

# --- SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKERS' POWER 

---

ALDERMASTON SPECIAL

Volume 2 Number 10

---

---

6<sub>D</sub>



# CANON BALLS

Certain recent events have shown that the CND leadership is increasingly out of touch with the rank and file.

'Steps Towards Peace', the new policy statement issued by the Executive, stinks. Various local groups have already rejected it.\* Many others object to the way it was foisted on the movement. Some are beginning to ask themselves whether CND is still unilateralist. Is unilateralism (the struggle against one's own government) a principle? Does it apply everywhere? Or is it 'designed to break the present deadlock in negotiations for a multilateral agreement?'. \*\*

Supporters are also concerned at the bureaucratic practices of the Executive. Malcolm Pittock has recently described in detail \*\*\* the monstrous manoeuvres whereby the Executive succeeded in avoiding all reference, in its various leaflets and publications, to the Crewe resolution, passed by the March 1961 CND Conference, which called on people to struggle for unilateral disarmament in America and Russia, as well as in Britain. Events in St. Mary-lebone CND \*\*\*\* and at the recent Oxford Conference marked further stages in the bureaucratic degeneration of CND.

Last June, the CND Conference called for industrial action against the bomb. In this issue we document how the Executive reacted to this resolution. Their dishonesty led directly to the resignations of Pat Arrowsmith and of Michael Scott from the National Council.

It is now time for the rank and file to begin asserting its control over this great movement, to stop the further growth of the bureaucracy and to halt the drift back to traditional politics.

No one knows how many paid officials CND employs. Or how much they are paid. How much of the funds collected by supporters goes to propaganda for the cause? And how much to the self-perpetuation of the apparatus? Michael Howard tried to raise these questions at the first Council meeting to which regional representatives were admitted. He got nowhere. Since then the question has been repeatedly evaded.

Is it true that Peggy Duff refuses to work for CND for less than £18 a week plus all expenses? Is it true that A.J.P. Taylor, when addressing local groups, always stays at the best hotel in town? Is travelling about by taxi becoming a mode of life? Is the advocacy of unilateralism becoming a job, like selling toothpaste?

Conference this year should ask some pretty pointed questions. It should insist on some honest answers. And from these, it should draw all the necessary conclusions.

---

\* See 'Solidarity' vol.II, No.9, and correspondence in recent issues of 'Peace News'.

\*\* Canon Collins, 'The Observer', March 24, 1963.

\*\*\* 'Peace News', July 20, 1962.

\*\*\*\* See 'Solidarity', vol.II, No.8.



THAT WAS

- 2 -

## INDUSTRIAL ACTION

THAT WAS

The idea of 'industrial action' as a means of challenging the Warfare State has slowly developed within the ranks of CND. From the onset it has been opposed by the leadership. \* But with the utter failure of traditional methods of protest the idea of more radical action has gradually gained ground. The CND leadership has adapted itself to the pressure. It has given verbal endorsement to new policies, the better to prevent their implementation in practice.

In earlier issues of 'Solidarity' \*\* we have argued that the best way of translating the widespread desire to get rid of nuclear weapons into effective action against the Bomb was a conscious turn by the anti-bomb movement to the working class. In the conditions of today the working class, and the working class alone, has the concentration, the cohesiveness and the power fundamentally to challenge the Establishment and its preparations for war. Although thousands in CND and the Committee of 100 are doing useful work, decisive results will only come through the industrial action of dockers, railwaymen, transport workers and engineers. The real problem is that of the necessary mass consciousness.

We pointed out that when we spoke of propaganda and agitation among the working class we did not mean influencing the trade union bureaucrats who manipulate votes at Labour Party conferences. Nor did we mean getting pledges from the professional politicians who 'represent' the working class in the Westminster gas-house. We mean turning the campaign towards the rank and file in industry, towards those who make the weapons, transport them, maintain them, and who build and supply the bases and the rocket sites.

We pointed a warning finger at the skeleton in the CND cupboard, at the Labour Advisory Committee, with its big names, its publicity-seeking Labour 'personalities' and its union 'leaders'. This body was impotent from the very onset. Its parliamentary members saw nothing peculiar in claiming to be CND supporters - and yet voting the Service Estimates in 'The House' - or in apologizing for those who did so. Party loyalties - and the jobs that went with them - nearly always came first. Even the five 'dissidents', who momentarily put principle before Party, are now asking to have the whip restored. And this despite emphatic assurances from Mr. Wilson that 'policies worked out under Mr. Gaitskell's leadership would not be changed'.

---

\* 'The Campaign has in previous years resisted attempts to make it support industrial action. Canon Collins has expressed fears that its adoption could be the Waterloo of the movement' (The Guardian, June 18, 1962).

\*\* 'Solidarity', vol. I, Nos. 8, 9 and 10.



## CONFERENCE DECIDES

The June 1962 CND Conference went on record in favour of 'strong industrial action'. It passed resolutions demanding 'a) the launching of an immediate campaign to influence trade unions; b) token direct action, including the blacking of work and poster demonstrations at factory gates; and c) the recognition that this physical challenge to the arms race is as important as marches.'\*

The Conference resolutions were moved by Jimmy Jewers, secretary of the Docks Group, Committee of 100. They were supported by Pat Arrowsmith, secretary of the Merseyside Trade Union Committee of CND. For a variety of reasons (admitted and unadmitted) the resolutions were opposed by the CND Executive. Michael Foot, acting as a 'left' cover for the CND bureaucracy, advised Conference to reject them. He correctly stressed that 'no one but the workers directly concerned could decide when, where and what type of industrial action were possible'. But he did so in order to discredit the very idea of CND agitation around the idea and the need for industrial action, a very different matter. Fortunately Conference saw through this little manoeuvre. It rejected the advice of the Executive and passed the resolution.

The more sophisticated sections of the bourgeois press immediately saw what was at stake: 'The Guardian' \*\* warned editorially that 'attempts to foment strikes and the "blacking" of work to further the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament must lead to a decisive change in the nature of CND'. Precisely! After the usual blood-curdling warnings of 'industrial anarchy' 'The Guardian', solicitous as ever about Labour's fortunes, continued: 'The Labour Party cannot ignore this new development... The use of industrial action for political ends strikes at the roots of orderly government and is alien to the whole tradition of British trade unionism. The TUC could not countenance it'.

Again, precisely! How well the Establishment knows its Labour lackeys!

## THE EXECUTIVE INTERPRETS

The passing of this resolution was a landmark in the history of CND. It testified to the development of a new awareness of social realities. Would the Establishment be talked into nuclear disarmament? Or was it a question of struggle and direct action? Industrial action, a direct 'physical challenge', was explicitly recognized as being 'as important as marches'. A challenge by people themselves, from outside the parliamentary arena, was seen as of equal relevance to challenges through the traditional built-in stabilisers: the political machines of the 'left'. This basic awareness of the shallowness and fraudulent nature of parliamentary 'democracy' was a great step forward.

---

\* 'Sanity', July 1952, p.2      \*\* 'The Guardian', June 18, 1962.



The resolutions were ambiguously worded. \* This played right into the hands of the CND leadership, expert politicians in these matters. It enabled them to evade the fundamental issues, to remain respectable, to confine the Campaign within the ambit of traditional resolution-mongering... while appearing to implement what Conference had decided.

