—SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKERS' POWER

6D

Volume 1 Number 9

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

AND THE

WORKING CLASS

1. THREE BASIC IDEAS

In our last issue we described the nuclear deadlock between the great powers, the paralysis of the traditional parties and the partial breakthrough achieved in the last few months by the Committee of 100.

We discussed why the influence of the Committee had grown - particularly among young people - at a time when apathy and disillusion were widely felt on the 'left'. Provided they developed still further, the methods of struggle and organization evolved by the Committee could, we pointed out, both create an effective instrument for a challenge to the Establishment on a very wide front and provide a framework for the reorganization of society on a completely new basis.

There are many good points about the movement now developing around the Committee: enthusiasm, sincerity, preparedness to struggle - and to face personal sacrifice in the process - and an awareness of the limitations of 'traditional' types of protest such as collecting signatures, sending postcards, marching and lobbying MPs. Of the greatest importance is the fact that the movement is becoming increasingly aware of the real nature of the coercive society in which we live.

How can this great potential be used to best advantage? How can it be translated from a <u>desire</u> to rid society of nuclear weapons into an <u>effective means</u> for doing so?

In our opinion this requires the acceptance of three simple ideas, which flow logically from one another. We think there should be a full discussion about them among supporters of the Committee of 100.

The first is that, in order to be effective the struggle against the bomb must enlist the support of hundreds of thousands of industrial workers. The second is that in order to gain this support the Committee must considerably broaden the scope of its activities and the third is that the process of winning such support will both alter the nature of the Committee and immeasurably increase its chances of success.

2. TURNING TO THE WORKING CLASS

This implies a recognition of some elementary facts of social life. Let us put it quite bluntly. 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.

We don't want to be misunderstood. Thousands of sympathisers of the Committee who are not industrial workers are doing extremely useful work. But decisive results will only be achieved through the industrial action of dockers, railwaymen, transport workers and engineers, not through poster parades in residential areas. As long as the Committee finds its main support among people other than workers, it will remain incapable of getting very far, however sincere and self-sacrificing its activists, and however skillful its propagandists.

This is not to say that the present social composition of the movement condemns it to futility. Things can change very rapidly. Many of the greatest revolutionary upheavals in history started when students, intellectuals and 'middle-class' people began developing radical ideas. When the working class became 'infected' with these ideas, things really began to move. Those who have read of the years preceding the Paris Commune, of the ideological ferment in pre-1917 Russia, of the activities of the Petoffi circle in the Hungary of 1955-56, will see present events in all their promise.

When we speak of action among the working class, we do not mean 'influencing' the trade union bureaucrats who manipulate votes at Labour Party conferences or the professional politicians who 'represent' the working class at the Westminster Gas House. We mean turning the campaign to the workers who make the weapons, transport them, maintain them, and who build and supply the bases and the rocket sites. It is at this level that the problem must be tackled.

An extremely flexible approach will be needed. Where opportunities occur for the advocacy of civil disobedience in the traditional organizations, these should certainly be taken. But the Committee should bear in mind that only a very small minority of workers attend Labour Party

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FOUR HOURS

IN A DEGENERATED WORKERS EMBASSY

Tuesday, October 19. 8 pm. Five people present themselves at the Russian Embassy, in 'Millionaires' Row', Kensington: a housewife, a compositor, a student of architecture, an accountant, and an engineering shop steward.

We knock at the door. Will we be admitted? We are an 'official' delegation, of the type beloved by bureaucrats. But we are a delegation with a difference. We are quite prepared to sit on the steps if refused access. I smile at the thought of a deputation, militantly concerned with peace, being turned away by those who talk loudest on the subject.

The door opens. We enter the embassy of the 'degenerated workers' state'. Not a worker in sight, not even a degenerated one. Only an oppressive atmosphere of late victorian opulence. A long time since the comrades round here did an honest day's work.

The functionary in charge received us politely. 'The Soviet bomb would be let off with great regret... but the security of the Soviet Union was at stake.' - 'What about the thousands to die, both born and unborn, as a result of the tests?' - 'All precautions have been taken. There will be no fall-out. Anyway, you have only the reports of the Western press as evidence that we are undertaking tests. There might not have been any. Or there might have been three - or ten - we don't know. Comrade Krushchev's speech might have been misreported', etc... etc... etc...

At 8.40 pm., our spokesman, Pat Pottle, told the Russian spokesman we were not satisfied. Nothing personal, of course. Very sorry and all that. But we were staying until we got an undertaking that they would not let off their 'doomsday bomb'. And if we got a 'niet' we'd also stay, in protest.

We watched the smile of courtesy congeal as the brain behind it began to freeze. It took ten minutes to convince the tovaritch that we really meant it. He seemed quite stunned. 'Were we aware of what we were doing? Did we know we were on Russian soil? Were we prepared to take the consequences?'. We thought nasty little thoughts of salt mines, of Vorkuta and of inevitable confessions. Then we said we'd stay. The Russian official left us. He was soon replaced by another, then by the Press

Attache. And so the interminable discussion proceeded, the officials relaying one another like coppers on a sit-down.

We talked politics. We pointed out that their justification for the tests were precisely those of the American and British governments. They were those of comrade Gaitskell, too. All of them proceeded from the alleged 'differences' in their respective social systems, from the alleged superiority of their way of life. In defence of these fundamental 'differences' the world would regrettably be rendered radioactive or incinerated. The 'evil leaders' of the other side, in the depth of their shelters, just had to be deterred, no matter what the cost.

We got no caviar, but were allowed to use the toilet.

At about 10 pm., I received an envelope addressed to me c/o Mr. Soldatov, Russian Ambassador. It contained 'SOLIDARITY' leaflets calling for friendship with the Russian workers who had had no say in the monstrous decision of their rulers. I handed these out to the Embassy officials, together with some Committee leaflets. They seemed nonplussed.

At 11 pm., the Russians told us that we had appeared on television. Surely, we would now go home as we had achieved our object. We said we were very sorry. We were staying on. Then, they tried a new tack. They pointed out that we were in the Ambassador's private residence. * We couldn't possibly remain all night. We would be allowed to return the next day and sit in their luxurious waiting room until 6 pm. if we liked (they only work a seven-hour day!). We remained unmoved - in both senses of the word.

At 11.30 pm. we were informed that the police had been called to remove us. I wondered whether they had had to phone Moscow? Would the doorman get the sack? Would the first secretary blame the second secretary? And what of the Home Secretary? Had he himself sanctioned this brutal intrusion of the imperialist police onto Russian State property? Was Lenin turning in his grave?

At 11.40 pm. a couple of very embarrassed and very senior police officers arrived with some flunkeys to remove us. We were not charged with any offence. Jurists in the future might discuss whether we could have been charged, under English law, with an offence committed on Russian soil. Legal history was perhaps in the making.

Ken Weller.

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An Englishman's home is his castle... but so apparently is the Russian Ambassador's! A new text is needed on Nationalization and the Housing Question!

BLSP STRIKE

'SOLIDARITY' will very shortly be publishing a special 20 page pamphlet giving a full and detailed account of the strike still in progress at British Light Steel Pressings, Acton. This is undoubtedly one of the most important strikes of the post-war period.

The pamphlet will not only bring to readers background material essential for a full understanding of what the strike is about. It also gives details of what has been achieved, in terms of shop organization, by the BLSP stewards. It presents a day-by-day account of how the strike developed. We have been fortunate in obtaining from the strikers themselves considerable inside information concerning the attitude of various trade union officials in this dispute, which we intend to publish in full.

We here reproduce the introduction to this pamphlet and certain passages dealing with the background to the dispute. Copies of the pamphlet may be ordered from E. Morse, 183 Beech Lane, Lower Earley, Reading.

INTRODUCTION

We shall deal in some detail with the British Light Steel Pressings dispute because it has raised many fundamental questions. Basic issues of a real socialist character are more clearly embedded in this dispute than they are in all the jargon and slogans of the so-called 'left' of today.

Two worlds and two ethics are here opposed. On one side the philosophy of systematic overtime, of mass sackings, of ruthless exploitation and of the ever greater subjection of men to machines. Men are regarded as mere servants, capable only of obeying instructions, accepting what the boss hands out and saying nowt. This is

the world of capitalist exploitation where boss and trade union bureaucrat stand hand in hand.

On the other hand, the world of sharing work and of sharing earnings, of solidarity and of the placing of human values above those of production. In this second world lie the real seeds of socialism.

Our attitude to the trade union bureaucracy, our views on their relation to the factory organization, should be made quite clear. We don't think it is much good calling for strikes to be made official when this places policy control in the hands of men whose interests are not those of the workers. We think the determination and application of industrial policy should be in the hands of those who have to apply it - and have to carry the can - that is the men on the shop floor.

We are for keeping the trade union bosses out of the factories. Let them stay where they belong - in their offices - or possibly cleaning the streets (if road sweepers would work with them).

We think it foolish to build up false hopes that victory can be achieved by declaring disputes official, through procedure, or through the Rule Book or Constitution of the Union. The BLSP strike shows this very clearly. The men's strength lies in their unity and militancy, and in the solidarity and class consciousness of workers and stewards in other factories and jobs.

