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solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

aberdeen

STRIKES: dustmen & lewis's

 **Consolidated Pneumatic**
TOOL COMPANY LIMITED

aberdeen students

the struggle in portugal

no. 4

6^d

THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT.

INTRODUCTION

The rash of strikes which have lately hit industry in Aberdeen continues. Since June this year, over 2,000 workers have been involved in strikes. This is more than the combined number throughout the 1960s. The second struggle, that of the dustmen, was over a straight wage demand. The first strike described below was over a different issue; the victimization of a shop steward.

SHIPYARDS STRIKE

The empire of Lewis' in Aberdeen covers many varied concerns. This small-town capitalist owns a ship-yard and boiler and repair shop (approx 300 workers), a coal merchants business, a travel agents and a delicatessen shop as well as the second largest trawler fleet in the port (with approx 250 workers) Lewis' has a record of providing employment that is low paid and with bad conditions, and distinguished himself in the recent Trawl strike (see Aberdeen Solidarity No 2) by attempting to sail 'scab' boats. This ended in a humiliating defeat for him. The yard itself is often short of orders, but recently it has won a couple, including one worth £200,000 for two trawlers, so the strike came at a bad time for the bosses.

The present dispute began when a couple of months ago, when J. Maconnachie went to work in the repair and boiler shop of Lewis' which is over the river from the yard on Point Law. He was almost immediately elected A.E.F. shop steward, and began to agitate for an end to some of the appalling conditions which had been tolerated in Lewis' for so long.

In mid-November Maconnochie and another worker were paid off, allegedly due to a lack of work in the repair and boiler shop. But the men knew what was at stake, and the 40 engineers in the shop came out in support of their steward.

SYMPATHY ACTION

The strike immediately to the yard itself and at a mass meeting, the engineers and boilermakers there, also decided to strike. Sympathy action started, and the engineers in all the ship repair shops on Point Law came out in sympathy including those at the biggest, Wood & Daividsen. Soon at a meeting addressed by MacArtney, the convenor at Russels, more than 100 engineers struck in this yard which employs over 800 men. This movement was spontaneous and in no way led by the Union. As usual when he makes a blunder, Lewis' panicked. He offered the men their jobs back, providing that Maconnochie did not remain as shop steward. The real issue for the sackings was now admitted. The management claimed that he had not been in the shop long enough to be a shop steward, and that his appointment was against a national union-management agreement.

THE ISSUE AT STAKE

The fundamental issue of this strike, was now in the open; who decides who is eligible to represent the men in the shop floor? The men themselves, or the unions and bosses? The men gave their answer at a mass meeting of almost 400 by refusing to go back, and by threatening to attempt to spread the strike to other engineering firms in the city.

Attempts to get the rest of the workers in Lewis' out in support failed at a mass meeting. Part of this was due to the old divisions in any yard, but there was sympathy for the engineers case, and the plumbers and painters etc saw little need to strike, when they would be paid off and go straight on to the brew. This happened on Friday the 21st of November.

Over the week-end the strike lost some of its momentum. A cock-eyed scheme to appeal to the Labour M.P. for Aberdeen South, Dewar emerged, and the district secretary

of the A.E.F., Thom. made his usual speech about returning to work for negotiations. The management agreed to open negotiations and the men were led to believe their two mates were being re-instated and so agreed to return to work at a mass meeting on Wednesday the 26th. Once the men had returned to work, they discovered that the two men were suspended under full pay. There is a strong feeling among the men that they have been conned and the possibility of a further strike does exist.

CONCLUSION

This strike, with its great degree of solidarity, and the fact that it was over such an important issue, is one of the most encouraging developments in local shipbuilding for years, despite the reservations outlined in the previous paragraph. Workers are beginning to see that control over their own shop floor organization and solidarity between the various shops is essential to advance their interests.

The Aberdeen dustmen's strike is now in its third. At a meeting of 70 of the city's refuse drivers on the 13th December, the men came out on strike to forward their pay claim of £3 per week which would have brought them into line with Edinburgh and Glasgow. During the first week, the mens union, the Scottish Commercial motormen's Union advocated that they returned to work so negotiations with the council bosses could continue.