What did the Conference resolution mean when it spoke of 'influencing trade unions'? Did it mean influencing general secretaries and full-time officials? Did it mean manoeuvres? Or vote trading? Or the various horse-deals that go to win - or to bury - Conference decisions? Or did it mean taking the message to hundreds of thousands of trade unionists at rank and file level, to the people in whose hands lies the real power to compel a change of course?

And what precisely was the message to be taken to industrial workers? The straight CND message? (radiation is dangerous. Accidental war is always possible. Nuclear Disarmament is a good thing. Use your vote wisely at the next election. Call for a Summit Conference now). Or the more radical message concerning the role workers could play as workers, on the job, in the struggle against the Bomb.

Most leaders of CND knew quite well what Conference was hoping for, as it listened to Jimmy Jewers and to Pat Arrowsmith. It was hoping for an extension of what had already occurred, a few months earlier, when gangs of dockers had refused to handle crates from Woomera Rocket Range consigned to the AWRE at Aldermaston. Of such action, and of its implications, the CND leaders were basically afraid. So they took refuge in the ambiguities of the resolution. They chose to see in it only a turn to the tops of the trade unions hierarchy, an apparatus as ossified and degenerate as themselves, as expert in manipulation, as committed to 'established' channels of thought and action... and in the last analysis as ineffective.

Within a few days of the conference Collins wrote a slithery letter to 'The Guardian' (June 20, 1962): '... The basic policy of the Campaign remains as it was before the Conference. We are still committed to the use of only legal, constitutional and democratic methods of persuasion in all our activities..... The particular resolution to which you referred is somewhat ambiguous. It must therefore be interpreted in the light of our basic policy and our approved methods..... Conference expressed its purpose that in future we should translate a general but poorly implemented intention into a specific and energetic campaign to gain the active support of trade unions. Clearly it would be for them to decide whether any particular activities, such as 'token and direct industrial action' and the 'blacking of work' are desirable. We have too much political nous to think we can or should dictate or interfere with the trade unions.....'

\* 'The Guardian' (18.6.62) clearly perceived the ambiguity. It clearly discerned wheat from chaff. 'The relevant sentence of the resolution, the rest of which dealt with the need to proselytise among trade unionists, said "we regard this programme as part of a campaign to ensure both token and direct industrial action, including the blacking of work, on the issue of disarmament".'



This was precisely the type of argument Michael Foot had used at Conference, and which Conference had rejected. Incidentally, the worthy Canon seems singularly lacking in the 'political nous' of which he boasts. Does he really believe that in the conditions of today a genuine struggle can be initiated from the bureaucratic summits of the trade union machine?

## THE RESIGNATIONS

The next CND Council meeting discussed the various resolutions that Conference had passed. Pat Arrowsmith spoke and made practical suggestions to 'put teeth' into the resolution on industrial action. Canon Collins told her that her proposals 'would break the movement'. After much argument it became crystal clear that the leadership would only implement a much watered down version of the resolution. They were prepared to hold 'factory weeks' but would not countenance agitation for real industrial action. Pat Arrowsmith and Michael Scott then resigned from the Council.

The resignations stirred up a hornet's nest. They exposed the double talk of the CND leadership which was acting more and more like that of the traditional organizations of the left, 'forgetting' what displeased it and 'interpreting' what it could not conveniently forget. Michael Scott and Pat Arrowsmith described Collins' statement as 'showing a flagrant disregard for the declared wishes of CND at its annual conference'.\*

On September 12, 1962, Collins bowed slightly to the storm. At a press conference, he stated that 'should a trade union decide that the best way to forward the cause was to call a strike, the Campaign would support it'. 'The Guardian' claimed this 'a definite concession to the more militant wing of the movement.' On the same day the Canon announced that a series of 'factory weeks' would be held later in the autumn. He added 'There is no intention on the part of the Campaign to engineer strikes. But we will support them if they are started'.

This was another masterpiece of skillful and cynical evasion. Collins is not really quite as naive a priest as he appears. He knows his fellow-bureaucrats better than he pretends. No trade union leader will ever decide that 'the best way to forward the cause' is through the independent, self-conscious struggle of the rank and file. When Collins stated that the Campaign would support any industrial action on the Bomb called for by trade union officials, he wasn't committing himself to much!

---

\* 'The Guardian', September 13, 1962.



## THE MOUSE THAT WAS BORN

What of the proposed 'factory weeks'? What of the campaign to take the message of the June Conference deep into the ranks of the working class? 'Sanity' \* soon made it quite clear what the leadership had in mind.

A single week in November was to be set aside as 'factory week'. The case for CND was to be put, at factory gates meetings, to as many industrial workers as possible. The setting up of CND factory groups was to be encouraged. One of the main functions of such groups was seen as.... the regular sale of 'Sanity'! Pro-CND industrial workers were to be encouraged to be active in their unions.

The workers, 'Sanity' proclaimed, should be made to realize that through their unions they can play an active part in influencing the policy of the government and the political parties'. This was to be done 'by attending union branch meetings, putting down resolutions for their union conferences, making sure that their branch sends delegates to Labour Party GMCs, puts resolutions down there and encourages the union itself to be active in every possible way in promoting nuclear disarmament'.

'The task of "factory week", the statement continued, 'is to make the unions active. It must be stressed that this is the main task of industrial workers who support CND'.

Not a single word about the 'physical challenge' to the arms race - about 'direct action' - about the 'blacking' of work on nuclear weapons. Instead a detailed and explicit exhortation to turn to the bureaucratic organizations, to get caught up in their manoeuvres and resolution mongering.

It is high time the rank and file of the movement were made aware of these facts. Is this what you voted for last June?

K. S.

### THOUGHTS FOR EASTER

FIRST EVER EASTER LAMENT:

'MY FEET ARE KILLING ME!'

'FATHER, FATHER, WHY HAST THOU  
FORSAKEN ME?'

or BETRAYED BY THE LEADERSHIP  
AGAIN!

\* 'Sanity', October 1962.



## DANGER! PARTY HACKS AT WORK

'Steps Towards Peace' was issued by the CND Executive without the endorsement of Conference and without the support of any significant number of local groups. CND supporters were presented with a fait accompli. The statement tacitly accepts Russian and American bombs. It explicitly accepts the fraud of 'negotiations', 'agreements' and 'test ban treaties' signed by the big powers. It accepts the still greater fraud of the United Nations (enlarged, of course, to include China and the two Germanies). All this after Suez and after Hungary. After Cyprus, Algeria, Sharpeville and Angola. After Cuba. And after nearly two decades of talk about peace.

The new policy statement marks a new stage in the degeneration of CND. This degeneration is due to several factors. Firstly, to the pressures of the environment in which CND has to operate - an increasingly totalitarian environment in which the Bomb and power politics still reign supreme. Secondly, to the difficulties recently encountered by the more radical part of the movement, around the Committee of 100. In the absence of a constant and effective challenge from within their own ranks, the 'leadership' of CND has been able to get away with almost anything. Thirdly, to the increasing activity within CND of groups whose outlook is fundamentally bureaucratic and conservative (Labour Party, Communist Party, various Trotskyist sects). The policy of these groups is to push CND back in the direction of traditional, 'realistic' politics. The coalescence of these various influences, and of the interests they represent, adds up to a formidable obstacle, under the weight of which the mass movement and the mass challenge it presented are beginning to crumble.

