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SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKERS' POWER

ALDERMASTON AND
MAY DAY SPECIAL

Volume 2 Number 2

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SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKERS' POWER

Volume 2, Number 2



TWO MARCHES

On Easter Monday, scores of thousands will march into Hyde Park. They will assemble there in what could be the greatest mass demonstration since the days of the Chartists. The majority will be young people. Their banners will be black and white. Their object: to assert their right to live.

Less than a fortnight later the 'traditional' organisations of the working class will also march through the streets of London. They will muster a few thousands. In the Park they will hold a number of separate demonstrations. The banners will be red but many of the demonstrators will be ageing. Their object: to echo what was once their aim - the brotherhood of man.

By any normal standards - size, enthusiasm, impetus, the reactions of the authorities - the movement against the Bomb is a far greater challenge to the Establishment, both in present physical terms and in future implications, than anything the traditional organisations are achieving today.

It does not follow however that the challenge to Established Society now comes from the primarily middle class peace movement, rather than from the working class. The working class should not be confused with 'its' organisations. Its real challenge takes place daily, on the job, not through 'Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition'.

The movement against the Bomb is still in the process of creating its own traditions out of nothing. By contrast the real struggle in industry has a tradition of its own. It is a constant thorn in the flesh of our rulers, a constant reminder of their inability totally to dominate society.

Why do the 'traditional' organisations fail to present a serious challenge? Why does their message evoke no echo among young people? Has our society so changed? Are there no causes worthy of their enthusiasm and rebelliousness?

We think the socialist movement has lost its bearings. Its analysis is faulty - its prescriptions largely irrelevant. It refuses to see that much of its programme has been fulfilled through the concentration of capital itself (whether private or bureaucratic) but that

this has in no way solved man's subordination to man, his alienation in production and the rigid division of society into two classes: those who give the orders (and own or manage both the economy and the state) and those who throughout their lives will be compelled to obey orders given by others.

The 'traditional' organisations now increasingly reflect the bureaucratic society in which they have grown. They reflect it in their programme, and they reflect it in their internal structure. They speak for the managerial bureaucracies of both East and West. And they say much the same things: more organisation, more discipline, more 'efficiency', more experts, more time and motion study, more production! They both offer us the carrot of more consumption as the only goal worthy of the efforts of human beings. In exchange for a fridge and a T.V. set, they would make of us cattle to be slaughtered at their will. They are remote from the real lives of ordinary people who want more freedom in the matters which concern them most.

The bureaucratic and coercive society creates its own contradictions. Decisions, from which the vast majority of people are excluded, are usually absurd. Many see this despite 'official' lies and soothing syrup. And from this awareness, opposition springs.

It is here that the link should be seen between those who are struggling against the Bomb - because none will struggle for them - and those in industry who are also struggling to defend the conditions of their own existence and to transcend them. From Tolpuddle to Wethersfield our rulers have feared this challenge.

It is absurd to leave to Air Commodores or to professional politicians the right to press the button, the right suddenly and noisily to destroy millions of human beings. It is equally absurd to leave the management of industry to the few enabling them to destroy millions silently and piecemeal.

The struggle for working class power, the struggle for socialism, is the struggle to democratise society down to its deepest roots. It is the struggle to give ordinary people the right to decide their own fate - both in production and outside it. In such a society none will live off another's labour. And none will die to preserve another's right to rule.

SIT-IN AT BMC

LONGBRIDGE PLANT IMMOBILISED!

NO ARRESTS!

The week-long 'sit-in' strike of 3,000 hourly-rated workers, sweepers, labourers, setters, 'viewers' (semi-skilled inspectors), internal transport drivers, storemen, etc., at the vast British Motor Corporation factory at Longbridge, Birmingham, was one of the most significant disputes of recent years.

THE ISSUES.

Differentials in the factory had been growing, owing to the increased earnings of piece workers, while the wages of time workers had remained fairly static. The issue of the strike was to bring the wages of these hourly-rated men more into line with those on payment-by-results. This involved increasing their wages by 36 shillings a week. The claim of the hourly-rated men had been right through negotiating procedure, 'round the Wrekin' in fact, without result.

The wage demand was not, however the most important aspect of the dispute. The way in which the struggle was fought, the tactics used and the masterly timing, are of great importance to militants. These methods illustrate what 'SOLIDARITY' has been saying for some time in relation to effective new methods of struggle.

THE STRIKE.

On Monday morning (April 2) the men clocked in as usual but refused to handle any work. They were immediately supported by the production workers. Within a few hours the plant was at a standstill. The lead given by the day-workers was followed by the night shift: 4,500 night shift production workers had to be sent home.

On the same day an emergency meeting of trade union officials was held in London. It issued urgent instructions to the men to restart normal working, 'so that new negotiations can start at the week end'.

On the Tuesday morning a mass meeting of the 'sit-in' strikers voted overwhelmingly in favour of continuing the strike. They did this despite the instructions of

the trade union officials. The Shop Stewards Committee simply passed on these 'instruction' to the meeting, without any recommendations. There was no real doubt as to where the sympathy of the Committee lay. The men decided to strike despite statements by the company that they would not negotiate until the men returned to work.

Following the men's decision, foremen and other supervisors went around the shops informing the piece workers that they were being laid off. About 15,000 men were affected.

One of the affected men told me: 'It would be foolish to pretend that the piece workers were overjoyed at being laid off, even though they gave full support to the men in dispute. Due to the complex and interdependent nature of the car industry a factory of the size of Longbridge has almost continually some department or other affected by disputes in other sectors of the industry. It is a practice of the car employers to use the laying off of unaffected workers as their trump card in bringing men in dispute to heel'.

The halting of production at Longbridge very soon affected a number of other factories. 2,400 workers were laid off at Fisher & Ludlows, at Erdington, 800 at Nuffield Metal Products at Washwood Heath, 1,700 at Morris Motors, Cowley and 750 at the Cowley and Swindon plants of Pressed Steel. Dunlops put over 1,000 of 'their' workers on short time. Workers at Hardy Spicers were also affected.

SIT-DOWN... WITH PAY.

