SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKERS' POWER

Volume 2 Number 9

6D

We're allright, Jack!

The Jack Court of Enquiry, now in session 'investigating' labour relations at Fords, throws an interesting light on the workings of the British State, and on the value to it of the trade union officials.

The Court consists of ex-professor D.T. Jack, aided by two assessors from the Ford Motor Company and two assessors from the TUC. The Ford assessors are two managers (noted for their militancy). The TUC assessors are two trade union officials (not noted for militancy, other than verbal). Both 'sides' are therefore well and truly'represented'. The only people left out appear to be the men themselves. It would not be out of place to say: 'what about the workers?'.*

Both 'sides' of the Court are opposed to 'unofficial' action. Both are opposed to the Shop Stewards Committee. Both are for increased production 'to help the export drive'. Both stand for 'law and order' in industry, the law and the order of the employers. What differences they may have are on minor tactics of how best to deal with the men.

The workers 'spokesmen' giving evidence at the Court were all trade union officials. Some had long records of vicious opposition to the Fords Shop Stewards Committee, such as J. O'Hagan (National Union of Blast Furnacemen, Ore Miners, Coke Workers and Kindred Trades), W.B. Beard (United Patternmakers Association), and Les Kealey (TGWU). Others had long records of judicious silence, like Claude Berridge (AEU), that well-known life-long 'prisoner of the right-wing'.

Even the 'independent' Chairman of the Court (ex-professor D.T.Jack, CBE, MA, JP, of Durham University) has a long and excellent record of service to the Establishment. He is an economist and it is he who first put forward the bright idea that the Treasury should be the final arbiter of wage claims. He also helped the Government initiate the infamous Cohen Council, which first proposed the 'wage pause'. His last foray into the Court of Enquiry business was in 1958 when he was Chairman of a rather similar 'Jack' Enquiry into the BOAC dispute. Predictably, the Court savagely attacked the BOAC Joint Shop Stewards Committee. It recognized that 'the curbing of disruptive elements presents a problem for the trade unions'. It advised that 'the disruptive (how they love that word!) behaviour of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee was a matter to which the unions concerned should give their most careful attention'. In due course Professor Jack was rewarded with the Chairmanship of the Civil Aviation Transport Licensing Board.

One of the secret agreements reached between the TUC and the Ministry of Labour in setting up the recent Court was that none of the shop stewards should be called to give evidence or any of the sacked workers themselves.

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* No, we are not in favour of 'workers' participation' in Courts of Enquiry!

The final irony of the whole business is that this Court of Enquiry was militantly demanded by the TUC as a quid-pro-quo for 'reluctantly' calling off, once again, the proposed official strike.

Militants need not get too excited about the prospects of the Court putting the Ford Motor Company on the mat. It is on the cards that a deal will be made. In return for a promise by the unions to 'put their house in order' by taking action against the Shop Stewards Committee, the Court might recommend that the Company take back the seventeen men, but as ordinary workers, well split up throughout the plant, or even dispersed in plants elsewhere. The damage will then well and truly have been done.

HALEWOOD STORY

Recent events at Fords new plant at Halewood near Liverpool are a classical illustration of the aims of management today, of their attitude to the full-time trade union officials, and of the role of the local Labour bureaucracy.

The plant, which was started in 1960, will be the new Stamping and Assembly Group. Its construction cost over £28 million. It is one of the most modern and well equipped in the world. When in full production it will employ over 9,000 workers. It is intended eventually to extend it by building a £9 million Transmission plant which will employ a further 2,500 men. The expense has been heavily subsidised by the Government, to bring work to a high unemployment area.

Early in 1960 the Management signed secret agreements with the AEU and the NUGMW. The two unions were conceded 'special rights' to organize the plant, in return for their agreement to rates at Liverpool far below those nationally agreed for all other Ford factories. They also agreed to a 41¼ hour week being worked, compared with 40 hours worked at the other factories. Other aspects of the agreement related to the curtailment of the rights of shop stewards.

Unfortunately for Messrs. Carron and Matthews, news of the agreement leaked out. Officers of the 20 other unions, led by the TGWU, were up in arms. Someone had pulled a fast one! They had been robbed!

Some militants naively hoped that Kealey, Beard and O'Hagan had changed their spots. Would they now campaign against the use of the Merseyside unemployed as a pool of cheap labour? Not a bit of it! All they were saying was 'me too!'. The TGWU demanded (and obtained) equal recruiting rights. At the same time it agreed to the lower rates. The smaller unions are still agitating for equal rights. Perhaps if they undercut the bigger battalions and agreed to still lower wages for their own members they might get somewhere with the Company.

(continued p. 20)

I WORK AT FORDS

A Court of Enquiry is now being held about labour relations at Fords. Management has put its side of the case - the union officials 'the other side'. But no one has spoken for the men. They have no mouthpiece. Neither management nor union officials can speak about life on the shop floor at Fords. They don't know. Both 'sides' ponce on production. Both are outside of it. That's why this 'enquiry' is a farce.

B. J. has worked for several years in one of the main shops at Dagenham. This is what life is really like at Fords.

It is a matter of chance which particular job a new entrant to Fords finds he is lumbered with. Say the firm wants 20 assembly operators, 15 machine operators, 4 janitors and 12 foundry workers, in that order. The job the new bloke gets will be decided by his position in the queue the morning of the interview. A man with HNC certificates finds himself tightening nuts and bolts on the assembly lines. Ex-farm labourers find themselves time clerks and inspectors. The whole selection process is rather like that in the forces.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

Working conditions at Fords have not improved during the past few decades as much as in other industries. Walk through the main doorway of the plant on any week-day and the atmosphere seems to knock you off your feet. Fumes from the Heat-Treat. Fumes from the foundry. The stench of stale burnt oil. The air seems full of swarf. Oil everywhere. Your clothes are blackened by just standing in the filthy atmosphere for an hour or two. In the lines the machines are so filthy with this mixture of metal-dust, oil and dirt that Fords never have to re-paint their machines. And after a few hours' work the men start to look like the fixtures. No wonder the tea and cakes have to be well covered... unless the worker would like to eat oil as well as breathe it.

The floor gets covered with a thick film. When it rains water drips down from holes in the roof, turning the same floor into a slippery hazard. Make a complaint about the dangerous floor and the answer is the usual one: 'If you don't like it here, get another job!'.

This pretty well sums up the attitude of the authorities to conditions of work. One assembly shop steward complained of a metal plate fastened to the floor. The supervisor told him: 'Tell the men to be careful of it!'. The steward persisted with his complaint, pointing out that the plate could cause a very serious accident. Suddenly the supervisor seemed to wake up. 'Good Heavens! Can't have any man off work through injury this week. Last week it wouldn't have mattered, but this week we're short of labour'.

DISCIPLINE.

Discipline is harshly enforced. If a man is late for work five times in any month, he is sacked. This regulation is less strictly enforced when there is a labour shortage. If the worker is a minute late, he's late - whether it be caused by rail delays, cancelled bus services, or any normally valid excuse. Mind you, if you're well up the foreman's arse he might clock you in and save you trouble.

One man was summoned to appear in court as a police witness. The next day his supervisor told him his 'absence was inexcusable', and that it would be marked up on his record. The man protested, claiming that the supervisor's attitude was in opposition to the Factory Acts. The supervisor replied: 'The Factory Acts do not apply'. Although the man may have been arguing about laws he didn't know much about, the attitude of the supervisor is the important thing.