## PASSED ANY GOOD RESOLUTIONS LATELY?

Sometimes the push is towards the Labour Party. Nearly two years ago 'Tribune'\* denounced those who organized the first sit-down as 'lacking in patience'. It told us how 'Patient explanation had won the TUC for unilateralism and made possible the decisions of the (Scarborough) Labour Party Conference'. A little later, intoxicated by this paper victory, and blissfully unaware of the bureaucratic structure of traditional political parties, Donald Soper, a leading Tribunite, was to write: 'My own feeling is that the imprecise, inchoate demand for direct action... is diverting the energies of young people. The work of slow persuasion within a political party, the continued attendance at dull, not at all romantic Party meetings, demands its own brand of courage...'.\*\* (We would prefer to say its own brand of masochism!)

---

\* 'Tribune', May 5, 1961.

\*\* 'Sanity', November 1961.



The bureaucratic manoeuvres that followed Scarborough, the ease with which the Transport House apparatus men reasserted their control of the machine, brought the real facts of political life into sharp focus for thousands in CND. The Labour 'lefts' were caught with their pants off. But they are still at it. 'Tribune' \* recently welcomed 'Steps Towards Peace' with enthusiasm. It called it 'the merging of idealism and realism'. Some hybrid!

All this dove-tails well, of course, with the innate conservatism of the CND leadership. What these 'leaders' really think was perhaps expressed most lucidly in an article by Canon Collins published in 'Christian Action Newsletter': 'There are voices among and behind the Committee of 100 whose aim is... to make it impossible for the government to govern. Anarchists, making use of the growing and righteous indignation of countless thousands of the people of Britain, particularly the young, against inhuman and insane defence and foreign policies of government and opposition alike, and playing upon the emotions of those who fear that, if something is not done at once, the whole human race is threatened with nuclear destruction, aim by an ever-increasing use of civil disobedience to destroy the British Constitution and to bring all administration to a standstill... I could never associate myself with such an aim'.\*\*

## COME TWIST WITH ME!

Another influence now strongly pushing CND in the direction of traditional politics is the Communist Party. Their previous record in relation to the Bomb is worth documenting in some detail.\*\*\* It is a warning to those who might be tempted to accept the Party as honest and principled supporters of unilateral disarmament.

When the original atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in 1945, the Communist Parties throughout the world welcomed the fact. These were the palmy days of Teheran and Yalta. On August 8, 1945, the 'Daily Worker' boasted that the possession of the new weapon would 'enormously increase the strength of the three great powers in relation to all other countries'. On August 14, it denounced Japanese procrastination and wanted to know how long the Japanese would be allowed 'before the full force of Allied power - including the Atom Bomb - is loosed against them, in a blow intended to be final'. 'The employment of the new weapon on a substantial scale would expedite the surrender of Japan' the 'Daily Worker' urged. 'Valuable lives in the Allied nations will have been saved by the new discovery'. All this at a time when the Japanese were already suing for peace.

\* 'Tribune', November 30, 1962. \*\* 'Christian Action Newsletter' Autumn 1961.

\*\*\* An excellent account of this record is to be found in Raymond Challinor's article 'ZIG-ZAG: THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE BOMB', published in issue No.6 (Winter 1960-61) of 'International Socialism'. We are indebted to this source for several of our quotes.



Other Communist Parties denounced those who protested at the use of the bomb. 'L'Unita' (August 10, 1945), journal of the Italian Communist Party, took the prize for sheer cynicism. 'The news that an atomic bomb was dropped by the American Air Force has made an enormous impression throughout the world, and has been received on all sides with a sense of panic and condemnation. This shows, it seems to us, a curious psychological perversion and a doctrinaire obedience to a form of abstract humanitarianism'.

1947 saw the Marshall Plan and the beginning of the Cold War. The Party line changed. The Stockholm Peace appeal was launched. This called for multilateral disarmament through Summit Talks (the sort of thing Macmillan and Strachey are still trying to peddle... fifteen years later).

In 1953 the Russian successfully tested their first Hydrogen Bomb. 'World News' (October 24, 1953) commented that this was 'a powerful basis for widening and extending the peace movement'. And Party Chairman Palme Dutt wrote in 'Labour Monthly' (April 1955): 'It is the Soviet hydrogen bomb that is the true great deterrent'. The ideas of the Communists were shown to be mirror images of those of the rulers of Britain and America. They all accept the 'great deterrent' mythology, the 'negotiation from strength' arguments and so on. In so doing they all contribute to the deadlock.

At Trade Union conferences throughout 1958 and 1959 the Communist Party opposed all resolutions calling for unilateral disarmament by Britain. For instance at the 1959 Conference of the National Union of Mineworkers, Abe Moffat, Communist Party leader of the Scottish National Union of Mineworkers spoke in favour of the official right-wing TUC-Labour Party statement and opposed a CND resolution moved by Bert Wynn of the Derbyshire Miners. On September 12, 1958, 'Tribune' wrote: 'Some delegates at last week's Trade Union Congress were puzzled over the size of the opposition to the Fire Brigades Union motion urging unilateral disarmament. Many of the unions traditionally supporters of nuclear disarmament, either voted against it or abstained. Some of them even failed to support the Public Employees' resolution urging 'the drastic curtailment of military expenditure'. What happened within these union delegations? The answer is simple: the Communist Party members within them urged this course of action in line with the policy line plugged by the 'Daily Worker'. This alleged that to call for unilateral abandonment of the H-bomb destroys unity and splits the "peace forces" because it is a "maximalist demand".'

The 26th Congress of the Communist Party (March 27-30, 1959) reaffirmed the position. The draft political resolution appealed for unity of 'all sections of the peace movement in Britain, those supporting unilateralism, and those advocating international agreement...'. This made it quite clear that the Party was not in the former category. At the Congress John Gollan dotted the i's and crossed the t's. He deplored 'emphasis on the issue of unilateral nuclear disarmament in a way which has tended to divide



and slow up the activities of the forces of peace'. \* He stated that 'the real issue is what policy will unite the greatest number of people to get rid of the bomb'. He then went on 'every experience has shown that to make agreement on unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons a condition in the fight for peace only divided the movement. It tends to divert attention from the real issue: international agreement'.

The organizational implications of such a position were obvious. Comrade Gollan dotted some further i's. 'The interests of peace require an organization like the British Peace Committee, which because of its policy and constitution, fulfils a role which none of the other organizations can... It is the only peace organization linked with the peace movement in all other countries, through its association with the World Council of Peace, etc, etc.'

These pronouncements were made at a time when CND, with its emphasis on unilateralism, was growing rapidly, attracting more and more young people to its ranks and breaking through the straight-jacket of traditional political parties and allegiances. The British Peace Committee, a typical Stalinist front organization, was meanwhile stagnating despite all its 'unity mongering'. Its intentions could be smelled a mile off.

'If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!'. By 1960, the King Street leadership decided that the Party had better jump onto the CND bandwagon... and quick. It had failed to prevent the growth of the 'dividing' and 'diversive' CND groups which 'slowed up the activities of the forces of peace'. So Party members were urged to join CND. They did so in droves. The repercussions are being felt more and more within the movement. 'Steps Towards Peace' directly reflects this growing influence. From John Gollan to Ivor Montagu (of the British Peace Committee); from Ivor Montagu to Professor Bernal (also of the British Peace Committee); and from Bernal to Canon Collins, the ideological transmission belt is now in full swing.

