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solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10

6^D

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STRINGS WITH EVERYTHING

After endless negotiations, the Southern Region motormen resorted to direct action (work to rule) to press their claim for a fully justified bonus. The only response of British Railways was to repeat that they would only consider paying a bonus if it was linked to 'increased productivity' on the railways. They want to 'diminish costs' through the widespread introduction of one-man ~~manning~~ of locomotives.

Employers (be they private owners or the bosses of nationalised concerns) only reckon 'costs' in terms of pounds, shillings and pence. Human costs just don't enter their equations. In practice the proposals of British Railways would mean 'redundancies' (read sackings), 'greater mobility of labour' (read uprooting of workers and either separating them from their people or forcing whole families to move) and more work - under more lonely conditions - for those remaining in the industry. Is it surprising that the men rejected such proposals?

There is a very strong feeling among footplatemen in most parts of the country against any 'strings' being attached to their bonus or wage claims. Delegates at the last ASLEF Conference went overwhelmingly on record against any package deals of this kind. The feeling of the men is crystal clear.

The voice of the employers is equally clear. Their tone is arrogant and uncompromising. They feel sure of themselves. After all they are only acting as mouthpieces for what Wilson and Brown have been saying for months, namely that 'many jobs are overmanned' and that 'wage increases must be linked to the elimination of "restrictive practices" (i.e. hard won rights in production). Section after section of the working class are beginning to experience what Labour's plans for modernising capitalism really amount to. They are beginning to see on whose back the modernisation is planned. A clear pattern is emerging.

The top ASLEF officials are buzzing around like blue arsed flies. They have failed, in the depots, to convince the men to put a halter round their own necks. They are now trying to get away with a gimmick: the recall of the National Conference. They hope (through their control of the union machinery and of Conference arrangements) to manipulate

the delegates into abandoning their 'intransigence'. This would then allow the officials to negotiate a package deal with British Railways. Griffiths doubtless remembers how the leaders of the NUGMW reconvened that union's Annual Conference, a few years ago, to get an embarrassing unilateralist resolution 'reversed'. Does the ASLEF leadership feel it too can now turn rank and file opinion on and off like a tap?

Many railwaymen have seen through all this. On July 19 the London District Council of ASLEF declared it had no faith in any Court of Enquiry 'in view of the ill-judged outburst by the Prime Minister and the policy of wage restraint advanced by Mr. George Brown'. Paddington and Leeds Holbeck branches of ASLEF have already denounced the manoeuvres of the reconvened Conference. Doncaster branch has already mandated its delegate to the Conference to oppose any attempt at reversing the previous Conference decision. At the same time rank and file organization and links are being strengthened. The struggle must be fought at all levels.

What can those who are not railwaymen do to help? What is needed is an intensive propaganda campaign to put the case of the footplatemen over to the general public. Press, radio and television are seeking to stir up hostility to the railwaymen. All the official handouts put the point of view of the Government, of British Railways and of the union bureaucrats. These are minor variations on a common theme. The voice of the men themselves has scarcely been heard.

Within our very limited means we have done what we could. Five thousand copies of the following 'SOLIDARITY' leaflet were distributed by friends and supporters in stations throughout North Kent. They were also distributed at Victoria, Waterloo, Charing Cross and London Bridge stations. The reception by railwaymen has been enthusiastic. To our certain knowledge the leaflet has been pinned up in several railway canteens. Several orders for the leaflet have been received. The majority of passengers have also received the leaflet favourably, although we have had a few letters of abuse telling us to 'go and distribute in Moscow'. Judging by the recent speed-up in public road transport there, at the expense of the drivers (see April 10 issue of 'Soviet Weekly' and Glasgow Solidarity, vol.I, No.4) this might not be such a bad idea!

OPEN LETTER

from an angry
commuter

'Don't be angry'

More than 5000 leaflets urging commuters not to be angry with the motormen were handed out at several stations on the North Kent lines today by a political group known as the Libertarians. At the General Election they called on people not to vote.

The leaflets blamed British Railways for the trouble. Many commuters threw them away.

One distributor said: "We are not doing this for any political reason. We just want to see some common sense."

40 Tudor Close
Dartford, Kent.

Dear Friend,

I travel everyday between Crayford and Cannon Street. It's never pleasant. Lately it's been worse. Most of us are pretty fed up with the present chaos on the railways. But frustration has caused the thinking of some of my fellow travellers to become quite muddled.

Nonsensical stickers have appeared: 'Bring back Beeching'. (If there is £24,000 a year in the kitty to spare, why not pay £3 a week more to the 150 railwaymen?) Telegrams have been sent to Wilson asking him to 'take action'. (What action would MPs have the nerve to take? Remember, they've just voted themselves a rise of £30 a week) Some have called for the sacking of the 'dissident' motormen. (A sure guarantee of bringing hundreds more out in sympathy!) Others have suggested that the men should be 'disciplined' by their unions. (And will doubtless be surprised when the rank and file disregard their so-called leaders) Tory MPs are even asking the Labour Government to make 'unofficial' strikes illegal. (They know their Gunter) In at least one case a commuter has used violence against a motorman.

I am angry because so many of my fellow commuters have been blinded, deafened and bamboozled by this Press, TV and radio barge. They have become incapable of seeing where the blame really lies for the inconvenience we all suffer. The drivers' case has never been fully and fairly put. And I mean the drivers' case, the case of the men on the job, not the case of the union officials sitting in their offices.

The motormen's patience has been exhausted. Nothing has been done for nearly two years about a reasonable claim for a

productivity bonus. Instead of negotiating this claim British Railways have used all sorts of delaying tactics. They are attaching strings to their offers. Strings which will intensify the burden of labour for the men concerned in the years to come. Those of you who work in industry will know exactly what this means. It's the same pattern everywhere. No wonder the men won't play.

You have been told that it's a 'go-slow'. It is nothing of the sort. The motormen have simply decided to work according to the rules laid down by their so-called 'betters': the management of British Railways. The management calls this 'non-cooperation'. On the contrary, it is maximum cooperation. It is the strict implementation of rules (of rules made by others, not by the men themselves).

Normally drivers 'cooperate' in running the railways by systematically breaking these rules. We are carried to and from work safely - and reasonably on time - because of the motormen and despite the management. We get there because the men use their loaf, show initiative, break ridiculous rules, and exercise some control over the job. Even now, there are many more rules which the men could abide by if they really wanted to disrupt the traffic!

