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Soli

Solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 10

STALEMATE AT HALEWOOD

CARBON BLACK

U.P.W. : strike
aftermath

WIFE and MOTHER



5P

STALEMATE AT HALEWOOD

The recent week-long unofficial strike of 9,000 Ford workers at Halewood against the victimisation of John Dillon, a steward in the Paint Shop of the P.T.A. Plant, has forced the Company to reinstate him. This result was due entirely to the immediate and united action of the rank and file. Before celebrations get out of hand, however, it is worth examining both the background to this important episode and the outlook at Ford now it is over.

Ever since the 10-week long national stoppage earlier this year Ford have been trying to recoup the increased wage bill. They have been seeking to reestablish total domination on the factory floor by increasing speed-up, and renewed attacks on job organisation. There have been many incidents during this period throughout the Ford empire but the brunt of the struggle has been borne by the militant P.T.A. Plant at Halewood.

The settlement following the national stoppage earlier in the year had totally ignored such questions as speed-up and conditions within the factories - for example the demand for control over the speed of the track (mutuality). It is however in such areas that the most potent source of conflict lies. The fact that these issues were not discussed at the negotiating table does not mean that the matter is settled on the shop floor. Parity is still a long way from being achieved. Wages are still the lowest in the industry for production workers, while output per worker is far and away the highest. (See SOLIDARITY, vol.VI, No.5, p.16.)

Resistance to this situation by the production workers has recently been considerable, particularly at Halewood. According to management sources, until June 18 of this year, there had been only 38 dispute-clear days (someone has obviously slipped up!). As a result the Halewood management has been consistently incapable of achieving production targets, in either quality or quantity.

The dismissal of John Dillon fits neatly into this context. Immediately after the national stoppage the number of men in the landing deck in the Paint Shop was reduced from 8 to 5. The men mistakenly carried on. On June 7, yet another man was taken off. The remaining men couldn't do the job. The supervisor threatened the sack, the men walked off the job, and everyone was laid off.

A number of the men did not leave the plant - a very welcome innovation in our view. (For a discussion of techniques of struggle within the factory, see 'Strategy for Industrial Struggle' by Mark Fore, Solidarity Pamphlet No.37. Price 10p.) They barged into the Paint Shop Office and

told the supervision in no uncertain terms what they thought of them. John Dillon was present, but his role seems to have been to cool the situation down. When he finally persuaded the men to leave the office a meeting gathered outside. It was this which constituted the management's 'unauthorised meeting'. Incidentally the walk out of the landing deck men was successful and ended on June 12.

The sacking of Brother Dillon had been planned at the highest level. Ramsay, the much beloved Labour Relations Manager, secretly visited Liverpool on Sunday, June 13. Ensconced in the Adelphi Hotel he briefed a number of managers and Dillon's section foreman. On June 14 Dillon was dismissed. Another sign of Ford's preparation was seen by Silcock and Colling transport drivers at Harwich on June 11: hundreds of right-hand drive Ford cars were being brought in from the Belgian and German plants.* Incidentally this threat still exists.

The historical parallels of the Dillon dispute are significant. In January 1957 Johnnie McLoughlin was victimised in the Briggs plant (now the Body Group at Dagenham) for calling an 'unauthorised shop meeting'. A strike followed but the men returned to work following union promises to settle the matter. There was a Court of Enquiry which, surprise, surprise, supported the Company. McLoughlin stayed out on the cobbles and job organisation at Briggs, then the most militant plant, was badly damaged.

On October 17, 1962 Bill Francis in the Dagenham P.T.A. was sacked for holding an 'unauthorised meeting' (Fords tactics are not very original!). This led to a mass walk-out. Following union promises the men again returned to work, this time minus a number of militants. Seventeen men were in fact permanently victimised. There was again a Court of Enquiry which supported the Company. Job organisation at Dagenham received a blow from which it is only just beginning to recover. (This defeat has been responsible for the wage and condition position in which Ford workers find themselves today.) When the men returned to work in 1962 the first act of the management was to increase track speeds by a third. (The full story of this strike is described in our pamphlet 'What Happened at Fords', now unfortunately out of print.)

This time around, Ford was forced to withdraw Dillon's sacking. Not only had the Halewood P.T.A. men stopped work, but they had been joined by the men of the Transmission, thus confronting Ford with the prospect of a progressive shut-down of all production in Britain. Moreover, this was

* This is just another example of coordinated action against the workers by various sections of the Ford Empire in Europe. A previous interesting example was during the 10-week Ford strike in February and March. The Ford-Genk plant in Belgium started running out of components made in Britain. To avoid paying full wages for reduced production the management deliberately precipitated a strike there by trying to speed up production from 1050 to 1170 cars per day. (Details from 'Liaisons', B.P. 12, Ixelles 2, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium.)

happening in a situation where it was fortunately unlikely that the unions would be able to persuade the men to return to work 'pending negotiations', the credit - even of the trade union 'lefts' being particularly low just now. Even the usual gambit of a Court of Enquiry wouldn't have washed.

The settlement 'achieved' by Moss Evans, National Officer of the TGWU, involves Dillon working in another part of the plant. It also involves the withdrawal of his credentials as a steward. This cannot by any stretch of the imagination be seen as a straightforward victory for job organisation. The precedent it sets will allow management to get rid of effective stewards in key areas by the simple expedient of framing them for minor breaches of discipline at a kangaroo court, at which management are judge, jury, and executioner. The Halewood settlement was a stalemate. Any Ford worker who feels that the struggle is over, and the management has now given up their objective of smashing job organisation, needs his head examining. What is now needed is serious preparation for the next round, not resting on our laurels. One question that must be considered in preparation for the crunch is how the struggle should be fought. We feel that the question of occupying the plant must be seriously discussed.*

One revelation of the recent conflict was the truly appalling system of communications between the stewards at Halewood and the other plants. At Dagenham it was days before even active stewards knew what was going on at Liverpool. Some of the other plants were even more in the dark. The National Convenors' Committee didn't meet until it was virtually all over. This Committee seems to see itself more as a pressure group on trade union officials than as a channel of information or a mechanism for mobilising workers. This problem must be solved urgently if the next attack is to be faced. This is too important a matter just to be left to the convenors themselves.

A worrying aspect of the whole affair has been the rather legalistic and defensive attitude towards Brother Dillon's victimisation shown by both the Halewood Shop Stewards' Committee and the National Convenors' Committee. In fact Dillon was not sacked because he was a bad boy but because he was a good steward. This needs to be said much more clearly. If progress is to be made we will increasingly have to challenge the outrageous restrictions on stewards, oppressive working rules and far too heavy work-loads. If there is to be any real advance, we will have to face up to and defeat the procedure agreements and the conditions accepted by the union leaders. This will not be done by an implicit acceptance of the status quo, however much this is done with one's tongue in one's cheek. It must never be forgotten that the 'Blue Book' procedures were imposed on Ford workers, without their consent, and in the teeth of their opposition.

We would welcome the comments of Ford workers on this article. We would also like further reports of day-to-day struggles within the various plants.

* For a detailed examination of a classical occupation, see 'The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike against General Motors, 1936-37' (8 pence + postage from our usual address).

ABOUT OURSELVES

The last issue (1400 copies) sold out quickly. We then produced 2000 copies of our latest pamphlet ('Strategy for Industrial Struggle'). Initial comments have varied from 'Bang on' and 'Fills a tremendous void' to 'It's not really a strategy' (we'll come back to this later, for we believe that the systematic linking of means to ends, which this pamphlet attempts, is of the very essence of a strategy).

Further well attended public meetings have been held on 'Women's Liberation', 'The Mass Media' (to be published in the autumn as a pamphlet), 'Political Alienation and the Problems of Everyday Life', and 'Revolutionary Organisation'. This type of free-ranging discussion seems to fill a real need and we hope to start a similar series again, in a few weeks' time.

Discussions with a number of rank and file postal workers have continued. Anyone wishing to participate in this work should write to Joe Jacobs, 29 Troutbeck, Albany St., London NW1. Our pamphlet 'Sorting Out the Postal Strike' has been translated into French and just been published in No.105 of Informations, Correspondance Ouvrières (P. Blachier, 13 rue Labois-Rouillon, Paris 19e.). Swedish and German editions of 'The Bolsheviks and Workers Control, 1917-1921' have also recently been published. Further translations will be out before the end of the year. Few reviews have appeared in this country. The trad revs. apparently prefer not to know.

A new autonomous group has been formed in Swansea and good links established with other groups. We extend warm greetings to these new comrades and look forward to a long and fruitful cooperation in subverting the system.