The men actually in dispute remained 'at work'... on full pay! Why did the firm take this apparently

ridiculous step? They probably felt that if they laid off the strikers, they might face a long struggle, possibly lasting weeks. Production was at full blast to fulfil export orders, which in fact made up 95 per cent. of production. At a million pounds - or 1,800 vehicles - a day (according to BMC Chairman, George Harriman) such considerations were not to be sneezed at. By leaving the men 'at work' the firm left the door open for continuous informal discussions, and for an immediate mass meeting which might sanction a return to work once a settlement was proposed.

NEGOTIATIONS.

An interesting aspect of the dispute was the rapidly changing attitude of the employers to the question of negotiations.

On Monday, April 2, the 'Birmingham Mail' quoted a BMC spokesman to the effect that 'Friday's talks were conditional upon an immediate resumption of work by the strikers'. The strikers stood firm despite the panic reaction of the trade union officials who instructed them to return to work. The company began to change its tune. By Friday April 6, the 'Birmingham Post' was quoting a 'BMC executive' as talking of 'the probability that talks would proceed, even though the strike may continue'. This was held up 'as a sign of the reasonable attitude being adopted by the management'. Sure enough, the talks took place!

MAKING IT 'OFFICIAL'?

The Longbridge Shop Stewards Committee contains a number of Communist Party members, amongst whom

Dick Etheridge, convenor of the Committee and annual delegate to the National Committee of the AEU. The Committee did a good job of organisation from its headquarters in the Longbridge Assembly Rooms. But it didn't seem to realise the full significance of all its actions.

For example the Shop Stewards Committee, as well as the factory organisations of the individual trade unions (notably the NUVB) called for the strike to be made 'official'... whereas most of the 'strikers', as well as those laid off, were praying that it wouldn't!

As long as the strike remained 'unofficial' the laid off men would receive more in unemployment pay and National Assistance Benefit than the £2.10.0 strike pay due to them if the strike was 'recognized'. (I heard £4.10.0 mentioned as an average payment being made to those laid off). If the dispute was declared 'official' those laid off would automatically lose unemployment pay and a proportion of the National Assistance Benefit; only their wives and children would then still be entitled to it.

As for the men 'on strike' they were receiving full pay from the firm. 'Recognition' of the strike by the unions would have meant a net loss in wages of about £11.0! The demand 'Declare the Strike Official', put forward in an NUVB notice posted around the plant, seems to us quite ridiculous!

At Longbridge, if the trade union 'leaders' had wanted to play their usual role of weakening and splitting the struggle, they should have recognized the dispute! This would at least have been an amusing variation!

INSIDE THE FACTORY.

On Friday, April 6, I spent some time inside the factory and saw at first hand how production was at a halt. As I walking around the vast shops I saw no work at all being done. I did see, however, a few card schools playing 'Solo', a group of men playing darts, another group kicking a football about, a few men asleep on their benches, others reading papers, and some 'chatting up' the girl clerks. In the prototype development shop I saw a small group of men clustered around a man on a step-ladder who was giving an excellent 'take off' of an 'agitator' leading off with: 'Comrades of the revolution...'

About the only sign of 'activity' were groups of foremen and supervisors talking nervously with one another in small groups 'all dressed and nowhere to go'. Only one sound emerged from the forging shop, with its huge steam hammers: the hissing of the tea urn, from which the card players would occasionally refill their teapots!

It was a fantastic experience to walk along the new mini-car assembly lines. The two main ones are the engine shop and the trim and paint shop. Each of them in over 400 yards long. The lines of automated machinery, beside which men are dwarfed, were at a complete standstill.

The factory is like a town, and its size makes the mind boggle, even the mind of a working engineer! It is partly built on the side of a hill, which also provides underground storage space. The plant is divided into two parts: the old Austin factory, down by the plant's own goods yard. This mostly consists of old

and dirty steel sheds. There is also the much larger new section, where the Austin, Morris and other types of minicars are made.

CONCLUSIONS.

This was one dispute where the employers were really over a barrel. They were eager to settle the strike provided they retained a fig-leaf of 'face', namely provided they could get a return to work before anything was formally signed. In the early stages of the dispute they screamed like stuck pigs. But when they realised the free publicity they were giving to a revolutionary way of struggle, they quietened down.

On the Friday, we had the unreal position of negotiations going on between trade union and company officials, while the men who mattered, the representatives of the Shop Stewards Committee, sat in an ante-room. I am sure, however, that the men's presence was felt at the Conference table. It seems to me that the Shop Stewards Committee should demand that all future negotiations between the two parties should take place directly, without middle-men.

Unlike some, whose enthusiasm for a strike is in direct proportion to the length of the stoppage, to the numbers involved, and to the sufferings of the men, we feel that the working class consists of human beings whose sufferings and sacrifices do matter. We feel enthusiastic about struggles which impose the maximum 'hardship' on the boss, at the cheapest cost to the men. This is why the Longbridge strike was so important.

KEN WELLER.

SEEN ON A WOOLWICH TOMB

"SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MAJOR JAMES BRUSH, R.A., WHO WAS KILLED BY AN ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE OF A PISTOL BY HIS ORDERLY, 14th APRIL, 1831." - "WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT."

LATEST SOLIDARITY PAMPHLETS

- No.8. THE BLSP DISPUTE. THE STORY OF THE STRIKE. A documented exposure of the union 'leaderships', by Ken Weller, AEU, 10d. (post free).
- No.9. THE CIVIL DEFENCE FRAUD. THE CASE OF ANDY ANDERSON. HIS FIGHT AGAINST THE DARTFORD R.D.C. The story of one man's challenge to the Authorities. 8d. (post free).
- No.10. THE 100 VERSUS THE STATE. (produced jointly with the I.L.P.). The socialist implications of mass civil disobedience and direct action. 8d. (post free).

ROUTE 40 SIT-IN

This article describes the struggle in the USA against racial discrimination in restaurants. It was written for 'SOLIDARITY' by Owen Cahill, a young American sympathiser, who has been actively involved in the sit-ins.

