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# WORK and

# WAR

THE CRISIS OF MODERN SOCIETY IS A TOTAL CRISIS, AFFECTING EVERY ASPECT OF MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER MEN AND WITH THE WORLD AROUND HIM.

The crisis affects ordinary people in the matters that concern them most. They experience it at WORK, to which they are tied for the major part of their lives. They also experience it as the chronic threat of WAR, which hovers over their very existence, as the arms race proceeds with unabated momentum.

In Britain today thousands of workers are already on short time. There have been cut-backs at BMC and Standards (in the Midlands) and sackings at Vauxhall's (Luton) and Rootes (Cricklewood). A few weeks ago 18,000 men were put on a four-day week at the giant Ford plant at Dagenham. At Frigidaire's (Hendon), at Napier's (Acton) and in many other factories workers have recently been compelled to down tools, in attempts to resist the constant speed up of the assembly lines, the introduction of time and motion study into more and more workshops, and the imposition of new machinery and new techniques of work without so much as a

pretence of 'consultation' with those who will do the work.

Under capitalism, technological progress results in an ever increasing division and fragmentation of human labour, in still further degradation of man's innate capacities, and in intensified exploitation. Technical improvements mean the further subjection of working people to conditions of work which are not of their own choice or making and over which it is tacitly assumed they should have no say whatsoever. The boss, bless his heart, alone knows what is good for you. For His is the Divine Right of Management.

Sackings and speed-up. Short time working and systematic snooping. All are part and parcel of one and the same process: the concentration of capital. Dead labour in its embodiment, the machine, acts as proxy for the capitalist class. It imposes its demands on living men and women. The ruthless drive to 'rationalise' production continues, with or without

the sanction and connivance of the State. Enormous enterprises spread their tentacles. They crush or assimilate smaller ones, often in other lands, the more effectively thereafter to compete with their few remaining rivals.

Beyond the Iron Curtain the same process is at work. The symptoms of the crisis are different. The struggle takes different forms. Unemployment and short-time working are no longer problems. They never are in gaols. The more advanced concentration of capital has 'solved' these 'problems' at the expense of an ever greater tightening up of factory discipline. From the columns of the Hungarian Communist Party weekly Hetfoei Hirek we have the news that the so-called 'people's inspectors' are now using concealed cameras to spy on workers in Hungarian factories. According to the same journal a photographic record of working activities in the Ganz-Navag locomotive works at Budapest, taken during several weeks of inspection, showed that 14 to 16 per cent of total working time was 'wasted'. The blame was promptly put on 'the loose working morale of the workers' and on 'poor shop organization'.\*

Both East and West (and whatever the formal status of property), ordinary people remain entrapped within relations of production which they do not dominate and which therefore dominate them. Both East and West, every new technique of production, every new discovery only increases the contradictions of the

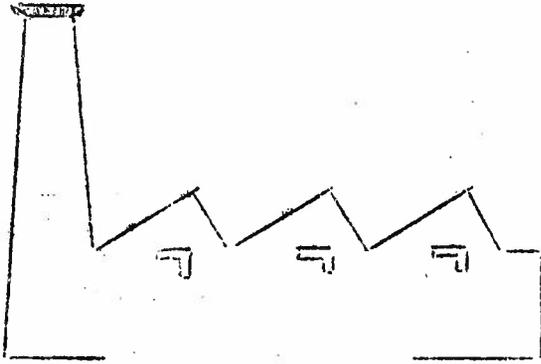
regimes. Every new contradiction builds up the material premises for the eventual revolutionary solution to the crisis through the self-assertion, self-activity and self-emancipation of the working class.

All political discussions and all political programmes that fail to examine these aspects of capitalism and their effect on peoples' lives and thinking are sterile and unreal. They are, in a sense, very sectarian too, because they do not deal with the real preoccupations of the masses themselves, but with what the professional politicians think the masses ought to be thinking about. It is for this reason that we are indifferent to the whole discussion now taking place in the Labour Party. Even the most 'left' inside that party can offer no more serious alternative to capitalist centralisation than the dated slogan of nationalization, a slogan that does little more than echo the fundamental natural tendency in the evolution of capitalism itself. This apparent panacea is even put forward as a serious solution to the problem of unemployment. After the experience of sackings in the British coalfields, after the massive sackings in the 'nationalized' Borinage coalfield in Belgium, after the recent large-scale dismissals in the State-owned Renault motor works in Paris, this is surely pathetic.

But even more important is the question: 'what is nationalization' (cont'd p. 19)

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\* We are indebted to the November 1960 issue of 'Socialist Current' for this account. According to these comrades, 'the close similarity between the mentality of the stalinist bureaucracy... and the outlook of management in this country' is something 'interesting to note'. It in no way seems to invalidate their assessment of Russia as being fundamentally a workers state. For us, on the other hand, this account comes to grips with the essence of the situation. It describes a society in which the working class is in a subordinate position in the relations of production. For us this means a class society and one in which the proletariat is certainly not the ruling class.



# RENAULT

## WORKERS FIGHT BACK

By

Martin Grainger and Bob Pennington

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The French motor car industry has recently been resorting to sackings on an increasing scale. Pushed on by its drive for profits, compelled to cut production costs in order to compete, this sector of French capitalism has recently been engaged in an intensified effort to 'rationalise' production. As usual it is the working class who pays the costs.

The nationalized Renault works, the biggest factory in France, has been in the forefront of this process, setting a pattern and example to every employer throughout the country.