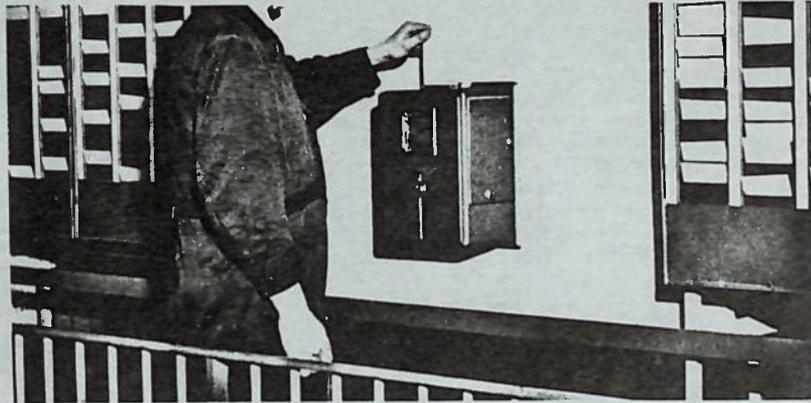
Compare the motorman's job with that of most of the commuters. Day in, day out, the same boring track. Yet, for every second of every hour of his working day he must concentrate 100% on his job. On his attention depend the lives and safety of hundreds of us. Most of us commuters work in offices. When we have an off-day and make mistakes, there's no real harm - perhaps a few quid are lost. If office workers want a bit of distraction (like staring out of the window or at a typist's legs) they have it. But a motorman allows himself to be distracted at our peril.

These men are entitled to much more pay. Anyone in his senses must recognize that. They are our colleagues. Don't insult them by telling them they are not worth a few extra quid a week.

Let's put the blame where it really belongs, squarely on the shoulders of the employing authority: British Railways. Help the men struggle against this bureaucratic monster which has been pushing them around for months. The fight of the motormen is the fight of all working people for a decent wage and decent conditions. Support your drivers! Tell British Railways to pay up!

Andy Anderson.

THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE



We print below excerpts from the Sales Manual of the STANDARD TIME COMPANY, a manufacturer of timing equipment for industry. These graphically illustrate the attitude of employers towards workers' lives.

When the salesman talks about workers 'stealing' the bosses' time he is talking about the struggle to retain some sort of human existence at work. What is 'time' to a manager is in fact a part of the worker's life. This treatment of workers as objects permeates the whole structure of modern society, whether East or West.

We stand for something entirely different: a society where workers directly control their own destinies - as men, not as units of time. That is why the struggle for socialism is inextricably bound up with the day-to-day battle within industry for human dignity at work.

Our subject is time, and it is difficult to discuss this subject without many puns. The passing of time is a part of our everyday lives, and yet how many of us stop to think of this 'thing' called time. You cannot hear it, see it or smell it, but one thing is sure, you can neither stop its passing, or save it. This makes time the most valuable item in both our personal lives and in commercial life.

Most of our present market is in the industrial field and deals with industrial time control. The following sections deal with some of the points connected with this market and also give information on the equipment we have to offer and the service we can offer in the 'Time' field.

CONTROL OF TIME IN INDUSTRY

The start of any company in business and the reason for its being comes to one

item. 'Money'. Money is invested to buy the buildings, tools, materials and skill. No matter what may be produced and sold, the real end product of any business is again money: this is the profit made.

Having established the point between the original investment and the final dividend, various safeguards of management are put in. These are controlled by the accountant, cost accountant and the store-keeper, the latter having control of all the materials and strictly accounting for them. With all these, the most expensive item for any business has no really efficient control: the purchase of labour. Labour is of course purchased, the labourer contracts with the firm to sell so many hours at so much. The general accepted idea is that the various appointed supervisors control the working times laid down as part of the contract.

THE BRITISH WORKMAN

The British Workman has become the most expensive item in industry today. This in some ways is due to the standard of living, a good feature. However, there is still the attitude of the workman which since the war has been that of doing less work and getting more money for it. This happens in two ways, the official negotiations between employers and unions, and, what can really only be termed as minor theft. We have already said that the worker is paid for the 'maximum effort according to his ability for the time contracted'. Very few, however, give this, they arrive late, leave early, dawdle over tea-breaks and mope during the working day.

The loss of labour cannot be taken in terms of just the wages paid to one man. It must be thought of in terms of a proportion of the whole cost of production. This means that the cost of a workman must be regarded as his wages plus a rating of the overhead. Therefore if we estimate on a minimum of 10/- per hour wage, overheads cannot be less than 100% of this, meaning

"and it can really only be termed as minor theft".



another 10/- (or a total of 20/- per hour). So for every hour lost by a worker 20/- is lost to that business. This is an accepted risk if the worker is sick or absent and not being paid and only involves the loss of overheads. If, however, he just stops working for an hour during the day, he has received 10/- but the business has lost 20/- out of its profit.

THE TIME LOSS PROBLEM

Of the various time losses during the working day, those that we are most interested in, from our basic time control, occur usually eight times a day. They are the start and stop of the morning and afternoon work periods and the start and stop of the two tea breaks, which now form an accepted part of industrial life. The remainder of the day is not within our scope, except for production job timing and costing which we will deal with separately.

Let us briefly analyse what losses occur at these points. Each morning the worker arrives by his bus, train, feet or other

means of transport, as near to starting time as his conscience allows, he usually rushes the last few yards and clocks on at the gate. Then he breathes a sigh of relief and strolls to his work, where he perhaps starts ten minutes after he clocked on. This will happen again on his return from lunch. He works through the morning and towards tea-break begins to feel in need of his tea and chat with his mates, so a few minutes before he slows down and starts to clear away to be first in the canteen. As soon as break time arrives, he shows the most astounding energy in getting there. Now the normal tea break is ten minutes (paid for by the employer). Therefore it should be safe to assume that at the end of this break he is back at work. But no! This is the time for him to 'think' about going back to work and perhaps three, four or five minutes later he starts. Having started again, it is not long before his stomach tells him that lunch is due, and as the best items in the canteen go first, the whole process of slow down and preparation takes place once again.

Eight times in a day he is way ahead or far behind of the official time as it best suits him.

Before we can discuss the answer to this problem, we must go a little deeper and see what is giving our worker his time.