Young people in the States are taking a very active part in these militant struggles for democratic rights and human dignity. The movement is developing outside all the traditional parties. Some of these are advocating 'postcards to Kennedy' (this species is found everywhere!). Others see the solution in building a Labor Party... so that the masses can be 'taken through the experience' of its inadequacy. Meanwhile the real struggle for racial equality - here and now - proceeds....

Route 40 has gained a fair amount of notoriety in the US lately. It is the most direct road between New York and Washington. As such, it is traveled by many diplomats going from the seat of the UN to the seat of the US government. Many of these diplomats are now Africans. Two of the States between New York and Washington are Delaware and Maryland. Africans, and Negroes in general, find it difficult to be served in the road-side restaurants of these States, particularly in Maryland.

Maryland is not a deep Southern State, being further North than Washington; but it is, in particular outside of Baltimore, its largest city, a more segregated and racist State than some further South.

The US State Department, 'appalled' at the bad impression this discrimination against African diplomats was having on its friendship campaign in these new countries, tried to put pressure on the restaurants to serve Africans, ignoring the fact that black Americans had been discriminated against in these restaurants for years and would continue to be discriminated against.

CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, * decided to attack the problem of discrimination in the restaurants along Route 40 by having sit-ins in them. It is slightly ironic that most of the

* The group which has sponsored the famous Freedom Rides.

direct action campaigns against discrimination in the South have been directed against such things as restaurants and transportation, which are but symptoms of the root causes of segregation. These are essentially economic. It is important to the South, or to its rulers, first to have a supply of cheap labor, second to keep the white and black workers separated so that they cannot unite against the ruling class.

Restaurants and transportation segregation were chosen as targets of direct action campaigns because such campaigns are easier to win than campaigns for jobs. The Negroes of the South have the good sense to hit the enemy where he is weakest. It is far easier to sit where one wants to in a bus than to insist on being hired in a specific job. However, as the struggle develops, this too is being done.

After some hesitations, CORE finally began the campaign, on December 16 last. Over 700 people were involved. Cars came from all over the North Eastern portion of the US. The plan of attack was that each car would consist of a team made up of both Negroes and whites. A number of cars would hit a restaurant, either at once or in succession. It may seem a bit odd to use such military terminology about a non-violent movement such as CORE. But it comes naturally. The important thing about non-violent struggle to most of us who participate in it, both black and white, is not that it is non-violent (that is mere expediency) but that it is struggle.

The first day was fairly successful. Of 35 restaurants hit, 10 integrated. It ended in a meeting in a Negro church in Baltimore and a march through the Negro quarter. This had scores of Negro working people joining the march. When we returned to the church, we were told that a number of riders had been sitting in a restaurant in Aberdeen, Maryland, for several hours and needed relief. A number of cars went to their aid. About 45 of us sat in or picketed this restaurant from 7.0 pm to 10.0 pm.

The restaurant was more a beer hall than an eating place and seemed to be a hang out for the local hoodlums. The proprietor, rather than read the Maryland trespass law to us and thereby have the police either order us out or arrest us (which is the customary and legal way to get Negroes out of a restaurant in Maryland), called in a large number of the town's thugs. The police appeared. They did nothing to stop this concentration of racists and were quite friendly to the proprietor.

Audible rumors flew around the restaurant that the lights would go out at 10.0 and the racists would attack us. Several hoodlums stood in back of us clutching beer bottles which they planned to break, probably over our heads. The police discreetly absented

themselves. The lights did not go out. The proprietor called the police back in and ordered us out. Since we did not plan to be arrested, we left. This sudden change of plan was not due to a sudden access of gentleness. Aberdeen is the site of a large Army base and a number of Negro soldiers and their white buddies came in and were obviously ready to join in the fight on the side of the sit-ins. The proprietor realized that his restaurant would be reduced to splinters if he allowed the fight to start.

A similar incident took place several weeks later in two separate Maryland towns, where CORE members were sitting-in, in restaurants. Racists gangs, not merely ignored by the police, but encouraged by them, attacked the CORE sit-ins. The Negro people of the towns came out and in defense of the CORE sit-ins, drove off the racialists. At this, the police took action. They arrested many Negroes and most of the sit-ins, but none of the racist hoodlums. These acts of defence are contrary to the official policy of CORE which remains non-violent. But in the case in which I was personally involved, I was very grateful to see strong outside help. I've spoken to many friends who were in one or another of the other two towns and we were all impressed by the determination and courage of the local Negroes, since they knew that they would be the ones arrested by the police.

These cases were not the first of their kind. Negroes all over the South are resisting the attacks of racist gangs on their homes and they are further defending the sit-in demonstrations and picket lines, formed to demand their rights as human beings. There is no contradiction between non-violent campaigns and self-defence. In most cases they complement each other. There is no case where Negroes of the South have attempted to gain their human rights by violence and very, very few cases where they have not defended themselves when attacked by racist mobs.

It seems incredible to me that anyone claiming to be for the success of the Negro struggle could object to tactics of self-defence. Yet apparently there are people to whom the means is more important than the end. I remember a small number of American pacifists who supported the Russians in Hungary in 1956 because the Hungarian rebels used violence to gain their freedom. Nobody has yet switched from the Negroes to their white oppressors; but as the tactic of self-defence spreads among Negroes in the South, many pacifists, mainly whites, will be forced to make a choice. A few have had the gall to sit in New York or Philadelphia and tell Negroes in Tennessee and North Carolina that they should not defend themselves if attacked. The Negroes are ignoring them and self-defence tactics are merely bringing them closer to victory in their fight for freedom.

* * * * *

We have received a further article from Owen Cahill on the Monroe events which will be published in the next issue.

ELECTION SENSATION!

RUSSIA MOVES SIDEWAYS !!!

The elections for the USSR Supreme Soviet, which took place on March 18, 1962, 'were marked by a high level of political activity amongst the soviet people. The results have once again justified the great political unity of soviet society and were a triumph of socialist democracy'. (Soviet News, March 29, 1962).

Of the 140,022,359 registered voters, 139,957,809 (99.95 per cent) rushed to the polls.

Abstentions varied widely in the various republics. For example in soviet Georgia and in sunny Uzbekistan the poll was 99.99 per cent. In soviet Latvia it was a mere 99.83 per cent. In Esthonia dissatisfaction was rampant and Trotskyists had been at work. The figures fell to a shocking 99.38 per cent.* A recount was ordered so that new figures might be issued.