HIERARCHY OF COMMAND.

The face of management the average Ford worker comes across is that of the department supervisor. The foremen are his disciples: they get the rockets from him for department failings. The foremen in turn pass them on to the chargehands. The chargehands then pass them on to the common herd below.

Foremen decide when to speed-up, when to reduce labour (norm system), and when to give workers the 'psycho' treatment... By this latter I mean he will watch, or stare at one chosen victim for an hour or so, thus un-nerving and humiliating his object. Sometimes this 'psycho' treatment is worked in cooperation with the chargehands.

I mustn't forget that, right at the bottom of the chain of command, are the arse-hole crawlers, known universally as the ACs. Sometimes where there is more than one AC to a department, they are known as AC1, AC2, etc. It is from these types that the chargehands of the future will come, as old chargehands are transferred, die or resign. The promoted AC gets his new position from his 'attitude' to the management rather than from length of service or knowledge of the job. Often men with ten months' service are promoted, while others with 15 years' service are ignored!

One case I knew of was an AC who was promoted after seven months' service. He didn't know one operation from another. He just hadn't a clue. The other workers had to show him his job. After all, he had to bollock them if they made mistakes, so he had to know what to look for! Only a few knew how he got the foreman's favours. He heard the foreman was building a bungalow, and offered to help. Using his old van he would raid building sites by night and come along with plenty of fixtures and fittings. These all found their way to the foreman. During weekends our AC friend helped in the building operations. This is one way to promotion at Fords!

SPEED-UP.

All the time there is a continual battle between men and management, the latter trying to get more and more work out of the former, who in turn resist the increasing demands put upon them. Thus a sub-assembly line may have 11 men producing 50 units an hour. Production is speeded to 60 an hour, but only one extra man is added. If schedule falls to 55 per hour, the man is taken away. If it falls to the original 50, another man goes!

So the line is reduced to 10 men at 50 units per hour. In time, if the management gets its way, the line will be reduced to 8 men working at break-neck speed producing 70 units an hour.

Some time ago an article was circulating in the shop. It dealt with the latest production methods in 'Communist' China: the norm system. The article was read with great interest. We all agreed it was very much the same system Fords have been using for years.

The drive for speed-up never slackens, especially as the supervisor at times gets a 'production bonus'. Don't imagine the worker gets a production bonus as well! No such luck! He gets his wages. So although the drive for greater productivity comes continuously from above, whenever the militant shop steward has a bash about it, the answer he gets is: 'We don't cover our costing! We are well below what we should be producing now! We are well over-staffed as it is! This department is running at a loss!'.

It's very funny! No department ever seems to cover its costing, yet at the end of the year there always seems to be a handsome profit overall. It was calculated one year that the management could comfortably pay all the workers double wages, and still show £10 million clear profit.

UNITY AGAINST THE SPEED-UP.

Here is an example of the men's resistance to speed-up. On an assembly line the men were scheduled to produce 96 engines, although they had only the men to produce 90. Management brought pressure to bear, the lines started going faster. Production leapt to 106 an hour, until this increase was noted by one of the workers, whereupon he stopped the line. The chargehand remonstrated: 'What's wrong? Why has the line stopped?'. The man told him: 'The speed. We're making up to 110 per hour'. 'Up to the office', said the chargehand (prelude to suspension and sack). As they walked towards the office the chargehand noticed that the whole section (minus a few ACs and company men) were following. 'All right, forget it', he said, 'Back to work'.

MERIT MONEY.

One of the schemes used by the management to extract that 'little extra' is the awarding of merit money. In theory, this is an additional copper or two on the hourly rate (basic rate 7/4½d per hour) awarded for good time-keeping, cooperation, etc.

In theory the worker should be granted it automatically, on merit. In practice he has to beg and scrape. First he asks the chargehand: 'What about a penny? I've been here 18 months and haven't had one yet'. The chargehand probably says he'll consider it. After 3 or 4 months the worker might approach the foreman, then the supervisor. Then maybe he gets it. Making it difficult to get in this way, and at the same time using it as a bait to be begged for, all help to psychologically adapt the worker to understand where he belongs in the Ford society.

THE SUGGESTION SCHEME.

Another scheme used by the employer is the 'suggestion box'. The boss wants the job cheapened, and labour costs cut. And who knows better how this could be done than the worker himself? A bribe of a few pounds for the worker, and a saving of thousands for the boss.

One of our workers wrote a little poem about the suggestion scheme. Although it may not be Shakespeare, it does express the feelings of the

majority of the men:

'At Fords they have a suggestion scheme,
Those who "suggest" are called the "Judas team",
For a few pounds, and perhaps a few bob,
They think of a way to do mates out of a job.'

Sometimes the management goes really mad. It offers prizes (pens, packs of cards, etc.) to all who make a suggestion, whether adopted or not. Here is an opportunity for the men to pit their intelligence against the boss, to win the prizes with worthless suggestions, but which must nevertheless appear to be genuine. So we get ideas like carpets on the floor to soak up the oil and prevent the men slipping, or polythene tractor wheels. Dozens of men submit the same idea, maybe just a word or two different. Quite a number of prizes have been taken away like this.

PROFITS FIRST, HEALTH LATER.

The indifference of Fords to the workers' health is often apparent. Sometimes it could only be described as brutality. If a man has a serious accident while working, the chargehand rushes straight to the time-clock, to clock him out, fearful that he (or perhaps his widow) might get a penny more than he is entitled to.

One man, an engine assembler, had to have an operation to mend a hernia. The Ford medical department notified the supervisor that the man was only fit for light duties. But the worker in question, not being one of the foreman's ACs was left on heavy work. 'If you can't do it, get another job. You're no good to me', the supervisor told him. Not surprisingly the man's wound burst open again. Back he went to hospital for more stitches. The medical department informed the patient that they had no power to compel the supervisor to grant light duties.

Another man, in the P.T.A. building where I work, sustained a head injury at work. After 20 minutes or so of trying to carry on in a dazed condition, blood everywhere, he just left the line and went to the nearest medical unit. He required, and received, 3 stitches. On his return to the assembly line he was escorted to the supervisor's office and sacked on the spot for 'leaving his job without permission'.

FORDS PROMISES.

When it comes to making vague promises and then going back on them, no employer in history could compete with ours! Perhaps the best example concerned the 'F' building at Dagenham, containing the assembly lines for commercial vehicles. It was decided to move this section of the plant to Langley (Bucks). The management hoped eventually to recruit local labour for the operations required. But in the intermediate stage there was a need for Dagenham workers to go to Langley to help train the new recruits. 'You help us now, and we won't forget you', was the appeal of the management.

A few workers, chargehands, etc, did volunteer to go to Langley 'for a few weeks'. But nowhere near the required number of volunteers came forward. So eventually the bosses decided that what could not be done by exhortation would have to be achieved by threats. 'Either you go to Langley for a few weeks, or you find yourself another job', became the new attitude. The management could not understand how men could possibly refuse. Just think of it: five hours paid travelling time a day, rail fares all paid, and good jobs awaiting on the final return to Dagenham! Particularly

shameful was the attitude of the unions to this 'mass transfer'. The unions of course agreed that the employer had every right to transfer his workers from one factory to another, like so much cattle, as business required.