The various enemies of freedom each scrabbled to plant a knife in the back of the BLSP men: the employers with their attempted stockpile to be followed by sackings, the trade union leaders with their threats of expulsion and their back-stairs deals, the yellow press - both Tory and Labour - with its distortions, its half-truths and its lies, IRIS (American financed and supported by the trade union bureaucrats) with its lying, witch-hunting press releases. These are our enemies.

On the 'Left': confusion and self-interest. Each sect mouthing slogans of support and trying to get what <u>it</u> can out of the dispute. The Communist Party says: 'Our officials are better than those in office. Vote for us next time. Long live Brother Berridge!'. The Trotskyists say: 'Nationalize the car industry!'. <u>Tribune</u> says: 'Declare the strike official!'. None of these slogans really mean anything. These demands, even if achieved, would solve nothing. What counts is the consciousness of the men in struggle. And this is the one thing which has reached an extraordinarily high level at BLSP - where equal wages for skilled and semi-skilled have been achieved. This has greater socialist content than the entire programme of the sectarians.

BLSP: THE MEN

The British Light Steel Pressings factory at Warple Way, Acton, employs just over a thousand men. It produces Humber Hawk and Super Snipe bodies, Commer cabs and suspension units for the rest of the Rootes Group.

The men at BLSP have one of the tightest and most conscious shops

in the London area. This is illustrated by their record, both in relation to the number of their disputes and to the issues on which these disputes have centered. The men at BLSP also have a record second to none in support of other workers in struggle. During the Smith's strike in June-July 1961, they levied themselves 10s. a week each for the Smith's strike fund. They have levied themselves in support of disputes on many other occasions.

It is worth recalling some of the issues on which they have fought. In November 1958, the men threatened strike action if the firm (who were advertising for sheet metal workers) didn't employ Joe Parker, a militant who had been blacklisted by the employers in the Acton area. They forced the management to give way. Joe Parker was employed and still works at BLSP. (For more information, see 'SOLIDARITY' No.8, 'The Renault Story')

In October 1959, there was a six-day strike against the arbitrary action of the firm in moving a man from night work to days and putting him in another gang without consultation, thereby reducing the piecework earnings of the other 19 men in the gang. This was the so-called 'honeymoon' strike.

In August 1960, the men struck in protest against a loss of earnings due to flood damage in the plant.

In October 1960, BLSP played a leading role in the two-weeks long Rootes strike, in support of the men at Thrupp and Maberly's, who were striking against a large scale redundancy. The issue was similar to the present dispute. The management had been able to build up a stockpile. After a long dispute the men were able to establish the principle of work sharing in the Rootes' Group.*

According to figures given by the management there were 82 'stoppages' in the first 8 months of 1961. These involved 27,000 man-hours of production workers time, with a consequent loss for hourly-paid workers of 17,000 man-hours. The total loss was 44,000 man-hours. Since the figures given average only 524 man-hours for each 'stoppage' it follows that these must have been usually of very short duration. The overwhelming majority of the 'stoppages' were in fact time taken off for mass meetings or time lost during refusals to start work until the management cleaned up the plant properly.**

One unnamed trade union leader quoted by the Sunday Times (October 22, 1961) stated 'over lunch last week': 'Every past dispute at Acton has been a victory for the shop stewards. This has made them into tin-pot gods who have been worshipped by workers as the beginning and the end of the unions'.

The consciousness of the Shop Stewards Committee is high. They have very few illusions about the part played by the trade union officials. When the strike started the

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* See 'What Next for Engineers?' by Ken Weller. 'SOLIDARITY' pamphlet No.3

** Management in large factories often try to economise on cleaners, since they consider them non-productive and therefore expandable.

Acton Gazette quoted a statement of a strikers' spokesman who said: 'We don't want or expect any interference by officials. We don't want the type of assistance the union officials gave us last time we stopped work over a short time dispute (the national Rootes Group strike of October 1960). On the first day we were ordered back to work without anybody considering why we had come out'.

The Shop Stewards Committee has 29 members. It is worth making the point that not one of the stewards - press reports notwithstanding - is a member of the Communist Party.

The Communist Party has a small factory branch at BLSP with about 6 or 7 members. They were by no means the most militant section of the strikers. We understand they in fact voted for a return to work early in the course of the dispute. They presumably were embarrassed by the fact that the local officials of three of the four main union involved were members of the Communist Party. By virtue of their positions in the union machine, these officials had to instruct the men to go back to work.

The conditions at BLSP are amongst the best in the London area. The production workers are formally on piecework. In fact, through rigid control of prices, rates of work, and by setting a ceiling to piecework earnings, the men virtually got a fixed weekly rate. The piecework limit is 8/9 an hour, for both skilled and semi-skilled men. Added to these piecework earnings is 'clock money' which is the nationally agreed basic rate, which contains a built-in differential. But this differential only comes to a few shillings a week. On day work skilled men earn 11/4 an hour and semi-skilled about 11/1. On night work the rate is about 13/2 an hour. The equalisation of earnings was established several years ago when the men decided that workers had the same social requirements and responsibilities whatever the grade of work they were doing.

LABOUR JARGONOLOGISTS :
DEPT. OF UTTER CONFUSION

'This Conference calls upon all leading personalities and all representative organized bodies in the Party to bring to an immediate end the public quarrels over defence, which are achieving nothing but the prevention of the obtaining of electoral power.

Conference concedes the right of the Parliamentary L.P. to frame its policies and elect its officers in the light of its position as H.M. OFFICIAL Opposition in Parliament, and supports the view that it cannot exercise its true function if it is subject to a rigid mandate to act strictly in accordance with all majority decisions of Conference. Nevertheless, the Parliamentary L.P. must at all times give due weight to the decisions of Annual Conference in framing its domestic, foreign and commonwealth policies. It is the opinion of this Conference, therefore, that all sections of the movement should exercise RESTRAINT and RESPONSIBILITY in dealing with POLITICAL matters, in and out of conference. The future success of the Labour Party is bound up in the ability of the three sections of the movement to work together with due regard to the importance of the task each has to perform and the ability of each to perform it.

- Resolution submitted at Blackpool by Woolwich L.P...and ruled 'out of order'.

POLEMIC

Following the publication of our last issue we have received several articles, expressing different viewpoints on Civil Disobedience, the Committee of 100, etc. We are very pleased to publish them. We hope they will stimulate a thorough and badly needed discussion on the whole subject.

Sit-down critique

BY JIM PETTER

After reading the lengthy editorial in 'SOLIDARITY' No.8, entitled 'From Civil Disobedience to Social Revolution', I could only marvel that a paper which claims to make a serious contribution to socialist thought should give way to romanticism.

It would be too easy to use my powers of invective to blow sky high such irresponsible wishful thinking, for I believe the Editors are serious. It will be better to answer them in the same way. There is far too much bickering on the Left, and it is now more than ever necessary to recognize where we do agree rather than to accentuate our differences. The menace of nuclear war is far too close for us to indulge in the luxury of kicking one another about for the sake of scoring clever debating points.

We must start by recognizing that on the question of civil disobedience, there is at present no final answer. Most of us have very decided opinions, some for and some against, but they are opinions. Our best course is to respect each other and to be ever ready to modify those opinions as experience and events unfold.

WHAT ARE WE SEEKING TO DO ?

The Committee of 100 starts off with a trump card. They are doing something active in the struggle against the Bomb, while we, the critics, are doing precious little. But I want to emphasize that just 'doing something' is not of itself necessarily valuable. The activities of the 100 spring basically from good intentions, which can easily be doing no more than paving miles of motorway and making it easier to do the ton in a headlong rush to hell. We must look for something besides good intentions.

First we must clear away all the overgrowth of romanticism surrounding the very earnest desires of those who want to make their protest against the nuclear policy of our present government. I suggest it is very nearly irrelevant to the issue whether the supporters of the 100 are high-minded, self-sacrificing heroes or self-centred exhibitionists; whether they are beatniks and layabouts or serious-thinking and respectable; whether they are saints, redeemers, pacifist fruit-juicers and social misfits, or atheists, political big fish in small ponds and fringe hooligan elements. We can admire them or we can condemn them, but the problem still remains. We must ALL seek to do something EFFECTIVE.

It is because I don't think that the sit-downs have so far made any effective contribution towards winning the people of this country to support a concrete policy of nuclear disarmament, that I feel so despondent. Much as I admire and respect many of those who have taken part, I will not sing their praises or contribute to the funds so long as I have such grave doubts about the effectiveness of these demonstrations. I would also issue a caveat against those who would turn the limelight away from nuclear disarmament and towards protests against police brutality, Home Office invocation of archaic Acts of Parliament, or press misrepresentation. It is all very well to quote Voltaire: 'I loathe what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it'. Of course, we demand the right to say it. But our whole aim is to convince others that what we say is right.

THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE 100

Let me quote four alleged statements from the Committee of 100:

(1) 'We are not hooligans and revolutionaries'. The statement was attributed to George Clark at the start of the second sit down when he was appealing to the police to treat supporters gently.* It was a gratuitous insult to all past demonstrators who have come out on the streets against oppressive governments; to the victims of Peterloo, to the Chartists, to the hunger marchers of the thirties and the rent strikers of St. Pancras. These were all 'hooligans and revolutionaries' in their time. All contributed something to working class struggle. But the statement misses the point that nuclear disarmament is a demand which can only be won in victory for the revolution through which the whole world today is passing. Capitalist production today depends on the Bomb; capitalist society is determined to defend itself with the Bomb; the capitalist class will destroy the whole world rather than surrender voluntarily the power and privileges it regards as its divine right. Only the destruction of capitalism will ensure that capitalism will not destroy us.