COMING SHORTLY :

CRITIQUE OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

by P. Cardan

SOLIDARITY PAMPHLET No.38



CARBON BLACK

This article is a follow-up to the one on the 'Politics of Community Action', published in our last issue, in which we sought to demystify people concerning the activities of well-meaning but misguided radicals, busying themselves in the 'community action' field. The present text counterposes to such activity a form of direct action, initiated and kept under the control of the people themselves. It also shows how ordinary people are beginning to struggle against pollution.

The United Carbon Black factory, situated in the Port Tennant area of Swansea, produces carbon blacks for use in car tyres. It is American controlled. Although large in size it only has a small, non-union labour force.

Besides carbon blacks the factory also produces clouds of black smut and dirt which constantly rain down on the houses nearby. This makes it impossible for washing to be hung outside. Within an hour it is filthy, so all washing has to be dried indoors. But the dirt also comes indoors, covering food, furniture, children and babies. A local manager of the factory once remarked that the people of the area were living in slums anyway, so why were they complaining about dirt?

Port Tennant is a working class area composed of rows of terraced houses. It has returned Labour councillors since time immemorial. Twenty years of protests to the Labour Council have not however changed the situation as regards the pollution.

In January 1970 local housewives dumped their dirty washing at the Guildhall and temporarily blocked the road leading to the factory. In response to this the management installed a new burner in March 1970, claiming this would end the "muck-spreading".

By January 1971 the situation was as bad as ever. Having tired of useless protests to the Council, to M.P.s and to the local Health Department the people of Port Tennant decided to act on their own behalf. At a meeting on January 26, it was decided to block the road leading to the factory indefinitely, until the filth it spewed out ended.

To maintain surprise a Committee consisting of one representative from each street in the area was elected to decide the time of the action. When the time came each Committee member would inform all the households in his or her street.

On February 1 it was announced at a Council meeting that the Carbon Black factory was planning to increase its production by 25%. At 9.30 a.m. on February 3, fifty housewives moved onto the road leading to the factory and stayed there. The aim was not a symbolic temporary blocking of an entrance. It was to be a permanent obstruction until production was brought totally to a halt or the pollution ended. The housewives were also determined to remain until the plans for expansion had been scrapped.

Cars and lorries bringing in supplies were turned away, but police escorted employees and others through the crowd on foot. The blockage continued throughout the night, much to the annoyance and surprise of the management who had confidently told lorry drivers to park 'round the corner' and deliver during the night. If the management had any further doubts that the road blockers were there to stay these were soon dispelled. A large tent was pitched on the road and a fire built up. Chairs, stores and radios were brought in. Meals were cooked on the spot. Local tradesmen brought in wood, coal and other supplies. A fish and chip shop sent a huge tray of free pies and another small shop stayed open till 4.00 a.m. to supply the night shift with tea and sandwiches.

As the days went by, the organisation improved. To combat the cold weather - there were strong gales with driving sleet and rain throughout the first weekend of the protest - ropes were slung across the road at head height, and large tarpaulins draped over them. To one of these tarpaulins was attached a notice reading "We're not budging, even if we catch pneumonia".

Shifts of fifty a time were organised on an informal basis - "We just dash round each others' houses to see who can or can't go on blockade duty". The whole pattern of everyday life was changed. The women were getting up early to cook breakfast for husbands and children, then going immediately to guard the factory entrance against lorries trying to enter. Then, sometime during the day, they would take a two-hour break to do essential housework. At night the men took over - often coming straight from work.

Even the local newspaper was moved to write "It is in the evenings that the comradeship is most evident. Fighting spirit becomes akin to party spirit as people bring portable record players and share their food."

Many of the men took their winter holidays to take part, though one remarked "We don't normally spend our holidays on the Port Tennant Riviera". The humour of those taking part was apparent throughout.

On Shrove Tuesday a fancy dress and hot pants pancake race was run round the factory and the residents turned out en masse to join in the fun. By staging such events the road blockers were able to keep their morale high at a time when lack of sleep and terrible weather could easily have dampened enthusiasm.

During all this time no vehicles of any kind were allowed to enter or leave the factory, though employees were able to come and go. It was not long before this had an effect on production, although a full week

elapsed before the management admitted that production had been cut back. At the end of three weeks several departments had been closed down and the employees were being put on maintenance work. Since no lorries could leave the factory all finished products were being stockpiled.

At this stage the management proposed a "truce". This was immediately rejected. The management then stated that they were meeting their legal requirements (and they were). They appealed to the Secretary of State for Wales to back them up. Swansea Council had also referred the matter to the Welsh Office, being only too pleased to pass the buck. The fact that the management were now taking some initiatives revealed that they were now seriously concerned at the protesters' threat to stay till Christmas ("the one after next", as the local people were at pains to point out).

Peter Thomas, Secretary of State for Wales, (and also Chairman of the Conservative Party) stated on February 12 that the report of a Welsh Office Alkali Inspector showed that the factory was indeed meeting its legal requirements. Some interesting facts then emerged about Thomas' position. The Carbon Black parent company is Anchor Chemicals Ltd. The Deputy Chairman of Anchor Chemicals is Sir Clyde Hewlett, an active member of the Conservative Party and friend of Peter Thomas, whom he met at the Young Conservatives' Conference at Eastbourne, during the blockade. Thomas' decision came as no surprise.

There followed another report, this time by Britain's Deputy-Chief Alkali Inspector. This ended with the same result. Edgar Cutler summed up the thoughts of the road blockers when he said "We've not been hanging around here 24 hours of the day for 17 days for nothing. We will continue our stand". It was noted that as the Inspector arrived, the works momentarily went out of production; no smoke came out of the stack that day. As soon as the Inspector left, production started up again.

Production was now being increasingly affected. On February 26 a meeting was held in Cardiff, between the road blockers, the management and Swansea Council. The management made some concessions. They promised to control the smut and grime more effectively, stating that they were to spend £200,000 on pollution-control. The factory was to be thoroughly spring-cleaned. Lorries would be re-routed. More important it was agreed to halt production when strong easterly winds were prevalent (surely a unique agreement in British industry). Finally a Liaison Committee was to be formed consisting of the management, the Port Tennant residents and the Council. This Committee was to keep a continual watch on the pollution situation, enabling the residents to exert some control over the situation. It was hinted that the expansion plans were to be dropped.

Were these proposals a victory for the residents or not? Obviously this would depend on how they were interpreted. What constitutes "a strong easterly wind"? Would the decisions of the Liaison Committee have any weight? Would the new expenditure by the management really take place? And if so, would it be any more effective than previous expenditure in stopping pollution? Only time would tell.

Given these terms, the residents reluctantly agreed to lift the blockade. Howard Bevan spoke for many when he said "A lot of us are not satisfied. We've heard all these promises before. Although we have taken down our shelter we have stored it near the entrance. If Carbon Black don't keep their promises we won't take long to erect it again. All we can do now is wait and see what the outcome will be. If we blockade again it will be on a much larger scale than during the last three weeks". Three days later it was announced that the plans for the extension of the factory had been shelved.

The blockade had lasted 24 days, in the middle of winter. After years of asking the Council to do something for them the people of Port Tennant had acted unitedly, on their own behalf. At the end of it many who had taken part were despondent about what they had achieved. But they were not despondent about the type of action they had undertaken. All were contemptuous of the Council and confident that in the future it would only be by their own action that they could change the situation. If they had not got all they wanted it was because their action had not been strong or direct enough, not because it had been the wrong type of action.

The people of Port Tennant had however established some important principles, and shattered some myths in the process. The management of a large factory has been forced to allow those who lived near it to have some measure of control over its production (i.e. no production when there was an easterly wind, and shelving of the plans for expansion).

Direct action has gone beyond the range of the symbolic protest: You don't show that you could close the factory if you wanted to - you try and do it!

The concern of politicians and businessmen over "pollution" has been exposed for the sham it is. The Carbon Black factory was operating quite legally as its filthy muck ruined peoples' homes and health. Peter Thomas, one of the Tories whose concern for the environment is never off his lips, was quite happy to see the pollution continue. The pollution could be stopped entirely if the management was willing to spend the money. The people of Port Tennant knew this. The management had been refusing as this would have meant cutting into profits.