## YOUTH AGAINST THE BUREAUCRATS

Much ink has been spilled over Communist influence in YCND. It is difficult to discuss the matter objectively. Attempts to do so provoke cries of 'witch-hunting' (usually uttered by those who see nothing wrong in witch-hunting their own opponents on the left).

If we oppose Communist influence in CND it is because we consider it a thoroughly conservative, bureaucratic and reactionary influence, liable in the long run to discredit the movement and to prevent it evolving in a genuinely revolutionary direction. We are not anti-communist; on the contrary, we consider ourselves far more radical than the Communist Party with its emphasis on Summit Talks, and postcards to MPs.

---

\* 'Marxism Today' (May 1959) went even further: 'Unilateralism only divides the movement and diverts attention from the real issue, namely, international agreement to ban nuclear weapons'.



Soon after the change of line, in 1960, a concerted effort was made to influence YCND. This involved, among other things, 'cooperation' in the production of 'Youth Against the Bomb'. It is here that Party influence was most clearly seen.

In the autumn of 1961 this influence was to reach its peak. Issue after issue of the paper would carry articles on the 'German menace', a typical Communist Party preoccupation at the time, but one alien to the whole mood and purpose of CND. The July-August 1961 issue titled 'Has Germany set the date for World War III?'. The September 1961 issue carried a front page article 'ACHTUNG!'. This concluded with certain paragraphs, the political parentage of which could be in little doubt.\*

All this nationalist and sectarian nonsense was being dished out at a time when the Campaign against the bomb in Britain was facing the challenge represented by the Committee of 100 and getting involved in the real debate about direct action. While YATB talked about German troops in Wales and moaned about the loss of British independence, thousands in CND were reaching radical conclusions as to the real nature of the British State. They were beginning to understand its forces of repression, the class nature of its 'justice', the shallowness of its institutions. They were discovering the fragile nature of our civil liberties. And they were realizing that if they wished to be taken seriously by ordinary people they would have to take an unequivocal stand against ALL nuclear tests, and against the nuclear policies of both East and West.

The September 1961 issue of YATB also reported, with obvious pride, how the Chairman and vice-chairman of YCND had recently gone as delegates to the Disarmament Commission of the World Youth Forum in Moscow (July 25 to August 3, 1961). The Chairman had 'received an ovation'. His speech had been reprinted in 'Komsomolskaya Pravda'. When we recollect how 'Pravda' reacted, a few months later, to the genuine challenge of the Committee of 100 in Red Square \*\* we can only surmise that the YCND speech in Moscow was strictly on the Party line...

The December 1961 issue of YATB was to give front page coverage to a decision of the National Executive of YCND 'to ask the Committee of 100 not to organize a civil disobedience demonstration over the Easter weekend'. YCND was beginning to echo the bureaucratic concerns of the CND leadership. These were to curb the youth, to keep the movement within orthodox, respectable channels - and to do nothing which might harm the prospects of

\* 'The West must negotiate, if necessary with East Germany, to settle the security of access to Berlin and the rights of West Berliners. The West should consider the proposals, already receiving the sympathy of the Russians, that West Berlin be made into a free city, guaranteed by the U.N., etc,etc.'

\*\* See 'Solidarity', vol. II, No. 6.



influencing the traditional 'left'. A fear of mass action that might escape from the control of the leadership dominated all their thinking. These concerns and these fears coincided with those of the Communist Party, whose 'British Road to Socialism' is well known for its parliamentary and thoroughly bureaucratic approach to the problems of social change.

Fortunately there has been a strong reaction within the ranks of YCND. The 1962 Conference showed the growth of a revolutionary opposition both to Stalinist policies and to the bureaucratic policies and methods of the CND leadership. This opposition has since gained ground. It represents a most healthy and radical trend in the youth movement. It will have none of Stalinist summitry, of Stalinist jingoism, of the workers' bomb, or of letters to Tory Prime Ministers. It has few illusions about the nature of the State. It clearly sees the relation of the Bomb to all the other problems of a class society. If it could only divest itself of its Labour Party 'fetishism', if it could only abandon its futile vision of success through work in the traditional organizations, if it could only see that this is not the be-all and end-all of real politics in 1963, possibilities would open up for a genuinely radical break-through. The road would at last be open to the masses of working class and student youth, who treat the traditional 'left' with the contempt it so richly deserves.

Maurice Brinton

## TWO POEMS BY BRECHT

My brother was a flyer,  
One day he got his cards,  
He put his toothbrush in a bag  
And flew off southwards.

My brother was a hero.  
'Our frontiers are too small'  
Surely to be a patriot  
Is the finest dream of all?  
The lands my brother conquered  
Lie east of the pale moon.  
Two metres long, a heart' breadth  
And a single metre down.

Translated by  
JOHN COMLEY.

Those who take the meat from  
the table  
Teach contentment.

Those for whom the taxes are  
destined  
Demand sacrifice.

Those who eat their fill speak to  
the hungry  
Of wonderful times to come.

Those who lead the country into  
the abyss  
Call ruling too difficult  
For ordinary men.



# THE OXFORD CONFERENCE OR THE DIVINE DIALECTIC IN ACTION

Once upon a time there was an organization called the European Federation Against Nuclear Arms. It had few member groups, as there was only one big CND - in Britain. But it had an office. And some special notepaper. And a secretary called Peggy Duff. And to make everyone happy it also had three presidents.

One president was called Heinrich Buchbinder. He was a Swiss. He sometimes called himself a Trotskyist, but the Trots called him many other things.

The second president was German. His name was Heinz Kloppenburg. He was secretary of something called the Christian Peace Conference. And he was editorial chairman of a paper of the same name, published in Prague (sic!). You too can buy a copy if you like a little Christianity mixed with your Stalinist propaganda.

But guess who the third president was? Yes, children, of course! Our own dear Canon. He must be such a busy man, presiding over so many things!

Last year the Federation decided to call an International Conference in Oxford, in January 1963. It would send invitations to all sorts of 'non-aligned' groups. You know, those naughty groups opposed to ALL bombs and ready to struggle against the nuclear policies of their own governments.

But the busy little Canon had a list of his own. He had been to Moscow that Summer and had met Mr. K. himself. He had made many new and strange friends. He was now a different man. All his old associates would say so... but only behind his back.

The Canon's new friends were called 'Peacemen'. They belonged to something called the World Peace Council which even had a branch in Charlotte Street called the British Peace Committee. Late in 1960 its members began to call for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Some nasty people don't think they really mean it, because they often prefer to talk about Summit Conferences. Their emblem is a white Picasso dove, bespattered with red Hungarian blood. These 'Peacemen' only protest at some of the tests, because they know that certain kinds of Strontium 90 are really very good for children. Politically they are everywhere. Some have even succeeded in infiltrating the Communist Party.

Well, one night, unknown to the other two presidents, or to the other members of the Federation - or to the other organizations that had been invited, the busy little Canon sent cordial invitations to all his new friends



and acquaintances.\* They were all very happy about it and some even accepted the invitations before they had been received.