All the candidates nominated polled absolute majorities and were returned as deputies. All the deputies elected were candidates of the 'Bloc of Communists and non-Party People'. Several candidates had lost their heads and been eliminated in the thirties.

From their Vorkuta headquarters the leaders of the Opposition declared themselves surprised at the results and conceded defeat. 'The result', they claimed, 'had been unduly influenced by the pre-election poll conducted by Pravda's Dr. Gallupski and by the Party's rash promises of free bread by 1965 and free vodka by 1970.'

Spokesmen for the Government were jubilant at the unexpected landslide. They claimed the vote was a massive endorsement of their policy of socialist leukaemia for all. It clearly proved that the Albanians had never been marxists. By public assent Mr. Molotov would now be transferred to Outer Mongolia where he would be condemned to serving cocktails to camels.

The authorities had but one reservation (in which the Opposition were locked!). They viewed with concern the 1521 invalid ballots and the fact that only 99.53 per cent of the electorate had survived to vote for the Government's policy.

* An Izvestia psephologist told the 'SOLIDARITY' reporter that such fluctuations were to be expected during the fifth decade of a government's tenure of office.

A DOCKER LOOKS AT

THE DOCKS

People don't often read articles on the docks, written by working dockers. We are usually told the problems are so 'complex' that they can only be discussed by shipping company 'experts', university professors or retired generals - all of whom, of course, have long personal experience of the dockers' life!

'SOLIDARITY' is pleased to print something different. The following article describes the docks industry as seen by a rank-and-file docker. It is of great interest not only in this respect, but also as a reflection of working class consciousness, in one of the key sectors of British industry. The author is Bro. Jimmy Jewers, a member of the TGWU and Secretary of the Docks Committee of 100.

For a great many years dockers have been a thorn in the sides of shipping employers, industrialists and successive governments alike. Through the Press they have been abused, ridiculed and displayed as the arch-examples of the discreditable attitudes of the British working man. There have probably been more government-sponsored enquiries into the docks industry than into any other. There have been many investigations by both amateur and professional 'experts' into the causes of various disputes and into the reason why the Port of London does not function as 'efficiently' as a great many continental ports.

As a result of this, the idea was engendered amongst people that the docker is a lazy, backward thinking individual, more concerned with holding his employer to ransom - for more money and less work - than with the material welfare of the people.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The dockers are no more concerned with money than people in any other walk of life. What concerns them is the establishment of security within the industry and the opportunity of taking an active part in its development at all levels. Here lies the crux of all the problems within the industry in recent years.

THE DOCKERS

People don't often read articles on the dockers written by work on dockers, they are usually told the problems are as 'complex', that they can only be discussed by authority experts, university professors or retired generals - all of whom, of course, have long personal experience of the dockers' life!

RECENTLY, as I passed through the dockers' area, I was struck by a sense of great interest and also a realization that not only in this respect, but also in the way of working these organizations, in one of the very few areas of public industry, the dockers are the only workers who are not only interested in the work, but also in the people who work with them.

For a great many years, dockers have been a part of the life of the dock, and they have been a part of the life of the people who work with them. They have been a part of the life of the people who work with them, and they have been a part of the life of the people who work with them.

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anyone that people are highly sensitive to tradition. As this attitude permeates all levels of society can any group be blamed for maintaining their own private traditions? It might be the fault of the system under which we live. Is it surprising that men who, throughout the past, were regarded as second-class citizens - and sometimes not quite worthy to fit into any class at all - should band together and attempt to create a society of their own? When they finally achieve something, naturally they cling to the traditions which initially produced and maintained their strength.

Dockers are no longer a mob. They are fully conversant, fully equipped and determined fighting men. They are always prepared to do battle at injustice. They are one of the last bastions of traditional working class solidarity. And it is extremely doubtful if the traditions which foster this spirit will disappear for a long time to come.

CONDITIONS OF WORK

It is said that the docker is antagonistic toward his employers and is perpetually seeking methods to blackmail them for some concession.

By the nature of his job, the docker has daily to seek work. If unsuccessful, he is unemployed. He is subjected to a system of engagement similar to a cattle market, where foremen walk along lines of men choosing who they want just as a farmer would choose pigs. The only representative of the management he

comes into contact with is the foreman, who really does not have very much authority, or the occasional superintendant, who is always most reluctant to discuss anything with the men.

Management is remote from the docks. The employer is some far removed figure one only reads about in the press. One is never likely to see him. When there is this mystical quality about one's employer, a feeling of antagonism often develops when he contributes to some unpopular piece of policy-making.

A man may serve the industry for fifty years and no matter how brilliant or highly competent he may be in the many skills of dock work, he is never likely to finish as anything other than a docker. This tends to make men insular and interested only in their own affairs. It is very difficult to show much interest in a job when the rewards are only financial. The only thing the docker has left to be proud of whilst working is his physical ability. When this is gone, he has nothing.

THEIR ONLY WEAPON

It is claimed that dockers 'undermine the national economy' with their various disputes and bring trade unionism into disrepute.

Dockers are as aware of the part they play in the national economy as anyone. There is no reason to assume that they love their country any less than the rest of the community. Many of them fought bravely

and many died against fascism and doubtless many others would do it also if threatened by a force as repellant and obnoxious.

But when one's family and domestic economy is threatened by some unjustifiable action by an employer or anyone else, it would not be much of a man who ignored this without some fight. Dockers have not got much but they will cling dearly to what they have got. To be involved in a dispute is not a pleasant thing, especially if it is prolonged. But if a struggle is their only weapon against injustice, then they will use it.

Dockers are especially proud of the fact they they were among the pioneers of trade unionism in this country. They know that every condition they have was fought for and that real strength can only be achieved by a strong organisation. Is it not possible that by being militant and objective the officials are kept on their toes? Weakness and apathy are more likely to set in where the members show little interest in the part their organisation should play. It is not much good complaining after complacent officials start letting things slide. If there is one thing that can be said for trade unionism in the docks it is that it's by no means dull!