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* See 'Reynolds News', April 30, 1961.

(2) (The sit down demonstrations) 'are designed to embarrass the Government, to cause Mr. Macmillan to resign and to cause a general election'.* Again George Clark, making his statement in mitigation to the Court, which handed him two months in gaol. Does anybody really believe that a general election would make a scrap of difference? The Labour Party is, if anything, more committed to nuclear strategy and NATO tactical weapons than are the Tories. If you believe that Parliament can decide the H-bomb issue, where are the ND candidates to come from?

(3) 'We advise you to do nothing.... Tomorrow the police themselves will feel properly ashamed' This statement was attributed to a spokesman at the office of the Committee of 100. He was answering a caller outraged by police brutality in the Square. One can only hope that this was a starry-eyed innocent with no experience of the wicked political world, in which St. Trinian is a convent school. If this really is the policy of the 100, it is sanctimonious irresponsibility.

(4) 'Bertrand Russell is not against the American Bomb, he is only against Britain having the Bomb'. This is a favourite quote, from presumably intelligent people, who think it necessary to deceive others besides themselves into believing that nuclear disarmament is compatible with some mythical 'left Establishment' thought. Unless we are prepared to make it absolutely clear that we condemn American bombs as vehemently as our own (while recognizing that we can have little influence on American nuclear policy), we are rightly condemned as dishonest hypocrites sheltering behind American nuclear power.

SOME FALLACIES

It seems to me that we must have very clear ideas on what we can achieve through civil disobedience, and that we must recognize some severe limitations. Here are a few:

a) Every demonstration must have a positively realisable aim. The act of civil disobedience must only be used when that aim is frustrated. It is not permissible for demonstrators merely to display a willingness to go to prison. Our aim is nuclear disarmament and not to advertise that we are people who believe fervently in nuclear disarmament.

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* 'Guardian', September 13, 1961.

** David Robinson, in 'Guardian', September 28, 1961.

*** I do not believe it is fair to attribute this to Russell but it is frequently quoted by those writing to the press and I include it as an example of double think by those who are eager to make propaganda points.

b) The demonstrations are claimed to be non-violent. No one can deny that they are displays of force. Now the trouble is that I do not know where force ends and violence begins. There are no agreed rules for civil disobedience and what constitutes violence is largely a matter of opinion. For instance, one Holy Lock demonstrator complained that the Americans did not play fair when they greased the Proteus' mooring chains and used hoses to repel boarders; my own view is that this was legitimate - unless you take the view that the Americans are wanton, hell-inspired sons of Baalzebub. Until we can claim a majority in favour of nuclear disarmament, there will always be a majority who will claim it is the duty of the police to display superior force, and who will state that superior force does not constitute violence. Anyhow, do we wish to coerce a public which is not converted to nuclear disarmament into accepting our own dictatorship? Is this non-violence? Or isn't it?

c) However attractive the idea of filling the gaols, it is hardly practicable. A great many of us must contract out. We rightly condemn the H-bomber who boasts that he would rather his children were fried to radioactive ashes than suffer a mythical Soviet domination. Similarly, none of us is justified in deliberately bringing hardship to those who depend upon us, however dearly we may hold our views. To admit this is to admit that your appeal to supporters is selective, and at least half your ground is sterile. Unless the Committee of 100 face up to this, they are bound to create misgiving, even antagonism. It is not good enough to be non-commital; nobody likes pleading for special dispensation, for this leads one very close to the implication of cowardice. It should be made clear that we cannot cause suffering to those unable to decide or fend for themselves.

Furthermore we must not glamourise gaol unduly. Her Majesty's hospitality is pretty lousy. But it is the Ritz Hotel compared to Dachau, or even to the concentration camps of Algeria, South Africa or Hola.

d) No allowance seems to have been made for ordinary human frailty. Let us frankly admit that most of us are cautious and timid, with greatly inflated ideas of our powers of endurance. Few of us will voluntarily suffer avoidable discomfort for long. Even fewer have the will power, stamina and courage to stand up against overwhelming adverse force. Even pacifists can learn from military technique. The purpose of an army is to use and to resist force (violence if you like, it makes no difference), but it has to undergo a very severe course of training first. This training not only hardens the body and mind to display physical endurance. It also brings together a heterogeneous group of men who normally would hate each other's guts, but by training come to accept each other as essential members of a group which transcends individuality. Nothing of this sort is possible in a sit-down. So when we come together and are arrested, our very anonymity makes it easy for us to rationalise when physical weakness falls short of good intentions. And if we are not arrested we go home feeling frustrated. There is nothing to be ashamed of in this; it is necessary that we recognise it. Whatever some of the 100 may be, most of us are not saints. And even fewer have any intention of being martyrs.

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Film review

"ROCCO & HIS BROTHERS"

THE PERSONNEL

1. The Mother. Signora Parondi is a widow forceful and dominating as type-Mothers are, living only in her children as type-Mothers do. 'When I see my five sons round the table like the five fingers of my hand, then I shall be completely happy'.

2. Vincenzo, the Eldest Son. Vincenzo is the family man. He accepts responsibility, first for his mother and brothers, later for his wife and child. 'I have a family to consider, another child on the way, furniture bills...'. He is only slightly developed in the film and is, in fact, superfluous, his worthy sense of duty being more fully expressed by Ciro.

3. Simone, the Sinner. 'I need money quick, to get away'. Simone's progression is the dominant theme of the film. He is a young man with good roots and a tragic flaw. We see him as merely lazy and vain, reluctant to get out of bed of a morning, flexing his muscles, admiring his chest. Owing to unfortunate circumstances, however, he borrows a shirt from the local laundry, then steals a brooch, then rapes the girl whom he and his brother Rocco love, then beats up Rocco. Finally he murders the girl and insults his mother.

4. Rocco, the Saint. Rocco is gentle and modest, his eyes downcast or upcast as events permit. He must wrap up warmly; he has been ill of course. He is half early nineteenth century phtisical Romantic, half late nineteenth century Alyosha or Myshkin. He observes all the family pieties, and is 'sorry for' Nadia, the prostitute, whom later he loves. He performs sacrificial acts, rejecting Nadia and accepting a detested career for Simone's sake. He would rather help than judge. He recommends faith. In what? 'In everything. Trust in everything'.

5. Ciro. Ciro is the technician, the bright young lad of Alfa-Romeo. He studies hard and gets a good job with prospects. He rides a handsome motor-scooter (Rocco rides a bicycle). He is like Vicenzo and is used in antithesis to Rocco. It is Ciro who gives up Simone to the police. 'One must do one's duty. Rocco would forgive everything but in this world we can't always forgive. Some day, perhaps, it will be possible to live honestly and decently'.

6. Luca, the Child. Luca, the youngest brother, is used in accordance

with the now aesthetically tedious custom, as a symbol of hope and renewal.

7. Nadia, the Prostitute. Nadia picks up Simone when he is a promising young boxer and makes use of him as suits her purpose. She extricates herself when she finds he is a thief, and eventually falls in love with Rocco. After she has been raped before his eyes Rocco, aware for the first time of his brother's intense need, compels her to return to Simone. She complies, prostituting, now, not her body, which is simple enough, but her reality. Such a life cannot be long endured. When it collapses she chooses not to return again to Simone, even though this choice will result in her death.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The photographers have picked at all possibilities like bewildered gulls. We get naturalism in the shots of factory, flats and building site, realism in the rape on a wet rubbish-dump to the whistle of a distant train, symbolism in the crucifixion pose of Nadia before she is murdered beside the grey, oppressive lake, and a plethora of romantic gleams - in the procession of dark figures across the snow, in Nadia's flight down a colonnade of church spires, in the film's final shot of the child running in a wide street.

Juxtapositions help to deaden the scenic impact. The disruption of the first family party (a stock device since Aristotle, the disruption of family parties!) weakens our response to the disruption of the second. The organized violence of the boxing scenes weakens the film's total violence.

SLEIGHT OF HAND

Like a magician who tries to convince us that six pieces of string are in fact, one, Visconti repeatedly deludes us:

Firstly, that we are watching the serious treatment of a social theme. The Parondi family are peasants from Lucania, seeking a living in urban Milan. At the beginning of the film their problem is indicated by the comments of Milanese gossips: 'Lucania? Never heard of it. In the South? Ah! Where all the slackers come from'. The subject is then dropped. The city becomes a symbol in Rocco's mind, for a way of life of which he disapproves. The final song: 'O beloved land, I left my heart with you' is a piece of fraudulent nostalgia.

Secondly, that we are watching the destructive force of tragedy within a family. (It was Aristotle's dictum that tragedy is more effective if it occurs within a family). The singular characteristic of this family is the absence of any convincing relationship within it. This is partly the result of Visconti's Indian file method whereby one member is treated after another, each preceded by his name writ large on the screen. Traditional family respects are acknowledged. Mother is shunted off somewhere when trouble is brewing but the brothers live only in their extra-family relations. The implication that things are otherwise, on which Rocco's sacrifice and the climatic party are made to depend will, if tested, be found wanting.