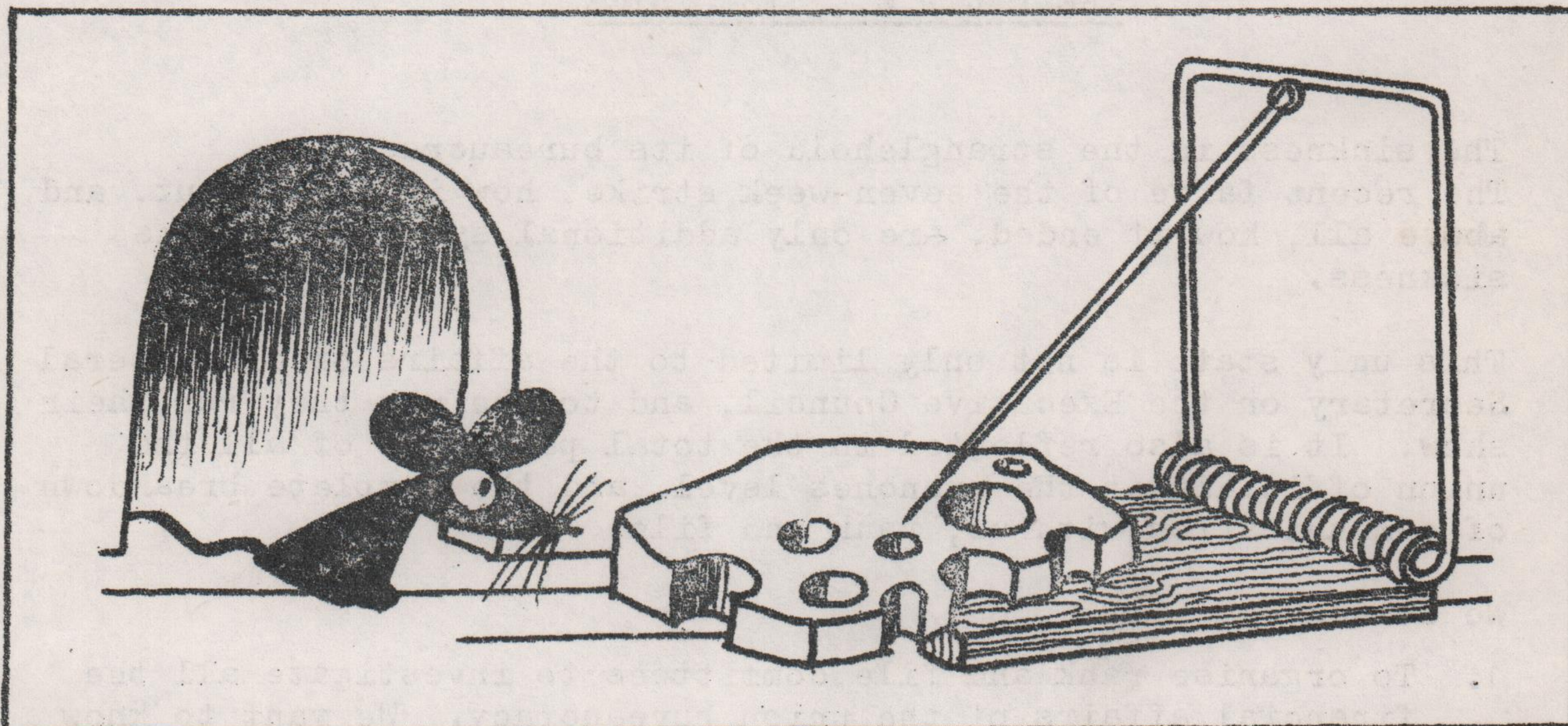
Mrs Barbara Davies summed it up simply: "I remember picking water lilies, wild irises, bullrushes, and blackberries from the banks of the canal. As children we swam there. There were swans and we held fishing competitions. Now we have to wash our windows every day, spend at least 15/- a week on a family wash at the launderette and dare not put a baby in its pram in the garden. All this when everyone's talking about pollution and conservation."

Finally, and most important, the people of Port Tennant have discovered in themselves a new sense of comradeship and self-confidence in their own ability to take action and change their surroundings. This will not quickly be lost.

A few weeks ago the Chief Public Health Inspector of Swansea referred to the smashing of pollution-deposit gauges on an old cinema in Port Tennant. He said "It seems that our attempts to look after the interests of the community are not appreciated". He can say that again! As one of the women said: "I don't need an Alkali Inspector to tell me if my babies' nappies are dirty". Now she can add that she doesn't need a Councillor to tell her how to put an end to it, either.

Ian Bone.

CALLING ALL REVOLUTIONARIES (I)



AFTER CEYLON AND BANGLA DESH, BEWARE THE MAO'S TRAP!

SOLIDARITY AUTONOMOUS GROUPS

ABERDEEN : c/o Ian Mitchell, 3 Sinclair Rd., Aberdeen.
CLYDESIDE : c/o Dan Kane, 43 Valeview Terrace, Dumbarton.
DUNDEE : c/o R. Downing, 17 Blackness Avenue, Dundee.
LONDON : c/o 53A Westmoreland Rd., Bromley, Kent.
NORTH WEST: c/o R. Sumner, 23 Sewerby St., Manchester 16.
SWANSEA : c/o D. Lamb, 66 Terrace Road, Swansea.

The leaflet below was distributed to delegates by some rank-and-file telephonists attending the recent Bournemouth Conference of the Union of Post Office Workers. We are pleased to give this campaign wider publicity. Although we do not share the view of these brothers that the control of a modern union can be restored to the rank and file, we are convinced that many useful lessons will be learned in the fight for these elementary democratic rights.

THE U.P.W. IS SICK

The sickness is the stranglehold of its bureaucracy. The recent farce of the seven-week strike, how it came about, and above all, how it ended, are only additional symptoms of this sickness.

This ugly state is not only limited to the affairs of the General Secretary or the Executive Council, and to the way they run their show. It is also reflected in the total paralysis of all the union officials at the branches level, and the complete breakdown of communication with us, rank and file.

We demand:

1. To organise rank and file committees to investigate all the financial affairs of the union bureaucracy. We want to know where all our money went, before, during, and after the strike. Publish all the findings in detail and immediately.
2. To take over the official organ of the union, The Post, and make it our own. Not pages of manipulative declarations and meaningless statistics in a magazine we hardly ever see; but a paper which we, rank and file, write, distribute and read.

The U.P.W. is our union, not the bureaucracy's. We want it effective, militant and winning.

Take the power away from U.P.W. House and keep it in the branches. All initiative, coordination and decision-making must rest with the rank and file.

Continental Telephonists,
London, May 1971.

a day at the seaside

The U.P.W. recently held its annual conference in Bournemouth. Most years, this event would have attracted little attention outside of the union's own membership. This year, however, things were different: a great struggle had finished a mere month previously.

On a hot day in May a group of Solidarists went to the seaside, to witness the first day's proceedings. We wanted to distribute a leaflet entitled 'Some questions for postal workers', to sell our 'Sorting out the Postal Strike' pamphlet and to talk with as many of the delegates as possible. All this we did.

We handed out over 1000 leaflets before the conference started. All the delegates saw them and a very high percentage actually read them. In the course of the morning we sold all the pamphlets (ten dozen) we had taken with us. Considering the composition of the 1400 delegates, the general reaction was not unfriendly. For all their diversity of opinion about the strike and for all their various attitudes towards the Executive Committee, the delegates were not really a reflection of the rank and file. They represented the middle strata of the UPW machine. There is a limit to the degree of militancy and amount of criticism of the E.C. to be expected of such people.

Outside the Winter Gardens Conference Hall we weren't the only critics of the leadership and of the UPW bureaucracy. Some International Services telephonists were distributing a leaflet entitled 'The UPW is sick'. In this they criticized the union structure and pointed to the gap separating the members and the officials in the union. They were bitter about the lack of rank and file voice in the Union newspaper 'The Post'.

It was obvious right from the start of the conference that the E.C. was going to use every opportunity to justify its handling of the recent dispute, and to guide the emotion generated when the strike was discussed into channels which would not threaten the E.C. itself. The 'thank you' speech from someone who had just been made an honorary member of the UPW (after many years of service to the union organisation) proved a vehicle to start this 'defence of the E.C.' campaign. The new member said how proud he was to belong to a union whose members had written a chapter in the history of the British labour movement. He praised the leadership shown during the strike. He went on to emphasise the trials and tribulations of the E.C. during the long dispute. They deserved the support of the membership, etc, etc.

This was just the lead-in that Tom Jackson needed for his own white-washing act. He 'explained' the inability of the T.U.C. and of other unions to supply the necessary cash to maintain the strike. Several unions had rules which prohibited them from transferring cash, even if they had wanted to (no criticism was voiced, however, of the very existence of these rules). Some unions, we were told, were already forking out money to support other strikes, like that at Fords. (No criticism was heard of the T.U.C., who didn't consider it necessary to raise a national levy, although it had promised that it would not stand by and watch the postal workers crushed.)