EMPLOYERS' PROPOSALS

At this moment, the port employers have submitted a set of proposals. If accepted these could drastically affect the dock industry and change of whole concept of port-working. They include:

- * The abolition of 'restrictive' practices. The employers to have complete control of labour.
- * Full mobility of labour.

- * The fullest 'economic' use of mechanical appliances.
- * Shift work where appropriate.

These are some of the changes to the Dock Labour Scheme the employers intend to institute. Some of our answers have already been covered here. Needless to say all the Docks branches have rejected the proposals and submitted their own.

THE DOCKERS' VIEW

Dockers are sick of the present set-up where their standard of living is governed by their degree of acceptability to a particular foreman. The system allows corruption and graft to run rife. It turns decent, respectable workmen

into brutes prepared to resort to savagery to obtain work. We want changes but changes so that we and society will be the beneficiaries.

We claim that, through the National Dock Labour Board, everyone

should fairly be allocated work on a competent rota system.

All trade unionists realize the danger of a demand like 'the abolition of restrictive practices'. There is no such thing as a restrictive practice, there are only protective practices, created years ago by men sick of suffering indignities and determined that their descendants should fare better. Their descendants are determined that they will.

That the employers should demand the control and mobility of

labour is especially repellent to the men. The trade unions now have a 50 per cent. control of the National Dock Labour Board. They have an equal say in the implementation of the scheme, and control of the register. We require 100 per cent. control, culminating in the docks becoming managed by the community. Only then will people realize the services the docker has given over the years, and at what expense.

Until then the docker will protect his livelihood and remain a bulwark of the working class.

* * * * *

MAY DAY PUBLIC MEETING

INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND THE BOMB

ANSON HALL, CHICHELE ROAD, CRICKLEWOOD, NW2.
(Nearest Tube: Willesden Green - Bus No.16 to Cricklewood Broadway)

SPEAKERS: ALAN SILLITOE ('Saturday Night and Sunday Morning').
PAT ARROWSMITH (Merseyside CND T.U. Committee)
JIMMY JEWERS, TGWU, Docks Committee of 100
KARL DUNBAR, AEU, Engineers' Group, Committee of 100.

CHAIRMAN: BILL CHRISTOPHER, NATSOPA.

TUESDAY, MAY 1, 7.45 PM

Organised by the Industrial Sub-Committee of London Committee of 100.

ABOUT OURSELVES

Again we must apologise for the delay. The chance of an issue for Aldermaston and May Day together was too good to miss. Also, there was other work to do.

We have reprinted 'The Workers' Opposition' (over 400 copies sold to date) and the basic exposition of our ideas 'The Meaning of Socialism'.

'The B.L.S.P. Dispute' has been reprinted twice, and has sold some 1200 copies. Most of them have gone to engineering workers and shop stewards. One Shop Stewards' Quarterly Meeting in North London bought 94 copies - more than one for every two stewards present. The B.L.S.P. management went to considerable trouble to obtain their dozen copies. They sent their couriers twice into 'wildcat' country at Whip-snade! By contrast, the District Officials of the NUVB had heard of the Post Office, and put their order in writing.

We have also produced two new pamphlets. No.9, called 'The Civil Defence Fraud', describes what happens when just a small spanner is thrown into the bureaucratic machinery of deception.

No.10, 'The Hundred versus the State', is a new venture, a printed pamphlet published jointly with the I.L.P. It is an account of the challenge presented by the Committee, with special reference to the Official Secrets Trial. This practical cooperation between the I.L.P. and ourselves is a reflection of the considerable political agreement we share with many I.L.P. members.

ABOUT THE OTHERS

As from the next issue, 'SOLIDARITY' hopes to contain a new regular feature: 'AROUND THE INTERNAL BULLETINS'. It will be written by Pulex, our rat-group correspondent. He already has interesting material about secret analyses of Cuba and about some of the Committee's new 'friends'.

With this work behind us, and with a stockpile of our recent material to draw on, we hope (again!) to produce the journal more regularly. Readers who are thinking of sending us All-Bran needn't bother.

Sales continue to rise. All 850 copies of vol.II, no.1 were sold within a few weeks. We appeal to our new readers to begin to participate in our work. We need articles and reports on the real struggles that take place in industry and elsewhere. And we need criticism, as hard hitting as possible, of our own efforts. Of course, we would also welcome subscriptions.

REVIEWS

STRIKE STRATEGY

Pamphlet published by the NATIONAL RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT (price: 2d.)

This is a much needed discussion of various methods of strike action and how to make them effective.

It points out the importance of the right to withdraw labour power, without which 'man is a slave'. It clearly stresses that strikes can only be successful on issues which the workers understand and on which they feel strongly. The decision to strike should always be taken by the majority of workers concerned. We would add that collective decisions, as far as possible, should also apply to the day-to-day running of the strike and to the question of the eventual return to work.

If I have any criticism to make, it is that the pamphlet doesn't sufficiently relate 'strike strategy' to methods of struggle within the factory. These are often more effective (and less expensive and demoralising for the workers) than strike action of the orthodox type. The pamphlet only deals with this subject in passing, but I understand that this type of struggle will be the subject of the next pamphlet in the series.

One of the many strong points of the pamphlet is its realistic and

down-to-earth attitude to strike organisation. I recommend it to all readers of 'SOLIDARITY'. Copies may be ordered from Bill Christopher, 34, Cumberland Rd., London E.17 or from E. Morse, 68 Hill Farm, Whip-snade nr. Dunstable, Beds (5d. post free, or 2/6 per dozen).

K. W.

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FREEDOM RIDERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

by Mary Hamilton, Louise Inghram and others.

A 'NEWS AND LETTERS' PAMPHLET.

This is an unusual pamphlet, quite free of the unpalatable, indigestible and unreadable quality which makes people turn away, little the wiser, from the average political product.

'Freedom Riders' is written by the politically unsophisticated and in the simplest possible manner. It leaves the reader with a clear picture of the unforgivable treatment lotted out to these courageous young people. Equally vivid is the warm welcome given them by the Southern Negroes.