At a meeting on Thursday 18th, the men agreed to return to work and negotiations started between the union and the bosses. On the Friday, the men only did their usual rounds and did no overtime so only buckets that are usually emptied on Fridays were done. The council offered the men between £2 and £2:10:0 backdated to the beginning of October, the union refused this offer and the strike was made official.

Once the strike was made official, the men recieved strike pay, obviously an important consideration, however the union officials negotiating for the men are not subject to any rank-and-file control in the form of election and recall as would say an unofficial strike committee. One promising sign was the men picketing on their own initiative at the two corporation rubbish dumps and succ-

essfully turning away 'scabs' private vans which had been collecting rubbish.

The strikers have been subject to a great deal of public abuse from a number of sectors—from the A.A., Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, the Lord Provost certain town councillors. Councillor Hughs, it appears is only concerned with lower paid workers in South Africa, When those in Aberdeen go on strike he doesn't seem to think it's such a good idea. Treasurer Lamond, ex C.P. member and Labour stalwart is put in the embarrassing position of being the strikers boss and refusing their justly deserved increase. All the talk of irresponsibility by the town council is just so much claptrap. The men are only demanding a similar increase which dustmen in other parts of the country have already been awarded. Rather it is the town council who is irresponsible - don't forget it's not long since they decided to spend over £12000 on a new Rolls Royce for that well known trade unionist Provost Lennox. If the council can't afford to give the men their rise we all know the reason why. It is not on the heads of the strikers we should heap abuse, it should be on the steps of the town house along with the rubbish

READ SOLIDARITY

A paper for militants - in industry and elsewhere Attempts a total critique of modern society, and a systematic 'demystification' of its values, ideas, and forms of organisation. discusses what libertarian revolution is all about. 10d p.p. from: N. Roy, 138 Walker Road, Torry Aberdeen.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN PORTUGAL

Apart from occasional news from its colonial wars, little is heard in this country about Portugal. For more than 40 years, it was under the right-wing dictatorship of Salazar, with strikes, combatitive trade unions and opposition political parties all banned. In recent years, especially since Salazar's incapacitating illness, the repression has been relaxed slightly in favour of more intelligent control; the Communist Party and the other opposition parties have even been allowed to put up candidates for the next legislative elections.

Despite this relaxation, the wave of strikes which has hit Portuguese capitalism, and which this article describes, is quite unprecedented. What is most interesting and encouraging is that, despite their lack of an organisational tradition, the Portuguese working class has successfully developed its own organisations and forms of struggle.

THE BACKGROUND

There is still little information about the vast wave of strikes which, since July 1968, has hit nearly 100 concerns, principally in the Lisbon area. Two things at least are certain: on the one hand the movement is entirely spontaneous, i.e. outside of any trade union or political control (even underground Communist Party), on the other, the level of self-organisation has been often very high, with the workers always facing the bosses with a united front.

In spite of the lack of real traditions of struggle, in spite of the permanent threat of repression, the Portuguese working class has lost nothing of its determination and its militancy. Isolated by the regime for more than 40 years, it has been forced to adopt its own forms of struggle, protecting itself as much as possible from police repression, while remaining determined to gain its demands.

THE STRIKES BEGIN

It all started with the strike of 7000 workers of CARRIS (an English company which holds the urban transport concession in Lisbon) in July 1968. Several meetings of

thousands of workers had taken place in the depots during June. The main claim was a general wage increase of 30Esc. (8/9d) per day, a rise of almost 30%. The management refused, with the public authorities taking no part in the matter.

On July 1st the workers occupied the depots, but were forced out by the police. There was no direct conflict, but for 2 hours, the workers and the police confronted each other face to face, the former chanting "Viva Benfica", a football club whose colours, as everyone in Portugal knows, are red... Faced with the impossibility of staying in the depots, the CARRIS workers decided to run the trams and buses without collecting fares.

The news of these events spread throughout the country, stirring up the other transport workers; those of the Metro and those of Eduardo Jorge Co. (a private company running suburban transport). After a few days the government stepped in to force a settlement with a general rise of 20 Escudos (5/10d) per day.

The government and the Portuguese capitalists cashed in on the situation by repudiating the English management, and taking up positions on the board of directors. At the same time, the traditional opponents of the regime characterised the strike as a struggle against a foreign management! According to them, what oppresses the workers is not being exploited in itself, but in being exploited by a foreign company.