CLOCKS

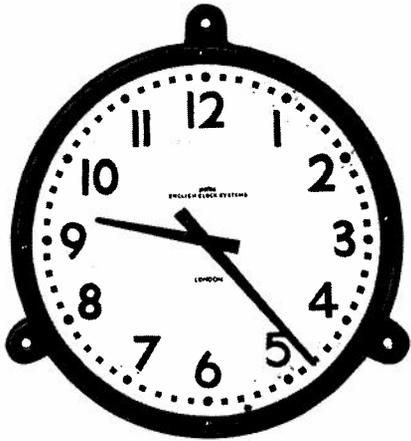
The average factory usually has clocks on the wall, they show 'a' time. These can be spring wound or electric clocks or a mixture. If spring even the maker does not guarantee them more than a minute's tolerance when new, and it is doubtful if they are new. Even with electric mains or individual battery clocks, they cannot be set to identical times throughout the works, and if our worker discovers another department getting away before him, he will never trust his clock again, but will always add or subtract a little so that he is on the right side. If there is no clock at all, then perhaps the most favoured of half a dozen watches will be taken.

SIGNALS

'They all work to the hooter' is a common statement from our prospects.*

If someone presses a button to sound the starting and stopping signal, it is certain that this is not his only job, and to sound two thousand signals dead on time over the course of a year is impossible.

* Salesman jargon for prospective customers.



Again, if he does manage to do this, and takes his time from one of the clocks, this will not agree throughout the works. It is highly improbable that the worker in these departments will carry on work when his clock is past the time and the hooter signal not sounded, or keep to the clock when the signal has gone.

RECORDED TIME

This is mainly a formality and for records, wages and computations. These things however, are important. The speed of passing people through, the psychological effect of late or early clocking standing out. Lastly, if the recorder is an independent item, it may not agree with the remaining times, and disputes can occur.

TIME SOURCE

Our sales story is a simple economy one, based on the principle that if £2 per week were regularly being stolen from the till, then 15/- spent on a lock would be a justifiable expense.

We tell our prospects that unless they have synchronized systems, there will be no trust and an allowance made against all times shown or sounded. This being so, we must be able to save a minimum of 8 minutes per day per man. Let us turn this into hard cash. Suppose he has 60 workers and he is certain to agree to 10/- per hour for wages and overheads, this will give us:

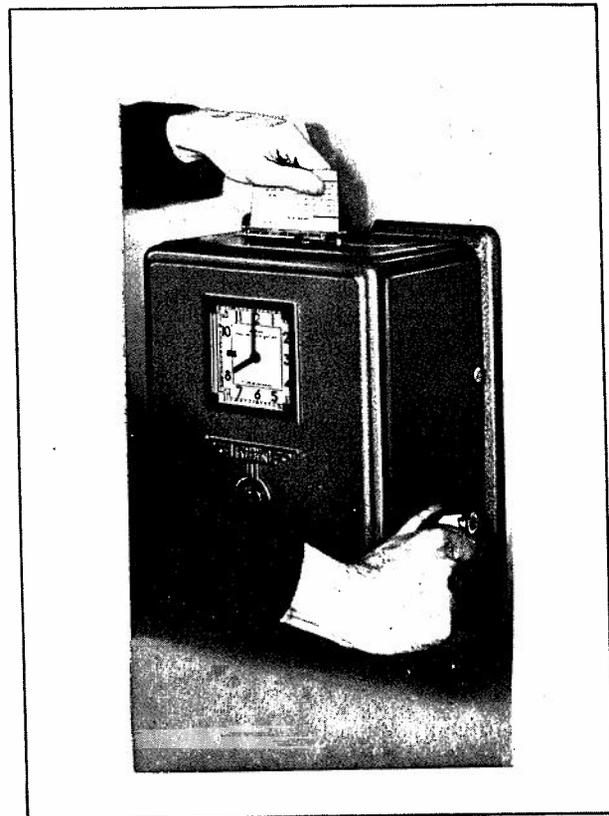
60 men x 8 minutes per day per man = 480 minutes. Making 8 hours per day at 10/- per hour, which is £4 per day and £20 per week, balanced against a cost of perhaps 35/- per week for complete synchronisation from our Time Control.

Obviously a reasonable case and worthy of any Managing Director's serious consideration.

PRODUCTION CONTROL TIMING AND COSTING

Our Time Control has given the answer to the starts and stops during the day, but the losses attributable to 'Time' still occur in between. There are many of these for which as yet we have no answer. Experience has shown us that there are certain points of the industrial organization where we can make very big savings. These usually are closely allied to Costing.

Time and Motion and Work Study are now accepted investigations to save time and money, and if the information obtained is used properly, can give large time savings. The Costing section is always trying to get more accurate figures for the production of each item manufactured. The difficulty lies in relying on the worker to give them the information, and we have already discussed his attitude to life.



There are two basic systems by which jobs are timed. Firstly the Job Sheet. This is a simple piece of paper which the worker takes at the end of the day and spends five minutes 'inventing'. Really all this provides is a way of spreading out the time during the day over all the jobs done. Our workers' memory is never brilliant to within half an hour. This is the usual result:

JOB 139/6/42	3 hours
JOB 139/7/43	2 hours
JOB 647/1/25	3 hours
JOB 942/9	1 hour
<hr/>	
TOTAL HOURS	9 hours

The time he first estimates adds up to more than he worked, so alterations are made in the easiest way knocking half an hour off two different jobs. NEED WE SAY MORE.

More enlightened firms having seen the waste of time of the system have installed a Time Recorder. This is excellent for the very small firm where each man can be within easy reach of the Recorder and clock on and off every job. This will give accurate times and show the delays or waiting time between jobs.

However, when a business is of a larger nature, men wandering from their place of work to Recorders are going to stop and chat with friends on the way. What would be perhaps three minutes walking time becomes ten minutes talking time.

The answer to this is a Production Control and Costing Office. By means of strategically placed single line telephones the various workers can report the start, stop and interruptions that occur during the day, direct to this office where recordings are made. The layout of this Office and the appropriate job cards can give a complete picture of progress and work load and will assist in immediate costing of any job as required.

Apprentices Movement

39, Alder Road,
Rochdale, Lancs.

Dear Friends,

It is now painfully obvious that no successful apprentice strike can be launched without a determined effort to set up a united apprentice and young workers' organization. We call on supporters of the political and libertarian left to drop their political differences in the attempt to improve apprentice conditions and organize the apprentice movement.