Thirdly, that we are watching a valid depiction of human lives. To this end an excess of motivation is employed. The brothers' acts appear as inevitable as bean flowers from bean seeds.

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ON THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE NEW CUBA

BY JOHN BALL

Seriously thought-out attitudes to the Cuban Revolution, based on proper information are remarkably few. As a contribution to discussion we are pleased to present the following article which appeared in July 1961, in a pamphlet issued by 'Cornucopia Publications' (290 Riverside Drive, New York 25, N.Y., USA). The author had recently returned from a visit to Cuba.

In our next issue we hope to publish further information on the subject, including such facts as have come to hand concerning the persecution of revolutionaries by the Castro regime. We will also publish some translations of recent issues of the Cuban Trotskyist paper 'Voz Proletaria' which develops ideas very different from those of 'sister' Trotskyist parties in Europe or the USA.

In spite of the many material achievements of the Cuban Revolution - its reduction of unemployment, its diversification of agriculture, the consequent rise in standard of living, and the fantastic housing programme - Cuba is still not a land of abundance. It will be some years before the Cuban economy will be able to afford luxuries for more than a few of its citizens.

So under even the best of circumstances (not to mention the austerity which would come from increased American pressure or harassment, or from the reduction or withdrawal of Soviet bloc support as the result of a possible overall East-West settlement), we can expect that Cubans will try to improve their individual conditions and positions within their social structure.

This is not only inevitable, it is not bad in itself. The trick is to arrange social institutions in such a way as to preclude the emergence of a group or class whose interests diverge sharply from, or are opposed to, the larger interest of the people, and who also have the power

to advance those particular interests at the expense of the majority. To what extent does the new Cuban institutional structure guard against such a development?

The farmer whose income and well-being depend on the productivity of his cooperative has an interest in contributing to its productivity; and this interest is in harmony with the interest of the larger community, the nation.

The case may be somewhat different with the INRA * administrator or official. If he is responsible to those below him - to a co-op or factory or to a whole sphere of production, or to the representatives of a geographic area - he must concern himself not only with their productivity but with their compensation; and his position, his security, his future prospects depend on his effectiveness in both respects.

If, however, he is responsible only to those above him; if he works in an autonomous organization which is not directly responsible to the people, but responsible to a government which is not responsible to the people (and the Cuban government, no matter how responsIVE it may be to the people, is not responsIBLE to them), he is likely to be judged largely in terms of the economy of his management: his achievement of high productivity at low cost. His security, his salary, his advancement, the size of his staff, his reputation, his prestige, is very likely to be decided on this basis by the people who count for him: his colleagues and superiors. And up to a point economy is a sensible criterion: one does not feed turkeys any more than is needed for them to reach a certain size in good health. But does one pay workers any more than is needed to achieve a certain productivity? If one is in a position where workers are seen primarily as an item of cost, one tends to resist raising this cost.

The Cuban economy appears to be administered by people in such positions. For whatever reasons, there have been no national elections, and the government and the heads of the various Institutes it has created are not accountable to the people. Moreover, elections seem to be increasingly regarded as unnecessary in the future.

Nor are the administrators of the co-ops and nationalized industries generally accountable to the workers of the farms and factories they administer, but rather to their superiors in INRA who decide on policy, including prices. Of ten economic units visited by two members of 'CORNUCOPIA' on separate visits (one with the Fair Play tour), one was still privately owned, and of course the workers had no voice in management except through their union; only one had elected its own director; one had petitioned the government to remove its administrator and had been assigned a new one in his place; one had successfully petitioned the government for the assignment of a particular administrator whom the workers

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* National Institute for Agrarian Reform.

knew and trusted; and six had no formal democratic proceedings at all. It is perhaps indicative of the fluid state of Cuban institutional structure today that democratic procedures can still be used for redress of grievances, but democratic machinery is not built into the institutional structure itself. The co-op administrator who was removed from his position was removed because the workers said they 'didn't work together well under him'. Would the government prove so flexible if it were not a relatively simple problem of efficiency, but rather some government policy which was being questioned; or would a new administrator continue to carry out the old policy despite opposition among the workers? And above the co-op or factory administrator, are coordinators and planners and policy-makers whose identity is not even known by the workers and whose responsibility is blurred in the interplay of committee decisions and directives, and who are generally beyond the reach of those whose activities, ultimately, they direct.

These bureaucrats emerge as a group which administers a state economy, is paid by the state, and consequently has an interest that the state economy be run 'profitably', with all that may imply for the workers; and has the power to run that economy more or less profitably, since it is not accountable to the units it administers or their workers. Where power is not held in check by such responsibility, revolutionary idealism is no more likely to resist the temptations of narrow self-interest, in the long run, than was bourgeois morality. It would be tragic indeed if the Cuban people, having been freed from the old monopolies, now confronted a new one, more powerful than the old in that it combined both economic and state power.

But this new force is not without limitations. The national leaders claim to have taken steps to submit themselves to the approval of the people, and steps to share their power; the bureaucracy in its own self-interest may follow a course which coincides with the interest of the Cuban people; and at any rate the freedom to act against the interest of the Cuban people is limited by the existence of the armed militia. To what extent do these factors actually afford the Cuban people control over their own economy?

The national leadership has submitted itself for approval by the General Assembly of the Cuban People, huge mass rallies of perhaps a million Cubans, and has described this 'direct democracy' as infinitely superior to other forms of democracy. Such assemblies can indeed demonstrate overwhelming support for a regime; but as organs of democratic control they have obvious and decisive drawbacks. They are called only at the initiative of the government, and it is worth noting that none has been called since last September. They cannot initiate policy, and they cannot discuss policy, and their response to policy presented to them may be ambiguous. At the September Assembly there was a noticeable lack of enthusiasm for Fidel's restraint regarding Guantanamo, but no

opportunity was given for approval of an alternate policy, and the subdued response to the policy of restraint could be interpreted as Fidel saw fit. Such an arrangement can hardly constitute an effective check on government.

THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

Somewhat more promising has been the creation by the government of Technical Advisory Councils of workers in the nationalized sector of industry with the announced purpose of encouraging worker participation in the planning and running of the economy. Addressing the first delegates from these Councils on February 11, 1961, Che Guevara noted that 'There were still lacking some complementary aspects of this great struggle to see that the people totally control the productive forces. There was still a bureaucratic management in almost all the leading or recently nationalized enterprises, there was still a certain failure of the working class to fully understand the new situations. The Administrator designated by the Revolutionary Government was seen somewhat in the image of the old capitalist owner; at times because there existed indifference, or because all our administrators could not always achieve the necessary stature, and also they had a somewhat owner-like concept of their position in the management of the factory... This step which has been taken today will completely eliminate these differences... Moreover, you can, at the side of your companero Administrator, orient him so that he better understands the spirit... of the suggestions which the working class makes, which have a habit of seeming inexplicable to those who from administrative positions have to run this type of establishment'.

The aim is laudable, and such Councils, extended throughout the economy, could provide an effective counterweight which could prevent a bureaucracy from extracting more from the economy than the workers agreed to. In deciding on the balance between future needs and present needs, on how much of present production be allotted for industrialisation, etc., the people, who do the work and are called upon to make whatever sacrifices are deemed necessary, would gain a determining voice.

Unfortunately information about the Councils is hard to come by. According to the November-December 1960 issue of Voz Proletaria, published openly in Cuba by the Workers Revolutionary Party (POR - Trotskyist), 'In spite of the Technical Advisory Councils having been ordered set up by the Minister of Labor himself and in spite of Che Guevara's having publicly proclaimed their importance and promised their rapid activation, the fact is that the Councils of workshops and industries have been ignored by the state administrators (of industry) and by the great part of the official union bureaucracy. So that even this timid attempt at democracy and worker control has not been made effective'.

These Councils existed, then, in December. But no American visitors in Cuba in December and January had heard of them, and their existence was only publicized by Guevara's addressing their convention in February, after which they disappeared from the pages of the Cuban press. Then again in the Voz Proletaria of March 1961 the selection of Council delegates is described. Three workers, usually those proposed by the union leadership, are elected by the body of workers; and of the three so elected one is chosen by the administration, as Technical Advisor. Such a procedure is at best ambiguous, and could equally well be used by management to claim worker acquiescence in its plans as by workers to participate in the shaping of those plans. Furthermore, from all accounts the function of the Councils, as their name suggests, is purely advisory, not vested with authority. Nevertheless the Technical Advisory Councils constitute an organ which under certain circumstances might be transformed by an aroused body of workers into their true spokesman. Given the right to elect representatives they might insist that their choice not be rendered meaningless by being ignored by management; and given genuine representation in the administration they might insist that their views be heeded. That such 'insistence' is not mere daydreaming, not abstract theoretical possibility, but could really come about in Cuba, as it could not in the Soviet bloc, will be indicated below in discussing the militia.