'Agitator' has been fortunate in obtaining a number of articles written by rank-and-file militants in the Renault works in Paris and Le Mans. These articles, which we are producing as a special pamphlet, describe in vivid, down-to-earth terms, the explosion of working class anger that greeted the news that men employed for years at Renault's were to be tossed onto the scrap heap. They give the inside story of how resistance to the sackings developed in the workshops.

At first the workers were uncertain of how to fight back. They were taken through the useless and frustrating experience of a number of isolated 90 minutes stoppages, confined to individual shifts. The management felt sure of themselves. Behind them were the full powers of the State. At their sides, the union officials, capable of 'coping' with any independent working class reaction, well-trained in the ins-and-outs of class collaboration, part and parcel of the whole industrial edifice, often in fact little more than cogs in the established transmission belt from managerial office to the workshop floor.

But the workers' patience snapped. The 'prayer' meetings organized by officialdom were suddenly transformed into something very different. They made for the managerial buildings. Loyal CGT officials who blocked the entrance, imploring the men to 'behave' in an orderly manner, were swept out of the way. The vernacular of working class abuse replaced the constitutional jargon of union officials.

Iron doors were broken down. Militants swept through the hallowed corridors of sacrosanct managerial property. Executives' chairs, unfortunately minus their well-proportioned occupants, crashed through windows. Sacked workers chased supervisors out of the building.

(cont'd overleaf)

For a brief moment the great traditions of the 1936 sit-down strikes were revived. This was however an elemental act of desperation, not yet a planned occupation of the factory.

Years of fragmentary struggles, diverted by the union bureaucracies into constitutional channels have had a certain demoralising effect on the French working class. The recent upsurges in the Renault works in Paris and Le Mans show however that the working class in France as elsewhere is capable of breaking through the stranglehold of bureaucracy, and of asserting itself as an independent force. As yet this force is not fully aware of its strength or of the need itself to determine the objectives of its struggle.

'Agitator' sees as one of its main aims to bring to as many workers as possible the experience of other workers in struggle. Everything in present society conspires to hide this experience from workers. Within our very limited means we will strive to break down these barriers.

-----

## RENAULT WORKERS FIGHT SACKINGS

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WORKERS CONTROL OR WORKERS MANAGEMENT?

DIRECT ACTION AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

'OUR FATHER WHO ART IN CLAPHAM' - a counter-revolutionary hymn.

# WHITE - COLLAR WORKER

By Eric Morse

'Oh, the hinges are of leather  
And the windows have no glass;  
The boards, they let the howling blizzard in.'

Not too bad a picture of many a box-room hitched to the rear of a smart shop and pompously called an 'office'. There, tucked in a corner behind a battered old typewriter, dusty piles of ancient invoices and other grubby papers, sits the order clerk. The window hasn't been cleaned for decades. It either doesn't open or doesn't shut - both kinds are available. The clerk is assisted by a miserably inadequate electric lamp and, in due course of time, by a pair of glasses.

This is one of those 'offices' selected as a target by the Gowers Report. While the Report is shelved ad infinitum by the Government, our clerk may at least find comfort in the assurance that Mr. Gaitskoll will ask a fatuous question from time to time and receive an equally fatuous reply from an 'Hon. Member' opposite.

There are, of course, other offices: the chromium-plated emporia of the bigger and better firms. New typewriters, perhaps even a typist pool, a filing cabinet at your elbow, a swivel chair, even a telephone on the polished desk. Ergonomics at your service. The affluent society.

The phone rings: a customer! You boldly clamp your ear to it and wince. The client, unaccustomed to this device for communication, bawls away in an attempt to prove that he could manage without a phone at all. Your ear-drum survives. You take his order. 'Yes, it will be up from the works next week' (it says so on your stock card). So you ambitiously give the client your name. Who knows? He may mention it to the Manager some day!

Alas; something goes amiss. A long process of take-overs built this mighty empire. Built it rather unevenly, however. New offices, of course, there had to be, with all mod. con. (the Company Chairman himself has moved in on the first floor). But the works, a sprawling hotchpotch of sheds and shanties scattered throughout the grimiest part of the black country, are rarely visited by the titled old bird on the first floor. Besides, it takes capital to modernise. We've spent a packet on the last take-over. So the works wait a bit longer. Meanwhile we make further extravagant claims to the effect that we can supply everything in creation.

Next week the customer rings again. You're lucky; he's on someone else's line. Hell! He's remembered your name. 'Yes, sir. It should have been here. They

had a fire at the works... No, you wouldn't have read it in the papers. Only a small one... Just burnt this one machine'.

He's not convinced, but he probably can't believe you're quite that kind of a liar (come to think of it, neither can you). He may ring again, to the progress (sic) department. Forestall him! Ring 'progress' and adjust your yarn to theirs. Fine! He hasn't been on to them yet. They'll remember your tale when he rings. They congratulate you on your fiery imagination.

Casually, trying not to sound harassed by your work, you discreetly enquire if 'progress' have anything truthful to report on this job. No joy. The works department listen sympathetically to what you have to say. They ooze well-oiled solicitude and then pass your complaint over to their own 'progress'. They quote a further seven days, a sort of breathing space while they think up a corker. By now so many people have passed the buck that you begin to see visions: long procession of Pontius Pilates all washing their hands at you as your client prepares the gear for crucifixion.