THE STRUGGLE SPREADS

The government attempted to take over and manipulate the strike movement, but their efforts were cut short by Salazar's illness in September 1968 and Caetano's consequent take-over.

Then the spotlight turned on to the railwaymen (CP) and the postmen (CTT). Spontaneous gatherings of workers took place, in the Rossio railway-station and outside the Terreiro do Paco Central Post Office. By and large, the workers got what they wanted: the CP got increases of between 6%-11%, inversely proportional to wages; the CTT's demands were - curiously - concerned with transport allowances, because the local authority had just permitted CARRIS to increase train and bus fares.

From then on, the movement began to spread throughout the industrial sector. In the General Motors and Ford car assembly plants at Azaonbuja, 30 miles from Lisbon, and in the Covina glass factory at Pevoa de Sta Iria, the workers occupied the buildings, but were later forced out by the police. In the area around the Amadoza-Reboleira suburb of

Lisbon, there were also strike movements, notably at the Sorefame railway works.

The biggest cartel in Portugal - CUF - was also threatened. The workers at the naval dockyard of Lisnave, part of the CUF holdings, put forward claims at the same time as the dockers of Parry & Sons. The bosses immediately yielded, to prevent the strike spreading to the whole cartel i.e. to nearly 50,000 workers, concentrated in the single town of Barreiro which faces Lisbon on the left bank of the Tagus. Many other firms went on strike, like Robialac (paints and varnishes), Cabos de Avila (electrical conductors), Celcat, etc. Recently there have been strike movements at Fiat and Volkswagen.

STUDENTS, PUPILS AND SOLDIERS

At Coimbra, the University was closed down by the police after street demonstrations in which several people were injured, one seriously. The May '68 events in France had a certain influence amongst the students, but they were not the cause of the student movement.

What is interesting about the struggle of the 8,500 students of Coimbra University, is that the actions of the mass of the students have all been radical and have never obeyed the empty slogans of the traditional leaders (of all tendencies from social democrat to maoist). The students got their comrades freed from prison; they occupied the faculty buildings, holding permanent general assemblies; they boycotted the examinations by an overwhelming majority (95%).

The movement is now spreading to Secondary Schools and Technical Colleges, with the police already having arrested several militant schoolboys.

The government is trying to stop the movement by threatening to send the students, and youth in general, to the African war-front. This has simply created another movement (against the colonial war) which is becoming more and more direct and violent, with street demonstrations and clashes with the police. At the same time this struggle offers a solid basis for building links between students and workers for here are the students and the young workers fighting the same battle against the war and conscription.

CONCLUSION

The most significant feature of all this is the remarkable radicalism of the Portuguese working class, which, without any political or trade union traditions, has to a certain extent organised itself, creating in the struggle the

kinds of organisation it needed.

The struggles are following one another. The Portuguese working class is progressively discovering its power as a class, and is learning to organise on its own to gain its demands. Moreover, it has shown the limits of police repression—virtually helpless before a vast mass movement. Today the working class amounts to 1.5 millions (more than 1/3 of the total working population) and it is to it that the task of overthrowing the capitalist regime falls.

It must continue to fight in an autonomous way, creating for itself in the course of the struggle, the class organisation necessary for the execution of given tasks.

But other sectors are already in motion. The students and the young conscripts, in struggling harder and harder against the colonial wars in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, are placing insurmountable difficulties before the regime, weakening the unity of the capitalist bosses, and contributing decisively to sharpen the contradictions, amongst which Caetano is finding it impossible to achieve balance.

The political situation in Portugal is very unstable. The regime is worn out, sunk in contradictions it is incapable of resolving—the colonial wars, economic development, the workers' struggles, student agitation and the rising cost of living. The 'Generals' are watching Caetano closely and the 'dictatorship of the extreme-right' would not be long in coming if the government showed itself unable to 'maintain order'. The traditional opposition is afraid, and its electoral statements take absolutely no account of the determination of the working class and the students towards the struggle.

The only defence against the ruling dictatorship, against the overtly violent form of capitalist exploitation, is the pursuit of struggles as they occur, their coordination and unification towards the same common end - the overthrow of the regime, and the taking of power by those who work and produce all the wealth.

