvrières', 'Noir et Rouge', and 'Recherches Libertaires', an ideological debt freely, but rather erratically, acknowledged. The 'plagiarism' is extensive, intelligently selective and thoroughly commendable, ensuring a wide audience for views as yet insufficiently known. Great chunks, for instance, of 'Solidarity' Pamphlet No.7, on the Workers Opposition, are to be found in the authors' discussion on the nature of Bolshevism. As the authors nicely put it: 'Cohn-Bendit is simply the anonymous author of all these reviews'.

I have but one criticism and it has been voiced before. It is a note of scepticism concerning the implied proximity of total revolution. It is hard to accept that, last May, it was touch and go whether everything would be swept aside. Or to believe that if, on the morning of May 25, Paris had awoken with several ministries occupied, Gaullism would have collapsed... and self-management become an objective immediately to be fulfilled.

The grip of class society unfortunately exerts itself at a much deeper level than the authors appear to suspect. Even the decomposition of bourgeois state power - and one could argue whether it was as profound as they believe - is no guarantee that bourgeois institutions will be replaced by consciously created socialist ones. The essential precondition for a radical and total social transformation is the change, brought about through the class struggle itself, in the attitudes of the mass of the population, i.e. the working class. These attitudes today are not only coloured by the traditional organizations but are constantly reinforced by the very conditions of capitalist production and of life in capitalist society (passivity of workers subjected to domination by machines, pressure of financial insecurity, preoccupation with only immediate things, etc.). These attitudes (which add up to the more or less widespread acceptance of slavery by the majority of the slaves) are one of the main causes for the perpetuation of bourgeois or bureaucratic rule. (Other factors act in an opposite direction, constantly compelling people to question the methods, priorities and relations of capitalist production.) The ideological superstructure of capitalist society isn't as 'fragile' as many revolutionaries seem to think. It has enormous resilience and to shatter it a whole epoch of sustained and conscious struggles will be necessary. The French events undoubtedly initiated such a period. But by ignoring this facet, the Cohn-Bendit book at times unconsciously lapses into a system of ideas in which the role of active minorities would seem to be paramount. Paradoxically, it is a system of ideas which if thus explicitly formulated the authors would be the first to reject.

SHEFFIELD : PARTY AND POLICE

ad hoc ad nauseam

This article is an abridged version of a pamphlet recently published by the Sheffield Vietnam Campaign. No apologies are offered for reproducing what some may consider "stale" material. We do not necessarily endorse all the views expressed, but feel nevertheless that this is an important document, and that the points raised are of more than local significance. Thanks are due to S.V.C. for permission to print.

These pages are a commentary on events surrounding the March 1st Sheffield Vietnam demonstration.

The role played by the majority (not all) of the Communist Party is emphasised because we feel it was a major factor behind the destructive antagonisms manifested on March 1st.

Our experience raises several questions concerning mass mobilisations and forces us to examine the viability of the ad-hoc form of organisation (a question that is occupying many V.S.C. members). Detailed work on these points is a must for the future.

SHEFFIELD'S HISTORY OF VIETNAM ACTIVITY

Since early '67 Sheffield has boasted only two resilient Vietnam organisations. These are the university Vietnam Action Group (today's Socialist Society) and the Sheffield Vietnam Campaign. A record of past V.A.G. and S.V.C. activities speaks for itself, ranging as it does from a Vietnam Week of intense and varied activities to the challenging of the university's acceptance of grants from the U.S. Department of Defence; from the first provincial blood donor session (M.A.V.) to the production for more than three weeks of a broadsheet on Vietnam.

The C.P. has supported many of these activities yet no member of Shardlows Shop Stewards' Committee* (C.P. or otherwise) has ever attended an S.V.C. meeting. Indeed a Sheffield Y.C.L. member in regular attendance at S.V.C. meetings had the propriety of such a liaison questioned by the Party secretary.

* According to the Morning Star this committee initiated the March 1st demonstration.

THE ORIGINS OF THE MARCH 1st DEMONSTRATION

The C.P. behind Shardlows' Shop Stewards' Committee convened a Yorkshire meeting to consider provisional arrangements for a demonstration, declining to discuss with S.V.C. (which is after all the only Vietnam organisation in Sheffield) the issue of whether or not the mobilisation was a particularly valid form of activity at the given time.

Various non-C.P. organisations arrived to discover that the date, nature, and certain speakers for the demonstration had already been decided upon.

The meeting, packed with C.P. members (Yorkshire for that day embracing Manchester and Mansfield) consequently gave birth to an Ad-Hoc Committee of 22 members, only five* of whom were not C.P./Y.C.L. delegates.