No, your mates are not rogues; they're just stalling you, just as you are stalling the customer. Stalling, while they try to get some sense out of (?into) the complex chain of 'experts' extending from the firm's works manager to his opposite number in the raw material firm. Laboriously they grope their way through the jungle of departmental chaos, a jungle that others have planted. You meditate: 'They pay me to unravel the mysteries of this jungle and to make it "work". As the phone rings once more you idly wonder what it would

be like if you (and all your mates you've been swearing at) suddenly stopped trying to make things 'work', junked the 'solutions' of the experts and, with the blokes in the workshop, replanned the whole damn thing yourselves. Surely, we couldn't make the muddle much worse. Who knows? We might do a lot better.

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WITH THE JARGONOLOGISTS

(Department of Democratic Centralism)

Workers Democracy under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is exercised through the organs of the state, the trade unions, and democratic centralism within the Marxian Party, including the right of all factions within the Party at all times, within the framework of Democratic centralism. Those parties which after the establishment of the Workers State do not accept basic principles must be suppressed. However, certain parties, groups or factions which in the first period of the Workers State accept its foundation principles will continue to exist with full freedom of expression within the bounds of the new society until they are by a natural process merged with the Marxist Party; or until their policies drive them into fundamental opposition with the new society, at which point they must be suppressed.

- From 'The 14 Point Program of the Provisional International Contact Commission for the New Communist (4th) International', as published in International News for February, 1945.

# CHASING THE C.N.D. 'MARCH' HARE

by A. ANDERSON

THE POLITICAL A-BOMB. In July 1945 the Japanese were suing for peace. They had offered to negotiate an almost 'unconditional' surrender. A month later the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were massacred by American atom bombs. This barbaric human sacrifice to the Capitalist god of self-interest was made by the rulers of America with the connivance of the British. It was a political move, aimed at showing Russia's rulers and the world in general that America now possessed a weapon which had changed the face of war. The weapon could obliterate a city in a few minutes. Its new owners were prepared to be more ruthless in its use than any terrorist in history. This carefully staged demonstration possibly impressed the Russians.

CAUSES OF WAR PERSIST. The first operational H-bomb was tested by America in March 1954. It had a power equivalent to 20 million tons of high explosive. It was 1000 times more powerful than the A-bomb which destroyed Hiroshima. And Russia has, of course, caught up with America, both in H-bombs and means of delivery. World war as a means to political or economic end now defeats its own purpose. The human race could not survive a nuclear war.

But although war is obsolete as a means to anything but suicide, the social and economic forces which drive the ruling elites of the great powers towards war remain.

COLD WAR ESSENTIAL. Expenditure on armaments is very useful to capitalism. It does not create the social and economic problems involved in other forms of expenditure. When the present arms drive began, the stability of capitalism may not have depended on massive arms expenditure. By 1960, America was spending \$40,000 million and Britain £1,600 million per year on their arms programmes. Today this type and amount of expenditure are essential to capitalist economy. International tension is also essential, to give this fantastic expenditure some semblance of justification. The maintenance of tension gradually becomes necessary for the economic survival of capitalism. We do not say that our rulers consciously want war. Most of them don't. But even the threat of annihilation is not going to persuade a ruling class voluntarily to give up its power.

C.N.D. PLAYED OUT. Through demonstrations, leaflets, pamphlets and public discussions, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has been instrumental in bringing to the attention of millions of people the perils of the nuclear arms race. It has now virtually played out its historical role. Through further marching and similar demonstrations, it can consolidate its 'gains', but it can go no further towards success.

The aim of CND, explicit in its title, is only nuclear disarmament. To achieve even this limited objective would still involve a fundamental change in society - a reversal of the trend within capitalism towards ever more concentrated power and wealth. A movement aiming at such a change cannot be effective without first understanding itself, in other words without a theory of change. And from the theory must come practice: a programme of political action. Because this has not been understood, much of the discussion within the movement has been sterile.

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. The Campaign's opponents say, with seemingly logical accuracy, that unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain would mean surrender to the Russians. This is, of course, not true. Successful unilateralism cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism and a change as fundamental as the overthrow of capitalism cannot take place in isolation. While it might start in one country, its influence would be felt over the whole world. As the movement builds up, so probably would parallel movements take shape in other countries. In short, the logic of an effective movement for unilateral nuclear disarmament is a movement for Socialism.

On the question of nuclear war, most of those in CND are in advance of the majority of people. But only insofar as their horror of its effects has compelled them to take some action. Through a more vivid imagination they have correctly recognized that nuclear war will destroy us all, regardless of class. But they have falsely concluded that the solution also disregards class. This naive approach is fraught with danger.

A 'LEADING' QUESTION. It has led the CND to appeal to 'leaders' and to call for Summit Talks and international agreements. What ignorance of the driving forces of capitalism! The danger of such a policy is that it helps the ruling class disseminate its myths to the effect that genuine solutions can come from the 'top'. The solution can only come from below, from the working people themselves! There is no evidence that Lord Russell and Co. would even agree with this simple statement, let alone with its profound implications. For these are nothing less than a socialist movement; one based on the working class having complete control of their work, their leisure, their lives.

(cont'd opposite)



TH He's OK really, he belongs to friends in America, they didn't send his lead but don't worry!

CND 'MARCH' HARE (continued from p.8)

Surely no one can deny that the working people, acting as a class, have the power to make a reality of the aims of CND. Members of CND must stop chasing the 'march' hare. They must start acting upon the real implications of the Campaign.



# JOBS FOR THE BOYS

There used to be a saying: 'If you want to get ahead, wear a hat!'. A new one has taken its place: 'If you want to get on, be a shop steward!