Besides factors which may impose limits on the bureaucracy, there is the consideration that the self-interest of the bureaucracy may, in the peculiar Cuban situation, largely coincide with the interests of the Cuban people at large. In an economy which for whatever reason emphasizes industrialization, such as the Russian economy after their revolution, the bureaucracy must seek to expand by sustaining and increasing the emphasis on that industrialization, even if such emphasis brutally ignores the present needs of the population; and in order to sustain such emphasis may seek to establish and perpetuate a more reliable market for heavy industry than is afforded by an impoverished and goods-hungry population, such a market taking the form, for example, of a more or less permanent armament programme. To compel a people to produce, and to refuse to let them consume, also requires the familiar police apparatus which has grown up alongside the Soviet bureaucracy.

On the other hand, in an economy which begins with an orientation towards consumer goods, as has the Cuban economy since the revolution, the bureaucracy may find itself similarly seeking to expand by continuing and increasing this emphasis, which requires in turn the expansion of the people's capacity to buy consumer goods - their real wages. To encourage people both to produce and to consume hardly requires the apparatus of compulsion and regimentation so necessary to regimes of forced industrialization. The Cuban development, then, even without effective checks from the population, can be expected to take a somewhat more benign form than those models to which it is so often compared, and with which it is even coming to compare itself.

THE MILITIA

But there is one important check on the power of the Cuban government and the Cuban bureaucracy, and that limitation is imposed by the existence of the militia. It must be said at the outset that the militia is no substitute for democratic control: it cannot initiate policy, nor can it present only partial, selective opposition, defying the government in some policies while supporting it in others. Nevertheless the militia remains a powerful weapon of last resort, with the means of nullifying government decrees and overthrowing the government itself should it choose to do so.

Contrary to the description of the militia in the American press as Castro's personal instrument for terrorising and intimidating a rebellious population, the Cuban militia comes as close to the concept of 'the people armed' as anything we have seen in this century, with the possible exception of the Hungarians in 1956. Unlike a professional soldier, the militiaman continues to work in his old place of employment and receives pay for that work, performing his military duty as a volunteer. His prospects for economic advancement lie not in his service in the militia but rather in his activities in the civilian sphere. He suffers or benefits from the ups and downs in the Cuban economy in the same way as anybody else. Unlike the professional soldier the militiaman is not separated from his civilian environment, but continues to live at home among his family and friends, sharing their fortunes and misfortunes, alive to their problems. And unlike the professional soldier the militiaman is not sent away to serve among strangers, but rather guards the factory or farm in which he works, or the housing project or village or neighborhood in which he lives, and his fellow militiamen are his co-workers and neighbors. In short he acquires no special interest separate from or opposed to that of the population at large. If the Cuban people are oppressed, the militia are oppressed too. And the militia have weapons, and these weapons give them access to more weapons; and the force they represent must be reckoned with by any government and any bureaucracy contemplating unpopular measures. It is this consideration - the fact that the Cuban leaders, Cuban officialdom, Cuban bureaucracy do not have the monopoly of power so characteristic of all governments, do not even begin to approach that monopoly of power - it is this consideration that must ultimately restrain even the most ruthless and ambitious despot imaginable from embarking on any course which would require the widespread use of force for its successful execution. And where ultimate use of force is a doubtful possibility, the threat of force loses its coercive power proportionately.

It is under these circumstances that a people who feel themselves bullied or oppressed by their government may effectively 'insist' on their rights. The government which cannot compel must accommodate; and in this process Cuba has the chance to evolve her own unique forms of democratic control, both of her political and her economic life.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The perspectives for the Cuban revolution are thus fairly promising. Of necessity the government is based on the support of the populace, because the old state apparatus is gone, as are its personnel, and because the old army is gone, and its personnel dispersed; though this necessity is only temporary and will last only until the new bureaucracy consolidates itself. The initial orientation is toward raising the standard of living first, and creating an internal market before industrializing. And arms in the hands of the people preclude decisive actions against the interests of the people. With a rising standard of living the Cuban government can probably retain the support of a majority of its people without democratic institutions; though without democratic institutions Cubans run the risk of setting up an uncontrolled bureaucracy which may find it in its interest, and perhaps eventually within its power, to act oppressively.

The alternative to supporting the Cuban revolution, despite its inadequacies, its negative features, and its uncertainties, is to embrace a United States policy which so far has provided plausible if not valid explanations for every repressive measure the Cuban government has taken, and which has been responsible for Cuba's increased relations with and esteem for the Communist bloc, and the resulting prestige of Cuban Communists.

A more active intervention by the United States would have to overcome an armed Cuban people (Sartre, in On Cuba, estimates 2,000,000 Cubans armed and in the militia in January 1961; two Canadian fliers stranded in Havana during the April invasion attempt report 4/5 of the population of Havana is armed), with all the slaughter and destruction that would involve. Once we 'won' we would presumably install the counter-revolutionaries whose recent venture was marked by its significant failure to win any support from the Cuban people, and whose programme contains proposals that will alienate virtually every important sector of the Cuban population. We would find ourselves supporting a programme which offers to Cuban youth replacement of the militias by a drafted army, something Cuba has never known in all its history. To tenants it offers the abolition of the Urban Reform Law which makes each tenant the nominal owner of his rented apartment or house. To the population as a whole, it offers 'to restore to their legitimate owners the goods and rights confiscated by the Communist regime'. Upon a population which visibly does not want a return to the repressive old order, such measures could only be imposed by force: the democracy which the counter-revolutionaries and our own government proclaim could not do the job which they have set for themselves. Thus the alternative offered by the United States policy of hostility toward Cuba is not a very appealing one, least of all to the Cubans.

Defence of the Cuban revolution on the other hand has some additional considerations to recommend it. American friendship would remove justification for repression. American friendship would permit a peaceful influence among the majority of Cubans, who support Fidel Castro. Finally, preservation of the Cuban revolution would encourage revolution elsewhere in Latin America, which would open up wider economic perspectives for Cuba, and more importantly would proliferate a variety of political and economic arrangements, permitting imitation of the most successful and satisfying and undercutting support for the less democratic forms.

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Two recommendations emerge from the foregoing considerations. For Cuba, that all who have power be responsible to those over whom it is exercised: that peasants elect their co-op administration; that workers elect their factory administration; that the people elect their government.

For the United States, a policy of friendship for Cuba. This however, involves resignation to the loss of, or by, American business interests, and can only come about through pressure from below, from the American people. So until 'Friendship for Cuba' is possible, HANDS OFF CUBA.

FILM REVIEW. (cont'd from p. 14)

Simone responds to Nadia's name like one of Pavlov's dogs to a bell. Rocco sacrifices. Ciro reasons with sound common sense. Vincenzo cultivates his garden. So strict a determinism obscures rather than illumines for example, Simone's disintegration.

Fourthly, that Rocco is a saint. Here, as elsewhere, Visconti substitutes assertion for demonstration. Rocco's rejection of Nadia shows only the cruelty of the morally imperceptive. Even within the film, it is not credibly motivated. As a problem it is spurious.

In conclusion, I note the lip-service which 'Rocco and his Brothers' (and also Fellini's 'La Dolce Vita) pays to the transcendental. Of the characters, Nadia alone is seen to be making a free choice. When Simone has corrupted all that was beautiful in her life she refuses to return to him and elects, quite clearly, to die. For what?

NORMA MEACOCK.

SIT DOWN CRITIQUE (cont'd from p.12) -

Just consider the last sit-down. There were over 12.000 at the start of the demonstration. By midnight 1,000 had been arrested, and by varying estimates between 200 and 1000 remained. So 10,000 had gone home. Don't let us be afraid of frankly admitting that at least 5,000 had no intention anyway of being arrested. Their inclinations were no doubt good, but too much was asked of them. From the accounts of those who remained, when the police showed their true vocation, a large number again decided that discretion was the better part of valour. We must not be shamed by this, or allow it to belittle one wit those who were rough handled and brutally knocked about. Some of those who found themselves unable to take it have honestly written to the Press, admitting that when faced with the facts of Metropolitan Police philosophy, their courage failed them. These comrades are as much entitled to our concern as those who were able to endure the beating up.

And next day, what of the magistrates' courts? Practically all defendants accepted fines of 20s., 30s. or £2 - in Scotland it was £10. Fair enough, few could conscientiously do more. But the public is a hard taskmaster. The public shrugs you off as fanatics when you go to gaol, and when you pay the fine it feels robbed of its seemy pleasures, for anybody with more money than sense can pay a fine after getting a wet bottom in Trafalgar Square. And does it really help the cause of nuclear disarmament to help pay for the administration of capitalist justice?

CONCLUSIONS

What can we learn from this cold blooded survey? First we must admit that sit-downs, as at present organised, have very limited validity. This is not to condemn them. Some may genuinely feel that this is all they can do. All power to them, we can ask no more. But at the same time we must recognize two contradictory elements in this struggle for survival: time is not on our side.... and there are no short cuts.

I am a socialist who believes in workers' control (or management, as 'SOLIDARITY' perhaps more correctly calls it). In this struggle for survival, ultimate defeat, in which there will be no second chance, is more than a possibility. But only humanity can save itself. However great our faith in our premises, we cannot impose or coerce people to accept a way of life in which they have no confidence. The nuclear menace goes right down to the very roots of the meaningfulness of Life. The decision to continue having faith in that meaningfulness can only be taken collectively through individual conviction. It cannot be imposed on people because a few think it would be good for the others.