Jackson then went on to his main job: the defence of his own E.C. This was frequently done in an oblique manner. For example, the P.O. needed to be shown that the UPW was not a house union (i.e. part of the normal management structure). That Jackson should even mention this shows his sensitivity to this widespread belief. He defended the inadequate state of the Strike Fund by declaring that the causes were 'historical'. They were beyond the responsibility of anyone present at the conference. It had allegedly been necessary to keep the state of the union's finances secret from the employers (and thus, unfortunately, from the membership). Since the appalling state of the union's finances was nationwide knowledge from day one of the strike, this seems at first sight to have been a superfluous consideration. But looked at against the background of cleavage between the Executive and the membership and of the general lack of consultation (say, over the question of whether to strike at all, or resort to 'guerilla' industrial action) Jackson's statement could be seen as an indirect defence for the general policy of the Executive towards the dissemination of information.

Commenting further on the strike, Jackson sought to 'explain' why negotiations with the Post Office had broken down. The Executive had always believed the P.O. to have been a fair employer (!). In their innocence, they had been deceived as to the true nature of the P.O. To get the union finances in order, what was now needed was a period of considerable retrenchment. This would result in a 'stronger and bigger union'. The E.C.'s major contributions in the realm of ideas were to suspend the Sick Benefit Fund and to double the number of District Officers and Assistant District Officers, to increase recruitment.

The long and involved financial business had been pretty well wrapped up by the E.C. beforehand. By skillful use of procedural techniques and argument, very few amendments got through. The prime consideration of the E.C. was clearly to strengthen the union officialdom. Several speakers pointed out that if the E.C. were to go on getting their way in everything, there would be no money left to carry out any policies the conference might decide upon in the course of the debates during the following days: all the money would have been tied up in the financial proposals. And, despite the superficial democracy in the proceedings, it was this point which really counted. Through control of the agenda the Executive tied up the whole shape of decisions without having to resort to any ruse which might appear undemocratic.

The issue which provoked the greatest emotion was a discussion on whether the Union should make any effort to recruit the telephonists (the major scab group during the strike). Most delegates wanted to ignore them completely, at first anyway. Amid outbursts of great feeling, it was finally agreed that after allowing a period to elapse recruitment should be resumed, the naturally high turnover of telephone staff having ensured that there would be new staff to be recruited.

In the evening we went to an I.S. meeting where Paul Foot talked about the lessons of the postal strike. About 40 people turned up, probably thirty of them postal workers. The speaker gave an excellent and very funny rundown on Tory class mentality. But despite his lively presentation, politically he had little to contribute. He correctly pointed out that the effect of the strike had been very great. This was now being revealed in the annual reports being published by various companies. He then claimed that the postal workers were beaten not for lack of militancy or imagination, nor even as a result of the reactionary press coverage, but as a result of 'lack of solidarity among the working class'. One might agree with these words, except that by them Paul Foot means something very different from what we would mean. He means the failure of the T.U.C. to produce the (promised) money. He only appears to see working class solidarity in terms of institutionalised union structures. And here he missed the real point about the solidarity that really was shown: that of the union bureaucracies, whose interests are so different from those of the men they are supposed to represent.

To Paul Foot, and he is by no means alone in this, the way out is to replace the leaderships of unions (except, apparently, that of the UPW, in relation to which Paul Foot specifically said he had no major criticism). In overt politics, the task is to replace the Labour Party by another party (I.S. for example?) who are to lead and channel the political activity of the working class.

When Joe Jacobs, one of our comrades, suggested that instead of marching to Hyde Park every Thursday the postal workers could have occupied some telephone exchanges manned by scabs - or the Post Office Tower - he was ridiculed by Paul Foot. (How irresponsible to suggest that the property rights of the bosses should be threatened!) When it was suggested that the P.O.E.U. should have come out, this was dismissed as irrelevant, on the grounds that another sympathy strike would have achieved nothing. Glossed over was the fact that with very little effort (or lack of it!) the telecommunications system which includes telephones, telex, radio and television could have been degraded to a point of total confusion. (How childish to suggest positive activity in struggles, instead of passive inactivity.) Towards the end of the meeting Paul Foot's manipulatory proposals about 'channelling the political activity of the working class' lost him the support of the majority of his audience.

Returning to London in the early hours of the morning, we gave a lift to one of the International Service telephonists who had been distributing the 'UPW is Sick' leaflets. He told us that on the orders of an E.C. member his Branch Secretary (a delegate to the conference) had suspended him from the union!

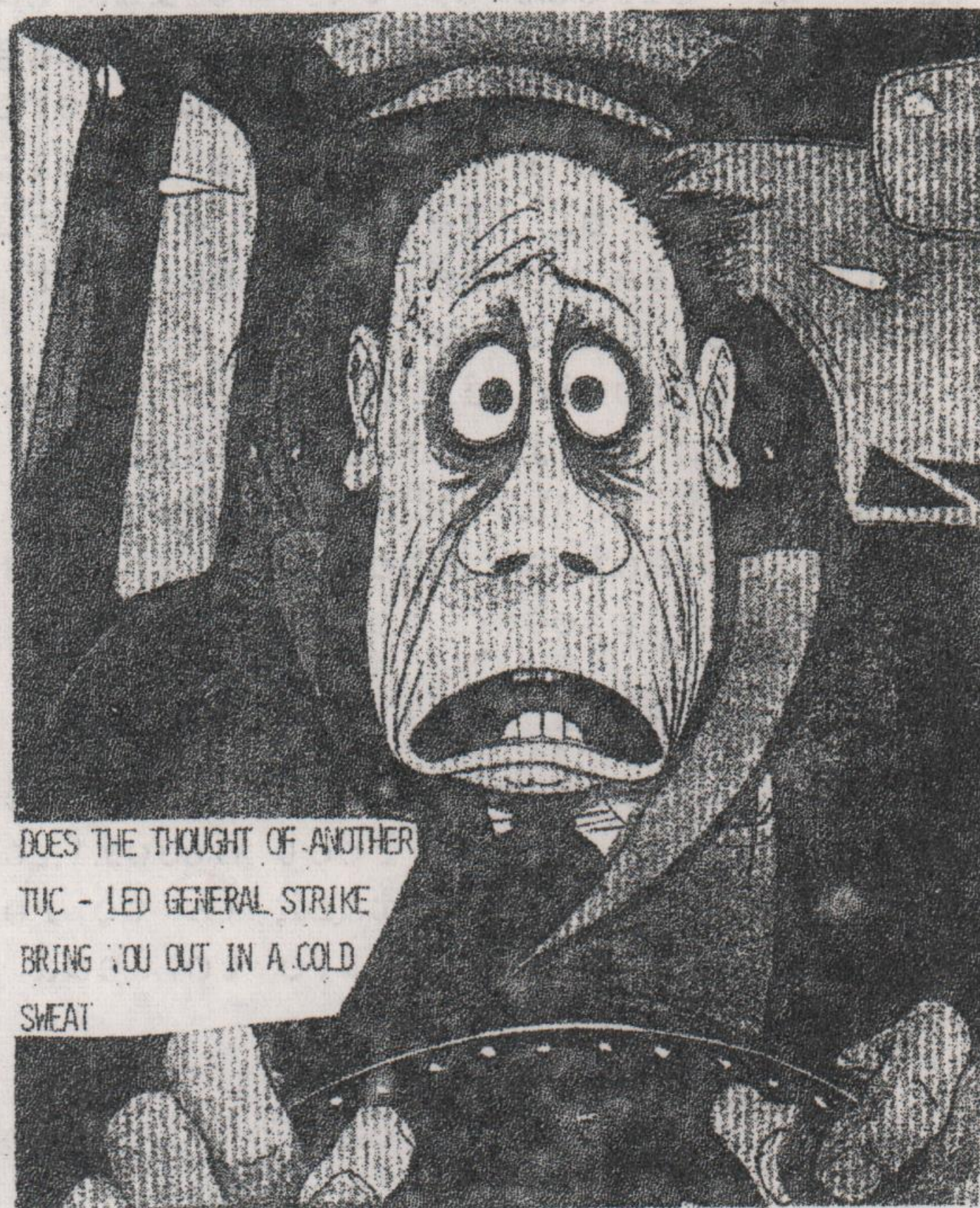
Well, you can't criticise your leaders, can you? After all, they know what's best, don't they? They study these problems, you see. Tom Jackson, for instance, was even seen sitting on the conference platform reading the last issue of 'Solidarity'. He even bought our 'Postal Strike' pamphlet. Knowledge is Power.