Of course, there are many thousands of shop stewards trying their best to do their work correctly, despite pressure and obstruction from the right-wing union bureaucrats.

It is the careerists we are referring to, the men who join various committees whose sole function is to smash militancy and to introduce american-style boss-worker relationships in the factories and on building sites.

The rank and file have experienced this type of fake militant for a number of years. We have seen them gradually become progress-chasers\*, charge-hands, and in some cases even foremen and managers!

For the bosses this is an excellent arrangement. Here are men with inside knowledge of the shop floor, intimately connected with the workers, often knowing who is a labourite and who is a 'red', etc. Some are even willing to work hand in glove with the management to the extent that they try their utmost to talk the workers out of taking strike action on the basis of: 'You can trust me, lads, I'll put your case to the management!'. You know the rest only too well.

\* Even members of so-called revolutionary parties fall for this one! Do they hope that by 'chasing' the workers they will thereby make them hate capitalism all the more? Or do they believe in converting from the top downwards?

There is at the moment no party of any kind which could be called revolutionary. No group of any appreciable size has its basis in the working class. It is therefore the duty of the rank-and-file militants to get together independently of all the reformist bureaucracies and discuss their common problems.

Such a meeting is being held on January 29, 1961, at Denison House. It will provide an opportunity to thrash out the meaning of socialism and of the methods of struggle needed to achieve it.

No members of any group will be barred. There will be none of the rigid bureaucratic control from the platform so typical of Stalinist and Trotskyist meetings.

I appeal to all trade unionists, shop stewards and militants to support this function. This is the real job with real prospects.

TOM HILLIER, AEU.

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## ON SHORT TIME ?

'Company Director permanently available several days weekly as Director or Executive; etc...

Advert in 'The Guardian'  
Nov. 28, 1960.

# REVIEW

THE SHEFFIELD SHOP STEWARDS - 1916-1918. Central Books, 1s 6d.

This duplicated pamphlet is published by the History Group of the Communist Party. It deals with one of the most developed rank-and-file movements this country has ever seen. Since it relates to a period before the foundation of the Communist Party it is relatively objective. In fact it is a model of historical research. It is based mainly on branch and district committee minutes and the file of the Firth Worker, the organ of the Sheffield movement. The writer seems unaware of the implications which the Sheffield movement has for us today. Some of them would be very embarrassing for the modern Communist Party bureaucrats.

The Sheffield Shop Stewards Movement started as a movement to protect the skilled man against the influx of dilutees. It rapidly developed a political consciousness, although it still retained a certain measure of craft consciousness until the end. The stewards rapidly built up an organization which linked up all the major factories in Sheffield, and began to develop links nationally. This organization cut across union boundaries. The movement recognized its own stewards and issued its own credentials, irrespective of what the official machine did. It even recognized non-unionists as stewards, provided they had the confidence of the workers they represented.

This movement organized and led several strikes all of which were successful. The most important of these was probably the struggle against the conscription into the Army of Len Hargreaves, who had been exempted. The strike started on November 15, 1916. For two days, Sheffield was stopped. The men refused to go back even after the War Office had promised to return Hargreaves. In fact, they stayed out until they saw and heard him in the flesh.

Another factor in the haste of the Government to concede defeat was the fact that the Sheffield men had established contact with engineers in Barrow, Coventry, Birmingham and Derby and had received promises of strike action within twenty four hours if no agreement was reached.

Needless to say the Executive of the ASE (forerunner of the AEU) was absolutely against the development of the Sheffield movement. It engaged in some slimy little manoeuvres with the help of local right wing officials. It eventually dissolved the Sheffield District Committee of the union and appointed Gavigan, the leading local right-winger, as District Secretary. This news, incidentally, was first leaked to the capitalist press, before the workers involved had heard about it, a tradition which

(cont'd overleaf)

# NAPIERS AND FRIGIDAIRE'S



Workers at Frigidaire's factory (Kingsbury) are challenging the boss's right to hire and fire. An assembly worker, Bro. Larkin, was considered too slow by 'his' foreman. During discussions he was transferred to the stores. On November 8, 1200 workers showed their contempt of this action by walking out and staying out. They held a march and demonstration on Thursday, Nov. 24, which was supported by many other workers in the Cricklewood area.

\* \* \* \*

The Napiers (Acton) strike which started on Nov. 24 is also a fight which raises the question of who is to control at shop floor level.

A shop steward was told to operate a machine on which

a worker had only the previous day been injured. He refused because the inspectors (the firm's own inspectors!) had not investigated the cause of this accident. In his eyes the machine was suspect. He was promptly sacked.

The workers came out with the backing of the shops stewards committee which represents the 7 unions there.

We fully support all such action by the men in their struggle for themselves to determine the conditions under which they will work.

GEO. GRAHAM  
AEU

## REVIEW (cont'd from p.11)

our present Executive seems to have continued. This didn't affect the shop stewards movement which was of course based mainly in the factories and not on the union offices.

The organizational programme of the Sheffield Workers Committee envisaged an organization which would make any bureaucrat's hair curl - Communist Party included. This was:

1. Every workshop to have a shop committee consisting of delegates elected by all the workers in the shop.
2. A factory committee in every works.
3. A Sheffield Workers Committee.
4. A National Organization of Workers Committees.

These demands should still be those of all militants.

K. WELLER

# 'THE PARTY' AND POLARIS

By HARRY Mc SHANE

The struggle against the Polaris base at Holy Loch is only beginning. Already, it is providing Socialists with a number of lessons. There is a danger that the campaign will be limited in its effectiveness by the manoeuvres of the Communist Party.