REVIEW:The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike Against GM 1936-37

This pamphlet, produced by our comrades in North London Solidarity, is particularly relevant to the contemporary national and international industrial situation despite the fact that it deals with a sit-down strike in the U.S.A. in the thirties. Basically it vividly describes the struggle of General Motors auto-workers against the atrocious conditions imposed on them, and their eventual victory after occupying their factories for 44 days, round the demand for union recognition. Although the ends of unionisation must be viewed strictly within the context of America at that time, the strikers' means, the tactics used, are of universal significance for the working class.

Of particular importance is the description of the workers' organisation within the occupied factories for it was a classic example of proletarian democracy in practice. The supreme body was the mass meeting of 1200 workers, meeting twice daily, who elected a 5 man strike-strategy committee and delegated 17 shop stewards to be responsible for the various committees essential for the guarding and organisation of the factory. The duties of these committees covered a wide range involving food collection and cooking (a big job where 1200 men are concerned), education, entertainment, athletics, information and defense, which was especially important because of the combined attacks by the police and company agents.

However General Motors did not only rely on direct assault in their attempt to dislodge the determined strikers, who with considerable ingenuity had utilised the resources available to them in the factories for their defense, so that steel sheets were welded over windows and paint sprays used to repel unwelcome intruders. The strikers also held a position of considerable strength, because although the management were indifferent to the no. of strikers clubbed or shot, they were more than a little concerned about the millions of dollars worth of machinery as the following passage shows,

"Then the heat was shut off. The workers immediately threatened to start huge bonfires to warm themselves. On went the heat... Next the lights were shut. Again the workers warned that every one of the 3000 men now inside would light a torch of waste paper in order to 'see'. On went the lights." (P28).

The company's attempts at divide and rule, at isolating the strikers by threatening, bribing and blackmailing other workers met with little success as more and more plants were shut down and occupied as the strike spread, and in a great display of solidarity, money and men poured in from other auto centres to aid the struggle at Flint. The management went as far as sending a prostitute into the occupied factory in an attempt to create a scandal, but to no avail. In the end, with tens of thousands of workers surrounding the factories, with 20 plants on strike and production at a standstill, General Motors, the second largest corporation in the world capitulated and acknowledged the strikers' victory with union recognition.

The pamphlet marks an important stage in the development of new and effective methods of struggle, for the traditional strike has a no. of limitations, e.g. it leaves the boss in charge of the factory; as recent events in Scotland have shown, even the most militant picket is no guarantee against blacklegs; and also, control of the strike may be taken out of the hands of the men by an undemocratic strike committee or by union bureaucrats. These problems are largely overcome with occupation, for the workers make a positive gesture and assume control over their factory; there is no possibility of scabbing and the presence of all the workers under one roof leaves no excuse for the initiative being taken from the rank and file. Although factory occupations are occurring with increased frequency on the continent, Britain has so far only witnessed the abortive attempt of the GEC takeover. However with the possibility of occupations being used by workers at Ford and Vauxhall in their coming struggles, I would strongly recommend this pamphlet to all militants.

C.A.

SOLIDARITY MAGAZINES

Regular magazines are being, or are about to be produced by the following autonomous Solidarity groups.

Solidarity(North London) - c/o H. Russel, 53A, Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent.
 Solidarity(South London) - c/o A. Mann, 79, Balfour Rd, SE17
 Solidarity(West London) - c/o M. Duncan, 15 Taylors Green, W3.
 Solidarity(North West) - c/o 102, Carter St, Moss Side, Manchester M13.

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 STUDENT REVOLT :

It would appear on examination that there are a number of similarities between the struggles in industry and those in a university. In much the same role as that played by trade unions in industry, the Student Representative Committee (S.R.C.) acts as the official liaison body between students and the university administration. The trade unions appear to be becoming more and more integrated into the managerial processes and there is a growing resentment among workers directed against union officialdom. This resentment is mirrored in the growing boycott of union control in industrial disputes as can be seen in the upsurge of unofficial stoppage, works to rule etc. There is a general move towards workers taking action themselves and cutting out the role of mediation traditionally played by the unions. All too often they have ignored the wishes of their members in order to obtain a "just settlement" i.e. one which appeals to management and the governments' income policy.