J. I. M.

CALLING ALL REVOLUTIONARIES (2)

As expected, the 'official' campaign against the Bill has collapsed.

Some are still calling for campaigns to 'make the T.U.C. fight'...



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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. Send £1 to SOLIDARITY, c/o 53A Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent, to receive forthcoming issues of the paper and pamphlets to that value.

FORDS: NEWS FROM THE SHOP FLOOR

It is surprising (or perhaps it isn't) how few struggles in industry get noticed by anybody beyond those immediately concerned. Ignoring the high degree of selectivity of the press, the significance of many acts of resistance at work often escapes even those participating in them.

Only slowly does the experience of new techniques tend to spread further afield. Industrial legends may, on the other hand, get created out of strikes that in fact only involved a few people beyond the first walk out of the gate. There often appears to be a strong correlation between the amount of attention a struggle will receive (both from the trade left and the media at large) and the degree of control over (and hence articulation of) that particular struggle exerted by one of several groups of 'professionals' (and I don't exclude many influential Shop Stewards' Committees from this category). This could be due to the fact that many militants, lefts, and socialists - in common with the employer - like to see a job done efficiently. And what better way to run a strike 'efficiently' than to put responsibility for tactics and publicity into the hands of 'those that know best'?

To illustrate these scattered and rather cynical remarks, I would like to give two short accounts of minor, but interesting, skirmishes concerning workers at the K.D. (Knock Down - for export) plant at Fords, Dagenham, and to compare them with some aspects of the recent major strike involving the entire Ford company.

During the closing weeks of the strike at Dagenham, pickets at the K.D. plant noticed that an outside contractor (Ralph Hilton Transport Services)* was taking delivery of spare parts, late at night. The pickets concerned, one of whom was a steward, followed the truck to the docks. Their aim was to contact the dockers unloading the spares from the lorries to request that they black all future consignments. On returning to Dagenham (at about 3 a.m.) the pickets were surrounded by squad cars and taken to Dagenham police station, where they spent the night trying to convince the fuzz that they were pickets, and not nuts trying to blow up Hilton's lorries. Eventually they were released after their story had been checked.

After the dispute was over, workers at all plants refused to unload Hilton's lorries. This was particularly effective at the K.D. and Aveley plants. Fords at first tried to bluster. After a number of amusing

* This firm in fact handles a large proportion of Ford freight.

incidents in which drivers, and on one occasion Hilton's Managing Director, begged the men to unload the lorries, the letter ~~opposite~~ was received. Obviously the management had contrived to let itself off the hook by removing a number of scapegoats. It is scarcely credible that the Company were not fully aware of all operations during the dispute. The point remains that on this occasion the men had the Company neatly over a barrel, and on their own terms. It was they that forced the issue.

The second oncident blew up at the K.D. plant during May. Twenty five men from the plant were, at a moment's notice, detailed to report to the P.T.A. shop. They promptly refused, and were suspended from work, whereupon they moved into and occupied the canteen. The company then detailed a further twenty five. These likewise refused, were likewise suspended, and likewise occupied the canteen. This continued for two days, until there were several hundred men occupying the canteen. By this time they were spilling out into the works and refusing to move. In a fit of rage the Company gave them a 24 hours ultimatum: work or be sacked. The ultimatum expired... but left the situation completely unchanged. The Company has now backed down and asked for talks. The sit-in was called off, pending results.

The final outcome of the sit-in was highly satisfactory. The 25 men who had originally refused to move were allowed to stay where they were. This prompted 8 men, who in fact had agreed to move, to demand that they be returned. This was refused. Thereupon the original 25 again stopped work, encouraging the Company to quickly decide that perhaps the demands of the 8 should be granted after all.

These brief descriptions are obviously not meant to be an analysis of these events. But when we examine the details of these two relatively insignificant disputes, some important points emerge:

- 1) Especially in the case of the sit-in, the men involved discussed tactics on the spot. This led to a more deeply collective decision.
- 2) Both events took place in the plant itself. Unlike what happened in the recent pay dispute, nobody dispersed home to the telly, thereby effectively ending their involvement. The men chose both the time and the place instinctively.
- 3) Again unlike the recent pay dispute, there was no tightly-knit group of militants taking charge of events (albeit with the best of intentions), with the majority registering approval at periodic mass meetings. For one thing, there just wasn't time.
- 4) The actions suited the occasions. There was no rigid adherence to any procedure or tradition, particularly in the case of the sit-in.

I would not for a moment suggest that either of these two examples represents the scaling of new heights of consciousness, or that they are above criticism. Far from it. But the episodes do serve to make the point that, brief though they were, they remained at all times directly under the control of the men. Probably because of this they were extremely effective.

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TGH/JMA

14th April, 1971

To whom it may concern

The management have decided to dispense with the services of the undermentioned staff owing to a difference of opinion over vehicle operations during the Ford Motor Company dispute as these men, contrary to instructions, allowed vehicles to be used and jeopardised future working relationships between both men and management of Ford Motor Company.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| D. A. Sanderson | (Night Manager) |
| A. White | (Operations Clerk) |
| J. French | (Night Driver) |
| S. J. Boxall | (Driver) |
| T. Hoyte | (Driver) |
| M. Smith | (Driver) |
| J. Gibbs | (Driver) |

In addition to these men no casual labour will be employed if they have previously been used during the Ford dispute.

These dismissals must be taken as a warning that the management will not tolerate vehicles working during official disputes between the Ford Motor Company and its workers.

T. G. HODGE
GROUP TRANSPORT DIRECTOR

'When the International was formed we expressly formulated the battle cry: the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself. We cannot, therefore, cooperate with people who openly state that the workers are too uneducated to emancipate themselves...'

K. Marx and F. Engels,
'Circular Letter' to A. Bebel,
K. Liebknecht, W. Bracke,
and others.

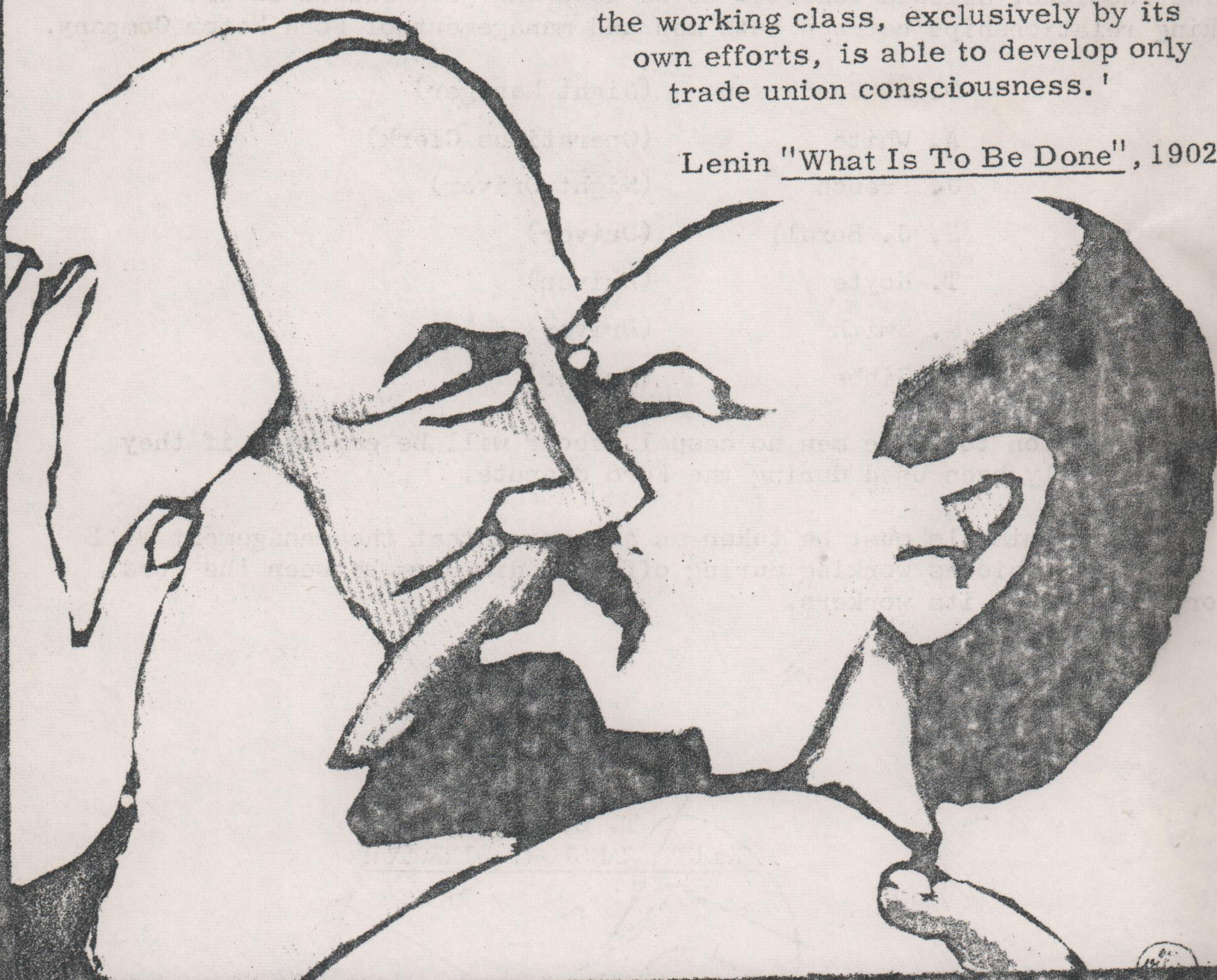
September 17, 1879.