On entering Jackson City Jail the 'riders' noted the inscription: 'This building was erected for and by the people of Jackson, Mississippi, in honor of liberty, equality and justice'. Mary Hamilton (coloured Freedom Rider) adds, more in sorrow than in sarcasm: 'everyone who saw it commented on our state of liberty and equality.'

At the first interrogation Mary is fingerprinted. She refuses to answer questions: this is the general policy of the Freedom Riders. At the second interrogation there is a moment when the policeman, trying to jog her into replying by dubbing her a Communist, suddenly falls into his own trap: 'Do you realize that the Communist Party is an enemy to our country?'; very quickly, she catches him up: 'Oh! even you realize that it is our country also.'

Two male Freedom Riders are put into solitary because they will not stop singing. This only spurs the 'riders' on. Freedom songs are rendered with huge volume for the rest of the day. This keeps the 'riders' spirits high, for they have no wish to show signs of flagging before foul-mouthed or insolent policemen.

After their trial the girls are transferred to Hinds County Jail, where conditions are vile. No personal belongings are allowed, not even a toothbrush. The blankets smell of urine; sheets are soiled and the mattresses are very dirty. There is an open lavatory and shower stall, offering no privacy whatever. Two out of the three meals a day consist of cold beans and cornbread, which they usually cannot stomach.

Incoming and outgoing letters are always censored. The Freedom Riders never know whether they

get through either way. Sometimes an empty envelope is all they receive. This causes great distress.

It is at Parchman Prison that the biggest insult comes. Having been made to take off their shoes, the girls are taken into a small room. Here, they are given a vaginal test (this is the first occasion this form of humiliation and intimidation has been practised on the Freedom Riders). The test is not performed by a doctor. It is carried out most unhygienically. The rubber gloves used are not washed after each test, but dipped into a common pot containing a solution used for all the girls! *

This is a story of courage, militancy and confidence told by a group of young Americans, coloured and white, imprisoned Freedom Riders every one of them. If you feel this is your cause too, you should read the full story. It is a remarkable one.

Copies may be obtained from P. Cadogan, 5 Acton Way, Cambridge (1/9, post free), or from 'News and Letters', 8751 Grand River, Detroit 4, Michigan, USA.

E. M.

* We understand that Committee of 100 supporters - imprisoned at Holloway for civil disobedience activities - have been subjected to much the same treatment.

* * * * *

COMMITTEE OF 100

TOWARDS INDUSTRIAL ACTION...

The following article is based on a report submitted by the convenor of the Industrial Sub-Committee to the inaugural meeting of the London Committee of 100. It has since been fairly widely circularised among Committee supporters in industry. We are pleased to give it still wider publicity. We urge all who are interested in this aspect of the Committee's work to contact Bro. Ken Weller, AEU, Convenor of the Industrial Sub-Committee, 37, Queens Mansions, North Road, N.7.

The Industrial Sub-Committee of the Committee of 100 was formed in October 1961. It was reorganised, on a more representative basis, in February 1962, in parallel with the reorganisation of the Committee itself. Its terms of reference are as wide as those of the Committee. But in addition the Sub-Committee is seeking to develop the struggle against nuclear weapons along more specifically industrial channels. It is attempting in particular to popularise the idea of eventual industrial action against the Bomb.

On the Sub-Committee are dockers, engineers, printers, a carpenter, two members of white collar unions, a busman, an electrician, a post office worker and a railwayman.

The Sub-Committee's first job was the drafting of the leaflet 'APPEAL TO TRADE UNIONISTS'. This explained civil disobedience in terms of mass struggle and not in terms of absolute moral imperatives, important as these may be to some people. This leaflet did not talk of Parliament, of Summit Talks, of UNO or of the Labour or Communist Parties. Workers were asked to consider what they could do as workers to assist in the struggle. About 130,000 copies of this leaflet have already been printed and distributed up and down the country. It has also been reproduced by the Merseyside CND Trade Union Committee.

The main emphasis of the Sub-Committee's work has so far been in the field of propaganda. It is seeking to get the Committee's ideas over to ordinary workers, both at shop floor level and through the trade union branches. It asks workers to consider what they themselves can do to assist the campaign.

The Industrial Sub-Committee has organised the distribution of leaflets at factory gates and at the docks. It has circularised hundreds of trade union branches with Committee material. It has sent speakers to trade union branch and trades councils meetings. It has organised two public meetings in the London area and is planning a third (see advert. on p.15). It has also raised a certain amount of cash for Committee of 100 funds. It is at present engaged in a circularisation to raise some money towards its own running costs.

Its aim is to create working and viable groups of supporters in all the main industries. To expand this work we need the fullest participation of all supporters of the Committee of 100. We particularly need their help in contacting the hundreds of sympathisers who are also trade unionists but with whom we are not as yet in contact.

The policy of the Sub-Committee in relation to industrial action is best expressed in a circular issued by the Sub-Committee inviting sympathisers in industry to a meeting on February 27:

'It was felt that rather than issue a general call for industrial action - which would only evoke a very limited response and could demoralise our supporters - the industrial sub-committee should concentrate on specific areas and factories where there was a real possibility of action. Such places would either be places where there was a tradition of previous action of this kind, or places where viable groups of Committee supporters existed, capable of mobilising some effective response.

'An extremely flexible attitude was needed, in line with the widely differing conditions in different industries and factories. Amongst the ideas to be discussed were extended lunchtime meetings; **knocking off** early; or token stoppages for widely varying periods.

'The Sub-Committee was firmly of the opinion that the decisions as to the type and place of action should be taken by the people directly involved in consultation with the local organisations of the Committee.'

The Industrial Sub-Committee helped in the formation of the Docks Committee of 100. This now has over 50 members, representing three of the main London Docks: the Royal Group, the West India Dock and the London Dock. It also has contacts in most of the other docks. The Docks Committee consists of members of both the main unions in the docks: the TGWU ('white') and the NASD ('blue'). It has succeeded in breaking down barriers which are usually only broken down in periods of industrial struggle. The secretary of the Docks Committee is Jimmy Jewers, TGWU, and the Chairman is Fred Morel, NASD.