We appeal to all existing young worker and apprentice committees to increase their agitation. And call for all socialists to step up their propaganda on the apprentices' behalf. Of all young workers in industry, we urge that they devote their energies to organizing 'One United Industrial Youth Movement', to fight for our industrial demands.

M. Mitchell (AUFW)	K. Brennan (NALGO)
J. Shrane (AUFW)	B. Dean (ASSET)
B. Bamford (ETU)	A. Barlow (T&GWU)
P. France (AEU)	B. Shuttleworth (T&GWU)
V. Johnson (T&GWU)	R. Marsden (NUGMW)

OFFSET - LITHO

This is the third issue to be produced in offset-litho. We are gradually learning how to make full use of the process. In this issue for instance, we are able to get 50% more material in the same number of pages by reducing print size, and we are using photographs for the first time. We feel that it is well worth taking advantage of these possibilities which the new process lays open to us.

However, there is a snag. The last two issues have been produced at a loss. If we are to continue with the new improvements we must eliminate this by increasing sales. In fact, sales have increased considerably since we went into offset-litho, but they need to be increased much further. In this everyone can help. We need new subscriptions, sellers for meetings, and bulk orders for general sales.

In the meantime we would of course welcome any contributions towards the deficit. We do not like asking for money, but the alternative is to return to duplicating the paper which we feel would be a retrograde step. Please make cheques etc. payable to 'Solidarity', 197 Kings Cross Road, London W.C.1.

THE MILK RUN

In a recent interview in the 'Daily Mirror' a milk roundsman said gaily 'It's more than a job, it's a way of life'. For those of Britain's 30,000 milkmen awake to the possibilities, this is a cynical joke.

If you happen to have the mentality of a butler, the thought processes of a computer, and no interest in life, it could be ideal.

The popular image of a milkman is that of a happy-go-lucky contented, ever-smiling figure, cheery, chatty, brimming with the health that early rising is supposed to give.

Personally I've done a fair selection of jobs from digging up roads and emptying dustbins, to selling rail tickets, but I've never worked so long and hard in my life as since I've become a milkman.

Conditions of work, hours, and pay vary enormously from depot to depot, and round to round. As standards vary so much I will speak from experience and try to give what I think is an average.

THE WORK ITSELF

There is nothing unpleasant about this job in itself. Superficially it sounds attractive. No clocking on and off. An open air life, meeting lots of people, finishing work early, no physical graft - but let's look a bit closer.

Basic pay is now £13 10 0d plus commission on sales. Commission is 1/- in the £1 on milk sales over 'pitch' (an arbitrary figure) and 1/- in the £1 on all sales of groceries. A pretty fair average would be a basic of £13 10 0d plus £5 0 0d commission - about £18 10 0d less deductions. To earn this a salesman would have to put in 55-60 hours per week. Not exactly on the bread line, but hardly outstanding. As there are no fixed hours overtime rate is only payable if you work on your days off.

Winter and summer the milkman will get up at 4.00 or 4.30 a.m., start at 5.00 a.m. and probably not get a proper meal before 3.00 or 4.00 p.m.

On a Saturday, when most people pay, he can work for 11 or 12 hours at a stretch.

When he has to cover for sickness or holidays he may work for several weeks without a single day off. Only a year ago we got what is known as a five-day week. This means in fact seven days off per four weeks, and also means that you must work for seven days before you get your two days off.

The commission basis of wages is most unfair. In theory a man must build up his own sales as an incentive to higher wages. In practice he can only sell a large amount of groceries in favourable areas (e.g. housing estates with few shops).

All the time pressure is put on to sell more. There is always a "push" for cream or "special offers".

Shortage of labour leads management to squeeze the last ounce out of employees, by inciting them to use "sales pressures" on the public, but more especially by simply giving them more to do. If you work for an hourly rate, an extension of half-an-hour per day would be resisted. But it is easy to accept another 40 calls when you are asked nicely. And each time it doesn't take quite an extra half-hour - you speed up, both to get finished, and to please customers waiting for their milk.

Very soon you are rushing round like a maniac, checking your watch by the minute, and things become intolerable. If you're doing the same work in a five-day week as you formally did in a six- or seven-day week who stands to gain? A man must complete 400-450 calls each day, collect cash, do his own accounts, orders, load and unload his own milk, goods, etc.. He is expected to look after the interests of his customers, deal with complaints, and as someone remarked "do everything but milk the bloody cow". If after all this his cash is short, he is expected to make up deficiencies.

The pressures of work are only surpassed by the mutilation of social life. Most of the time you are working when everyone else is free and vice versa. The most enjoyable nights out are spoiled by the thought of getting up at 4.00 a.m. the following day. You end up either a permanent recluse or permanently tired.

The most tractable employees are those with 25 or more years service who started on the milk when little other work was available. Then they averaged 70 hours per seven-day week, now it's nearer 55 hours. What progress! textile workers got a 56½ hour week in 1874!

Young people just won't put up with these restrictions on their freedom. No amount of money will bring in new blood. The capitalist conception is that everything has its price. But what is the price of relaxation, time to read or spend a day with friends - what is the price of freedom?

THE SO-CALLED CHARTER

Recently a further veiled attack on our freedom was hailed as a "workers' charter" and accepted by the T&GWU officials without demur. I refer to the so-called "agreement" to work signed by the company and the worker.

One may wonder how an 'agreement' can be made by unequal parties anyway; when it is a compulsory agreement it is absolutely farcical.

There are ten clauses, only one of which is in the workers' favour - "The Company shall pay to the Employee a weekly wage of T&GWU Rate". Other clauses spell out the Company's rights. The milkman has to undertake "to serve the Company as a Milk Seller, Roundsman, Salesman, and General Servant". He "shall use his best endeavours to improve and expand the business of the Company". He "shall in all respects diligently and faith-

fully obey and observe all orders ...". He "... shall not during his employment or at any time thereafter divulge any secrets or dealings relating thereto ..." (goodbye to that one!) He "... shall wear uniform" etc.

At present all this is not very serious. But it could be, as the individual signature on each document isolates each worker. The document has legal effect, and if milkmen decided to take action for themselves it could be used in the courts against them. So much for "the workers' charter".

What can be done?