MARXISM - LENINISM

I. THE CONCEPTION

'The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able to develop only trade union consciousness.'

Lenin "What Is To Be Done", 1902



POINT OF VIEW

'WIFE AND MOTHER'

We hope, in the next few issues of the paper, to carry a regular feature entitled 'POINT OF VIEW'. In this we hope to cover a wide range of new or controversial topics. We urge readers to write to us commenting on, developing or criticising these articles.

As the first in this series we publish a slightly abridged version of a paper by three members of the Peckham Rye Women's Liberation Group. The paper was first presented to the Oxford Conference of March 1970 but in our opinion deserves wider notice

This paper has been written by three women, each with two kids. We talked and wrote together as a group.

We are oppressed and have been from the moment we were born. Our families have squashed us into roles because our mothers wanted daughters in their own image, and our fathers wanted daughters like their submissive wives. We each had a girlhood instead of a childhood and are only now beginning to be conscious of what that means in terms of what we are now.

We have found it extremely difficult to look at ourselves - as through a window - and most of all it has been a sheer impossibility to imagine ourselves being involved in change of any sort. Our window on the world is looked through with our hands in the sink and we've begun to hate that sink and all it implies. So begins our consciousness.

The 'family', as it is experienced by the 65% of women who do not go out to work and who are presumably housewives, is the woman and the children in the house, the flat or the room, and the man who comes and goes. The space that the family occupies is essential to its own image of itself, its own way of living itself, its self-expression. The woman who goes out to work goes out of her family if only for that period of time: however drab the work routine, children are temporarily forgotten, housework ignored. In the home the woman is in the family, and the two are disturbingly synonymous. Housework cannot be separated from children, nor the children from the four walls, the food you cook, the shopping you do, the clothes you wear. How you, the house, the children, look may not be how they are, but reflects what you want them to be. It is not just that every pop-psychologist's 'mum' lives in a 'Woman's Own' dreamhouse, where the material solution to any problem is immediately on hand; it is that in our society being a mother is being a housewife: the security of the family is the stability of the walls - the image of the family home is the image of the family, but not in any simple way. The folk-lore has many permutations - from happy secure family in new semi, to poor but happy slum dwellers, to the 'broken home' of the 'juvenile delinquent' who comes from both.

HOUSEWORK

There is little to be said about housework on its own. An endless routine, it creates its own high moments of achievement and satisfaction so as to evade not monotony - the feature of many jobs - but futility. The bolt you tighten on the factory floor vanishes to be replaced by another: but the clean kitchen floor is tomorrow's dirty floor and the clean floor of the day after that. The appropriate symbol for housework (and for housework alone) is not the interminable conveyor-belt but a compulsive circle like a pet mouse in its cage spinning round on its exercise wheel, unable to get off. Into this one inserts one's own saving peaks: 'Happiness is the bathroom scrubbed down'. But even the glorious end of today's chores is not even an anti-climax as there is no real climax - there is nothing to fill the 'joyful moment'. But the routine is never quite routine, so the vacuum in one's mind is never vacuous enough to be filled. 'Housework is a worm eating away at one's ideas'. Like a fever dream it goes on and on, until you desperately hope that it can all be achieved at one blow. You lay the breakfast the night before, you have even been known to light the gas under the kettle for tomorrow's tea, wishing that by breakfast time everything could be over with - by 8 a.m. the children washed, teeth cleaned and ready for bed: tucked up, the end.

And yet there is nothing tangible to force you to do it. A job is compulsory: either you go or you don't have a job. Housework's pressures are more invidious - neighbours criticise and compare; grandmothers hand on standards; within you and without you is your mother's voice, criticising and directing. Their over-riding criterion is cleanliness: a dirty house is a disintegrating person. The compulsion to housework, then, is not economic or legal: it is moral and personal. And the housewife sees it in moral and personal terms. Hence her description of this structure of her oppression assumes querulous and complaining tones, the tones of a private neurosis to express a social fact - the imposed isolation of her work. For emancipated women to attack the complaint and ignore the whole socialising force which produces it simply reinforces the position.

Like every other form of social activity, every other aspect of social relationships, housework cannot be pinned down to a neat descriptive formula. The more we examine it, the more aspects it reveals, and the more we become aware of its contradictions and paradoxes. Isolated, the only adult in a private house, the housewife is yet crowded, by the emotional and physical demands of her family, by the unseen pressures of society. But although isolated the housewife is never alone; her domain is the kitchen, the most communal room, and even the possibility of sleeping alone is denied her. To have the right to sleep alone is essential. People in permanent relationships do not do this. A woman needs time alone - after a day of being a public servant to the rest of the family, of giving out all the time, of being open to all demands, and in ordinary

families the only time of the day this feeling of aloneness is possible is during the few moments before she goes to sleep after getting into bed. To then have to touch, caress, console yet another person is too much. The hatred of the man and sex begins - it is the beginning of such sayings as 'Oh God, he wants his rights again' or the husband saying 'You can't have a headache every night'. So that eventually she has no identity, no specificity, no privacy - she is defined by the demands of others. The only escape is the day-dream, turning-in-on-oneself is the only way out. It is a journey from a body which is always being touched - the mother must always allow herself to be open to physical contact - to an area which cannot be touched, to an area of total privacy, where one's body is one's own again. Ironically, housework is often seen as being self-determined labour - 'your time is your own'. In fact, in order to 'keep up', in order to be 'a good housewife', one has to work to a pre-determined routine. The 'freedom' of the housewife is in fact the denial of her right to a job. Even the division work/place of work, leisure/home does not apply to the housewife: her workplace is also the place of leisure and further it is her work which provides the basis of other people's leisure.

The 'rationalisation' of housework is held out as a future prospect - better technical equipment means less work. But even if this different equipment were made easily available to all classes, the situation of the housewife would be essentially unchanged, and problems would remain. Indeed some would be exacerbated. The only social world most housewives have is the shopping centre - hence their 'irrational' tendency to shop every day rather than once a week. Deprived of this they would lose one way of keeping up their morale. Being literally house-bound, afraid of leaving the house and being seen is a typical woman's syndrome.

Developments in technology on their own cannot change women's position in the home. We must be quite clear about this. Unless we can discuss through the implications of the role of the housewife - the institution of the housewife, if you like - and work out the reason why this institution survives so tenaciously, we will be unable to combat the various levels of oppression. Moreover, it is not enough simply to command women out to work - particularly since we all know that means that women usually end up with two jobs, one monotonous, the other futile.

MOTHERHOOD

Women are brought up for marriage and motherhood. The essential time spent in this is five years - five out of a lifetime of seventy years and more. The discrepancy between the time spent and the importance given to it is understandable - the human infant does need much care and attention. But from the viewpoint of the woman the discrepancy is absurd. Her whole life seems to be one long 'before' and 'after'. Children do go on being children beyond their first five years - in fact often until they produce the grandchildren which can replace them in their mother's eyes. But what does being a mother mean? In modern mythology it means being a

consistent being, untouched by the moods which the child exhibits, always forgiving, understanding, and certainly never violent or moody. The tyranny of consistency undermines both mother - she must never give way to anger or even to sudden affection - and child: whatever it does the superior adult can cope. It sets in motion a circular pattern. Consistency eventually means monotony. Inconsistency leads to guilt. Both cover suppressed feelings which can erupt into violence - which itself once more produces guilt and the struggle for the elusive and magical consistency. The smooth, unruffled exterior is simultaneously a masking of and a cause of conflict. Modern notions of the perfect and well-adjusted mother must be questioned and challenged. It may well be that they are designed not only to produce a compliant child, but also to produce the mother who, by turning a serene and contented face to the world, gives it an alibi for ignoring her problem.