The main work of the Docks Group has also been propaganda. It has held a series of very successful dock gate meetings at both the Royal Group and the West India Dock. Speakers have included working dockers, Bertrand Russell, Pat Arrowsmith, Vanessa Redgrave, Pat Pottle, George Clark and Richard Headicar. The results of this work have been twofold: 1) the support for the Committee in the Docks has steadily increased; 2) individual dockers (and - on one or two occasions - even gangs) have begun to refuse to handle atomic materials.

The Docks Committee is at present engaged in raising its own finance by circularising the Docks branches of the THWU, NASD, the Lightermen's Union and the AEU.

The Industrial Sub-Committee has also set up an Engineers' Group. Its secretary is Bro. Hogan, of the AEU. This group was formed in December 1961. It has been responsible for the meetings arranged for the Committee in the Engineering industry. It has also issued a leaflet for distribution at factory gates. It has contacts with groups at several large engineering plants in North West London.

There has been a certain amount of press interest in the work of the Industrial Sub-Committee. Several papers have run 'scare' stories. * There has also been some - not unexpected - snooping by the police. Just let them. The industrial sub-committee is not in the least perturbed by these events and it will continue to carry its message to rank-and-file workers throughout industry.

The Industrial Sub-Committee is not a bureaucratic, elected-for-so-many-years body. Any worker who supports its aims and policy of opposition to all bombs is welcome to share the responsibility and hard work entailed in the planning of its activities. It hopes that more and more workers will participate in its work and help to expand it where it matters most: at workshop level.

M. W.

* See for instance 'Sunday Telegraph' article of November 5, 1961, headed: 'Docks Threat to Nuclear Cargoes'. Also editorial of October 30, 1961, in 'Hackney Gazette' which stated: 'There can be no doubt that the Committee means business in a very big way. The Aldermaston marches, the sit-down demonstrations in Trafalgar Square and outside various embassies, are but a foretaste of much more bothersome demonstrations.... What in brief the Committee hopes to do is to gain the cooperation of trade unionists in refusing to handle any nuclear material in the docks or factories. The idea is that ordinary workers can be persuaded not to make weapons of mass destruction, or to transport them, instal them or handle them in any way at all... 'It all sounds so utterly simple. But then we know how easy it is to foment any kind of trouble in key industries these days... etc., etc...'

'DARTFORD REPORTER' ASKS: WHAT MAKES PEOPLE REVOLT?

Under this title the 'Dartford Reporter' (April 13, 1962) published a letter from one Betty Webb, Agent to the Dartford Labour Party. We reprint this letter below because it contains the most sophisticated appreciation of 'SOLIDARITY' yet to appear in the press...

The Mr. Anderson referred to is a 'SOLIDARITY' supporter who has repeatedly refused to pay his Civil Defence rate (on the grounds that the Dartford R.D.C. cannot supply the service charged for - and that C.D. is a fraud anyway).*

« May I take back my unfair and unkind comments about Andy Anderson which I made last year when he, with his friend Brian Weekes, encouraged and led (or misled) the Dartford Tenants Association in their revolt against the Borough Council rent increases...**

Now at last Andy is prepared to make a great personal stand (a change from sitting down) by withholding from the Rural Council the sum of 1s. 2d. from his yearly rates. I await with interest the action of the Rural Council and his next move... »

...Like you I classed him as a Communist, but he soon disproved this by encouraging the Tenants' Association to put up their own candidate for the Borough elections, although a Communist candidate was standing, and by bringing in the Communists' traditional enemies, the Trots, from St.Pancras, and other London boroughs. The local Communist Party was insulted by my suggestion that he was one of their members.

Later I discovered he wrote in a peculiar magazine called 'SOLIDARITY' which has a vulgar, obscene disrespect for authority in general and all established political parties in particular, including the Communist Party, and can only be described as anarchist in its content.

'SOLIDARITY' REPORTER ASKS:

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE REVOLTING?

COULD IT BE MALICE?

During the Dartford Rent Strike Miss Betty Webb issued several leaflets, usually inaccurate and invariably hostile to the tenants. She would sign them (hold tight!) Sergeant B. Webb, Instructor of Gunnery, R.A. - A.T.S. (1939-1945)(demobbed), on behalf of the Labour Party!!!

Only a person with such a background would consider 'disrespect for authority' a crime. Only a lady with such a training would (or could?) kick a man when he is down.

* See 'SOLIDARITY' pamphlet No.9: 'The Civil Defence Fraud. The Case of Andy Anderson'. 8d. (post free).

** See 'SOLIDARITY', vol.I, No.7, p.7, DARTFORD 1961. 'Council Tenants Fight Back.'

WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Is Socialism a utopian dream? Will there always be rulers and ruled? Will the working class always be exploited either by its class enemies or by those who claim to speak in its name? Is it but a modern army of industrial slaves, whose periodic eruptions into activity are without real social significance?

Or, on the contrary, do the conditions of proletarian life - and in particular factory life - lead the workers to develop a consciousness, ideas, and forms of action, whose deepest content is implicitly socialist?

Answers to these questions can only be found in an analysis of working class history and of working class experience. This must start at the most elementary level, from the social reality at the point of production. It must then look wider afield, at the organisations the working class has created throughout its history - and at what happened to them. It must finally look at the objectives of all previous mass actions of the class, during periods of revolution.

Such an analysis must lead to a drastic revision of traditional ideas concerning socialism. A different conception of socialism, in turn, implies different demands to be fought for by socialist organisations. And these organisations, in turn again, must be of a new type, if they are successfully to challenge the social reality of today.

THE STRUGGLE IN PRODUCTION

The struggle of the working class against capitalism is neither purely 'economic' nor purely 'political'. It is a struggle which starts at the point of production. Its object is not merely more wages (i.e. a bigger share of the surplus value produced by the working class). Nor is it explicitly concerned with the general reorganisation of society. Its importance lies in the fact that the struggle in production attacks, every hour of the day, the fundamental reality of capitalism. For what it challenges are the relations of production in the capitalist factory, i.e. the relations of groups of men to other groups of men in the process of producing wealth.

Attempts to 'rationalise' production are constantly taking place in the society around us. They are an inevitable by-product of the concentration of capital, whether private or 'state-owned'. These attempts can be seen in the Docks, in the Engineering industry, in the Railways,

in building, in the mines and in banks and offices up and down the country. They affect manual worker and 'white collar' worker alike.