For a start a campaign could be waged against this "agreement". The kinds of demand that could then be put forward are:

1. An outside limit of 400 calls per round.
2. A 40 hour basic week, of 8 hours per day. Thus a man starting at 5.00 a.m. would finish at 1.00 p.m. and go home for a meal.
3. Everything over 40 hours should be voluntary overtime, at standard rate, up to (say) 50 hours and time-and-a-half after that.
4. Abolition of the commission system, and replacement by a fixed bonus.

But action will be extremely difficult. The Union is hardly likely to support rank-and-file action on anything but wages. The whole Union apparatus, apart from being merely a defensive scheme, is too cumbersome and out of date. When roundsmen are starting and finishing at different times and are isolated from each other in between there's not much prospect of organisation. Frankly, I can see only one way of altering conditions - get out fast. This is no solution except for the individual - but it's a solution open to all.

Brian Rose

RESISTANCE

Monthly Libertarian Magazine.

New address: 32a Fellows Road, London N.W.3. (Pri 7387)

Current issue includes:

Vietnam - editorial, articles and reports.
Forces - news and comments.
Pirate Broadcasts - further discussion.
Walter Survey - attacks & defence.
Rogues Gallery.

and numerous other items.

SCHOOL IN THE DOCKS

"We're just a couple of trainees here for two weeks on teaching practice and observation."



We arrive before school starts, feeling shy and trying to look the pillars of respectability that we are supposed to be. We're just a couple of trainees here for two weeks on teaching practice and observation. Its only 8.30am - the kids haven't arrived yet, but the teachers have - they nod good morning. We're shown into the Head's room. We sit. She talks to us for half an hour - continuing with the same apologies for her school that she'd made over the 'phone a few days earlier. "This is only a dock school, you know - very rough area". We learn that there are about 250 kids in the school. Of that we are told about 100 are "town social problems" - families don't pay rent, old man's inside, live in reception centres etc. 50 are Educationally Sub-Normal. These groups overlap a bit of course, but all in all that's a pretty high proportion of so-called "problem children". We're told that from a survey done here only about 35 of the kids in the school are from "normal happy homes". In the class my mate was allocated to only 2 out of 34 were considered to come from normal homes.

Nine o'clock comes and the bell goes - in they all come - running, jumping, screaming, shouting, fighting, pushing, shoving, laughing. Thank Christ for that anyway - at least they're still kids!

Don't stop kids running, laughing, fighting, playing. If you do, then you stop them thinking, developing, communicating. The two go hand in hand - any difference is artificial and contrived - 'for the kid's own good, of course' - by 'Them' - teachers, adults, grown-ups generally. There should be no distinction between 'playtime' and 'lesson time'.

Eventually we go to our classes. 35 pairs of eyes are on me as I enter - they know I'm only a student teacher whatever they're told. The children I'm with are 10 and 11, the top class. Just coming up for the 11+. I find in the next two weeks that the 11+ is God. Those with a chance of passing are given special arithmetic lessons - the rest I take all day. 'Just keep 'em occupied, they're dim' says the teacher departing with her possible 'passes'. I have to do this - when you're a student, you're with the proper class teacher and have to do what you're told.

I learn that the school has got problems - there's little Valerie: she's the one who fainted in assembly last week due to malnutrition. My mate saw one of his kids eating in class. 'Stop that' he said. 'What did you have for breakfast?' 'Packet of peanuts, Sir'. 'What did you have for tea last night?' 'Bit of bread, Sir'.

Bernice is 10. Her old man's run off with another woman. One day a younger kid is crying in the playground. Bernice is comforting her. The kid of 10 comforts the kid of 7. Teacher goes and sees what's the matter. The younger kid keeps crying. "What's the matter?". No answer. 'It's alright, Miss', says Bernice, 'I understand how she feels'. It transpires that the younger kid's old man has run off now and Bernice understands. The kid of 10 comforts the kid of 7 in the playground. Oh, Christ what can you ever say or do about that?

It's pissing down with rain one morning. In comes a mother dragging 4 kids behind her. No coats - you can't buy coats when you've 4 kids and the old man's God knows where. She wants to register for National Assistance, but doesn't know how - so up to ask the Head of the kids' school. Into the Head's room. 'How

many children have you altogether?'. 'Just these 4, thank God the other two died' said the mother. And that was probably the best thing to say and think!

There's a kid over there. He's quiet today. Won't talk to anybody. We found out the reason. Mum locked the kids up in a room last night and did a moonlight flit. Trouble is, you can hardly blame her - or any of the other parents who piss off. That's how life is - you often get driven to things you wouldn't do normally.

One good feature of the school; there's a full time matron. I soon discover that she's really needed. She tells me she sometimes spends the whole morning bathing kids who come in smelling and dirty. I soon discover this is true. For an hour one day I went to observe in the reception class 4½ - 5 year olds. The teacher is good, the kids soon lose their shyness of me and start to crawl all over me - literally. 'Can I read to you?'. 'Come and see my drawing'.

Many are dirty and smelly, but it's great to see them - enthusiastic, active, creative. I wonder what they'll be like in 8-10 years' time. Disinterested adolescents probably. Successfully 'educated'.

The kids give a concert - dancing and singing. They love it and their willingness to stand up and sing in front of others is wonderful. They're not inhibited about it, they sing because they want to, it's part of them. If only so-called adults would do the same. But in present society being adult means being sophisticated, cold, emotionless and showing how much of a man you are. Kids are far more free, far more natural than most grown ups - society has not had time to completely warp them and throw a wall of shit round their lives. That's why it's no bloody good talking glibly about more education, etc. What is relevant is 'education for what'. 'What sort of education.' Let's discuss that.

Ron Bailey

THE POPULAR MYTH

ERRICO MALATESTA - HIS LIFE AND IDEAS

Edited by Vernon Richards
Freedom Press, 1965 (17a, Maxwell Road, SW6)
Paperback: 10/6 Cloth 21/-

This book consists mainly of a number of extracts from Malatesta's writings. Vernon Richard's intention in making this selection is to dispel the popular myth that Malatesta was merely a romantic activist. He believes Malatesta's ideas to be important and relevant for revolutionaries today.

If the popular picture of Malatesta is a myth, this book will strengthen it. Perhaps this is not entirely Malatesta's fault. The structure of the book is eccentric. The extracts are grouped under 27 headings, are generally very short and are inevitably repetitive. Moreover, they do not support the editor's claims for Malatesta as a serious or original thinker. The constant appeal to Eternal Principles such as Justice, Freedom, etc. are sometimes reminiscent of Ramsay MacDonald.