When Glasgow Trades Council set the ball rolling against the base, a wave of feeling spread throughout the West of Scotland. It was clear from the outset that this had nothing to do with support for Russia. Only one member of the Communist Party at the Trades Council meeting spoke of the 'correctness' of Russian policy.

There are those who would like to be able to say that the campaign is sponsored by the Communist Party and that it is in the interests of Russia. When the Glasgow Council for Nuclear Disarmament called its demonstration on Saturday, November 19, fears were expressed that the banners of the Communist Party would receive the full attention of the camera-men. It was hoped the banners would not be there. That was expecting too much. The photographs in the press will cause many readers to draw the wrong conclusions.

The Scottish Peace Committee has been revived. This body is a Communist Party front organization. It opposes the Polaris base because of Pro-Russian convictions. These people make the struggle against war more difficult. The Communist Party is concealing its aims. This is bound to affect the activities planned by the Trades Councils for December.

The Scottish Nationalists and large sections of the Church are opposing the setting up of the Polaris base. The Rev. Dr. Macleod has expressed his distrust of the Communist Party. One Scottish Nationalist has expressed the opinion that the Communist Party will change its attitude if given new instructions.

Members of the Labour movement hesitate about criticizing the Communist Party on this matter because they don't want to be accused of starting a new witch-hunt. It is clear however that something must be done to prevent the movement from appearing to support Russia.

At the outbreak of the first World War, the words 'Neither King nor Kaiser' appeared in the front of Liberty Hall, Dublin. Connolly regarded Britain as the main enemy. He could not be accused of supporting Germany. In the same way, we fight against the policy of Macmillan, but we do not support the policy of Khrushchev.

The Hungarian workers fought against the Warsaw Pact. We fight against NATO and everything connected with it. The Communist Party members may march with us, but they march for a different cause. This difference must be emphasized.

Meantime, the working class movement must be in the forefront in the fight against war preparations as part of the struggle to destroy the system that makes war possible.

## A LETTER TO READERS

So far, so good. The first issue had no sooner been assembled that comrades were flogging it. The initial 300 copies were sold within 4 days. A further 220 were quickly produced. About a dozen remain.

Copies have sold well at N.L.R. meetings in London and Birmingham, in two trade union branches in North London (a very brisk business, here), in Young Socialists branches in Hampstead, Harrow and Ramsgate and at various public meetings in London. Copies have also gone to Exeter, Liverpool, Nottingham, Loods and Glasgow.

Most encouraging have been the offers of individuals in various towns and localities to take bundles for sale. Each week we have added one or two new subscribers to our list.

A group of comrades in Kent have not only offered to sell the paper but will make regular contributions to its columns.

Naturally we have not escaped criticism. Mike Kidron lamented that we 'concentrated too much on the Socialist Labour League'. If he turns to the back page he will see that we have heeded his advice and learned our lesson well.

Others have accused us of being sectarian. By this they presumably mean we should take sides in the Labour Party's internal quarrels. We quite candidly don't think it matters one damn who leads - Wilson or Gait-skill. After all neither is opposed to capitalism and neither will oppose its wars. As for Mr. Foot we doubt whether he will escape 'captivity' for even as long as Mr. Bevan did.

As more and more workers leave the Labour Party, as mass indifference grows to its whole existence, all the more frantically do the various sects work to keep its organization intact. If refusal to participate in such a mockery is sectarian, then we plead guilty.

As you will see we have some new contributors in this issue. We hope many more of our readers will take advantage of the paper's columns. We want reports from factory and site, of real incidents, of real aspects of working class life. And we want controversy. For us this is not a pious statement. We are convinced that unless the working people discuss and argue about what they consider the important issues confronting them, there can be no real solution to any of the problems of modern society.

AGITATOR

# document

## NATALIA BREAKS WITH THE 'TROTSKYISTS'

Today the name of Natalia Trotsky is scarcely mentioned in the movement her husband founded. Enquiring comrades are fobbed off with remarks such as: 'She is an old woman now' or 'She is really non-political'. The 'leaders' have doubtless studied how Stalin parried similar awkward questions about Krupskaya. True enough Natalia is an old woman now - but she is certainly not non-political. Nor was her break from 'Trotskyism', in 1951, a non-political one.

'Agitator' reprints below the letter in which Natalia broke from the Trotskyist movement. In this letter she exposes the utter degeneration of Trotsky's epigones whom she compares to the 'dehumanized brutes' of Stalinism. These were the people who were later to define the butchers of Hungary and the keepers of the Lubianka as members of 'a society in transition to socialism' and who now argue publicly for the retention of the Russian H-bomb. It is time that those who live off Trotsky's name should have their discreet silence broken. We believe this is the first time this letter has been made available to British workers. All genuine revolutionaries will welcome acquaintance with the true facts.

### To the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party:

COMRADES: You know quite well that I have not been in political agreement with you for the past five or six years, since the end of the war and even earlier.

The position taken on the important events of recent times shows me that, instead of correcting your earlier errors, you are persisting in them and deepening them. On the road you have taken, you have reached a point where it is no longer possible for me to remain silent or to confine myself to private protest. I must now express my opinions publicly.

THE STEP which I feel obliged to take has been a grave and difficult one for me, and I can only regret it sincerely. But there is no other way. After a great deal of reflections and hesitations over a problem which has pained me deeply, I find that I must tell you that I see no other way than to say openly that our disagreements make it impossible for me to remain any longer in your ranks.