Six months later Langley was running under newly recruited labour. The men returned to Dagenham only to find that their supervisor - who was to be waiting for them with the new jobs - didn't even expect them back! Slowly it dawned on them that they'd been well and truly led up the garden path. In ones and twos they were pushed in here and there, in various other buildings... many of them eventually leaving in disgust. Many of the men felt that it served them right 'for being stupid enough to believe Ford promises'.

THE PURGES.

Every few years Fords carry out a major purge of 'malcontents', 'obstructionists', 'communists', etc. All who are not ACs are liable to be victims if the management gets its way. Ironically enough even the odd company man might get the push to keep the others on their toes, and to encourage the 'proper attitude to management'. This is very important to the powers that be, much more important we often feel than the quality of the work we turn out.

The conditions for a purge are manufactured in a typically brutal way. Although work may be slacking off due to lack of orders, the management continues to recruit. In this way they build up a 'stockpile' of labour. Then the purge! Out go the reds, the militants, the old boys almost due for a pension. The aftermath is often further subjection.

THE WHISPER.

The struggle between employer and worker finds a reflection in the antagonism between the ACs and the blokes who see their first loyalty to their own workmates, instead of to the boss. Such a person, the anti-boss worker, may become the object of a 'whisper' campaign, launched by the ACs. 'This man is a red'. 'This man has been to prison'. Such are the little whisperings that are spread around. As the charges are never made openly, the victim cannot defend himself. The end of the road is the sack, because the whisper sooner or later reaches the powers that be. I've seen quite a few whisper victims myself. Taking the plant as a whole there must be scores of them.

THE CANTEEN.

The canteens at Fords are owned and managed by a firm of catering contractors: Peter Marchants. Space and gas are hired from Fords. Hence the meals are no cheaper than in outside cafes. Individual items are often dearer.

Higher executives have different canteen rooms, of course. When it was pointed out that these people got superior food, yet paid no more for it, we received the reply that 'higher executives need a meal more in relation to their class, to the position held'. So the worker has no choice but to subsidise his bosses' dinner!

The general dirty atmosphere, full of metal dust, filters into the canteen as it does everywhere else in the factory. This, and the high cost of the food, encourages masses of workers to bring sandwiches and a thermos flask of tea, rather than enrich still further the canteen shareholders.

TEA BREAK.

During the first period, the workers have their tea break. Canteen

girls lug and push the tea trolleys carrying the heavy urns of tea, trays laden with cups, and usually some wrapped rolls or cakes. On most lines and machine sections the men take turns to be 'tea boys', that is to collect the money from his mates and to buy and deliver their tea. At the chargehand's signal, usually a whistle, the lines stop and the men flop down on specially hidden boxes, cases, old bins, etc. Being seated is discouraged by the management, so the seats have to be hidden. For 10 minutes the workers become ordinary human beings drinking tea, eating a sandwich, smiling, talking, reading the morning paper. Someone always keeps an eye on the time, lest the foreman rob us of a minute by starting the line early, which often happens. It's during the tea break that the 'sides' sort themselves out - the men on the one hand, the foremen and ACs on the other.

TIME STUDY.

One of the major means of controlling the workers' every motion is 'time study' or the 'Points Handicap System'. The management continually seeks to increase the worker's output by watching and controlling every second of his activity. Even such trivial events as visits to the toilet are watched and timed.

The effect on the men is shown by the comment of one dunkey merchant (one who sells surgical rubber goods). 'Five years ago I did a good trade along the machine lines and the nearby assembly lines. Now I don't sell half of what I used to. Sometimes it's a waste of time even trying. God kitted them out with a set of tools, but they haven't any strength to use them after a day's work in here'.

The aim of time study is to get one man doing the work of two, then three, then four. Who knows? If it all went the way they wanted it to, one day there might only be one worker, one assembly line, one weekly wage packet to fill. As the timers time the jobs, reducing the labour force, they always claim they are only fighting to 'cover costing'. No department ever covers its costs. But this is where we came in. I've explained all this before. It's the same old story. It just goes on, and on, and on...

B. J.

'The Company emphasises that wildcat strikes will not be tolerated in the future. Employees who go on unofficial strike must not assume that they will be able to return to their jobs automatically... These measures are designed to restore the joint authority of the unions and of the Company and to combat the activities of those who have no loyalty to either.'

Official Ford Motor Company notice issued Nov. 20, 1962.

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'The trade unions recognize the right of the Company to exercise such measures as are expressed within the Agreements against employees who fail to comply with the conditions of their employment by taking unconstitutional action...

Statement signed by all Fords unions, October 12, 1962.

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'Unfortunately a number of stewards of certain unions at Dagenham have got into the habit of trying to solve their own problems.'

Statement issued by Les Kealey Nat. Sec., Engineering Group, TGWU

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'Press your union executive for action now.'

From 'What's Wrong at Fords', pamphlet published by Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

OPPOSITION IN CND

The recent headlong retreat of CND towards traditional-type politics (temporary 'acceptance', for 'tactical' reasons, of Russian and American Bombs, shelving of the 1962 Conference decision on industrial action, increasing emphasis on 'winning over' the traditional political parties, renewed calls for 'discipline' on the March and increasing attempts to impose it from above, drift towards a 'membership organization') have provoked ructions in the ranks, which we are pleased to publicize.

I. WITNEY CND

TEXT OF LEAFLET: 'STEPS AWAY FROM PEACE'

'Whatever others may do or threaten to do to us, we will not sanction the use by our rulers, in our name, of the Bomb on others'. CND has built on the basis of this clear and concise ethical statement a formidable movement. This represents a considerable achievement. Five years ago radicalism in Britain was in disarray after the defeats of the Left at the Brighton Labour Party Conference. In these five years and on this basis CND has grown and this growth has sparked off a revival of radicalism in other fields.

Therefore organizationally, as well as in principle, unilateralism is the corner stone of CND. Unilateralism has an appeal because it is a principle and not merely a tactic. However a principle has universal application, and to limit advocacy of unilateral disarmament by saying that it is applicable in only one country is to damage the very foundations of CND.

The old internationalist socialist movement had the slogan 'The Enemy is in your own country'. This typified the need for the peoples of each nation to oppose the evils for which they and their own rulers were responsible. Unilateralism may be said to be an expression of this need. Therefore it would contradict the whole basis of the movement if CND should support an international movement on any other basis than <u>unilateralism in each and every country</u>.

CND has recently published a statement ('Steps Towards Peace') which differs in no vital respect from policies unofficially advocated by members of the Pentagon or Kremlin: namely that American and Russian Bombs should remain for the moment unchallenged but that all other countries should disarm and be neutralised. They assume that Russia and America would then be more likely to disarm multilaterally (a large presumption).

AGAINST THIS ACTION OF THE EXECUTIVE WITHOUT CONFERENCE MANDATE, WE - THE WITNEY NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT GROUP - MAINTAIN THE BASIS OF THE CAMPAIGN, STATING AGAIN THAT UNILATERALISM IS A PRINCIPLE THAT CANNOT BE LIMITED TO ANY ONE COUNTRY AND POINTING OUT THAT CONFERENCE CALLS FOR LINKS AT ALL LEVELS, WITH UNILATERALIST MOVEMENTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

2. LAMBETH YCND

TEXT OF LETTER TO PEGGY DUFF

'We, the undersigned, are members of Lambeth YCND. Since the publication of CND's new policy statement - 'Steps Towards Peace' - we have found ourselves in a position where we disagree more and more with the policies of the Executive.