On reading the extracts one gets a curious sense of timelessness. They lack specificity. There is no feeling of change, of new problems and developments, and seldom any comment on particular issues. Neither Malatesta's writings nor the editor's 'Notes for a Biography' give any picture of the collapse of Italian anarchism. (This apparently powerful movement put up no more serious resistance to Mussolini than the German Social-Democrats and Communists did to Hitler).

Perhaps the anarchist revolution was merely a Sorelian myth? This impression is strengthened by those selections which deal with such technical questions as the organization of society after the revolution. This is about as relevant as a discussion on the Utopian flag.

The most interesting part of this book is Malatesta's polemic with the French Syndicalist Monatte on the question of the general strike. Malatesta attacks the syndicalist-pacifist concept of the General Strike as a revolutionary panacea. Monatte quite correctly sees the general strike as a step on the road to insurrection, a position similar, in some ways, to that of Rosa Luxemburg. But where Luxemburg criticizes the syndicalist bureaucrats for ignoring the spontaneous element of the strike, Malatesta merely stresses the need for an armed conspiratorially-led insurrection. Monatte criticized this attitude as a reversion to Blanquism.

Although Malatesta had an ambivalent attitude to the class struggle (the working class movement is seen as just one lever of action) he is very perceptive and balanced on the subject of trade unions. He realises that the unions are necessarily reformist. This should be studied by all those left-wingers who imagine it is possible to build a revolutionary union.

On the evidence of this book Richard's claim for Malatesta as a major thinker are absurd. As a theoretician and as an economist he just doesn't exist. For instance, socialism is seen not as the problem of the organization of production but of consumption. What is really needed is a biography of this immensely attractive figure. The popular legend seems, for once, to have been true.

John Sullivan

CONSCIOUSNESS AND THEORY

For centuries the working class has smarted under the arrogance of intellectuals, theoreticians and philosophers. Intellectual ability has long been held to be the privilege of an elite. In a sense, this has been true, for access to education was and remains a privilege not equally open to all, and the content of established education served and serves the needs of the rulers, not of the ruled. This begins in elementary school, where working class children are told that the language learned from their parents is 'incorrect' - i.e. 'inferior'.

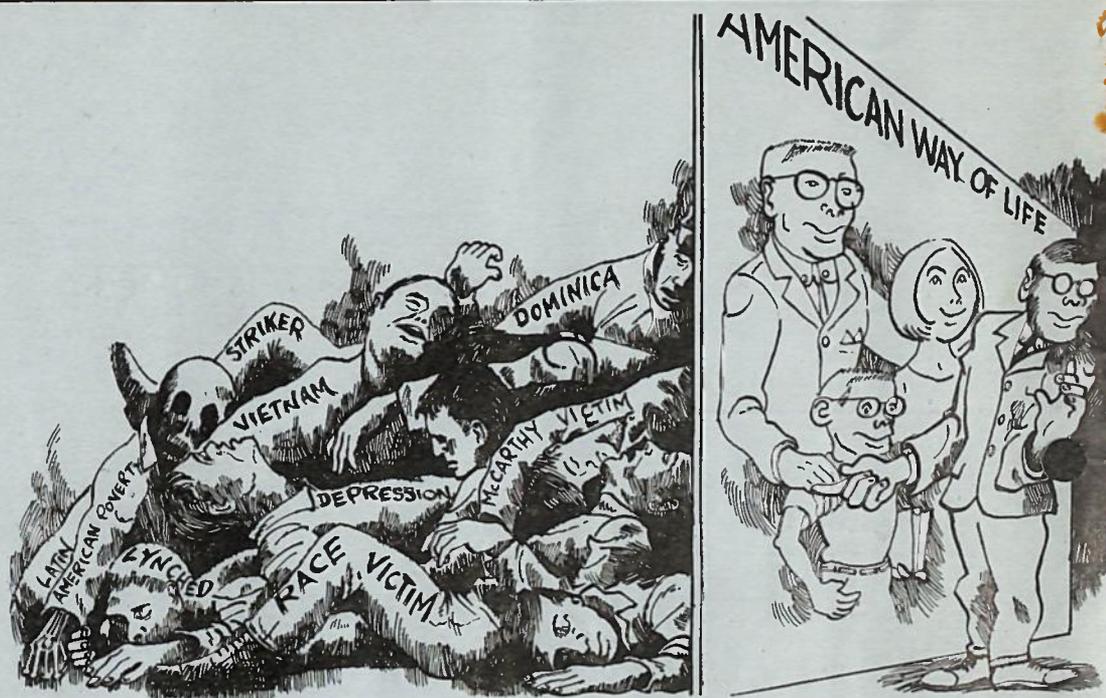
The rulers of both feudal and capitalist society defined the 'brain' worker as inherently superior to the 'manual' worker. This social definition of superiority has a class content, as the German philosopher Schopenhauer showed us unintentionally in an essay he wrote on 'Noise'. 'It is well to remind the man in the street that the classes above him work with their brains, for any kind of brain work is utter torture to him' (Emphasis mine, J.E.). First, the 'classes above' take education as a privilege unto themselves. Then they define education as a mark of superiority. And finally they use their superiority as a means to justify their privilege, and their right to manage or rule. Of course I do not imply that this process is necessarily conscious. But who cares? It has done its job.

Throughout history this attitude has damaged the working class. One reaction has been the 'humility reaction'. The 'lower' classes accepted the evaluation of themselves as inferior, looked up to their 'betters', and developed an uncritical respect for the learned man or the intellectual. This reaction was probably more typical of the feudal period than it is of today (if so, that is progress). But it is still with us.

It takes the form, for example, of many workers at least partially accepting the idea that managers, specialists, those who 'know better' can run the society and economy better than the masses will ever be able to. Or again, many workers respect intellectuals in a fundamentally different way from the way they respect their more skilled brothers on the job. Emotionally, many feel the intellectual as someone who possesses some sort of higher ability which they themselves could never attain. The 'humility reaction' among the working class is a symptom of damage.

Another symptom of damage is what we might call the 'sour grapes reaction'. Intellectuals and theory, it is felt, have no relation whatsoever to real life. The intellect is seen as the deadly enemy of good, practical common sense. This reaction, although false, is perfectly understandable. Social theory has been and is largely the monopoly of a privileged elite. In its degenerate form, ideology, it has been used to justify a social order that is contrary to the interests of the working class. Even the sincere 'left', themselves damaged by this society like everyone else, has largely failed to present social theory to the workers in terms of their needs and interest. Furthermore, the way children are taught at school, theory is experienced by the child as the deadly enemy of all natural human impulses.