There is a wealth of good will for nuclear disarmament. Lately this good will has become somewhat diffused. Most people are instinctively against the Bomb... much in the way Calvin Coolige was alleged to have been

against sin. Despite 2000 years of christian teaching, Coolige, like the rest of us, found that he could not get along without sin. Our nuclear disarmers have been no more successful than the christians. Most people acquiesce in the dogma that we cannot live without the Bomb.

It is no use blaming the Establishment because it will not do our propagnada for us. The Establishment is composed of all the forces ranged against changing existing society. In matters of defence, everything is geared to nuclear strategy. Economically, our affluent society depends upon the need to manufacture the very means of implementing a nuclear strategy. Politically and morally, we justify nuclear strategy on the grounds that any attempt to modify capitalist concepts of freedom and democracy must be resisted to the extent of global annihilation. If the normal process of capitalist power politics does not lead to final destruction, the two thirds of the world now existing below subsistence level, will decide for us that capitalism is not compatible with working class well-being throughout the world. Western reaction to the threat of Soviet competition for the control of human resources throughout the world only confirms that when western capitalism (or the Soviet bureaucracy) are 'threatened' by the 'non-committed' world, H-bombs will become equally relevant.

We do not seek to live uneasily in a make-believe world where moral leaders hope - and perhaps pray - that the wicked real world will pass us by. We cannot ban the Bomb by signing the nuclear pledge. Rather we must seek to find a way of life in which nuclear weapons are as pertinent as snoballs in Hell. Rents, racialism, redundancy, wage rates and workshop relations are all relevant to this new way of life. Our policy to achieve it will only be accepted when we cease to be afraid of proclaiming the interdependence of nuclear weapons and bread and butter.

The public, and particularly workers, are not morons accepting without question the soporifics of the Yellow Press and of capitalist apologists. But until a credible nuclear policy is formulated, workers will be right to reject pie in the sky. They will stop their ears to the nuclear Jeremiahs and scramble for what crumbs they can before the inevitable fate.

CND can only think that rigging Labour Party block votes will somehow produce a policy out of a hostile leadership. The Committee of 100 has not even started to consider that a credible policy is necessary. 'SOLIDARITY' N.8 upheld the vacuum. One waits impatiently, but without much hope, for 'SOLIDARITY' No.9.

NURSERY RHYME FOR CHILDREN IN CLAPHAM

'Little man kneels at the foot of the bed,
Little bare knees on the books he has read,
Joyfully singing a little refrain:
Nikky is tosting our H-bomb again.'

E. Morse.

'SOME VIEWS ON CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE'

BY GRACE JACOBS

What are the immediate aims of civil disobedience, as practised by the Committee of 100? Is the aim

a) to break through to greater numbers of people, people who cannot be reached by other methods, because of the power the Establishment exercises over the press and other mass forums in this 'democracy'.

b) to inspire by example, both physical and symbolic, similar action from others and yet further forms of protest against the Government, such as industrial action, etc...

c) so to choke the mechanism of the law as to make it easier for this type of protest to carry on and, at the same time, to make it impossible for the Government to carry on.

Supporters vary within different combinations of these various points. In so far as each has a positive contribution to make, he should be welcome within this type of organization. At the present time the idea of making it impossible for the Government to carry on seems to me subsidiary to the other considerations. It cannot at this stage become an objective in itself. It can only become possible through the ever increasing support of the public. Tactics which tend to segregate the 'go it all the way' supporters would be bound to failure. In this sense demonstrators cannot afford to be separated from any kind of support, even if it is of a different character.

During the Trafalgar Square meeting on September 17, which was after all planned for the two kinds of demonstrators, both sit-downers and others, some of our people were annoyed by those who did not want to sit down. The argument was that these people should have had the sense to keep the way clear for sit-down manoeuvres to take place as effectively as possible. Well, there is no harm in asking, but just how autocratic could one get? I heard some rather offensive remarks, which could have served to split our support.

The demonstration would not have been such a success without the non sit-down supporters. As it was we made history. Thousands upon thousands descended on the Square and the surrounding roads in spite of the law, the formidable array of police and the war-of-nerves let loose in advance over the radio, etc. This demonstration was the answer of the people and not merely of the Committee of 100's closest supporters. Divide the two and we are lost. I did not care where I was sitting, whether it was in Trafalgar Square, Whitehall or Parliament Square, I considered that

we had achieved our main object. As it turned out our spontaneous meetings in the Square were genuinely addressed to the public and did not merely constitute acts of disobedience.

We cannot afford to be autocratic or sectarian. We must always respect the public if we are to bring out the best in them. Everything depends on attracting ever-increasing numbers.

I think we should view CND in the same light, as something complementary and not in opposition. Doors should be kept open for all types of supporters to express themselves at all times. We did right to raise the ceiling of the movement. It would be wrong to kick away the base, or to lose contact with it.

One other point. To sing or not to sing - nuclear disarmament songs, there is no question of anything lighter. It seems to me alien to the British disposition, especially the Cockney, to expect people to sit on cold wet stone for hours, without drawing strength and inspiration from each other with a song. It is certainly alien in a traditional sense and could discourage valuable support.

WHO SAID IT ?

(Answers on page 33)

(A) 'It is much better if the strike can be made official and enjoy the full backing of the trade union. We do our best to encourage such a course wherever possible.'

1. Ernie Bevin?
2. John Gollan?
3. Mr. Carron?
4. Gerry Healy?
5. Frank Cousins?
6. Hugh Gaitskell?

(B) 'Anarchists, making use of the growing and righteous indignation of countless thousands of the people of Britain, particularly the young, against inhuman and insame 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.'

1. The Police Commissioner?
2. The Lord Chief Justice?
3. Hugh Gaitskell?
4. Canon Collins?
5. Editor of 'Freedom'?
6. Gerry Healy?

ABOUT OURSELVES

We are pleased to report that 'SOLIDARITY' No.8 sold more copies (6/10) than any previous issue. The editorial 'From Civil Disobedience to Social Revolution' gave rise to wide comment, both favourable and otherwise. Parts have been translated into French - by comrades in Belgium - and are being distributed as a leaflet.

Our basic document 'Socialism Reaffirmed' (1/10, post free) has had to be reprinted for the third time. 'The Meaning of Socialism' has also run to a second reprint (several dozens have been ordered by comrades in the USA). Both are still selling well.

A number of leaflets have been produced in the last few weeks - both in relation to the BLSP dispute (this leaflet has been reproduced in POUVOIR OUVRIER, the paper of our French comrades) and in relation to the demonstration outside the Russiam Embassy.

The witch-hunt against some of our contributors smoulders on. The Economic League is still on the trail (bulletins No.91 and 92 for September and October 1961). The League has been joined by 'The Queen' - a leading woman's glossy - whose September issue contains a horror-comic entitled 'The Wreckers'. We anticipate a large expansion of sales among dowagers and debutantes.

We will shortly be publishing two new pamphlets: a detailed analysis of the BLSP strike by Ken Weller (10d., post free) and 'The Workers' Opposition' by Alexandra Kollontai (2/- post free). The latter text, which has been unobtainable in this country for nearly 40 years contains much that is of value in understanding the nature of bureaucracy in modern society.

WHO GRILLED THE COP?

When it comes to dealing with police brutality, some people write to the New Statesman and others call for committees of enquiry. But our Papuan brothers take the solution of their problems into their own hands! The Daily Telegraph (May 20, 1959) reported:

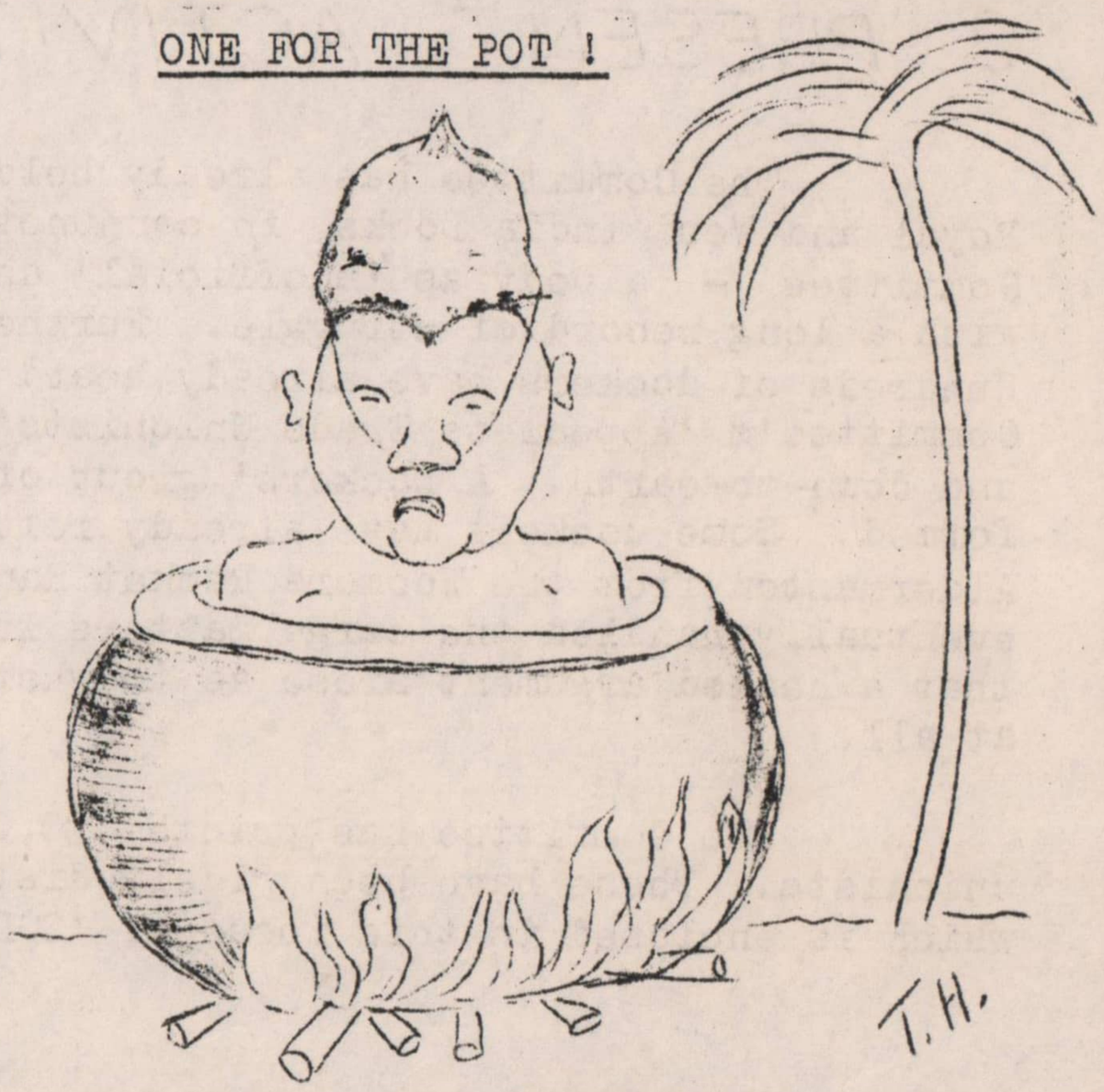
'Cannibal hillmen yesterday swooped on the village of Matuari, in Papua, and killed and ate the local policeman.

They chased the remaining villagers to the Australasian Petroleum Co.'s camp at Bwata, nearby.

Mr. W. Dishon, Senior Native Affairs official, said the eaten man, Obu, was responsible for reporting any trouble in the village.

The cannibals were probably from a tribe of about 300, with whom the administration had only the sketchiest contact. 'These people...don't realise that for every administration man they kill, there are boatloads more to take his place.'

ONE FOR THE POT !



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND THE WORKING CLASS (cont'd from p.2)

ward meetings or even meetings of their trade union branch. It should be prepared to approach workers directly, at job or factory level and through the great network of unofficial and semi-official organizations, shop-stewards committees, liaison committees, etc., those permanent thorns in the flesh of the Establishment and embryos of the new society within the old.

The job must be tackled with an understanding that what is finally needed is collective working class action, based on thorough understanding and not individual acts of 'contracting out' - however sincere those who perform them and however inspiring these may prove to be on certain occasions.

Turning to the working class does not mean convincing workers - or convincing oneself - of the superiority of the 'workers' bomb'. It does not mean arguing that Russian policy is fractionally better - or worse - than that of 'the West'. The Russian bureaucracy no more represents the working class than do the leaders of the Labour Party or the Trade Unions. Nor does it mean advocating 'nationalisation of the armaments industry'. This is quite compatible with capitalism and does not alter its nature in any real way. Nor finally does it mean telling workers they should join the Labour Party, pass resolutions and that others will then fight the bomb on their behalf. What it does mean is telling people quite frankly that the struggle is a difficult one, that there are no short cuts and that victory will only be possible if they themselves are prepared to do the utmost to ensure that the fight is won.

3. PRESENT ACTIVITIES

The Committee has already held three successful meetings at the Royal and West India Docks, in conjunction with the Portworkers' Liaison Committee - a body as 'unofficial' as the Committee of 100 itself, and with a long record of struggle. Further meetings are being organized. Hundreds of dockers have already heard Committee speakers and read the Committee's 'Appeal to Trade Unionists'. Discussions have been vigorous and down-to-earth. A Dockers' group of Committee sympathisers is being formed. Some dockers have already refused to handle crates consigned to Aldermaston from the Woomera Rocket Range in Australia. That others eventually handled the cargo matters less, at this stage, than the fact that a heated argument arose as to whether the cargo should be handled at all.

The Committee has printed 30,000 leaflets addressed to trade unionists. These have been widely distributed. The leaflet (a copy of which is enclosed in this issue of 'SOLIDARITY') explains civil disobedience

in terms of mass struggle, and not in terms of individual and absolute moral imperatives, important as these may be to some people. The leaflet does not talk of Parliament, of Summit Talks, of UNO, or of the Labour or Communist Parties. Workers are asked to consider what they can do, as workers, to assist in the struggle. The leaflet was recently published in Tribune and has reached tens of thousands of working class households.

The Committee is following up this work. An Industrial Sub-committee has been set up. It will be holding its first public meeting in the Caxton Hall, on the evening of October 30. We hope further meetings will then be held and a campaign started to popularise direct action among those who can most effectively undertake it.

The Committee realises that workers in dispute will readily understand the methods of the Committee. There is an obvious parallel between both kinds of struggle against the established order. Committee literature was distributed during the recent marches of BLSP strikers to AEU headquarters and to the Motor Show and was well received. Workers in dispute have had to take action into their own hands. They too have been through the experience of attempting to obtain their just demands through patiently asking for them. They too have waded through the bogs of 'negotiation'. They too thought, for a while, that others could solve their problems for them. They too finally realised that they could only rely on themselves. And they too have experienced - as their consciousness was translated into action - the full blasts of a hostile, cynical and contemptuous press, distorting their aims and attempting every kind of smear.

At the present stage, ideas and personnel are in a state of continuous flux. People are moving more and more towards the idea of industrial action. It would be very arbitrary to tar the Committee with statements made, at some time or other, by various of its members or supporters. The Committee is not homogeneous in its political outlook. There is no 'party line'. People around it often speak for themselves alone. This has its strength as well as its weaknesses. It prevents bureaucratisation. It also permits one to build up, through selected quotations, a false image of the ideas of its less vocal members.

4. ENLISTING WORKING CLASS SUPPORT

How can the campaign gain the support of industrial workers? The only way an honest relationship can be built is for the Committee to show that it not only stands against nuclear weapons, but that it also stands for something positive, for a new philosophy of life, for a new system of society in which ordinary people will be masters of their own fate.

The Committee should seek to clarify its own ideas as to the full implications of the direct democracy it advocates. It should gradually evolve a more or less coherent system of ideas in relation to the hundred and one problems that confront in our bureaucratic society. It is not only in relation to the crucial issues of war and peace that ordinary people feel frustrated, discouraged and 'betrayed' by the bureaucracies that presume to speak in their name. There is scarcely a field of human endeavour where they do not come up against cruel and absurd rules and regulations, backed with the full authority and power of the State. In each of these fields the methods and conceptions of the Committee could be of the greatest relevance. They could give confidence to people in their ability to struggle together for what concerns them most. It would dispel the 'apathy' which reflects their sense of alienation and helplessness.

Here again a useful beginning has been made. A recent Editorial in Peace News * entitled 'The Committee of 100 and a New Political Basis' puts forward some constructive ideas. Traditional pacifism is itself evolving as events unfold. The following quotation from this editorial speaks for itself:

> 'The logic of the Committee of 100's position demands rejection both of reliance on existing parties to carry out its programme under pressure, and reliance on creating a political instrument to take over state power. The only alternative is to create a new basis to society and government and a framework in which unilateralism could be effective. This would imply actively promoting the idea of workers' control in industry, actively taking part in and revolutionising local government - and promoting the use of direct action methods as a means of social change'.

A later article by John Morris in Peace News ** entitled 'Working Out Direct Democracy' pinpoints the realities:

> 'We have already learnt that nuclear weapons are not simply an accidental excrescence, that you can remove without affecting the rest of society. The bomb has become the ultimate symbol of the irresponsible violence in our autocratic society, and each step towards its abolition brings you slap against some other deceit or latent violence'.

If the Committee of 100 shows that it really stands for industrial democracy, that it stands four square on the side of workers in dispute

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* Peace News, September 22, 1961.

** Peace News, October 6, 1961.

against absurd managerial prerogatives (and struggles of this type occur very frequently today) it should be possible eventually to gain working class support for a policy of industrial action against the bomb. Workers would not feel they were being used by the Committee for aims which are not theirs. Rather would anti-war militants and militants in industry come to realise that they were fighting for the same objective and against the same enemy - capitalist society and all it represents.

This will not be an easy relationship to establish. There will be the constant danger of raising artificial issues, of raising issues too soon or in a doctrinaire, 'external' and purely agitational manner, separated from the real preoccupations and concerns of working people. But with common sense and patience these dangers can be overcome. And as more workers come to support the Committee the dimensions of the problem will gradually lessen.