This type of 'rationalisation' creates a mass of contradictions which cannot be solved within class society. For it consists in 'reorganising' the labour process from the outside. The wishes and aptitudes of those who do the work are excluded. Capitalist and bureaucratic 'rationalisation' attempts to reduce to a minimum the creative intervention of workers in the productive process. This is intrinsically absurd... even from the view point of 'efficiency' itself!

In all class society, 'rationalisation' only increases exploitation. It gives rise to a constant working class resistance which dominates the whole of factory life. This resistance affects every aspect of the labour process. Its objectives are not merely an increase in the wage packet. They are also to control the job itself.

In most cases the actual size of the pay packet is determined less by 'official' wage-rates agreements, and more by the realities of production in a given factory: the control of piece rates, the distribution of the workers' time between different kinds of work and especially the tempo and norms of work which the management is able to impose. All these are the subject of a permanent and irreconcilable struggle between workers and management. This struggle takes many forms. It is much more a motive force of the class struggle than is the more obvious struggle for the disposal of surplus value. The pattern of recent strikes should make this clear beyond question.

THE NEW RELATIONS

Whatever their wage level workers are constantly fighting against methods of production which daily increase the inhuman aspects of work. This struggle is not merely a defensive one, aimed at limiting exploitation. Production must somehow be carried on. While acting together against the bureaucratic apparatus of management, workers create, among themselves, a certain solidarity and discipline. They carry on a form of cooperation at work which in spirit and substance comes hourly into conflict with the everyday rules and regulations of the capitalist factory. In a sense the workers 'instinctively' seek to impose a form of workers' management. *

* Anyone who has worked on the night shift in a large factory will know exactly what we mean. The bureaucratic stranglehold of management is a little less obvious at these times.

During work new relations are created between groups and between individuals. These new relations often challenge the capitalist morality of maximum individual gain. They even tend to replace it with a new morality, based on solidarity and equality. The more serious bourgeois industrial sociologists, such as Elton Mayo, have seen this quite clearly. It is strange to find most 'marxists' unconcerned at or unaware of these basic facts. *

The capitalists constantly try to impose hierarchical wage structures or hierarchical patterns of wage increases, the better to divide the workers. The more class conscious workers sense that this can only divide them. It is no accident that at British Light Steel Pressings (Acton), probably the best organised and most militant engineering factory in Britain, the Shop Stewards' organisation had succeeded in establishing virtual equality in wages between skilled and semi-skilled. ** The same tendency was seen recently in the London bus garages, which overwhelmingly rejected proposals to grant different increases to drivers and conductors.

This 'equalitarian' aspect of working class consciousness and this tendency of workers to manage the job themselves are no 'accident'. In one way or another they come to the forefront every time that capitalism attempts to alter the techniques of production, in order to 'solve' one of its own problems. They express a fundamental and universal tendency, the effects of which can be seen in Russia and in the United States, in France and in Britain. This tendency may remain latent for long periods. It has no formal organisational expression. It has no clearly formulated programme. But its content is to be found in the activities of the masses each time a revolutionary crisis shakes capitalist or bureaucratic society. In every factory throughout the world the workers struggle against arbitrarily imposed norms, and, more generally, against conditions of labour that they have not themselves determined. The 'abolition of the norms' was one of the main demands of the Hungarian Workers' Councils in 1956.

* These 'marxists' claim to be 'realists'. Their 'realism' consists in taking refuge behind the real or alleged 'backwardness' of sections of the working class. These 'revolutionaries' don't talk about these basic things for fear of being 'misunderstood', 'isolated' or labelled 'utopian'. The workers, according to them, have been 'thoroughly corrupted by centuries of capitalism'!

We feel that those who use such arguments abdicate the role of conscious revolutionaries. They do nothing to develop the positive and potentially socialist aspects of working class consciousness.

** See 'Solidarity' pamphlet No.8: 'The BLSP Dispute, the story of the strike', by Ken Weller, AEU.

THE EXPERIENCE OF REVOLUTION

Born in the trivialities of the work process, and in the experience of collective labour, this 'socialist' conception of society has surged to the forefront in every proletarian revolution. In these upheavals the working class has not simply revolted against misery and exploitation. It has sought to challenge the real basis of every established society: the relations of production, which determine the attitude of human beings to one another.

In these upsurges the working class has repeatedly placed before mankind the whole question of a new form of social organisation. And to this question it has repeatedly provided its own answers. The Commune of 1871, the Soviets of 1905 and 1917, the Russian factory committees of 1917-1918, the German workers' councils of 1919 and 1920, the Italian factory committees of 1921, the councils set up by the Spanish workers in 1936-37 and the Hungarian workers' councils of 1956 were at one and the same time organs of struggle against the ruling class and its State - and new forms of social organisation, based on principles radically opposed to those of bourgeois society.

These institutions, created by the proletariat itself,* should be studied most closely. They expose, once and for all, certain misconceptions

(continued p.28)

*Parties of professional revolutionaries had very little to do with these creations. The members of the 1st International were taken by surprise by the spontaneous developments in Paris in March 1871. The Russian Bolsheviks were at first opposed to the Soviets in 1905. They viewed them with extreme suspicion. The Stalinists, as is well-known, were the most vicious opponents of the independent class organs created by the Spanish workers in 1936-37 and devoted much of their energy to liquidating them.

WHAT DID YOU DO LAST MONDAY?

On Monday, March 5, the leaders of the Confederation of Ship Building and Engineering Unions called their members out, for the second time, on a 24-hour token stoppage. The following day, 'Solidarity' reporter Tom Hillier interviewed some of his mates. To the question: 'What did you do on Monday?', he obtained the following answers:

Bill: 'The Missus'.
Joe: 'Went on the piss'.
Carl: 'Who wants ter know?'.
Harry: 'Went to the union meeting. Heard the usual balls!'.
Sid: 'Slept all day'.
Rex: 'Took the wife out. It cost me a packet'.
George: 'Did some thinking. Token strikes are useless. Only save the officials' faces when they're scared to have a real bash!'.