THE REASONS for this final action on my part are known to most of you. I repeat them here briefly only for those to whom they are not familiar, touching only on our fundamentally important differences and not on the differences over matters of daily policy which are related to them or which follow from them.

OBSSESSED by old and outlived formulas you continue to regard the Stalinist state as a workers' state. I cannot and will not follow you in this. Virtually every year after the beginning of the fight against the usurping Stalinist bureaucracy, L.D. Trotsky repeated that the regime was moving to the right, under conditions of a lagging world revolution and the seizure of all political positions in Russia by the bureaucracy.

TIME AND AGAIN, he pointed out how the consolidation of Stalinism in Russia led to the worsening of the economic, political and social positions of the working class, and the triumph of a tyrannical and privileged aristocracy. If this trend continues, he said, the revolution will be at an end and the restoration of capitalism will be achieved. That, unfortunately, is what has happened even if in new and unexpected forms. There is hardly a country in the world where the authentic ideas and bearers of socialism are so barbarously hounded. It should be clear to everyone that the revolution has been completely destroyed by Stalinism. Yet you continue to say that under this unspeakable regime, Russia is still a workers' state. I consider this a blow at socialism. Stalinism and the Stalinist state have nothing whatever in common with a workers' state or with socialism. They are the worst and the most dangerous enemies of socialism and the working class.

YOU NOW HOLD that the states of Eastern Europe over which Stalinism established its domination during and after the war, are likewise workers' states. This is equivalent to saying that Stalinism has carried out a revolutionary socialist role. I cannot and will not follow you in this. After the war and even before it ended, there was a rising revolutionary movement of the masses in these Eastern countries. But it was not these masses who won power and it was not a workers' state that was established by their struggle.

IT WAS the Stalinist counter-revolution that won power, reducing these lands to vassals of the Kremlin by strangling the working masses, their revolutionary struggles and their revolutionary aspirations. By considering that the Stalinist bureaucracy established workers' states in these countries, you assign to it a progressive and even revolutionary role. By propagating this monstrous falsehood to the workers' vanguard, you deny to the Fourth International all the basic reasons for existence as the world party of the socialist revolution. In the past, we always considered Stalinism to be a counter-revolutionary force in every sense of the term. You no longer do so. But I continue to do so.

IN 1932 AND 1933, the Stalinists, in order to justify their shameful capitulation to Hitlerism, declared that it would matter little if the Fascists came to power, because socialism would come after and through the rule of Fascism. Only dehumanized brutes without a shred of socialist thought or spirit could have argued this way. Now, notwithstanding the revolutionary aims which animate you, you maintain that the despotic Stalinist reaction which has triumphed in Eastern Europe is one of the roads through which socialism will eventually come. This view marks an irremediable break with the profoundest convictions always held by our movement and which I continue to share.

I FIND IT impossible to follow you in the question of the Tito regime in Yugoslavia. All the sympathy and support of revolutionists and even of all democrats should go to the Yugoslav people in their determined resistance to the efforts of Moscow to reduce them and their country to vassalage. Every advantage should be taken of the concessions which the Yugoslav regime now finds itself obliged to make to the people. But your entire press is now devoted to an inexcusable idealization of the Titoist bureaucracy for which no ground exists in the traditions and principles of our movement.

THIS BUREAUCRACY is only a replica, in a new form, of the old Stalinist bureaucracy. It was trained in the ideas, the politics and morals of the GPU. Its regime differs from Stalin's in no fundamental regard. It is absurd to believe or to teach that the revolutionary leadership of the Yugoslav people will develop out of this bureaucracy or in any way other than in the course of struggle against it.

MOST INSUPPORTABLE of all is the position on the war to which you have committed yourselves. The Third World War which threatens humanity confronts the revolutionary movement with the most difficult problems, the most complex situations, the gravest decisions. Our position can be taken only after the most earnest and freest discussions. But in the face of all the events of recent years, you continue to advocate and to pledge the entire movement to the defence of the Stalinist state. You are even now supporting the armies of Stalinism in the war which is being endured by the anguished Korean people. I cannot and will not follow you in this.

AS FAR BACK as 1927, Trotsky, in reply to a disloyal question put to him in the Political Bureau by Stalin, stated his views as follows: For the socialist fatherland, yes! For the Stalinist regime, no! That was in 1927! Now, twenty-three years later Stalin has left nothing of the socialist fatherland. It has been replaced by the enslavement and degradation of the people by the Stalinist autocracy. This is the state you propose to defend in the war, which you are already defending in Korea. I know very well how often you repeat that you are criticizing Stalinism and

fighting it. But the fact is that your criticism and your fight lose all value and can yield no results because they are determined by and subordinated to your position of defence of the Stalinist state. Whoever defends this regime of barbarous oppression, regardless of the motives, abandons the principles of socialism and internationalism.

IN THE MESSAGE sent me from the recent convention of the SWP you write that Trotsky's ideas continue to be your guide. I must tell you that I read these words with great bitterness. As you observe from what I have written above, I do not see his ideas in your politics. I have confidence in these ideas. I remain convinced that the only way out of the present situation is the social revolution, the self-emancipation of the proletariat of the world.

NATALIA SEDOVA

Mexico, May 9, 1951.

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## WAS THE BEAK A WILDCAT?

WORK OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Robert J. McGirk, recently convicted in Southampton of driving under the influence of drink, claimed that he should not be disqualified because he was a trade union official.