THE FIRST AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

The idea of stewards was overwhelmingly defeated and street occupation made an objective. Slogans, speakers, and a venue for the rally were decided upon. These decisions were to be reported to a mass meeting scheduled to take place two weeks before the demonstration. It was not agreed that such a mass meeting could reverse these decisions. Indeed the non-C.P. delegates had decided to continue on the committee only on the basis of the decisions taken at this first meeting.

These initial decisions taken, the committee worked well in a growing atmosphere of trust, reinforced by the way in which C.P. delegates dropped their bones of contention once reminded that points had already been settled.

THE SECOND AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

Two weeks before March 1st this trust was shattered. On Friday February 14th, with 7 out of the total Ad-Hoc Committee present, the C.P. majority exhumed the question of street occupation and on this occasion refused to be bound by the prior decision. One C.P. member argued that only a disciplined 'demo' would attract the workers (the worker support claimed by the C.P. didn't materialise anyway).

The outcome was a 2 to 4 vote in favour of recommending to the mass meeting that the march be six-abreast and stewarded. Thus a recommendation from 4 out of a 22 strong Ad-Hoc Committee was touted as an official committee decision.

* i.e. Delegates from C.A.R.D., V.S.C., S.V.C., Sheffield University Socialist Society, and the Anarchists.

To us the maintenance of decisions embodied the integrity of the committee. To do this two weeks before a demonstration not only destroyed five weeks work but also revealed the C.P.'s contempt for the organisations that had agreed to participate on the basis of the original committee decisions.

Some C.P. members were genuinely convinced by our arguments, yet why did the remainder (a) keep us on the committee? (b) let these decisions through in the first place? It appears they were frightened of being left* with a 'demo' and very few marchers to people it.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 16: THE MASS MEETING

Again C.P. dominated, it endorsed the reversal of the original decisions taken by the Ad-Hoc Committee and took upon itself the right to suggest another speaker - John Gollan. Inevitably Gollan was accepted. Just how representative this decision was can be seen by the extremely hostile audience he got at the rally itself. Not content with this, Bob Wilkinson, full time local secretary of the C.P., proceeded to attack several of the non-C.P. organisations on the Ad-Hoc Committee. So much for 'Left unity'.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING III

The C.P. attempted to reverse one more of the original Ad-Hoc decisions - that concerning the venue for the rally. A majority finally voted that if the police continued to be intransigent, rather than force their way into Barker's Pool square, the marchers should let the first N.L.F. speaker in this country address a rally in a side street.

We told them their decision was a political disgrace, and reaffirmed our intention to stick to all of the original committee decisions, come what may.

At the final meeting we listened in disgust as a C.P. steward argued that it was their job to keep others away from any trouble between individual demonstrators and the police. (This 'comrade' was aptly photographed doing just that as an arrest was made.)

So ended the seven weeks 'committee stage' of the 'demo'. The following day saw the three hours of its actuality.

The 'demo' was to reflect in feeling only the last two weeks of the committee's work. The positive effects of the first five weeks were destroyed by C.P. manipulation before the 'demo' even started.

* A Morning Star article by Mick Shepherd, convenor of Shardlows' Shop Stewards' Committee, committed the C.P. to the demonstration, talking in terms of a potential worker turnout of 10,000.

THE MARCH AND RALLY

By two o'clock a crowd of about 1,500 had gathered. C.P. and Y.C.L. banners were much in evidence as were V.S.C., I.S., and student banners from Lancashire, Yorkshire, the Midlands, and the North. For the first time the S.V.C. was backed by contingents from the College of Education and Sheffield schools. Black flags flew over a sizeable Anarchist contingent. Notable amongst the banners were those from Sheffield District A.E.U., Daniel Doncaster Shop Stewards, Shardlows Shop Stewards and Leeds Trade Council. These were noticeable because so few marched beneath them. The C.P.'s much vaunted working class support was discovered only after very careful inspection.

The march was split 50/50 between Right and Left. The Right was characterized as those who were prepared to let police and stewards push them around; the Left were those determined to shape their own march. Within the first few hundred yards the stewards tried to shove marchers towards the gutter. Half the march refused to be constrained to the six-abreast crocodile the stewards desired. Outwards we built up, eight, ten, twelve abreast. Soon half the road was taken and held more or less for the duration of the march. In this the marchers were encouraged by the example of the Anarchists and the Tyneside V.S.C. who took the brunt of police and steward attacks.

The first arrest was that of a girl dragged out for retaliating against a steward. The militant front of the march halted, and a short argument ensued: "We can't leave a comrade here." "There's nothing we can do for her now." Eventually under pressure from behind, the march moved on. This was to set the pattern of the collective failing to defend individuals. That amazement that most people felt at the spectacle of the stewards allied with the police produced the indecision which prevents total commitment.