The Priest-King wanted his new friends to come as delegates. But he had to demote them to mere observers. 'I will resign if you don't', his secretary threatened, 'and expose you to 'Woman's Own' and 'The News of the World''.

About a month before the Conference, the good news about the invitations leaked out. Some people got all steamed up. They had learnt, at the same time, who the Canon had invited, and that the invitations had been accepted, thank you very much. Angry telegrams poured into London from many parts of the world.

The Secretary of the War Resisters International also objected. But he only lives in Enfield. His letter didn't need an answer. It was put straight into the waste-paper basket.

The delegates were very tired when they reached London. Some were happy to find that everything had been done for them. A thoughtful Steering Committee (yes, that man again) had prepared a thoughtful agenda, specifying exactly when the Peacemen would appear. But some delegates protested. The Steering Committee tried to solve the problem but couldn't. Something terrible then happened. The Conference itself took the decision. The Peacemen would have to stay in London, drinking vodka, until the end of the Conference.

The president was very angry. He said he would wash his hands of the whole business if people didn't do what he said. But people didn't. Some of them even asked that he apologize for behaving like a spoiled priest.

The Conference declared that each participating group should actively oppose: (1) the testing, manufacture, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons by all countries, including their own; (2) all nuclear bases, including the use of their own territory for this purpose; (3) all countries' membership of all nuclear alliances; (4) the spread of nuclear weapons to any new countries or blocs.

As it closed the Conference appointed a Continuing Committee. Some people actually said they had no confidence in the three previous presidents. Others agreed, but thought it very rude to say so. Ex-president Buchbinder left, slamming the door. Ex-president Kloppenburg said he wouldn't stand again. But ex-president Collins... yes, children, how did you guess?

The Continuing Committee appointed a small group to renew the 'dialogue' with the Peacemen. But when big, bad Peaceman Bernal was approached, he wouldn't talk. 'He wasn't interested in negotiating with a lot of nonentities'.

The Bernal is an important man. Stalin once gave him the Lenin peace prize (worth about £10,000).

So far the Canon has been too busy to attend meetings of the Continuing Committee. But then he too is an important man. Perhaps some day Mr. K. will give him a Lenin peace prize, too.

---

\* The Canon claims ('Sanity', April 1963) that CND National Council approved nem con, of this imaginative move. If this is a lie it's bad enough. If it's true, it's even worse!



# TWO CAN PLAY!

In our last issue we described how officials of the AEU and NUGMW negotiated secret agreements with the management of the new Ford plant at Halewood, near Liverpool. In return for 'special rights' to organize the plant they were prepared to accept rates on behalf of their members lower than the nationally agreed ones for other Ford factories. The news leaked out. The men took action and have now won. A member of the Walthamstow Trades Council shows here how a little initiative and 'unofficial' action helped things along and assisted in breaking through the bureaucratic stranglehold.

The report in 'Solidarity' vol.II, No.9, of Ford's new factory at Halewood was correct in all save one small detail. The error does not matter much. But it is worth recording because it discloses quite a good story.

When the AEU and NUGMW made their secret agreement for lower rates at Halewood, workers at other Ford factories could hardly believe that the national agreement for one rate to be paid in all Ford factories could be so flagrantly dishonoured.

Protests from Dagenham only resulted in NUGMW officials in Liverpool putting it around that Dagenham was selfishly opposing the new factory. When Dagenham stewards tried to establish contact with Halewood, they came bang up against all the frustrations imposed by the official trade union obstructive bureaucracy.

The Dagenham stewards first asked the AEU South East Essex District Committee to raise the issue with the AEU Liverpool District Committee; but the AEU Executive Council ruled that as the matter concerned national agreements, it was not district committee business. So Dagenham stewards asked the Dagenham Trades Council to intervene for them with Liverpool Trades Council. Unfortuna-

tely, Dagenham Trades Council knew their Rules too well. These rules are so fantastic that they are worth a little study.

Trades Councils are grouped together in regional federations. No Trades Council may write to another without first submitting the correspondence to their federation. As federations meet at two or three-monthly intervals, the time element alone makes it almost certain that, even if permission is granted, the letter will hardly be worth writing. When a Trades Council wishes to write to a Trades Council in another federation, Bureaucracy really goes to town. The letter first has to be submitted to the home federation, who, if agreeable, must forward the request to the TUC. The TUC, in the most unlikely event of approval, will then send the letter on to the appropriate federation for their observations. By now everybody will have forgotten all about the issue, for in the intervening time, those concerned will have been voted in and out of office several times over.

So Dagenham Trades Council regretfully declined the request of the Dagenham stewards. The Dagenham stewards are good triers. They have to be. Dealing with the Ford management



gives one a good training at refusing to take 'No' for an answer.

The request next came before the Walthamstow Trades Council, through a TGWU branch affiliated to Walthamstow. Walthamstow also knows the rules. It also knows that trade union rules must never be used to frustrate shop floor democracy. So Walthamstow wrote to Liverpool Trades Council, asking them to receive a Trades Council delegation to discuss Union organization at Halewood - a valid subject for trades councils to discuss - and righteously disclaiming any intention to interfere with wage rates.

At first Liverpool were not interested. But Walthamstow kept plugging away, until the knowledge that they were writing at all at last filtered through to the delegates of the Liverpool Trades and Labour Council. Liverpool Trades Council is not quite the spineless creature 'Solidarity' makes it out to be. It was moved and seconded that the Walthamstow deputation be received. The Chairman (Jim Braddock, husband of Bessie, the pugs' girl friend) ruled it out of order. Comrade Braddock in his turn was ruled out of order. He left the Chair and his ruling was defeated. The Trades Council agreed to receive Walthamstow. After the meeting, and safely behind the scenes, Jim Braddock insisted that all the correspondence should be sent to the TUC. Meantime, Walthamstow elected their deputation, which consisted of one of their delegates, himself a shop steward at Fords, to lead the deputation, and five co-opted Ford stewards from different Ford factories. This made a properly representative delegation.

Sure enough, Walthamstow received a snorter from the TUC. Surprisingly, this only expressed TUC disapproval, and did not actually prohibit the delegation. Democracy -

the national rate. Some credit for this in workers making their own decisions, rather than acquiescing in decisions imposed by bureaucracy.

tempered with bureaucracy - demanded that a reply to the TUC could not be sent until after the next meeting of the Walthamstow Trades Council - by which time the deputation would have returned from Liverpool. So Liverpool was informed of the arrangements. Fortunately, the delegation leader was given a copy of this letter.

When the delegation arrived in Liverpool, the Trades Council Secretary was caught bending. He had obviously assumed that the TUC would ban the whole enterprise. He told Walthamstow that they were not expected. To cover his confusion, he stated that he had received no confirmation of the meeting. When the delegates produced a copy of the letter which had been sent to him, he lamely suggested that the letter must have gone astray. However, he did agree to put the matter to the Trades Council who once again overruled their Chairman, and agreed to allow Walthamstow half an hour.

Thirty minutes is not much time in which to remove all the confusions and misrepresentations which then existed. Liverpool delegates did give Walthamstow a very fair hearing. It was not expected that much would be achieved at the Trades Council meeting itself. Afterwards the more directly concerned delegates met the Walthamstow deputation in the freer and more congenial atmosphere of a nearby pub. Here real business was done.