NIGHT SHIFT AND ALL. He told the magistrates he was a member of the Borough Council and a TGWU organizer. It was essential he be able to drive. During strikes he had been called out at 2.30 am. 'It is part of my job to try and avert strikes' he said.

COPS AND COUNCILS. Prosecution said his car was seen stopped in the middle of the road. Asked by a police officer what the trouble was, McGirk replied 'No trouble. I'm on the borough council'. Told he would be arrested, he said: 'You have no authority to arrest me. I am on the corporation. I want the chief constable.'

NO GRATITUDE FOR SERVICES RENDERED. McGirk was fined £50 and disqualified for a year.

(With apologies to the Evening Standard, November 16, 1960, which provided most of the text. The headlines are ours)

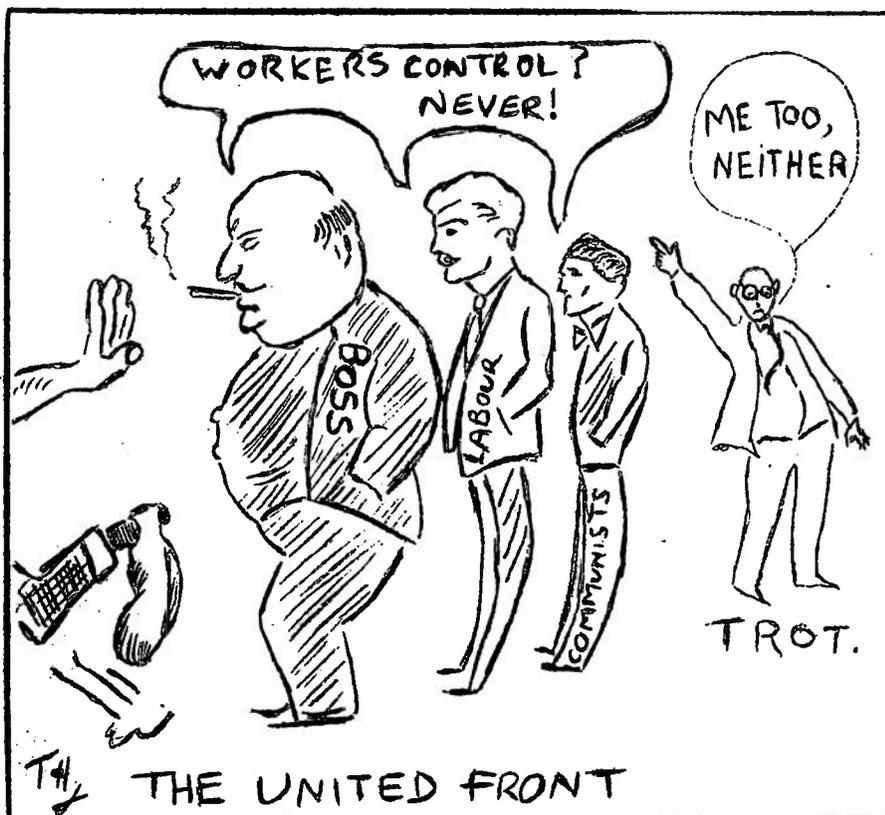
WORK AND WAR. (cont'd from p. 2)

zation for?'. Is it simply to make industry more efficient? Is its purpose to drive the conveyor belt faster and to increase the exploitation of the human labour force? No capitalist would disagree with such objectives. Every tendency in modern capitalism is towards greater centralisation. For some such measures will mean extinction. Others will more or less reluctantly accept necessity, depending on their insight into their own long-term historic interests. As a whole, the ruling class will, if necessary, accept the nationalization of vast sectors of the economy, provided it retains a dominant position in the relations of production. The whole idea that nationalization is the antithesis of capitalism is quite outdated. Labour's 1945-1951 nationalization measures were carried out to assist the recovery of British capitalism. No serious member of the Government Front Bench is in the least concerned in undoing Labour's work.

The common ownership of the means of production is of course necessary if men and women are to build a socialist society. But socialism implies far more than a mere legal change in the status of property. It also implies a lot more than a mere change of administrative personnel. Socialism implies a complete change in the entire relations of production. This can only take place providing the mass of the producers themselves manage the new property forms and provided they themselves take all the important decisions relating to the volume of production, to the conditions of production and to the distribution of the social product. The Labour Party cannot of course advocate this type of socialism. Its every idea is

a capitalist idea, determined by the requirements of the present society. Neither, of course, can the Communist Party. For to advocate these ideas is to explode the myth that there is anything socialist about the Russian economy.

No discussion of these topics (which really deal with what socialism is all about) today disturbs Labour's meeting halls. Instead, in order to obtain what is referred to as 'the broadest possible agreement' a miserable common denominator unites the anti-Gaitskell forces. Last July, the Clause Four Campaign Committee



met to discuss how to 'defend' the famous clause. Some of its members suggested the Committee link the defence of the Clause with a campaign for workers' control, thereby ensuring support from workers in 'nationalized' industries. At this modest enough demand the Trotskyists on this committee shuddered with horror. Inspired by visions of a popular front with such doughty Lefts as Swingler and Silverman, they were anxious not to jeopardize the prospects of this wonderful honeymoon. Patiently, the Trots explained their 'basic' agreement with the demand but the inadvisability of raising it 'at this stage'. 'You see, comrade, by talking about workers' control, you may drive out of the campaign a whole number of Labour 'Lefts', who, while agreeing to defend the Clause, are not yet prepared to go 'as far' as the demand for workers control.' This type of 'reasoning', with its emphasis on 'tactics' (i.e. an unprincipled manipulation of the working class) shows how far the Trotskyists movement has today degenerated and how valid is the contention that it is merely a 'left cover for Stalinism'.