There has been a noticeable lack of discussion or criticism of this policy in 'Sanity' and 'Youth Against the Bomb', even though several large groups, to our knowledge, have condemned Step I. Why has no publicity been given to these groups? Was it thought that this might result in a certain amount of controversy and be likely to cause a split in the movement?

We, also, wish to disassociate ourselves from Step I of the statement because we would never sanction the retention of the Bomb by the USA and the USSR. We do not wish to become a mouthpiece for either the American or Russian Embassies.

With reference to our annual excursion from Aldermaston to London, we resent the fact that political banners should be condemned whilst religious identification approved of. Perhaps the Executive is unaware that more people have been slaughtered in the name of 'god' than in any other cause. And how does the Executive hope to implement this decision? Will stewards on the march ask for assistance from 'friendly' policemen?

WE have no intention of resigning over your shamefaced shelving of the decision on industrial action, and although bombarding Parliament with 'Magna Carta' postcards may be easier than winning over industrial workers, we have no illusions as to which would be the more effective.

In the not too distant future will it be possible to hear the Executive's version of the incidents concerning Marylebone CND? There have been some nasty accusations made against various people from London Region and National CND. Unless an official statement is issued very soon, we can only assume that they are true.

The overall impression that one gets from these emasculations, distortions and ominous silences is that certain people are afraid of possible proscription of CND by a future Labour Government. What would be more fitting than to quote here the two 'grand old gentlemen' of British political life?

'The first task of the Labour Government was to complete the winning of the war against Japan and the general anticipation had been that this might prove to be a long and difficult one... But the use of the atom bomb at Hiroshima (and Nagasaki *) brought the war to a sudden end. It was of course an immense relief.'

ATTLEE,
'As it Happened', p.150

'All those concerned in the production of the first British atomic bomb are to be warmly congratulated on the successful outcome of an historic episode and I should no doubt pay my compliments to the Leader of the Opposition and the party opposite for initiating it.'

CHURCHILL,
House of Commons,
Hansard, October 24, 1952.

SIGNED:

David BARR
Jean BELL
John BELL
Reginald COOK
Peter CRONSHAW
Martin GOPPE
A. HEDGECOCK
Andrew HIRSCHORN
Kathleen HUNBY
Michael HUTTON
C. RYALLS
Janet RYALLS
Maxine SMITH
D. WALKER
Michael WALKER
Caroline WELLS
Peter WILLIAMS.

3. KENT YCND

CONFERENCE REPORT

This is to let you know about the Kent Region YCND Conference, in Chatham, on Sunday February 24.

In the morning session on 'POLICY' the main discussion was on the following resolution: 'That we do not believe in the "gradualness" of nuclear disarmament and that the Region should continue a policy of total opposition to atomic bombs and their supporting institutions and hence not accept compromise policies, even when agreed by its national counterpart.'

'STEPS TOWARDS PEACE' immediately became the issue. Not one person spoke in its favour. The real issue became an amendment 'That the words

"even when agreed by its national counterpart" be deleted.' We heard all the usual bullshit: 'We might get thrown out of the national campaign, it would be anarchy if regions pursued separate policies, etc.'. The amendment was finally carried by 29 to 24, after a recount. Nevertheless, at the end of the afternoon, an emergency resolution was passed overwhelmingly (if not unanimously) deploring Peggy Duff's threat to 'dissociate' Westminster CND from the campaign after its secretary had informed her that it rejected 'STEPS TOWARDS PEACE', whilst still supporting general CND policy.

In the afternoon the real fireworks came. It was over Gravesend's resolution 'That Kent YCND should stress the extreme importance of industrial action against the Bomb, and should organize a vigorous campaign to forward this end, including the production of leaflets aimed at industrial workers'.

In the process of moving this I launched an attack on participation in the Labour Party machine and on the weakness of Labour 'lefts'. This provoked several interruptions from the platform from Mrs. Ann Kerr (Labour candidate for Rochester and Chatham) who had opened the afternoon session. She was 'fed up with this political dilettantism'. She told me 'to get out of my beard and into the Party'. Cat-calls, jeers, etc, etc.

Then the predictable happened. The Laws brothers (YCLers) got up, evaded all the arguments, ignored all the qualifications and said simply that they had had industrial experience and 'knew that this resolution should be laughed out of court'. Actually they were the ones laughed out of court. The resolution was carried overwhelmingly. No doubt they will now attempt to prevent its implementation.

Afterwards Mrs. Kerr turned on her charms and came and spoke to us and apologized to me. I'd told her not to interrupt OUR conference and what she could do with the Labour Party.

I was quite surprised to see the strength of opinion against 'STEPS TOWARDS PEACE' and in favour of industrial action. I don't think it's wanted hot air as Gravesend is determined to get the resolution on the latter implemented.

A. H.

HOW TO CONTROL WORKERS

'Leading unions have far too few full-time officials to control members properly, Mr. A.G.Pritchett, managing director of the London engineering firm of Wood, Pritchett & Partners, said yesterday. This was one of the main causes of wildcat strikes'.

Daily Telegraph, 9.1.63.

'Che Guevara, Cuba's Minister of Industries, said yesterday that the trade union movement did not correspond to the needs of the socialist revolution. Its destiny was to disappear. The unions had to learn a new role, that of an ally to management in production. The prime thing was production'.

Observer, 3.2.63.

WE WANT WORK

The whole atmosphere surrounding West Hartlepool is one of decay. Factories stand idle. Girders, red with rust, lie about in the churned up frozen solid mud of factory yards. The main shopping streets were not very crowded, even on Christmas Eve. Even the pubs were half empty, a sure sign of unemployment in the North.

More than 3,000 are on the dole in Hartlepool, or 12 per cent of all insured workers. The Government's report that the 'country is going to the dogs' because we've too much to spend on horses, fridges, and holidays on the Costa Brava, does not even raise a cynical smile in West Hartlepool.

I spent Christmas Eve talking to men on short time and on the dole.

At the new £5 million strip rolling mill blokes are only working 4 shifts a week - and two weeks out of three. In the Labour Exchange men in cloth caps and mufflers hang about, lending each other fags and a few bob. They don't even expect a week's work now - a day's work would be a god send. If there are no jobs they all go down to the beach to scrape up the coal, which is washed up from the off-shore seams. They bag it and flog it for a couple of bob a bag.

Down on the beach, shivering in a cold wind blowing off the North Sea, I talked to Tom J., 27 year old steel worker, out of work for 9 months: 'I'd like to give old Mac a kick in the balls'. Arthur G., 24 year old skilled fitter, out of work 2 months: 'I don't like that ------- Leadbitter (West Hartlepool prospective Labour M.P.); he is too smooth. Vote Labour and you'll be allright. Don't bother to think for yourselves. Does he think we're a bunch of cunts or something? All he wants to do is get into Parliament'.

Bitterness. Anger. This is the mood in this town. And this was the mood of Ray P., 24 year old ex-merchant navy seaman, blacklisted after the great seamen's strike, when he was secretary of the West Hartlepool strike committee. Bitterness towards the employers. Bitterness towards the Labour Party and trade union leaders. Anger towards the Tories. 'The Labour Party in West Hartlepool has done fuck all. The only hope for the working class must come from the rank and file militants in industry'. Of the trade union leaders he said: 'All they can say is get back to work. Then they drag up the Red bogey. All they are concerned with is becoming "responsible". What ever happened to the class struggle?'.