There are no absolute guarantees that it will be possible to achieve this essential link. What is certain, however, is that certain actions can be guaranteed to prevent it. The greatest danger here is an ignorance of the identity of the working class, a tendency to confuse its face with its 'bureaucratic posterior', a wish to turn the campaign in the direction of the apparatus-men of the trade unions or of vote-seeking Labour politicians instead of towards the rank and file, at their places of work. Were the Committee to make this tragic mistake it would be dubbed - and rightly so - as no different from 'all the other outfits'. Its growing appeal rests on the fact that it is not identified, in its ideas or in its personnel, with any part or parcel of the Establishment, either 'Right' or 'Left'.

There is a skeleton in the CND cupboard, the skeleton of the Labour Advisory Committee. It points a warning finger at what is not to be done if the Committee of 100 wishes to win the working class to the idea of a struggle against war. The Labour Advisory Committee consisted of 'names', of Labour 'personalities', of various union 'leaders' and of sundry Labour MPs. It proved ineffective during the several years of its existence. It never really got down to initiating a campaign amongst industrial workers. Its members saw nothing inconsistent in sitting on the Committee part of the time and in repeatedly voting the Service Estimates, in 'The House', at other times. Or in apologising for those who did so. Party loyalties - and the jobs that went with them - always came first. What is now needed is rank and file support and people who will see the struggle against war as a serious business.

5. SOME PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

Proposals for practical action must be down-to-earth and realistic. They must be based on a sensible understanding of the level of consciousness amongst different groups of workers. This varies considerably from industry to industry, as do the possibilities of effective action.

The working class as a whole is not 'rarin' to go' in the struggle against the bomb. In fact the majority of workers still support the bomb. But neither is it true that the working class as a whole is as passive and apathetic as its 'representatives' would have one believe.

Much the same conceptions should prevail in the industrial work of the Committee as prevailed in its approach to civil disobedience. No more should be advocated at any stage than a substantial proportion of supporters are prepared to accept. Just as civil disobedience progressed from the Defence Ministry sit-down in February to the massive law-breaking of September 17 so the trade union work should develop, with its own momentum, from fairly small beginnings.

As a first step industrial workers should be asked to participate in the ordinary activities of the Committee (meetings at work to explain civil disobedience, local meetings, local civil disobedience activities).

Groups of Committee supporters should be set up in the various industries and factories to discuss, on the basis of detailed inside knowledge, how best they can assist in developing a militant mass-consciousness among their workmates and what types of industrial action would be best suited to their particular industry.

At a somewhat later stage groups of workers in certain industries could envisage partial forms of industrial action. Many people use this term as synonymous with strike, but in fact it covers much more than is usually realised. A 'refusal to handle' selected cargoes could have a very important effect. Industrial workers could in this way retain their jobs while considerably assisting the objectives of the committee. The 'all or nothing' approach of certain political groups in relation to industrial action has always struck us as particularly unrealistic. The 'nothing' part of it usually prevailed.

Basing oneself on how successful earlier forms of action had proved, one could, at a still later stage, envisage action on a regional basis, or on the basis of one or more industries, or even on a national scale.

This way of looking at things is, we feel, far more likely to bring about a response than the activities of those who shout 'for a general strike against war'. While this is obviously a correct objective it is a meaningless immediate demand in the context of today's reality and level of consciousness.

6. EVOLUTION OF THE STRUGGLE

If the Committee wins wide support among workers it will undergo profound changes. Its composition will change and so will the scope of its activities. This will be a perfectly natural development which will greatly strengthen its impact.

IMAGINE for a moment how workers supporting such anti-war committees would react to the arrests of their workmates during acts of civil disobedience. If previous actions by dockers are anything to go by, the whole tempo of the struggle promises to change quite radically.

In 1951 seven rank-and-file dockers were charged at the Old Bailey with leading an unofficial strike (the Prosecutor for the Labour Government was Sir Hartley Shawcross and TGWU officials gave evidence in court against the dockers). 'Thousands of rank-and-file dockers decided to take a hand in the course of justice, stopping work daily "in deference to the brothers in Court" and organizing large and noisy meetings outside the court room every day the trial lasted.' * The indicted men were acquitted.

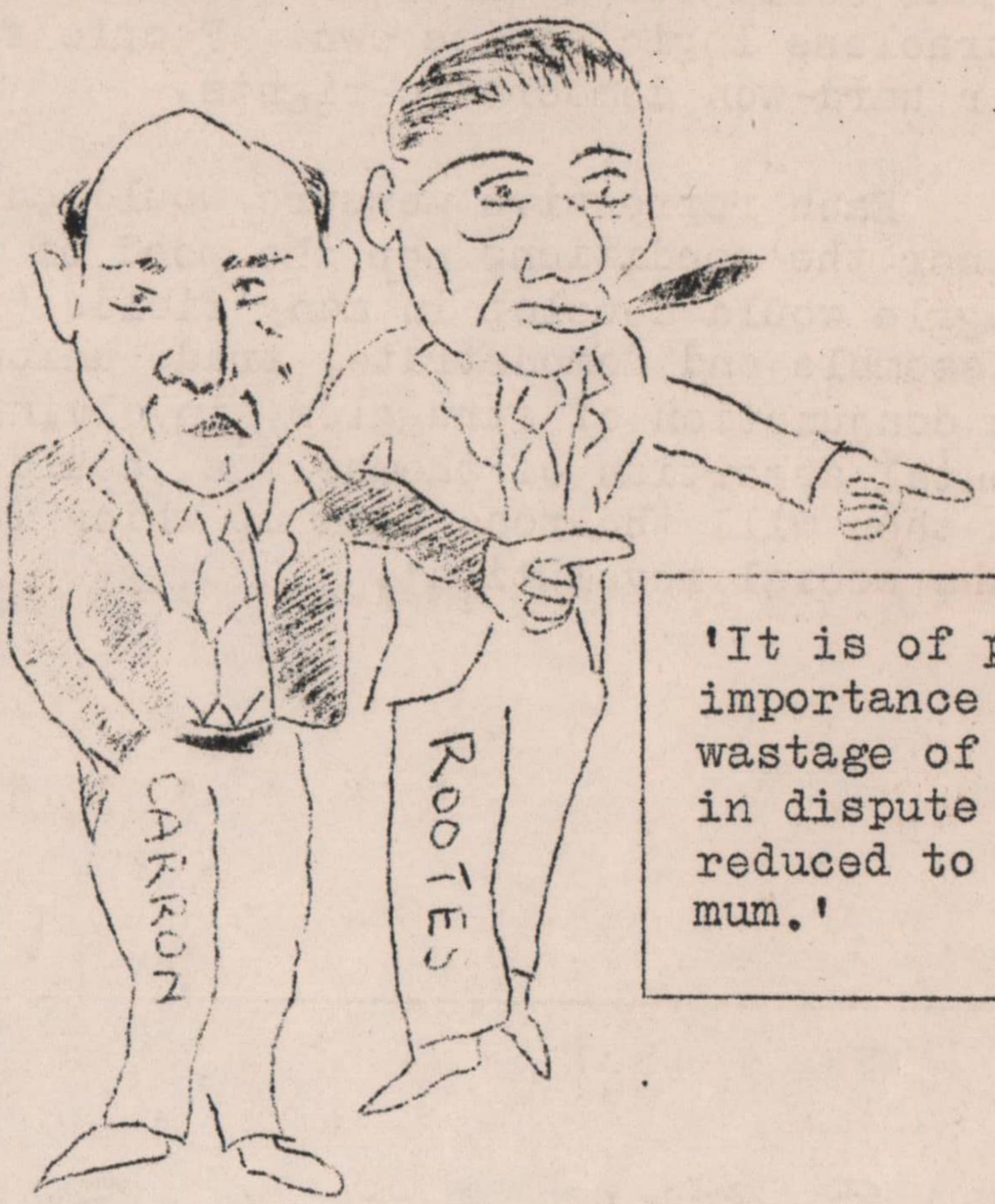
How would the Government react to such developments? It would be compelled to withdraw the iron fist from the velvet glove. It would have to administer 'justice' along increasingly obvious class lines. It would reveal still further the fraudulent nature of capitalist democracy. It could attempt intimidation by invoking legislation which is already on the statute book but of which ordinary people are quite unaware. Or it could churn out new legislation so quickly that it would amaze those

* See R. Pennington, 'The Dockers' breakaways and unofficial movements' in International Socialism, Autumn 1960.

WHO SAID IT ?

(A) Gerry Healy, Letter to 'Guardian', October 26, 1961.

(B) Canon Collins, Article on 'Civil Disobedience', in Christian Action Newsletter (Autumn 1961).



'It is of paramount importance that the wastage of man-hours in dispute should be reduced to the minimum.'

'ERE MATE ... WHICH IS 'OUR' BLOKE ?

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who judge Parliament by the rate at which it copes with 'unimportant' things such as houses and pensions. Or the Government could use troops to break industrial action developing against the bomb. Such methods could for a while succeed. But each of these steps has a remorseless logic of its own. People feel strongly about the loss of their hard-won democratic rights.

Each repressive measure would call forth counter-actions which neither the conditions nor the mood of today allow us to foresee. The struggle would develop in many fields (right of free speech, rights to assemble and demonstrate, trade union rights, right to strike). This conjunction of struggles, involving millions of people in a fundamental assertion of themselves, could transform society. Then and only then will the road open up which leads from 'civil disobedience to the social revolution'.

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