Guilt and anxiety always weave their way through one's happiness. The guilt of giving birth is endorsed by the constant notion that you are responsible for the child's personality. The first months of a baby's life are full of difficulties - the lack of sleep, the fear (particularly with the first child) that you are not doing the right thing, the appalling ignorance and one's amateur status. The only answer to these problems appears to be total dedication to the child. Furthermore, this dedication can be seen as an investment in the child's future - at least one might prevent future neuroses. But then again, your anxiety might cause future neuroses. Even more, your anxiety can cover up feelings of violence and hatred towards your child. The mother of the battered baby acts out the fantasies of many mothers. And however anti-authoritarian the mother hopes to be in the future, or for that matter in the present, she still wants the children to do what she wants them to do.

For some families one route out of the problem of the all-embracing mother and the pressures upon her has been a shifting of roles. The father has entered more into the life of the child. But this shifting of roles has also been a subtle reversal of roles. Instead of the comforting mother (whose ultimate threat was always 'I'll tell your father') and the punitive father, the father has become the source of amusement and the mother has remained the person ultimately responsible for the child's psychological and emotional future. Although the roles have changed, the ultimate responsibility has remained unchanged.

For this reason we should not be misled into thinking that the simple extension of woman into the man's role and the man into the woman's is the solution of the problem. Man as mother as well as man as house-slave is no answer. Obviously men can, should (and in rare cases do) perform domestic tasks and bring up families. This is not the point at issue. In the end the demand for complete reversal is the demand to extend oppression - understandable, but leading into a dead-end. Our perspective must be different.

The demand for communal living must be understood in this way. The commune offers obvious advantages - at the minimum it helps us spread the load, to share work and thus to allow us time which is really free. But we must be careful not to turn it into an extended family, turned in on itself, where all are enclosed in increasing domesticity.

We must also be aware of its limitations. Living communally can only change the lives of the people in the community. It can help people to become less obsessed about their possessions and help them to regard their children in a less possessive way. It could level people out economically and offer them a less competitive home environment. It can free women a little to pursue their own work by a sharing of the practicalities of daily living. What it cannot do is be anything more than an individual solution to an individual's neuroses. The causes of these neuroses will still be present.

Jan Williams, Hazel Twort, Ann Bachelli.

LETTER

I was interested to read V.A. Tope's fascinating article 'Foundations and Empire' (Solidarity, vol.VI, No.8) which dealt with the collaboration by trade union leaders (in particular those of the G.M.W.U.) in the activities of both the C.I.A. and its British equivalent. The information on the Ariel Foundation was particularly valuable.

An interesting set-up which has been coy about its activities and which Tope's article does not mention is the British-North American Committee. This was established in 1969. In June 1970 a subsidiary was set up: the British-North American Research Association (this latter has a declared income of the order of £15,000 to £20,000 per annum). The overt function of the Committee seems to be to act as a lobby for American interests when Britain enters the Common Market. The Committee was set up with every appearance of haste.

The Committee is lavishly if obscurely financed. Its address is 12, Upper Belgrave St., London SW1. Trade union leaders are well represented amongst its members. Among them are your old friends Lord Cooper, General Secretary of the G.M.W.U., Lord Collison, late of the Agricultural Workers, G.F. Smith of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, and until

his recent death Les Cannon of the E.T.U.-P.T.U.* Other members include a prestigious array of British, Canadian and American Big Business interests (Barclays Bank D.C.O., Chase Manhattan Bank, Heinz, I.B.M., Shell, B.P., Mobil, Standard Oil, Unilever, Chrysler and Dow Chemicals, to name but a few).

The swamps of Academe on both sides of the Atlantic are well represented. Britain's men are Dr. Charles Carter, Vice-Chancellor of Lancaster University and Harry G. Johnson, Professor of Economics at L.S.E. Perhaps their students should ask them a few questions? We would be interested to hear of their replies.

The most interesting and significant aspect of the British-North American Committee is the fact that Jay Lovestone, Director of International Affairs of the AFL-CIO, and Arnold Zander, now a Professor at the University of Wisconsin, are members. Since 1950 Lovestone has been the key figure in the C.I.A.'s trade union operations. He has been the channel whereby millions of dollars have been passed on to compliant Western-oriented unions and individual trade union leaders. It would be interesting to know who the British recipients have been, although it would not be difficult to hazard a few guesses.

Zander, an old buddy of Lord Cooper, was until ousted in 1964, President of the notorious Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. He has publicly admitted (Washington Post, February 23, 1967) that his organisation channelled C.I.A. cash into the Public Services International and other C.I.A. operations. His union was also used as a cover for the British Guiana operation and other ventures. C.I.A. men were made officials of his union as a front for their clandestine activities.

It is about time that the British trade union officials involved in these activities were asked a few questions. For example, what do they receive for this work and from whom? How long have they been doing it? How do they square it with their professed socialist convictions? For far too long they have been allowed to get away literally with murder. (See the section in Tope's article dealing with British Guiana, where 170 people were killed.)

O.G. Pugh,
Nant Gwynant, Caerns.

* There is a considerable overlap in individuals, firms and institutions with the Ditchley Foundation, concerning which see V.A. Tope's article.

book review

MARX'S GRUNDRISSE. Edited by D. McLellan. Macmillan, 1971. £2.50

The May 1968 upheaval in France took most Marxists by surprise. Their marxism did not equip them to expect, envisage or prepare for this significant event in modern history. Moreover, most marxists had difficulties in assessing the event, its significance and meaning, even retrospectively. The same applies with regards to the marxist approach to the contemporary youth scene in general. Traditional theory - as most marxists interpreted it - expected the revolutionary fervour and initiative to originate in the factories. If the revolutionary initiative (meaning a struggle consciously aiming at transcending capitalism, and not merely rejecting it) originates from youth, as youth, and not from the industrial proletariat, as proletariat, then the significances of the theory and objective reality are in conflict. If one wishes to retain the theory, then May 1968 must be considered insignificant or irrelevant - possibly reduced to the dimension of mere accident. But if one considers the May events as deeply significant then the theory is found inadequate. In fact a way out is usually practiced namely, to stretch the theory and reinterpret it so as to make it conform to the new reality. This is taking place now all over the West within hundreds of 'Marx study groups'. It is in this light that we should evaluate the publication, in English, of Marx's early writings. Last year, the fashion was the 'Paris Manuscripts of 1844' with their emphasis on alienation. This year, it is the 'Grundrisse' (fundamentals) of the critique of political economy' of 1857/58.

* * * * *

The 'Grundrisse' consists of about 1000 pages of short notes on various subjects. Typical themes are: 'Property as the right to alien labour', 'The individual and social conditions', 'The labour process and alienation in machinery and science'. It can be assumed that these are Marx's preparatory notes for the writing of 'Capital'. But whereas the overall emphasis in 'Capital' is on the 'Laws of Economics', the emphasis in the 'Grundrisse' is on the socialising aspects of industrial production under capitalism. Like much else that Marx wrote, the 'Grundrisse' must be included in the required reading list of every serious revolutionary.

This is not the place to present a critique of Marx's views as expressed in the 'Grundrisse', since that would require more than a mere review. Two words of warning concerning the editing and translating are, however, necessary. When an editor edits 1000 pages down to 150, his interpretation of the text leads to considerable selectivity. He does not merely translate, he interprets. Secondly, Marx is notoriously difficult to translate into English. This again forces the translator to interpret. For

example, Marx never distinguished between 'work' and 'labour': he always used the term 'Arbeit' never 'Werk'. This leaves the translator free to use either 'labour' or 'work' as he sees fit. In English, however, there is a considerable difference between the two ('Labourers of all countries, unite' to give critical support to the Work Party?).

The most misleading element in the current edition are the chapter headings and introductory notes added by McLellan himself. Consider the excerpt on page 148 (599-600 in Marx's original). McLellan puts in a heading 'Leisure and free time in Communist society', and adds a little introductory note: 'Marx here elaborates on the nature of work in communist society and the possibilities for human development offered by the increase in free time'. But Marx's text fails to reveal any reference to Communist society. On the contrary, Marx refers explicitly to work in bourgeois society and outlines his view on the general nature of work as such. McLellan seems to have followed the Moscow edition (1931/40). The German 'Rowolt' edition was much more careful, omitting all the Moscow headings and notes. The heading to the excerpt mentioned above is in brackets and says, in small print: 'Free time, leisure and labour time'.