As the wife of one of the unemployed workers told me: 'I've been saving 2/6 a week since August to buy my bairn a red train and ourselves a joint for Christmas. All the same we're not going to have much fun this Xmas'.

TERRY MILNE.

news, views..

I read with some amazement and disgust a footnote related to your leader on CND, concerning 'the capture' of St.Marylebone CND by the Communist Party (issue - Volume 2, No.7). This is an extremely vile statement to publish at a time when unity in the Peace Movement is needed so desperately. You present no facts with the note, merely making a vague reference to your next issue, this by no means ensues that all people who read this particular issue are going to acquire the next and read your documentation of the charges, and so have the chance to make up their own minds, you have very cleverly planted some seeds of doubt and confusion.

Your knowledge of Communist Party policy and tactics seems to be sadly lacking. You forget that the Communist views the struggle against the bomb as an integral part of the struggle against Capitalism and therefore he must desire victory, understanding perfectly well that a Communist 'leadership' in CND groups would certainly not provide the unity necessary for a victory, owing to the considerable anti-Communist element in CND. The Communist desires full unity on the broadest front possible and would do anything to avoid possible fragmentation of any kind.

All ranks of the CND must be continually on the alert to put a stop to the fascist-type activities of a handful of individuals who are obviously determined to jeopardize our chances.

D. Gollop
(Sec. Surbiton CND)

(You must still be living in the good old period of the Moscow Trials, Comrade Gollop. 'Fascist-type activities'? Just because we tread - good and hard - on some bureaucratic toes?

In our last issue - II, 8 - we fully documented the charges made in II, 7, in relation to Marylebone CND. In our next - Aldermaston - issue, we will fully discuss the bureaucratisation of CND and the part played by the Communist Party. Readers will judge whether 'our knowledge of Communist Party policy and tactics is sadly lacking'... or whether we just happen to have rather longer memories than Comrade Gollop.)

* * * * *

Ever since we have returned from Europe I've gradually reading the stuff we picked up there. Your 'Solidarities' and the few 'Solidarity' pamphlets had worked their way down to the bottom of a large sack. So I did not get to them until a couple of days ago. When I did, I completely flipped - they're tremendous!

Your 'What Next for Engineers' sticks out like an oasis. And Cardan's is very good, despite its shortcomings. Promising, I guess, is the word to apply...

Robert C., New York.

...and abuse!

Why must you be so damned inconsistent?

I was a follower of Bronstein before being converted to your way of thinking after reading 'Socialism or Barbarism'. I then read 'Solidarity', hoping it would be up to the same standard. What a let-down !

Some of the articles were very good, the ones that were reprints, while others - ugh! An example is the busman's holiday article (vol.II, no.6). This was not fit to be published in the 'Daily Herald'.

Please let us have more theory and stop trying to chase readers away. I can quote numerous examples of people who would not read 'Solidarity' because of its language. The odd swear word here and there is allright. Articles like 'Beat the Heat' are funny. But at times you can be sickening.

Ron F., somewhere in Scotland.

P.S. I would prefer it if my own name was not signed at the end of the letter since I am in trouble with the local Labour Party and they might use the fact that I am even slightly connected with 'Solidarity' as the straw that broke the camel's back

* * * * *

'Solidarity' does seem to be the only paper that can be profitably read from cover to cover by plant workers and students alike.

Adrian C., Cambridge.

* * * * *

I am a twenty-three year old centre lathe turner and am not, as yet, a member of the Communist Party, although I have 'leanings' in that direction.

As an AEU member I am mainly interested in your pamphlets. I feel there is an urgent need for some kind of literature that will counteract the effects of the abuse and lies that men in dispute are constantly subjected to.

Your own pamphlets are aimed at people who are already awake to what is going on around them, but I feel they do not reach the minds of people who have been conditioned by the national press, television, and every other capitalist-controlled source of information.

I suggest a slightly more subtle approach is required. For example remarks about trade union leaders sweeping the streets ('The BLSP Dispute') are superfluous to people who already have similar views and are liable to be branded as 'fanatical' by people who, as yet, have not. Also in your BLSP pamphlet you pick out some of the more extreme examples of the men's militancy. These are very stimulating to fellow militants but may have a different effect upon the 'Daily Mirror' reading public. These are the people you should at least try to reach.

We all feel strongly about these things, brother. I should like to make it clear that I do not suggest that you moderate your opinions, only your methods of expressing them. I think you should do that in order that your pamphlets may be aimed, success-

fully, at a wider section of the community.

I think some of your criticisms of the Communist Party are unfair. There are many good lads in the C.P. and I appeal to you not to run the risk of splitting the ranks of militant workers.

D.C., Potters Bar, Mddx.

* * * * *

I was pleased to see that you had taken up the question of the homeless. With the official Left one often thinks that they regard homelessness as a step forwards in that it breaks up the family and introduces the women and children to communal living.

However I have some criticisms. At the time that Newington Lodge was being given a great deal of publicity a radio programme announced that most of the families there were earning £20 per week and so were only homeless temporarily. The rest were all problem families who threw butter at the walls!

Some of those who wrote in the pamphlet have the same attitude towards other homeless families. Your writer should have pointed out more strongly the psychological effects that losing one's home, being separated as a family, and being put into an institution, must have upon the normal person. They must feel completely depressed and hopeless.

Possibly the type of snobbery exhibited by some of the correspondents is necessary for the individual to maintain his sense of self-respect. That I do not know.

I agree with your conclusions. The homeless must fight for themselves. Those comfortably housed are only too willing to believe that becoming homeless is the result of a fault or failure in the individual.

Sheila L., Whetstone, N.20.

* * * * *

Please send me 50 of the issue of 'Solidarity' containing Robin Kelsall's article 'Getting 'em Young' for selling at local schools.

The article, though excellent as far as it goes, was in my opinion too negative and not in the 'Solidarity' tradition of analysis followed by constructive suggestions, unlike your excellent 'Homeless' and 'The Meaning of Socialism', which seem to me to be the synthesis between Marxism and Anarchism which had been missing on the Left for half a century.

You ask me about my interests. I am a painter (the art variety). I worked in an office for five years - never again I hope. My industrial experience is nil. I have worked on four farms in my time: the only farm workers with any fight I have ever met had experience off the land, one in factories, the other as a miner. The sad truth is, as I am sure you know, that if you don't get together on your own behalf, you not only get kicked around, you deserve it.

Paul R., East Peckham, Kent.

* * * * *

The article on the Edwards strike in the last issue was received very well in Crawley, with the exception of some of the C.P.members.

I think Grace did a good job. Myself I am highly delighted with the result.

I am convinced you round 'Solidarity' have some right answers. At least you have me completely won on your fresh approach to the problems of winning the class struggle.

Frank D., Crawley.

* * * * * *

AN AFTERNOON WITH 'THE PARTY'

Four days after the publication of our pamphlet 'Homeless - Half-way House Tenants Speak Out', the Battersea Tenants Association organized a march through the streets of the borough to advertise the plight of the homeless, and to demand their re-housing by Christmas... then three weeks off.

I arrived punctually at the assembly point on a bleak Saturday afternoon. Only three people had got there before me: John Evans, described as a 'Battersea Tenants leader' (by the 'Daily Worker'), his wife Marjorie and a reporter (from the 'Daily Worker'). A few anxious minutes passed. Was anyone going to turn up? Would the march have to be cancelled?