Likewise among students there is a growing feeling that the S.R.C. is little more than the puppet of the university administration. The S.R.C. claims to give students a serious say in the running of their lives but when important issues crop up it is all too obvious that they are powerless, or at least are determined to ignore the power which the student body as a whole has in its grasp. An example of the dissatisfaction with the S.R.C.'s ineffectuality can be seen in last years' occupation of the university registry whereby students bypassed the S.R.C. and took action into their own hands. This was done in order to highlight the high failure rates, whereby one in six students is flung out each year. The resulting publicity given to this action forced the S.R.C. into "making investigations" into failure rates, but once the issue blew over, it heaved a sigh of relief and settled back into its dignified hibernation; failure rates meanwhile continue to be as high as ever.

The storm which followed the sit-in and the resulting mass meeting of students did achieve some good e.g. the setting up of representative committees in each class in every department. It has become apparent, however, that the university authorities are using this concession to quieten the students down by giving them the impression that they do have a say in the running of their courses; it has also become apparent that this impression is

completely false. The representative committees have been encouraged to trot along to the heads of departments with minor complaints but any serious attempts to question the contents of courses and general assessment systems have been heavily frowned upon. The collar around the student's neck has been loosened slightly but it is still there ready to pull him up whenever he steps out of line.

UNREST AMONG STUDENTS

This year, however, two mass meetings of the Ordinary Sociology Class were called and the outcome of these meetings was that the students mandated their representative to approach the department with a number of proposals for changes in their courses and these proposals seriously questioned the whole educational system. The proposals called for such things as open seminars and experimental lecture in which students and staff could enter into discussion and in which both parties could learn from each other by the general airing of views. It was the opinion of the mass meetings that a process which placed students in a completely passive role accepting the ideas of lectures and/or text books could not be termed true education; the ideas contained in text books and in lectures notes should be heeded but NOT to the exclusion of thought in the individual student. A true educational process can only be achieved when these inhibitions are broken down leaving the individual free to develop his own ideas and to learn from others by entering into discussion with them.

The advanced sociology class representative committee has also put forward similar proposals and has entered into a liaison with the ordinary class. A member of the ordinary sociology committee has also been approached by representatives from the politics and geography departments with the view of setting up interdepartmental liaison between committees. This is very heartening since students can obtain a say in the running of their courses through the building up of grass-roots organisations, which could have their basis in the elected and revocable department central committees.

Industrial workers also feel a sense of powerlessness when lack of contact between different sections weakens shop floor organisation. The need in the factories is the same as that in the university; strong "unofficial" and democratic organisations which would enable workers and students to fight for a greater say in the control of their lives.

K. N.

Editors - comments welcomed on this article

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 MORE FROM C.P.T.

As a continuation of our article in Aberdeen 'Solidarity' No 3 on work in C.P.T., we are printing below a few comments on management control in the factory. In our next issue we hope to publish an article giving some history of events inside the factory. We welcome letters from all C.P.T. workers.

INTRODUCTION

How has the management in Consolidated Pneumatic in Aberdeen successfully avoided disputes which could interfere with production? In the seventeen years since the factory opened there has been no major strike or struggle inside the factory.

Part of the reason for the absence of disputes is obviously financial. C.P.T. pays what are almost the highest rates in the city, and there is no other Modern light industry to compete for workers, so most want to hold on to their jobs. The bosses, on the other hand always have a ready supply of labour; every advert they put in the paper get at least 100 replies.

This financial aspect has been reinforced recently by the introduction of a company pension scheme. This provides greater benefits at less cost for the workers than the government one, but it also makes a fortune for the management, who use the contributions as long-term investments, and the scheme as a method of discipline in the works.

DIFFERENTIATION

These economic factors would not, however, be enough in themselves to prevent strife, were they not

supported at the shop-floor level by other means of management control. The first main factor is the attempt to split the workers among themselves (differentiation) at which the management are quite successful.

A general account of the bonus system appeared in the last issue. The bonus serves to divide the men and to create an aristocracy of workers earning £7 to £8 a week bonus, who have little interest in taking action over, for example, the basic rate, which is very important to the mass of the workers.