The anti-theoretical attitude, however, is a bad thing for the working class. It represents the rejection of a valuable tool because that tool has been mis-used. The working class badly needs theory, theory growing from and relating to its own practice. We should reject the social theories offered to us by the ruling class, but not reject the intellectual tool itself. Rather we must work to break their monopoly of it.



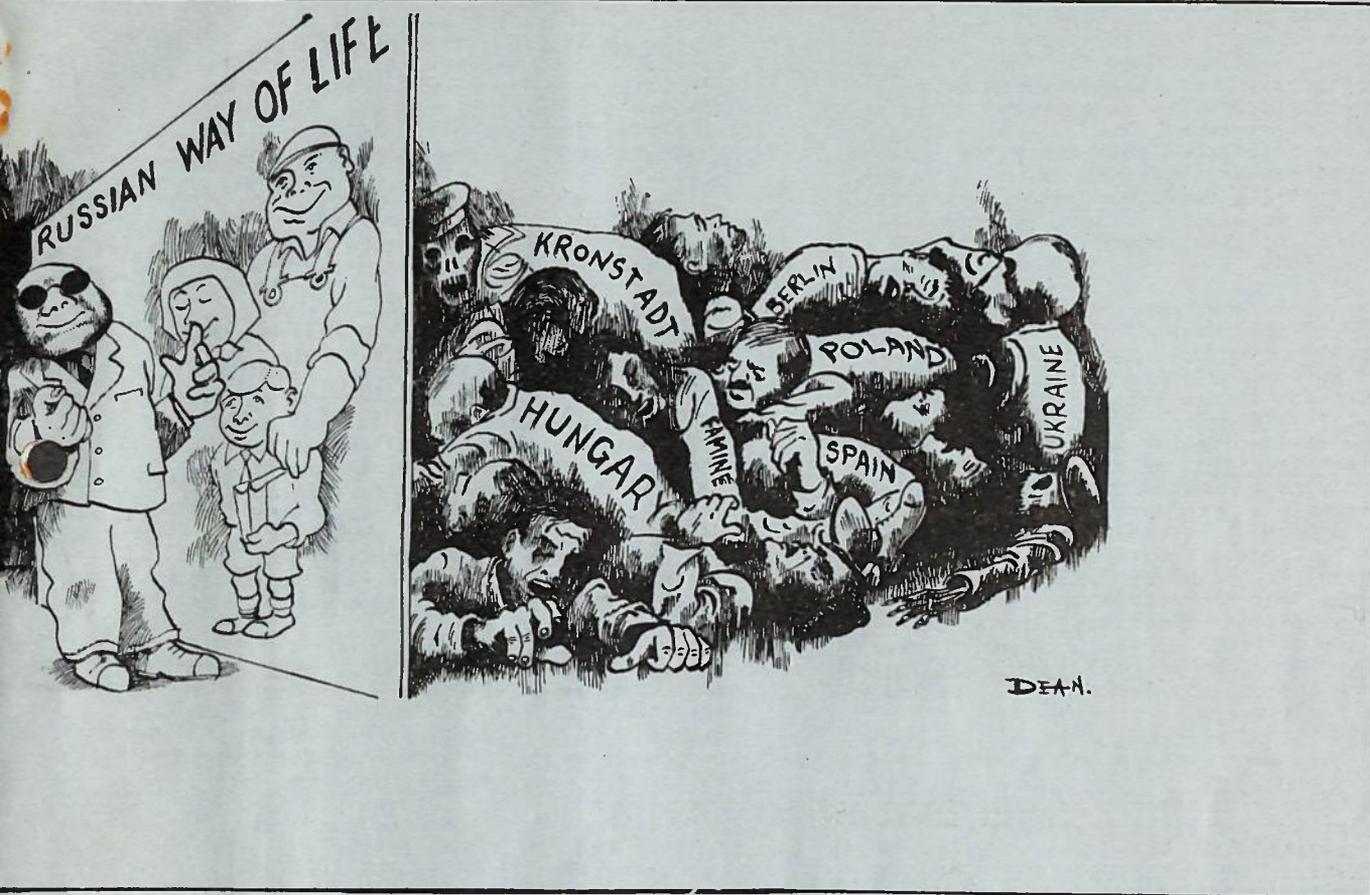
THE SALESMEN

Theory is that complex of ideas, hypotheses and concepts which man shapes for himself as tools, and with which he approaches, orders, explains the external world for himself and forms his experience and his practice. In this sense, there is no such thing as a human being without theory. If we refuse to concern ourselves with questions of theory, we simply limit our consciousness, impoverish ourselves, make ourselves know less about ourselves, our thinking, our motives, our activity, than we might otherwise know. Our concepts, attitudes, ideas, control us instead of us controlling them. Or rather those forces that control our attitudes, etc., control us through them.

The answer 'we just follow our practical common sense' is no way out. 'Common sense' is a very problematical concept. How many of us who, in one conversation, beat our chests saying 'I'm just a practical man', in other conversations make such statements as 'It's just against human nature to do such and such a thing'.

What's so 'practical common sense' about that statement? Did we just find 'human nature' in the backyard, a red piece of clay weighing 3lbs. 7oz., with seven little yellow feet? Or is it a little ghost, hanging in our left rib cage, that pinches our hearts every time we go against it? Or is it a concept? If it is, it is a mental tool. And as a tool, we had better learn to use it right. Or it'll use us.

'Human nature' is not the only questionable concept we may fall victim to, if we are not critical of theoretical assumptions. There is a whole garbage-dump full of such questionable concepts, all containing silent assumptions foisted on us from childhood by the established order: 'common sense', 'common decency' (that one's in the right rib cage), 'natural inclinations', 'healthy instincts', 'bad breeding' (I'd be showing it if I told you where that one hangs), 'normal', 'feminine nature', 'native intelligence', 'innate



character', to name but a few. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we all operate on one set of assumptions or another about man, the reasons for things, or why we and others act the way we do. The more consciousness we cultivate about these things, the more intelligently can we master our practice. If there are two things whose presence has never hurt the working class, they are knowledge and consciousness.