Suddenly two more marchers arrived: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, homeless people from Durham Buildings. They went into a huddle with the assembled 'vanguard'.

Edie Thomas shouted at me: 'Your name Bob Potter?'.
'Yes', I replied.
'That pamphlet of yours', she shouted, 'it's all lies'.
'For example', I replied, hoping she would be more specific.
'We don't want anything to do with that rubbish', she went on. The tenants in Durham Buildings are up in arms about the lies and slanders'*

Quietly I asked her which particular 'lies' she had in mind.
'Oh! I have not read the pamphlet. But I've heard all about it', she confessed. 'And if Sir Keith Joseph reads it, he won't help us get new homes', she added hastily, hoping to change the subject.

I asked her if she really believed Sir Keith and his like had the slightest intention of helping her get a new home. Her husband suddenly saw danger. He moved in to assist his wife out of these dangerous waters with a final: 'Don't argue with him'.

John Evans, regular Communist Party candidate for Battersea North at election time, felt he ought to have just one snidy swipe at 'Solidarity'.

'The tenants did not write that pamphlet. You wrote it', he proclaimed.

Sheila Jones, one of the homeless tenants who wrote in 'Homeless' chipped in: 'Oh yes, we did'.

---

* It was later established that no copies of the pamphlet had yet been seen in Durham Buildings.

Evans changed his tactics. He picked on a tenant not present to defend herself.

'Well, Joan Wreford did not write her article', he croaked.
Again Sheila lept in: 'She did. Indeed she wrote a lot of it in my own flat'.

Evans decided it would be better only to talk to the 'comrades'. The matter was dropped.

By now another 'tenants' leader' had arrived: Gladys Easton, full-time CP worker. Slithering up to Sheila Jones she handed her a shilling. 'Buy two from Potter, would you? I don't want to have to speak to him'. Sheila obliged.

By now a coach had arrived from Newington Lodge. Quickly 'the comrades' got to work, assuring newcomers that the pamphlet was to be boycotted at all costs. But a few decided to see for themselves.*

We were now ready to set off. About twenty marchers, five Solidarists, two police constables and a police inspector. As we moved off, I started selling the pamphlet. Imagine the horror of 'the comrades' when they noticed that nearly everyone approached was buying. This had to be stopped. A little consultation between Edie and her old man, and they suddenly started shouting: 'Don't buy that pamphlet... it's all lies'. Like a flash, Evans was with the police inspector. 'The tenants have objected to this pamphlet being sold' he appealed. The copper decided 'a breach of the peace was threatening'. I was warned that if I sold the document in the vicinity of the march I would be arrested.**

We decided we had no choice but to walk along behind the parade and do our selling there. But Brother Thomas decided even this was carrying democracy too far. Several times he left the parade to lead a copper back to our sellers and demand they be stopped. But poor Brother Thomas! The coppers' power is limited. They couldn't stop us.

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* Many copies of this pamphlet have since been sold in Newington Lodge and so far NOT ONE inmate of that institution has had anything but praise for it. The allegations of 'the comrades' that the pamphlet is 'lies' only shows how out of touch the Stalinists are.

** It is true justice that the 'Daily Worker' next day published a picture of the march showing Comrade Evans marching beside his friend from Scotland Yard.

Just what is it in the pamphlet which the Stalinists object to? Two things, as far as we can ascertain:

(1) that the pamphlet says quite bluntly that the tenants must rely on their own strength rather than on professional politicians and working class 'leaders'. As opposed to the call for direct action, the Communist Party is for a policy of 'you mustn't upset the authorities', and 'you mustn't attack the Labour-controlled LCC', to quote but two of the statements made by Comrade Evans at the time. *

(2) that the pamphlet reports the facts as they are. If the occasional tenant is anti-social enough to steal a light bulb from the corridor, we see no harm in saying it. The pamphlet makes it very clear that we see the plight of the homeless as part of the mismanagement of capitalism and the Tory Rent Act. But we refuse to treat the working class in an idealised and abstract way as do the so-called 'Marxists' in the C.P.

It is significant that the Communist Party's public attacks have not once been political. So little confidence do they have in their own dogmas that they find it safer to resort to slander. This is, of course, the well-tried method of stalinism.

The Battersea Tenants Association is fairly typical of an organization run bureaucratically by 'the Party'. Committee members are appointed by Evans, without consultation. Indeed the secretary of the association frequently receives copies of letters signed by himself, sent out by Evans to those of his cronies he chooses to invite to a particular meeting. When the 'Solidarity' pamphlet was mentioned at his last 'committee' meeting, Evans dismissed it simply by saying 'It's a Trotskyist pamphlet, and we all know what the Trots are!'... This tells us as much about his hand-picked audience as it does about the speaker. Who on earth could confuse us with Trots? (apart, of course, from the political 'experts' of the 'Daily Mail'!).

Elsewhere in the movement our pamphlet has met with tremendous success. Some 2,000 have been sold. Members and supporters of the Committee of 100 have helped us with these sales, and many new contacts have been made. We hope to have contributed towards the formation of direct action committees of the homeless. We are convinced that this 'do-it-yourself' approach is the correct one. We ask all readers and supporters of 'Solidarity', especially those who are themselves homeless, to play an active part in this work.

BOB POTTER.

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* On February 15, 1963, Comrade Evans was to attack the LCC rent increases, on the front page of the 'Daily Worker'. They were 'a shocking betrayal of LCC tenants', etc. Sauce for the goose wasn't sauce for the gander!

HALEWOOD STORY (continued from p. 2)

A delegation was sent by the Fords (Dagenham) Shop Stewards Committee to the Liverpool Trades and Labour Council to seek help in getting equal wages for the Halewood plant. All they got for their pains was a sob story about the unemployment situation and how much the jobs were needed. The Council failed to explain how the job situation would be eased by Liverpool men working longer hours for less pay, and by being exploited at a higher rate with even less job organization.

The building site of the Halewood plant has had a troubled history. Sir Patrick Hennessy, flushed with the publicity success of his horror stories about 'disruption' at Dagenham, paid a flying visit to Liverpool in November 1962. He issued a scarifying statement about strikes on the site (while he was there, there were four disputes!). He said that Fords might have to reconsider their plan to build the extension to the Transmission plant.

Fords claim that in the two years during which building work (involving 2,000 workers) had been going on, there had been 84,226 man-hours lost due to disputes ('Daily Telegraph', Nov. 30, 1962). Fords made a bit of a balls-up with their timing. For only a few days later J.M. Kuipers, Assistant Group Manager of the Stamping and Assembly Group at Halewood issued a duplicated letter to workers there which stated: 'I would like you to know that I appreciate the loyal service of all of our employees and the way in which in spite of difficulties, they are progressing with the training and preparatory work, necessary to launch the plants success--fully

We are glad to note that Merseyside workers are not as lacking in solidarity as their local and national 'representatives'. On March 7, the eve of the official opening of the new giant plant, 200 toolmakers banned overtime as the first step in a campaign to achieve the nationally agreed wages and hours. Following this action - which threatened to gain wide solidarity support - the Ford management finally decided to negotiate on a national basis. It is clear that workers at Halewood intend to press on until they have achieved equal wages and conditions with those received in other Ford factories.

KEN WELLER.

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SOLIDARITY costs only
9 shillings for 12 issues (post free). Make sure of your copy.
Write to Bob Potter, 18 Kingsley Road, London S.W.19.