The management further divides the workers by making it easier to earn bonus in some sections than in others and then publishing the average weekly bonuses for the sections in a crude attempt to create divisions. For example, figures in the sheet published for 8/II/69 read:

AVERAGE BONUS.

Millers	£2	:	16	:	3
Fitters	£5	:	2	:	6
Lathes	£5	:	3	:	11
Capstans	£3	:	5	:	11
Grinders	£4	:	3	:	3
Drills	£3	:	12	:	7

What is needed is the system operated in some well organised factories in the South of England where someone delegated to the task by the workers inspects the wage slips every week to see that everyone's bonus falls within a certain range. This would create a greater solidarity between operators, and also limit the situation at present where some sections receiving average bonus get more than some of the operators.

MERIT MONEY

Another divisive tactic is merit money. This is a system under which, depending on the range of work you can do, your record for punctuality, length of service, etc, can get you up to 6d per hour (£1 a week) guaranteed extra on your pay. The giving of merit money is in the foreman's hands and its abuse has led to much discontent many feel that it's just an excuse to give 'company men'

an extra £1 a week. Both the bonus and merit money mean that the workers often face an important issue divided.

DOMINATION AND INTEGRATION

The second important factor in management control is the high-handed attitude they take with the men, which tends to cow them into submission. On the shop-floor, control, though not possibly as complete as in other areas of the country, is more apparent than in other factories in Aberdeen. The severe penalties threatened for petty pilfering were mentioned in the last issue^I and C.P.T. is the only place in Aberdeen where people are threatened with the sack for not being at their machines right up till the hooter goes, or for running to the canteen etc. The effect of this is that everyone in the place, from the manager to the labourers becomes an expert at passing the buck and getting out of trouble.

This dominating attitude taken by the management was illustrated on one occasion when a work to rule was being enforced. One of the bosses turned up at a meeting in the works canteen and told us that unless it was called off, we would all be locked out, as the management in Fraserburgh had done with their workers in 1967..... slowly, the hands went up in favour of calling off the work to rule.

A more important attitude is the managements attitude to the shop stewards. They try to dominate the workers, but to integrate the shop stewards, this is done in various ways from shop stewards often getting the good jobs, to them being buttered up by the management and 'consulted' on various issues, to the high possibility for promotion which the stewards have especially if they appear militant. This policy of the management has various effects on the stewards, some remain solely on the side of the workers, and even refused staff jobs, others are plainly bosses men and have been known to tell workers in their sections to work harder as they were lowering the average bonus. Most of them would fall in between these extremes. These things mean that when an issue arises, no clear line comes from the stewards, some are for action, some not, and the men are confused

CONCLUSION

The amount of work on the books at C.P.T. and the extension of such profit making divisions as the Reich-drill, means that the workers are in a strong bargaining position in the future. The recent wage increase of over £1 for operators and 25/- for skilled men seems to be a sop to the men and the stewards to get us to accept a new bonus scheme, over which there could be trouble.

Militants should be discussing new forms of struggle such as factory occupations, and a lock out of the bosses as has proved its worth in France last year and in Italy this year² The occupation prevents scabbing and the transfer of work, denies the boss access to his files, etc and means that picketing in all weathers is avoided. Most important, it ensures that all the workers are involved when the major decisions on the strike are taken.³ C.P.T. would be easy to occupy, eg at the shift change when management is least in evidence. If an issue is worth struggling over, it is common sense to struggle with all the means at the workers disposal.

NOTES

- (1) see Solidarity No 3 available from :
N. Roy, 138 Walker Road, Aberdeen
- (2) See article in this issue 'Class struggle in Portugal'
- (3) see Flint Pamphlet available from :
N. Roy, 138 Walker Road, Aberdeen.

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Some additional information on C.P.T. was sent to us by an American friend. It seems that Chicago Pneumatic employs 9,000 people throughout the world, and has sales of approx £75,000,000. The president is Norman Riadman, who is also president of Consolidated Pneumatics. The various directors have additional interests in the Chase Manhattan Bank, the U.S. banknote corporation, and Metro-Goldwyn Mayer. Riadman is also chairman of other British firms, Jacobs Manufacturing Company and Frank Gaylee and sons, Ltd.