Arrests accumulated steadily. A Sheffield Anarchist was arrested, the stewards having pointed him out. A member of Sheffield University Socialist Society was hauled from the march by two C.P. members and thrown towards the police.

A Tyneside V.S.C. member going to the help of a comrade was held by police while a steward stamped on his foot, breaking a toe. He later commented "By Christ, you've got a bastard of a C.P. here, haven't you? In Newcastle they're reactionary but they don't side with the police."

Thus the march continued with the police de-escalating their attacks as we entered the city centre and came under the gaze of onlookers.

Finally in Barker's Pool, before the City Hall steps, the C.P. still had one officious directive to issue. They attempted to remove

demonstrators from the steps where they were surrounding both platform and speakers. C. P. members tore down an I.S. banner and stewards threw a Sheffield Vietnam Campaign member into a fracas from which he was arrested by the police. The loudspeakers said, "Will you all please leave the steps so that the rally can begin!" But we stayed and the rally began anyway.

Madame Linh Qui, wife of the D.R.V. press representative, was well received, yet Gollan was shouted down by an irate audience. A member of the Ad-Hoc Committee asked the C.P. platform to announce a collection for the fines of the 24 people arrested. The request was brushed aside and the announcement never made.*

IN CONCLUSION

While reinforcing many of our prejudices about the C.P. the mobilisation simultaneously showed us the dangers of stereo-typed wholesale condemnation. We realised that the C.P. is by no means a monolith of Stalinism. A few Y.C.L. branches vied with the Left in taking the whole street while at least three C.P. members tore up their party cards at the rally. C.P. miners expressed disgust for the tactics used by the stewards, and even a minority of the stewards themselves were bewildered and distressed by the events.

Given that the C.P. is not a homogeneous mass, we must be ready to accept dissenters from the party-line for what they are, and not just dismiss them as Stalinists.

Finally something must be done to span the gap between Workers and Trade Unionists, and Students and Youth; a gap which some people are obviously trying to widen, for what purpose only their sectarian minds can reveal. This gap can only be bridged through dialogue carried out in the spirit of wanting to understand, rather than wanting to convert; and action carried out in an atmosphere of trust with activities complementing rather than competing with each other.

One of the worst features of 'ad-hockery' is that it brings together not people, but organisations which are by their very nature hostile because competitive. What is needed is a coming together of people and their ideas rather than a ritual duel between preformulated abstractions.

Sheffield Vietnam Campaign
March 1969.

* Funds are still urgently needed to help pay these vicious fines. Please send every penny you can spare. Cheques, P.O.'s, etc., to S.V.C. Aid Fund, 159a Rustlings Road, SHEFFIELD S11 7AD.

about ourselves

In our last issue we announced the formation of the South London Solidarity Group which has now produced the first issue of their own Solidarity magazine. Since then Glasgow Solidarity, which disbanded 9 months ago, is being re-established, and another autonomous group has been formed in London: the Bow Street Solidarity Group. The Group emerged out of a work project following the closing of L.S.E. At present it is engaged primarily on work with students. People willing to help please write to L. Morphy, 16 Fielding Road, W. 14.

We are trying to help this formation of autonomous Solidarity groups by providing speakers for meetings, "recruiting" leaflets and putting isolated comrades in touch with each other. However, our resources are very limited and the real impetus must arise locally. A viable group can be as small as 3 or 4 people initially, and the best way of making contact with other people sympathetic to our ideas is by selling the magazine and pamphlets. Bulk orders on a sale or return basis can be obtained from H. Russell, 53A Westmoreland Road, BROMLEY, BR2-0TQ.

A national conference of Solidarity members will be held in Leeds during the weekend of April 19-20 to discuss the organisational problems of the groups and how they should be linked. The Conference is for people who have a strong commitment to the ideas of Solidarity, as we do not wish to waste time arguing over the basic ideas of Solidarity. Comrades who are not members but feel they fulfil this criterion should contact us through H. Russell.

Modern Capitalism and Revolution is now available and over 600 copies have been sold already. If you want a copy, then rush your order. One of our earliest pamphlets, Meaning of Socialism, has just been reprinted with a new introduction. Although several years old the ideas have by no means lost their relevance, and over 900 copies have been sold over the last two years.

The sales of the magazine are increasing and we would like to have more feedback from readers, old and new. We need the experiences and ideas of our readers to help develop the paper. News, comments and articles will all be very welcome.

"Capitalism and Socialism: a rejoinder" published in our last issue was written by an individual member, and was not an editorial, as might have been inferred from the front cover.