WHITE GUARDS? OR WORKERS? - 4

We here continue our translation of Ida Mett's 'La Commune de Cronstadt'. The series will be concluded in our next issue.

EFFECTS ON THE PARTY RANK AND FILE

On March 2, the Kronstadt sailors, aware of their rights, their duties and the moral authority vested in them by their revolutionary past, attempted to set the soviets on a better path. They saw how distorted they had become through the dictatorship of a single party.

On March 7, the Central Government launched its military onslaught against Kronstadt.

What had happened between these two dates?

In Kronstadt, the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, enlarged during a mass meeting by the cooption of five new members, had started to reorganize social life in both the town and the fortress. It decided to arm the workers of Kronstadt to ensure the internal protection of the town. It decreed the compulsory re-election, within 3 days, of the leading trade union committees and of the Congress of Trade Unions, in which bodies it wished to vest considerable powers.

Rank-and-file members of the Communist Party were showing their confidence in the Provisional Revolutionary Committee by a mass desertion from the Party. A number of them formed a Provisional Party Bureau which issued the following appeal:

'Give no credence to the absurd rumours (spread by provocateurs seeking bloodshed) according to which responsible Party comrades are being shot or to rumours alleging that the Party is preparing an attack against Kronstadt. This is an absurd lie, spread by agents of the Entente, seeking to overthrow the power of the Soviets.

'The Provisional Party Bureau considers re-elections to the Kronstadt Soviet to be indispensable. It calls on all its supporters to take part in these elections.

'The Provisional Party Bureau calls on all its supporters to remain at their posts and to create no obstacles to the measures taken by the Provisional Revolutionary Committee.

'Long live the power of the Soviets!
'Long live international working class unity!'.

Signed (on behalf of the Provisional Party Bureau of Kronstadt): ILINE (ex-commissar for supplies), PERVOUCHIN (ex-president of the local Executive Committee), KABANOV (ex-president of the Regional Trade Union Bureau).

The Stalinist historian Poukhov * referring to this appeal declared that 'it can only be considered a treasonable act and an opportunist step towards an agreement with the leaders of the insurrection, who are objectively playing a counter-revolutionary role'. (op. cit. p.95). Poukhov admits that this document had 'a certain effect' on the rank and file of the Party. According to him, 780 Party members in Kronstadt left the Party at this time!

Some of those resigning from the Party sent letters to the Kronstadt 'Izvestia', giving reasons for their action. The teacher Denissov wrote: 'I openly declare to the Provisional Revolutionary Committee that as from the first gunfire directed at Kronstadt, I no longer consider myself a member of the Party. I support the call issued by the workers of Kronstadt. All power to the Soviets, not to the Party!'.

A military group assigned to the special company dealing with discipline also issued a declaration: 'We, the undersigned, joined the Party believing it to express the wishes of the working masses. In fact the Party has proved itself an executioner of workers and peasants. This is revealed quite clearly by recent events in Petrograd. These events show up the real face of the Party leaders. The recent broadcasts from Moscow show clearly that the Party leaders are prepared to resort to any means in order to retain power.

'We ask that henceforth we no longer be considered Party members. We rally to the call issued by the Kronstadt garrison in its resolution of March 2. We invite other comrades who have become aware of the error of their way publicly to recognize the fact.'

Signed: GUTMAN, YEFIMOV, KOUDRIATZEV, ANDREEV.
(Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, March 7, 1921).

The Communist Party members in the 'Rif' fort published the following resolution: 'During the last 3 years, many greedy careerists have flocked to our Party. This has given rise to bureaucracy and has gravely hampered the struggle for economic reconstruction.

'Our Party has always faced up to the problem of the struggle against the enemies of the proletariat and of the working masses. We publicly declare that we intend to continue in the future our defence of the rights secured by the working class. We will allow no white guard to take advantage of the difficult situation confronting the Republic of Soviets. At the first attempt directed against its power we will know how to retaliate.

'We fully accept the authority of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, which is setting itself the objective of creating soviets genuinely representing the proletarian and working masses.

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* See 'Solidarity', vol.II, No. 6, page 26.

'Long live the power of the Soviets, the real defenders of working class rights.'

Signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the meeting of Communists in Fort Rif. (Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, March 7, 1921).

Were such declarations forcibly extracted from Party members by the regime of terror directed against Party members allegedly reigning in Kronstadt at the time? Not a shred of evidence has been produced to this effect. Throughout the whole insurrection not a single imprisoned Communist was shot. And this despite the fact that among the prisoners were men responsible for the fleet such as Kouzmin and Batys. The vast majority of Communist Party members were in fact left entirely free.

In the Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee for March 7 one can read under the heading 'We are not seeking revenge' the following note: 'The prolonged oppression to which the Party dictatorship has submitted the workers has provoked a natural indignation among the masses. This has led, in certain places, to boycotts and sackings directed against the relatives of Party members. This must not take place. We are not seeking revenge. We are only defending our interests as workers. We must act cautiously. We must only take action against those who sabotage or those who through lying propaganda seek to prevent a reassertion of working class power and rights'.

At Petrograd, however, humanist ideas of rather a different kind were prevailing. As soon as the arrests of Kouzmin and Vassiliev were learned the Defence Committee ordered the arrest of the families of all Kronstadt sailors known to be living in Petrograd. A Government plane showered Kronstadt with leaflets saying: 'The Defence Committee announces that it has arrested and imprisoned the families of the sailors as hostages for the safety of communist comrades arrested by the Kronstadt mutineers. We refer specifically to the safety of Fleet Commissar Kouzmin, and of Vassiliev, president of the Kronstadt Soviet. If a hair of their head is touched, the hostages will pay with their lives'. (Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, March 5, 1921).

The Provisional Revolutionary Committee replied with the following radio message: 'In the name of the Kronstadt garrison, the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Kronstadt insists on the liberation, within 24 hours, of the families of the workers, sailors and red soldiers arrested as hostages by the Petrograd Soviet.

'The Kronstadt garrison assures you that in the city of Kronstadt Party members are entirely free and that their families enjoy absolute immunity. We refuse to follow the example of the Petrograd Soviet. We consider such methods, even when dictated by ferocious hatred, as utterly shameful and degrading.'

Signed: PETRITCHENKO, sailor, president of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee; KILGAST, secretary.

To refute rumours according to which Party members were being ill-treated, the Provisional Revolutionary Committee set up a special Commission to investigate the cases of the imprisoned communists. In its issue of March 4, the Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee announced that a Party member would be attached to the Commission. It is doubtful if this body ever got to work, as two days later the bombardment of Kronstadt began. The Provisional Revolutionary Committee did, however, receive a Party delegation. It granted it permission to visit the prisoners on the 'Petropavlovsk'. The prisoners had even been allowed to hold meetings among themselves and to edit a wall newspaper (Zaikovski: 'Kronstadt from 1917 to 1921').

There was no terror in Kronstadt. Under very difficult and tragic circumstances the 'rebels' had done their utmost to apply the basic principles of working class democracy. If many rank-and-file communists decided to support the Provisional Revolutionary Committee it was because this body expressed the wishes and aspirations of the working people. In retrospect this democratic self-assertion of Kronstadt may appear surprising. It certainly contrasted with the actions and frame of mind prevailing among the Party leaders in Petrograd and Moscow. They remained blind, deaf and totally lacking in understanding of what Kronstadt and the working masses of the whole of Russia really wanted.