Dagenham shop stewards made arrangements for firm contact with their opposite numbers in Liverpool. From this point there was no need for further trades council or other official union mediation: what developed since is in the shop stewards' records only. It seems they have made good use of the opportunity offered them. In spite of the AEU and NUGMW back-door sell-out, in spite of NJNC impotency to reach an agreement on wage rates which conformed to the national agreement, it has now been announced that Halewood will pay must go to those who put greater faith

T.U. AMATEUR BUREAUCRAT.



FRANK BARDACKE \* WRITES:

# what's left?

If a 'new left' ever existed it is by now long dead. The fact that students continue to organize rallies, forums and picket lines is only an indication that they haven't the sense to lie down and give up. For certainly any bright student politico quickly learns the overpowering fact of American politics: the left is impotent. The instructions of the CORE organizers are superfluous... there is no reason to tell people to 'go limp' for the new left is not capable of getting even half a hard-on.

If there was any doubt as to the lack of political potency of the American left it was smashed by the recent Cuban missile crisis. Everyone at last seemed to realize that he was powerless. Nobody believed that the rallies and telegrams would have any real political significance, but they were organized anyway because organizing rallies and sending telegrams are the only things that the American left knows how to do.

Nevertheless, it is a somewhat pitiful sight to see people, who most certainly know better, rushing off telegrams to the President asking him to reconsider his policies. I too tried to send a telegram to the President. But the Western Union lady told me very politely that it was illegal to send a telegram which read: 'fuck you.'

But now that the left cannot possibly ignore its impotence, what is it to do? There are at least five ploys open to these young politicians. All of the ploys lead nowhere.

The most prevalent ploy is to ignore what it is impossible to ignore. When the people who make this decision are faced with the choice between ignoring their impotence and getting out of politics, they decide to remain in politics and pretend they have power. An editor of 'Dissent' writes: 'If Mrs. Kolko is right, the only choice is to get out of politics'. Therefore the readers are to conclude that Mrs. Kolko must be wrong. These people simply could not bear to give up their organizing, picketing, and open letters to the President. Well, it's one way to spend your free time.

Another way of avoiding the political reality is to alter it. Many people (happily their number is decreasing) merrily build a system in their minds in which they are powerful. They speak of the militant American working class, the immiseration of the proletariat, and various other fairy tales. The new left, they say, must identify itself with the interests of the working class and then it will gain power. Unfortunately if the American working class were armed, among the first they would shoot would be the Young Socialist Alliance.

There is also the ever popular 'another country' ploy. This escape, which seems to be quite prevalent in Berkeley, takes the form of: 'We may be impotent in the United States but we can ally ourselves with the Soviet Union which is the wave of the future'. If the Soviet Union is the wave of the future, most of us had better find some dry ground. By this time the tremendous historical difficulties

---

\* Frank Bardacke is some kind of a nut. He writes for the excellent periodical 'The Wooden Shoe' (synonym: Sabot) published by B. and M. Garson, 1937 1/2 Russell Street, Berkeley 3, California, from which this article is reprinted.



facing the Soviet Union' are beginning to get a bit old. Was it these difficulties which 'forced' the Soviet Union to sentence to death a man who 'cheated' on the amount of fats specified for making meat pies? And of course these people must bring themselves to believe that the Soviet resumption of nuclear tests in 1961 was necessary for the defence of the Soviet Union and that the Berlin Wall was built to 'stop the exchange of blackmarket goods'.

Another ploy is to become a professor in one of the social sciences. Somehow then you don't lose your political effectiveness. They are quick to claim that if you are in political science you can be thinking of ways to improve society. Unfortunately, political scientists

spend most of their time worrying about whether Rousseau was a totalitarian and what Hobbes really meant. Eventually the only issue that will move the social scientist to action is the size of his next grant.

The final way out is the most dynamic. Norman Mailer is the spiritual leader. Listen, he says, I may be impotent politically but personally I have balls. The world is second to Mr. Mailer's bed. Certainly a good lay might do the American left some good, but if you follow Mr. Mailer's lead, a knife is more important than a condom.

So there is the choice. Pick any group you wish. But always remember that if you have 'left' politics in the U.S. in the 1960s, you are of no political importance.

## SOLIDARITY PAMPHLETS

OBTAINABLE FROM :  
Bob Potter,  
18, Kingsley Rd., SW19.

- No.6. THE MEANING OF SOCIALISM. by Paul Cardan. A basic re-statement of socialist objectives. The case for workers' management of production. 10d. (post free).
- No.7. THE WORKERS' OPPOSITION. by Alexandra Kollontai. A fully annotated account of the 1919-1920 struggle in the Russian Bolshevik Party. 74 pages. 2/5d. (post free).
- No.8. THE B.L.S.P. DISPUTE. by Ken Weller. The story of the great 1961 Acton strike. A documented exposure of union leaderships. 10d.(p.f.)
- No.10. THE 100 VERSUS THE STATE. (produced jointly with the ILP). The socialist implications of mass civil disobedience and direct action. 8d.
- No.11. SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM. The text adopted at the May 1961 Conference of revolutionary socialist organizations. A basis for regroupment. 8d.
- No.12. TRUTH ABOUT VAUXHALL. An analysis of modern managerial techniques. Higher wages... but at what cost? by Ken Weller. 8d. (post free).
- No.13. HOMELESS. A call for direct action written by tenants themselves. 10d.



# THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION AND THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

A society without exploitation will only be possible when the key decisions concerning production and administration are no longer the exclusive function of specific social groups but are genuinely collective ones. Under socialism all institutions will genuinely express the wishes of the collective producer, of the working masses themselves.

Socialism implies the abolition of the structural division in society into those who decide and manage and those who merely execute. Only the working class can abolish this division by establishing its own rule: workers' management of production. No solutions from above - or from the outside - will really 'solve' anything.

Nationalisation of the means of production and planning do not of themselves change the class character of any particular regime. They in no way abolish exploitation. They have no implicitly socialist content. They may bring about the elimination of the old ruling class, but they don't answer the basic questions: who is now to manage 'nationalised' production? How? In whose interests? If a narrow social group assumes sole managerial functions in production, 'all the old crap' of which Marx spoke will immediately reappear. A new class society will emerge. For who manages production manages society as a whole.

If one sees the socialist revolution as the mere abolition of private property, plus nationalisation, plus planning, then the whole problem for socialists centres on 'taking power'. It centres in other words on a particular moment in history. This 'moment' may last a few days (or a few weeks). It may even be followed by several months (or years) of civil war. But the end result will always be the same. The old ruling class will be expropriated - both in law and in fact. But a new one will replace it.

If this is one's conception of the socialist revolution the main task today is to build an organization designed to lead the struggle for political power. The rest will more or less look after itself. All the traditional organizations of the Left more or less subscribe to this view.

This is certainly how things took place during the bourgeois revolution. The basic economic relations of capitalist society already existed, in an embryonic form, within feudal society. Manufacture had



already resulted in an elementary development of both capitalists and workers. The rent paid by the peasants to feudal landowners was an anachronism, devoid of all economic purpose. The landowners themselves fulfilled no social function whatsoever. They were also an anachronism. This society, which was fundamentally already a bourgeois society, was encased in a thin shell of feudal institutions.