For one reason or another McLellan seems very keen to resuscitate the man Marx (more than his theories). In a recent interview in 'Red Mole' he states that the 'Grundrisse' brought him to the conclusion that: 'Marx's writings are unfinished: "Capital" is only a fragment of what he intended to write. Thus his work is open-ended and quite unlike the sort of closed system with which he has so often been saddled'. (Red Mole, 8-22 April 1971) Are we then to judge Marx by his intentions? By his unwritten works? According to McLellan the answer is 'Yes'.

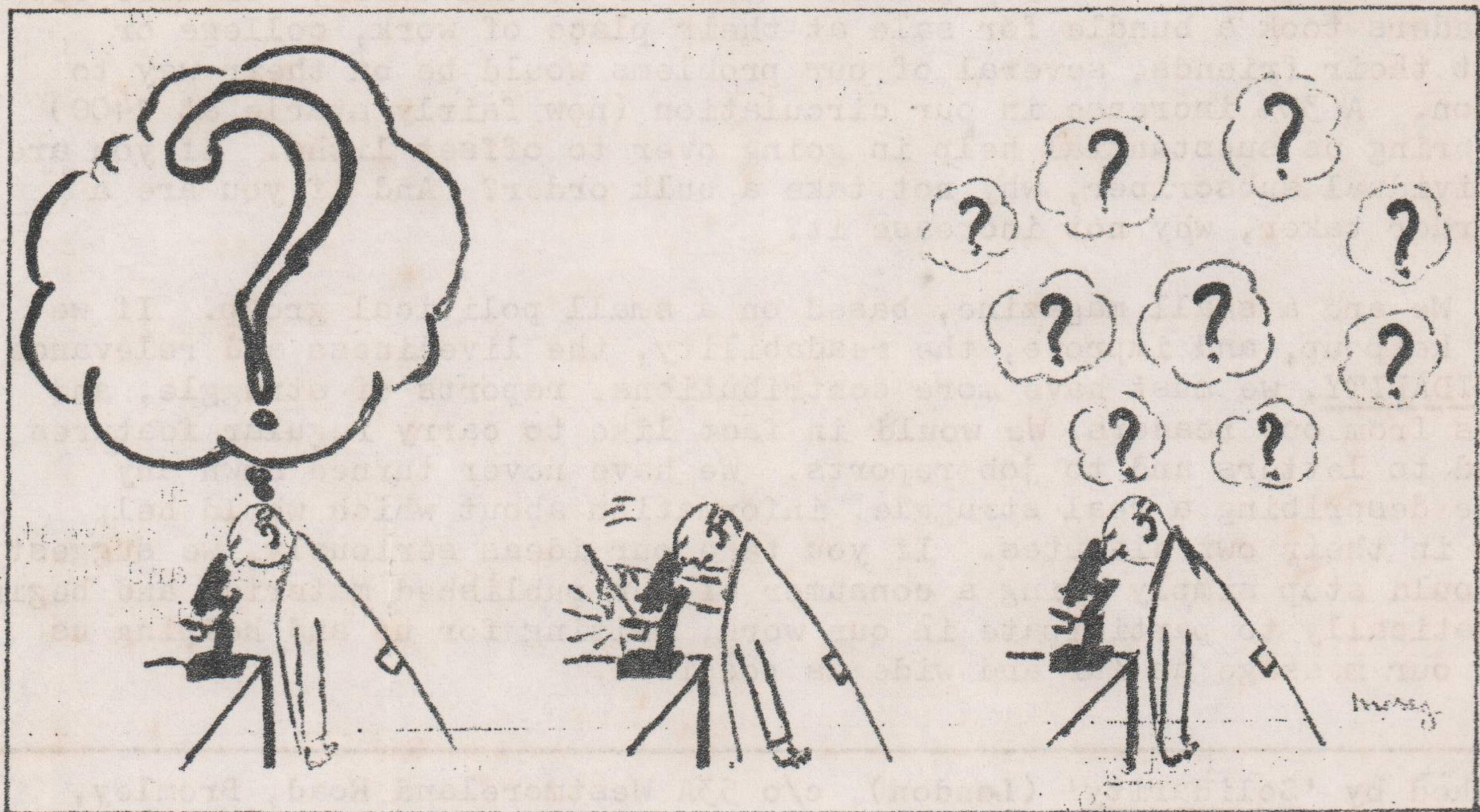
The absurdity of such an approach (which flows from a Marx cult) is a warning to all those revolutionaries who seek answers to the problem of revolution in the 1970's in documents written in the 1850's. We distinguish here between the Marxicologists (who specialise in everything that Marx did or wrote, and whose interest in revolution derives from their interest in Marx) and genuine revolutionaries, whose interest in Marx's ideas stem from their revolutionary fervour. Let the Marxicologists go on interpreting. That, after all, is their self-allocated function. But if genuine revolutionaries become endlessly entangled in interpreting Marx's theories without ever transcending them, or even developing a critique of them, they will render themselves irrelevant to the revolutionary processes in society.

Any genuine revolution will, by its very nature, create new and genuinely original modes of human mentality and behaviour. Thus a genuine revolution - which is more than a revolt against a despised system - will confound precisely those whose theorising is based on the past. A revolution is a creative act and as such is more than a product of past and present circumstances. A serious revolutionary must therefore expect his theories to be invalidated by a revolutionary upheaval. If he does not he will never rise above being a political technician, dealing in politics as a mechanic deals with an engine. He will never become an innovator, creator, or genuine revolutionary.

Without theory all revolutionary action is reduced to mere response (quite a common condition in the revolutionary movement today) but with a theory that has become an ideology (or faith) all action is reduced to mere ritual. Those who lack a critical view of their theory inevitably become dominated by it. Their theory 'guides' them as an independent, alien force. It is only a matter of time before such a state of mind produces its prophets, priests and believers. As far as Marxism is concerned this has already occurred. Serious revolutionaries must consider the fact that all the bureaucracies in the Eastern block not only permit but find it useful to teach Marx's writings in schools as compulsory material. It is no secret that many of the marxist groups in the West already contain a nascent bureaucracy, and that bureaucratic mentality and behaviour are quite common within them.

Is there any relation between Marx's theory of revolution and the fact that groups and states who adhere to this theory display a strong tendency towards bureaucratisation (both of themselves and of society)? If, as McLellan states, 'Marx was a nineteenth century thinker employing nineteenth century concepts to answer nineteenth century questions' (Red Mole, loc. cit.), what is the critique of Marx's theories made by twentieth century revolutionaries, employing twentieth century concepts? Do they have any? Do they intend to develop any? Or will they just go on with their exegesis of the sacred texts? Comrades, what do you wish to resuscitate? Revolutionary theory? Or a father figure? Marxists have only interpreted Marx, in various ways. Revolutionaries, however, must transcend him.

A. O.



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

One of the most encouraging aspects of our recent activity with Post Office workers, scientists and industrial militants generally has been the large and growing body of goodwill created towards our ideas. Our practical contact with this support is, however, very limited and we are anxious to develop a much fuller dialogue with all our readers. In London this has been achieved to some extent through a whole series of regular open meetings but in another parts of the country our contact with those who read our paper is only superficial. We want to know how our 250 or so individual subscribers react to our material and what new areas they would like to explore with us. We would particularly like them to participate more substantially in our work, which has now continued for eleven years.

As we announced in a recent issue we are investing in some capital equipment. We hope to improve the quality of our magazine without losing any of our flexibility. We are anxious to pay for this equipment without putting ourselves heavily in debt and saddling our resources with a long-term burden. So far the response to our appeal for cash has been rather disappointing. We again urgently call on all those who are in general agreement with what we are trying to do to help us in material ways. We need every penny (new or old) you can afford.

For a long time we have been aware of the fact that we have only been reaching a small proportion of our potential readership. At times we even receive complaints that people can't get our stuff. To solve this problem we badly need to increase the number of our friends and supporters who take bulk orders of our paper on a sale or return basis. If more of our readers took a bundle for sale at their place of work, college or amongst their friends, several of our problems would be on their way to solution. A 30% increase in our circulation (now fairly stable at 1400) would bring us substantial help in going over to offset litho. If you are an individual subscriber, why not take a bulk order? And if you are a bulk order taker, why not increase it?

We are a small magazine, based on a small political group. If we are to keep up, and improve, the readability, the liveliness and relevance of SOLIDARITY, we must have more contributions, reports of struggle, and letters from our readers. We would in fact like to carry regular features devoted to letters and to job reports. We have never turned down any article describing a real struggle, information about which would help others in their own disputes. If you take our ideas seriously, we suggest you should stop simply being a consumer of our published material and begin systematically to participate in our work, writing for us and helping us spread our message as far and wide as possible.