The sales figure is interesting. Each employee produces goods for sale worth £8,400 a year. We hope to have some figures on actual profits and salaries of the top bosses soon.

AS WE SEE IT....

1. Throughout the world, the vast majority of people have no control whatsoever over the decisions that most deeply and directly affect their lives. They sell their labour power while others who own or control the means of production, accumulate wealth, make the laws and use the whole machinery of the state to perpetuate and reinforce their privileged positions.

2. During the past century the living standards of working people have improved. But neither these improved living standards, nor the nationalization of the means of production, nor the coming to power of parties claiming to represent the working class have basically altered the status of the worker as a worker. Nor have they given the bulk of mankind much freedom outside of production. East and West, capitalism remains an inhuman type of society where the vast majority are bossed at work, and manipulated in consumption and leisure. Propaganda and policemen, prisons and schools, traditional values and traditional morality all serve to reinforce the power of the few and to convince or coerce the many into acceptance of a brutal, degrading and irrational system. The 'Communist' world is not communist and the 'Free' world is not free.

3. The Trade Unions and the traditional parties of the Left started in business to change all this. But they have come to terms with the existing patterns of exploitation. In fact they are now essential if the exploiting society is to continue working smoothly. The Unions act as middle-men in the Labour market. The Political parties use the struggles and aspirations of the working class for their own ends. The degeneration of working class organisations, itself the failure of the revolutionary movement, has been a major factor in creating working class apathy, which in turn has led to the further degeneration of both parties and unions.

4. The Trade Unions and political parties cannot be reformed, 'captured' or converted into instruments of working class emancipation. We don't call however for the proclamation of new unions, which in the conditions of today would suffer a similar fate to the old ones. Nor do we call for militants to tear up their union cards. Our aims are simply that the workers themselves should decide on the objectives of their struggles and that the control and organisation of these struggles should remain firmly in their own hands. The forms which this self-activity of the working class may take will vary considerably from country to country and from industry to industry. Its basic content will remain the same.

5. Socialism is not just the common ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. It means equality, real freedom, reciprocal recognition and a radical transformation in all human relations. It is man's positive self-consciousness. It is man's understanding of his environment and of himself, his domination over his

work and over such social institutions as he may need to create. These are not secondary aspects, which will automatically follow the expropriation of the old ruling class. On the contrary, they are essential parts of the whole process of social transformation, without this no change will take place.

6. A socialist society can therefore only be built from below. Decisions concerning production and work will be taken by workers councils composed of elected and revocable delegates. Decisions in other areas will be taken on the basis of the widest possible discussion and consultation among the people as a whole. This democratisation of society down to its very roots is what we mean by workers power.

7. Meaningful action, for revolutionaries, is what ever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. Sterile and harmful action is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others - even by those allegedly acting on their behalf.

8. No ruling class in history has ever relinquished its power without a struggle and our present rulers are unlikely to be an exception. Power will only be taken from them through the conscious autonomous action of the vast majority of the people themselves. The building of socialism will require mass understanding and mass participation. By their rigid hierarchical structure, by their ideas and their activities both social-democratic and bolshevik types of organisations discourage this kind of understanding and prevent this kind of participation. The idea that socialism can somehow be achieved by an elite party (however revolutionary), acting on behalf of the working class is both absurd and reactionary.

9. We do not accept the view that by itself the working class can only achieve a trade union consciousness. On the contrary we believe that its conditions of life and its experiences in production constantly drive the working class to adopt priorities and values and to find methods of organisation which challenge the established patterns of thought. These responses are implicitly socialist. On the other hand, the working class is fragmented, dispossessed of the means of communication, and its various sections are at different levels of awareness and consciousness. The task of the revolutionary organisation is to help give proletarian consciousness an explicitly socialist content, to give practical assistance to workers in struggle and to help those in different areas to exchange experiences and link up with one another.

10. We do not see ourselves as yet another leadership, but merely as an instrument of working class action. The function of Solidarity is help all those who are in conflict with the present authoritarian social structure, both in industry and in society at large, to generalize their experience, to make a total critique of their condition and its causes, and to develop the mass revolutionary consciousness necessary if society is to be totally transformed.