Then suddenly the masses erupt. A Bastille is captured. Heads roll. Or a Cromwell appears to challenge the divine right of kings. Representatives are elected, many of them lawyers. Constitutions, rules and decrees are promulgated. The political structure is 'revolutionised' from top to bottom. The trick is done. The revolution is an accomplished fact. An historical period comes to an end, a new one begins. True, a civil war may follow. The drafting of new legislation may take several decades. The administrative and military structure may be drastically altered. But the essential content of the bourgeois revolution, the new relations of production, were already well developed before the revolution took place.

The bourgeois revolution bases itself to a large extent on what is already there. It legalises established fact by destroying a juridical superstructure which no longer corresponds to economic reality. Its positive creations all pertain to this superstructure. The economic base looks after itself. Once capitalist relations have been established in a given sector of the economy, capitalism develops according to its own laws. Commodities are produced. They exchange with one another. They circulate. Capital accumulates. This tends to take place quite automatically, both before and after the establishment of the political rule of the bourgeoisie.

The socialist revolution is something entirely different. It is not simply a negation of certain aspects of the society that preceded it. It is essentially a positive, a creative act. Socialism has to build not only new factories, but new relations of production, new relations between men, both in their work and out of it. These new relations can only be surmised in the preceding capitalist phase.

During its final phase, capitalism brings about a 'socialisation of labour', the cooperative activity of thousands of workers in gigantic enterprises. This 'socialisation of labour', which Marx described in Volume III of 'Capital', is the premise of socialism insofar as it suppresses the anarchy of small scale production and the isolation and dispersion of the working class. But it is in no sense a 'preview' or 'embryonic form' of socialism. 'Socialisation of labour' under capitalism is an antagonistic socialisation. It both reproduces and deepens the division of society into a small group which directs and manages and a vast mass which merely executes.

Socialist relations of production are very different. They would abolish the existence of a rigid and stable stratum of managers in production. Socialist relations of production do not only imply the destruction of the power of the bourgeoisie. They also imply the establishment of conditions which would prevent the growth of any new managerial bureaucracy.

The main difference between the bourgeois and socialist revolutions can now clearly be seen. The bourgeois revolution completes the transition to capitalism. The socialist revolution merely starts the transition to socialism.

-----



# THOUGHTS ON BUREAUCRACY

by BOB POTTER.

One of the greatest problems facing the revolutionary movement today is that of bureaucracy. What is it? Is it a rootless 'thing', floating between the working class and their rulers? Is it a 'new class'? No other issue more clearly shows up the bankruptcy in ideas of the traditional 'left' than its inability seriously to grapple with this problem.

The traditional 'left' is incapable of looking at reality as it is, of analysing it here and now. Instead it gazes at society from the standpoint of political doctrines expounded a century ago, doctrines in many cases relating to very different social conditions and class alignments.

The contributions of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and other 'giants' of the past have been reduced to 'sacred scriptures'. They are quoted as 'divine authority' on the assumption that 'nothing has changed'. The term 'revisionist' has become a term of abuse. That the 'giants' themselves constantly revised their ideas in the face of a constantly developing experience is conveniently forgotten.

This 'religious' attitude to the past is a complete rejection of dialectical thinking. With such tram-lines firmly laid in their brains it is little wonder that so many self-styled revolutionaries fail to see that Russia today, for instance, is as much a class society as any Western country.

\* \* \* \* \*

The traditionalists, for instance, are all obsessed with the legal status of property, as if this were the fundamental thing. They fail to see that the bureaucracy in Russia has assumed the role of ruling class because it dominates production, manages it in its own interests and decides, through its exclusive control of the State, all about the distribution of the social product. State capitalism hadn't developed in Marx's day. His doctrines must be brought up to date in this respect.

Marx's dream of state ownership, centralised control\* and rapidly increasing productive forces has been fulfilled with a vengeance in Russia

---

\* '...to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e. of the proletariat organized as ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible'. 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', Foreign Languages Publishing House edition, Moscow 1957, p.85.



today. But is this socialism? The Russian workers are never consulted in the important, everyday decisions that concern them most. Hours or tempo of work, wages, consumption and leisure. They were never consulted about the resumption of tests (any more than ordinary people in the West were). Sometimes they are not even informed of such facts. And in the Arts, what the Party says, goes.

Marx defines capitalism as a society based on commodity production and wage labour and in which 'surplus value' is extracted from the workers. Part of this surplus value goes to capitalisation and part goes to the unproductive consumption of the rulers themselves. But many 'marxists' fail to see that from this standpoint the Russian worker is exploited just as much, if not more than his American counterpart.

The mere assertion that the State is 'owned' by the workers has about as much relevance to the Russian worker as the fact that British Railways are 'publicly owned' has for the rank-and-file member of the NUR. The abolition of private ownership is clearly not enough. Private ownership is only one 'legal form' for the power of the ruling class. The ruling class has certainly perceived this. It is high time the revolutionaries did too.

The more far-sighted sections of the ruling class are beginning to realize that only by introducing State ownership can they effectively rationalize their economies, overcome the old type of economic difficulties, and thus maintain their rule.\*

At the same time the rulers have learnt that they need the Labour bureaucrats to discipline the workers, to tie ever more closely to the job. They need the traditional unions as an outlet for grievances. In parallel with the increased State intervention in the economy, the Labour leaders and the unions have become increasingly integrated into the political structure of capitalism.

For the worker, these developments have meant increasing domination from above, both in work and in leisure. More and more the employer tries to fashion his employees along the lines so accurately depicted by Charlie Chaplin in 'Modern Times'.

Many other 'doctrines', unquestioningly accepted by the 'left' today, are equally contradictory. For instance some people pay lip-service to the idea that 'the liberation of the working class can be achieved only by the

---

\* Bismarck and Churchill were advocates, in their time, of nationalisation. Even the Nazis put forward the following economic demand, in 1923: 'We demand the abolition of unearned incomes and the abolition of the thrall of interest. We demand the nationalisation of all industrial trusts'. 'History of Nazi Germany', Pelican Books, p.199.



working class itself'. But the same people act and speak as if the working class is an unintelligent herd, incapable of achieving socialism without an 'elitist' party, 'stepped in struggle', 'disciplined', 'centrally controlled', a party which would lead the class to revolutionise society by capturing political power.

Socialism to us means the maximum freedom for the worker in all his activities. It is the very opposite of the massive bureaucratic control which has developed both sides of the Iron Curtain. The germ of socialism, i.e. maximum participation of the workers themselves, existed in the Paris Commune of 1871, in the Soviets or Workers' Councils of 1905 and 1917, in Spain in 1936 and 1937, and for a few weeks in Budapest in 1956. What has happened to that germ?

Millions of words have been written about the 'degeneration' of the October Revolution and of the Bolshevik Party. The writers invariably miss the crucial point, namely that the seeds of the degeneration lay in the dual (and typically capitalist) conceptions of an elitist party and of the authoritarian management of industry. These ideas - or rather this mentality - was to govern all decisions on political and economic questions.