All this would be ludicrous if one did not pause to assess the real implications of such manoeuvres. To advocate nationalisation without even mentioning the subject of workers' control, not only deprives the Campaign of any real working class support (few industrial workers would swap their present jobs for jobs on the 'nationalized' railways) but it also presents as 'progressive' and 'socialist' measures which have nothing in common with socialism, but which simply conform with the basic requirements of the concentration of capital. Here is the logical culmination of work in the Labour Party: finishing up as spokesmen for the

needs of capital and arguing against the most fundamental of all socialist demands.

Never has the gap been wider between the real interests of the working class (namely, themselves to control the conditions under which they work) and the programmes advocated by the various self-interested saviours of humanity. This schism exacerbates the whole crisis on the political 'Left' today. But it promises a solution far more radical and far more fundamental than the most revolutionary of our present thinkers can even envisage.

TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT  
ISSUE.

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ANTI-WAR CONFERENCE

A conference of socialist anti-war organizations was held in Leeds on November 19-20. Represented were the ILP, Commonwealth, the Syndicalist Workers Federation, Socialism Reaffirmed ('Agitator'), the Socialist Association, the Leeds Group for Marxist Unity and the Revolutionary Socialist Association. The Workers League had sent several observers. Also present was a group which preferred its name not to be divulged and spoke loudly for 'participation in the mass movement', by which it meant the putrefying corpse of social-democracy.

The ten-point resolution finally adopted is printed in full in the Socialist Leader for November 26. Leaflets and further details about the recall Conference to be held early in 1961, may be obtained from the acting Secretary, G. Stone, c/o ILP office, 48 Dundas Street, Glasgow C.1.

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# (FIRST) CLASS STRUGGLE

Sunday's 6.25 from Birmingham to London was packed: six extra coaches, 45 minutes late, and still bulging. Someone's plan had obviously gone off the rails. A dense second-class throng jammed the first class corridors. Traditional chivalry and enlightened self-interest ushered the standers, ladies first, into the lush emptiness of the compartments.

But crisis hovered. One by one, slowly, reluctantly, then almost violently, the lesser breed of travellers were cajoled back into the corridor, then forward down the train. As the crowd thickened, confusion grew. 'Plenty of seats forward' an official assured us, grabbing our non-U tickets.

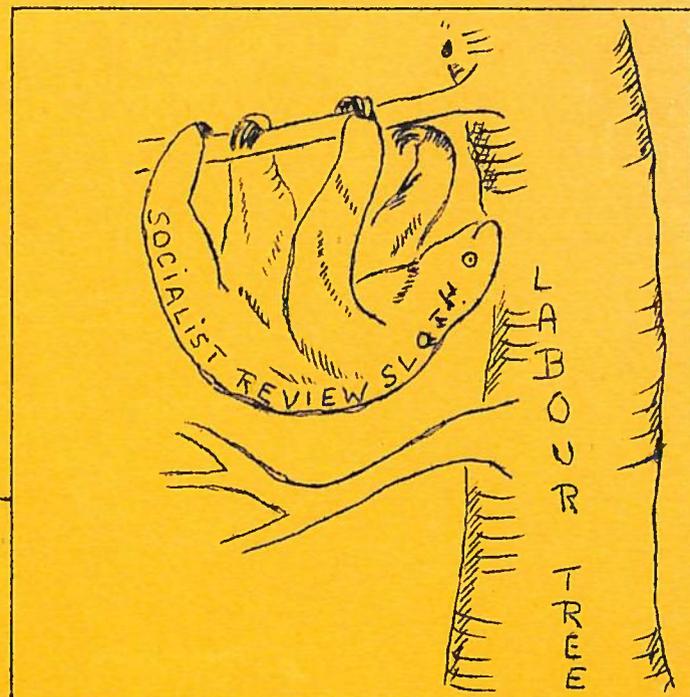
'I beg your pardon, my good man' said an unusually superior-sounding non-U: 'I've struggled, fought and all but bloody well crawled the length of your lousy train. And you, sir, are talking nonsense!'. 'Just get down there!' snapped back the voice of rebuked Authority. 'And you, too' it continued, barking at an innocent bystander, surrendering his ticket. 'Shut your trap' replied the innocent, without even looking up from his paper, 'I'm reading'.

Retreating before this directive the inspector stepped forward to continue his duties of organizer-cum-policeman. A foot slid out. The inspector went headlong into a touchingly intimate collision with a blond and buxom lady. 'Hooray!' 'Bigamist!' 'Cad!' 'Rape!' 'Pay her!'. The coach echoed to joyful

clamours for a demonstration from 'Lady C.'. Coyly, the blonde ventured: 'Oh, Sir! Don't I have to pay now?'.

Gone at last the useless defence of the empty first class seats from the proletarian horde. Gone the rules, the regulations and the blustering official, as fast as his flat feet could take him. Several non-U's stepped obligingly out of his way... into first class compartments. Deprived of the tickets branding them second class people, they settled down, victorious in their unaccustomed comfort, there to write this little tale, with me.

MARCO POLO.



< **SLOTH:** lives hanging upside down from Labour Party wards, suspended by its long resolutions. They move extremely slowly and feed on general confusion.

With apologies to Odham's Encyclopaedia for Children.