Catastrophe could still have been averted during those tragic days. Why then did the Petrograd Defence Committee use such abusive language? The only conclusion an objective observer can come to is that it was done with the deliberate intention of provoking bloodshed, thereby 'teaching everyone a lesson' as to the need for absolute submission to the central power.

THREATS AND BRIBES

On March 5, the Petrograd Defence Committee issued a call to the rebels. 'You are being told fairy tales when they tell you that Petrograd is with you or that the Ukraine supports you. These are impertinent lies. The last sailor in Petrograd abandoned you when he learned you were led by generals like Kozlovsky. Siberia and the Ukraine support the Soviet power. Red Petrograd laughs at the miserable efforts of a handful of white guards and Socialist-Revolutionaries. You are surrounded on all sides. A few hours more will lapse and then you will be compelled to surrender. Kronstadt has neither bread nor fuel. IF YOU INSIST, WE WILL SHOOT YOU LIKE PARTRIDGES.

'At the last minute all those generals, the Kozlovskys, the Bourksers, and all that rif-raf, the Petrichenkos and the Tourins will flee to Finland, to the White Guards. And you, rank-and-file soldiers and sailors, where will you go then? Don't believe them when they promise to feed you in Finland. Haven't you heard what happened to Wrangel's supporters? They were transported to Constantinople. There they are dying like flies, in

their thousands, of hunger and disease. This is the fate that awaits you, unless you immediately take a grip on yourselves. Surrender immediately! Don't waste a minute. Collect your weapons and come over to us. Disarm and arrest your criminal leaders and in particular the Tsarist generals. Whoever surrenders immediately will be forgiven. Surrender, now.

Signed: The Defence Committee.

In reply to these threats from Petrograd the Provisional Revolutionary Committee issued a final appeal:

TO ALL, TO ALL, TO ALL.

'Comrades, workers, red soldiers and sailors! Here in Kronstadt we know full well how much you and your wives and your children are suffering under the iron rule of the Party. We have overthrown the Party-dominated Soviet. The Provisional Revolutionary Committee is today starting elections to a new Soviet. It will be freely elected and it will reflect the wishes of the whole working population and of the garrison - and not just those of a handful of party members.

'Our cause is just. We stand for the power of the Soviets, not for that of the Party. We stand for freely elected representatives of the toiling masses. Deformed Soviets dominated by the Party, have remained deaf to our pleas. Our appeals have been answered with bullets.

'The workers' patience is becoming exhausted. So now they are seeking to pacify you with crumbs. On Zinoviev's orders the militia barrages have been withdrawn. Moscow has allocated 10 million gold roubles for the purchase abroad of foodstuffs and other articles of first necessity. But we know that the Petrograd proletariat will not be bought over in this way. Over the heads of the Party, we hold out to you the fraternal hand of revolutionary Kronstadt.

'Comrades, you are being deceived. And truth is being distorted by the basest of calumnies.

'Comrades, don't allow yourselves to be misled.

'In Kronstadt, power is in the hands of the sailors, of the red soldiers and of the revolutionary workers. It is not in the hands of white guards commanded by General Kozlovsky, as Moscow Radio lyingly asserts.'

Signed: The Provisional Revolutionary Committee.

Foreign communists were in Moscow and Petrograd at the time of the revolt. They were in close contact with leading Party circles. They confirmed that the Government had made hasty purchases abroad (even chocolate was bought, which had always been a luxury in Russia). Moscow and Petrograd had suddenly changed their tactics. The Government had a better grasp of psychological war than had the men of Kronstadt. It understood the corrupting influence of white bread on a starving population. It was

in vain that Kronstadt asserted that crumbs would not buy the Petrograd proletariat. The Government's methods had an undoubted effect, especially when combined with vicious repression directed against the strikers.

SUPPORT IN PETROGRAD

Part of the Petrograd proletariat continued to strike during the Kronstadt events. Poukhov, the Party historian, himself admits this. The workers were demanding the liberation of the prisoners. In certain factories copies of the Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee were found plastered up on the walls. A lorry even drove through the streets of Petrograd scattering leaflets from Kronstadt. In certain enterprises (for instance the State Printing Works No.26) the workers refused to adopt a resolution condemning the Kronstadt sailors. At the 'Arsenal' factory the workers organized a mass meeting on March 7 (the day the bombardment of Kronstadt began). This meeting adopted the resolution of the mutinous sailors! It elected a commission which was to go from factory to factory, agitating for a general strike.

Strikes were continuing in the biggest factories of Petrograd: Poutilov, Baltisky, Oboukhov, Nievskaia Manoufactura, etc. The authoritios sacked the striking workers, transferred the factories to the authority of the local troikas (three-men committees), who then proceeded to selective re-hiring of workers. Other repressive measures were also taken against the strikers.

Strikes were also starting in Moscow, in Nijni Novgorod and in other cities. But here too, the prompt delivery of foodstuffs combined with calumnies to the effect that Tsarist generals were in command at Kronstadt had succeeded in sowing doubts among the workers.

The Bolsheviks' aim had been achieved. The proletariat of Petrograd and of the other industrial cities was in a state of confusion. The Kronstadt sailors, who had been hoping for the support of the whole of working class Russia remained isolated, confronting a Government determined to annihilate them, whatever the cost.

TO BE CONTINUED.

DEFINITION

'A POLITICIAN ?... AN ARSE UPON WHICH EVERYTHING HAS SAT EXCEPT A MAN'.

E.G. Cummings

ABOUT ourselves

For once we're on time. This is partly due to the very encouraging response to our appeal in our last issue for help in increasing sales.

'Solidarity' II, 8, sold 1050 copies, more than any previous issue (with the exception of the 1962 Aldermaston and May Day special, which sold 1,200). We could have sold even more but we ran out of paper, ink, and slave labour. We hope this support will continue and grow.

Our next issue - Volume II, no. 10 - will be an Aldermarch Special, analysing the crisis now reached in the anti-bomb movement. We need many sellers to help cover the March adequately. Would anybody interested please get in touch.

We've just moved into permanent premises, at 197, King's Cross Road, London WC1, rented from the ILP, whom we would like to thank for their friendly cooperation. These premises will enable us to be 'at home' on certain evenings during the week. As sales and influence grow, so does the routine work of keeping in touch with correspondents. Please be patient if your letter or order isn't immediately acknowledged or answered. Incidentally we badly need some unpaid typists, prepared to help us with typing (stencils, etc.) one or two nights a week, at home if necessary. Any offers?

Regular readers will have noticed with pleasure that we are almost unique amongst papers on the 'far Left' in that we are not always asking for money. The last time we did so was in fact over a year ago, in 'Solidarity', I, 10. We then hoped we would not have to repeat the appeal. A pious hope. The production of leaflets, the purchase or hire of various items of capital equipment, postage expenses, the delays of comrades in settling for what they have received, as well as the move into the new premises, have all resulted in a gradually accumulating deficit which is now seriously impeding our ability to make the most of our opportunities. We now repeat our appeal to all readers and supporters. Send us whatever you can spare, and as soon as possible. We need it badly. If you can't make a donation, you can at least settle any outstanding debts for literature we have sent you.

One final point. If anyone has unsold back numbers of 'Solidarity' now collecting dust on some shelf, could they please return them to us? We are constantly getting requests for back issues or even for complete sets. We have great difficulty in meeting them as practically everything produced has been sold out. If necessary we will pay for the returned material, including postage.

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