The elitist theory finds its highest expression in the works of Lenin. In 'What Is To Be Done', written in 1902, he argues that the working class is incapable of independently developing 'socialist consciousness', which has therefore to be injected from outside. 'Socialist consciousness' he wrote, 'arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the working class movement. It arose as a natural and inevitable development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia'.\*

From here it is a logical step to the overall conception of the ignorant herd of workers on the one hand, and the leading 'cadre' of intellectuals on the other. The 'cadre' do all the 'thinking'. The workers 'test' the resultant 'theories' in their everyday struggles with the boss. The division of labour between manual and intellectual, which capitalism developed, has now affected the ranks of the would-be 'revolutionaries'. Here is the ideological justification for bureaucratic politics.

Once these premises are accepted it matters little how opponents are fought, so long as workers 'believe' the facts given them. In describing how one should deal with opposing factions (i.e. members of the same party) Lenin advocated 'the spreading among the masses of hatred, aversion and contempt for the opponents.' 'The limits of the struggle based on a split are not Party limits, but general political limits, or rather general civil limits, the limits set by criminal law and nothing else'.\*\* Modern 'Leninists' certainly seem to have learnt this part at least of the message!

---

\* 'What Is To Be Done', Foreign Languages Publishing House edition, p.51.

\*\* Lenin, 'Selected Works', vol.III, Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 493 and 494.



In the field of production, this philosophy found expression in the doctrine of 'one-man management', the militarisation of labour and the determination to prevent the rank-and-file bodies from taking over the factories. It was presumed, in a typically bureaucratic way, that only those possessing technical knowledge were entitled to impose decisions concerning production. 'In the interests of socialism, the revolution demands', Lenin wrote as early as 1918, 'that the masses unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of the labour process'. Writing in 'Terrorism and Communism', Trotsky echoed: 'The unions should discipline the workers and teach them to place the interests of production above their own needs and demands'. Trotsky continued: 'That free labour is more productive than compulsory labour is quite true when it refers to the period of transition from feudal society to bourgeois society. But one needs to be a liberal to make that truth permanent and to transfer its application to the period of transition from the bourgeois to the socialist order'.

These quotations show the contemptuous attitude held by the Bolshevik 'vanguard' for the working class. It was to have disastrous results. It led for example to the bloody suppression of the Kronstadt mutiny in 1921, when workers demanding that the power stolen from the Soviets by the Bolshevik Party be returned to them. The mutineers were massacred by the Bolsheviks. Significantly both Lenin and Trotsky publicly claimed that it was a counter-revolutionary rebellion, led by Tsarist officers. They both knew this to be a lie, but truth did not matter. Political expediency did.

The culmination of these doctrines was the introduction of completely capitalist methods into Russian production: speed-ups, piecework, unpaid 'voluntary' overtime, permanent labour control, time and motion study, and the open advocacy of a drive for 'American efficiency'. Engels could have been foreseeing modern Russia when he wrote: 'The modern State, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the State of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage workers, proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head'. \*

\* \* \* \* \*

'Being determines consciousness' is an oft-quoted marxist truism. Related to a bureaucrat it means that any man possessing power over others cannot fail but to see society through the eyes of a master. So long as political power exists, class society will exist. So long as a specific social stratum manages production, the ruler and ruled relationship will persist. The political power held by Lenin and his elite over the rank and file of the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik Party was simply transformed, by the

---

\* F. Engels, 'Socialism, Utopian or Scientific', Foreign Languages Publishing House edition, Moscow 1954, pp. 105, 106.



October Revolution, into State power. The Party appointed the industrial managers. It opposed workers' management of production. Its members took up key positions in the State apparatus. The Party built a society in its own image.

The trade union and Labour bureaucrat in this country plays the same role as his Russian counterpart. His prime concern is to maintain himself. This he has no difficulty to do as he is an essential cog in the whole edifice of bureaucratic capitalism. Socialism and workers' power would mean his extinction.

It is no accident that trade union and labour bureaucrats, of every political colouring, instinctively and inevitably must oppose any form of rank and file activity. The bureaucracies are fully integrated into the structure of capitalism. Independent action by the working class is the greatest threat to their existence. To talk, therefore, of these leaders 'selling out' the membership is absurd. There is no other way in which they could act. They differ with one another only in respect of the kind of class society they would choose: the Western, based to an ever-diminishing degree on private ownership, or the Russian brand, organized through total State ownership.

As capitalism develops the State bureaucracy 'takes over' managerial functions to an increasing degree until it becomes the ruling class. The economic basis for this new bureaucracy is the enormous concentration of capital and power and the increasing intervention of the State in all economic transactions, and finally in every aspect of social life. The old 'property-owning bourgeoisie', which characterised the capitalism of the days of Marx, is dying together with the era of laissez-faire. It now has to share its power with the new bureaucracy. It will eventually be eliminated altogether, either gradually and piecemeal (as in the West) or suddenly, as the result of a violent struggle (as in Russia and China). In this respect the only difference between East and West is that the former has already achieved total centralisation in the hands of the State, while in the West the process still continues. It is a quantitative difference..... not one of quality.

In their attitude to rank and file ('unofficial') activity, the organizations of the 'left' reveal most clearly their bureaucratic make up. The great Frank Foulkes, then 'Communist' President of the ETU, could say to the power workers (November 14, 1960) that 'Unofficial bodies are not in the best interests of the industry'. The Stalinist weekly 'World News' devoted a major article, in May 1958, to attacking the 'unofficial' attempts of sections of the London busmen to extend their strike. Even the ultra 'irrevolutionary' S.L.L. declares its policy in all strikes is to make them official. \* This is a permanent call for workers to leave control of the disputes in the hands of the bureaucrats. It goes hand in hand of course with calls for 'better leadership' (i.e. themselves).

Experience has shown that movements relying on leaders can achieve nothing of fundamental benefit to the working class. Bureaucratic parties can only build bureaucratic societies. Socialism cannot be built with capitalist tools. The only saviour of the working class must be the working class itself - a statement that must be taken in its most literal sense.

\* Gerry Healy, letter to 'The Guardian', October 26, 1961.



# LESSONS FROM THE PAST

ALDERMASTON 1962

There were ugly scenes in Whitehall, on Easter Monday, during the abortive keep-the-bomb demonstration. Some 5,000 demonstrators formed into long lines, linking arms, often right in the middle of the road. They wanted to draw attention to their case by obstructing the tens of thousands of citizens and vehicles who were going about their peaceful business.

Many of the demonstrators wore funny pointed hats. Their navy blue garb was decorated with chains, armlets and other ornaments. A sinister feature was the ubiquitous shoulder badges, with coded slogans such as 'PC 563'. Many carried long cudgels, which at first they had concealed about their persons. The demonstrators appeared to accept instructions from a small and inactive group of agitators in flat hats. But later, as feeling rose, some took the initiative into their own hands, and hit back quite spontaneously.

It took some 50,000 citizens two hours and twenty minutes to clear the streets. The demonstrators were carried off, arms and legs waving wildly, into the waiting tumbrels.

An observer from the National Council of Civil Liberties commended the vast majority of the citizens, who had used the maximum possible force throughout the operation. 'But', he added, 'in any excited crowd there will always be a minority of unprincipled pacifists, egging others on to non-violence'.

The good sense of the people made sure that this demonstration was a flop. But we should not be complacent. This was only the visible tenth of the iceberg. Beneath the surface, thousands of malcontents are at work, in various places, indulging in legal activities, making speeches, passing resolutions, imposing and accepting constitutions, and so on.

Only when these people are taught that undemocratic channels are still open to them can we boast about the health and disorder in our society.

J. L.