Why is it dangerous to remain unaware of our own theoretical assumptions? We find the answer in the structure of our society. No one in his right mind can seriously claim that the working class control education, or that we determine the content of the newspapers, magazines, radio, television programmes, movies and other products of mass communications that pound at us night and day. And yet these things have a decisive effect on the formation of our ideas, opinions, attitudes and concepts, an effect of whose nature we are often only dimly aware.

Most of the concepts that we take on unawares and uncritically are ideological, that is, they offer us seeming explanations of things. But their real function is to justify the existing order of things in the interests of those who rule over and profit from this society.

It is no accident that the concept of 'human nature' often shows its ugly head when we try to point out that such things as prostitution, criminality, and the 'inhumanity of man to man' are the product of social conditions. If you advocate social reform you meet the argument about 'human nature' but it is mixed with pity and understanding. If you advocate social revolution you are looked on as blathering idiots who 'forget' the facts about 'human nature'. What is the function of this concept at this point of the argument? If you accept it, you must logically give up your advocacy of social change. For if your character, good or bad, is innate, what's the point of trying to change society?

You can pick up this concept, and others like it, on every street corner. Many of us do not question such concepts. Uncritically accepting them, however, may lead to passive acceptance of the whole social order which is oppressing us. It is particularly insidious because the process usually goes on unconsciously. Becoming conscious of it, which is the same as having a theoretical orientation, is often enough to neutralize its effect.

Now what about the scientific validity of the concept of 'human nature'? We could point to a mass of evidence from psychology as to how changing situations change personality. The typical personality types characteristic of modern capitalist society are completely absent in some human societies (this type of 'human nature' crops up repeatedly in arguments ... by a strange coincidence it just happens to coincide with the type of character needed to keep our wonderful capitalist system going). The same could be said about the 'competitive instinct', which today usually means the 'inborn' urge to enter capitalistic competition, but which was absent in some earlier stages of our own civilization.

'Native intelligence' is allegedly one part of our 'innate character'. Many people think of it as a largely unchangeable, 'inborn' fact. But in the United States, a large group of mentally deficient (semi-moron) twelve-year olds were taken out of orphanages, put into new environments, and given special training. Within three years, the average I.Q. for the group was 110 (an I.Q. of 100 is average for the population as a whole). This means that the group average rose from moron level to above average for the population as a whole. Not one exceptional case, dozens. And not even infants, but twelve-year olds.

Another example is that of twenty-five three-year olds who were taught to read and write, using special methods. (The kids dug it. The method used was not work to them. It was a game, which they were not allowed to play more than a limited time each day!). By the time they were six, the youngsters were editing a children's newspaper (no, not 'Solidarity') by themselves, and reading and understanding the school books of 12-14 year olds. Where had the 'inborn limits' gone?

Another allegedly 'inborn' trait is musical ability. A rather uncommon

ability that comes under this category is the ability to discern absolute pitch. Recent experiments in Czechoslovakia have shown that this 'innate' ability can be taught to all children, almost without exception, provided you begin before they are three years old.

The facts cited above do not come under the Official Secrets Act. They, and many like them, are strewn all over the technical journals of psychology and sociology. But who reads technical journals? How many products of our glorious educational system are equipped to read and interpret the highly technical language in which such research reports are usually couched? And what about the media of mass communication, or our schools? As it is, these reports remain largely mysteries sealed with seven seals, or science fiction, or slices of utopia. The educational institutions which deform our children go on as if these things did not exist, dosing one generation after another with ignorance and prejudice.

They have miseducated us as children that they may manipulate us as adults with their movies, TV, radio, and newspapers. It is essential that working people do not adopt an anti-theoretical attitude. This would render them even more victim to the attitude-forming agencies and forces of the established order. We must formulate our theoretical assumptions consciously. We must shape for ourselves theoretical tools, which we can use the better to grasp the reality of today in terms of our own interests. We must construct tools with which we can better unite in common understanding of the interest we all share: our common liberation from a form of tyranny which, as never before in history threatens to make man a willing captive in a golden cage, or to sacrifice him in an atomic furnace.

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This does not mean that we should exalt theory as a goal in itself. I have constantly referred to theory as an intellectual tool to help us grasp our own practice. As any other tool, theory has value only in relation to the job it is supposed to do. I have yet to meet a mechanic who collects wrenches or spanners as Objects of Art. As in any other job, so too in intellectual work: the better our tool, the better the job we can do.

Socialists are not all agreed as to what is the basic contradiction of modern capitalist society. I, for my part, am convinced that despite great changes since the days of Karl Marx, the fundamental - though by no means the only - contradictions in modern capitalist society are still economic in nature. But it is not the economic contradictions of capitalism that engage us. It is rather the fundamental inhumanity which is the very essence of the capitalist social order. Dehumanization of man is not a mere by-product of capitalist society, which can be somehow eliminated, or even substantially lessened by reforms. It is at the very core, it is the vital pre-requisite for the continued existence of the system itself.

As ignorance of medicine in the tribe is the necessary condition for the continued prosperity of the witch doctor, so too does the continued existence of capitalism absolutely require our continued ignorance, prejudice, lack of insight into ourselves, and into what makes this society run. There has been a total

organization of all the resources of the established order against man's mobilizing himself to achieve his own self-realization in freedom. This is the final proof of how real the possibility of human fulfillment has become in our time. A working class armed with a coherent insight into the inhumanity of our present social order, coupled with a grasp of how real is its power, this will be the death toll of capitalism and the birth of a new order.

Jim Evrard.



FORDS PATH OF STRUGGLE

This diagram of the 'Procedure for dealing with problems at work' at Fords is typical of the agreements 'for the avoidance of disputes' in every major industry. These agreements have been entered into by every union, whether their leadership be 'right', 'left' or 'centre'.

These procedures, with their built-in 'cooling-off' periods and many tiered structure, can take up to 18 months to 'go through', especially if it is in the employer's interest to delay matters. Until this procedure has been exhausted there can be no 'official' disputes. And when it has been gone through the original issue is usually dead and buried. A very satisfactory state of affairs ... for the employer. Yet the trade union leaders instead of attacking these structures are collaborating in strengthening them.

It is argued that the procedures are effective and that if there is 'goodwill on both sides' disputes can be settled within procedure. This is not the case. In the June 1965 issue of the 'AEU JOURNAL' a complete list of the May references to the Central Conference at York is given. Of the total of 16 references not one was settled in favour of the men. This is the normal situation. *

This diagram has an interesting special feature: the way in which the role of the shop-stewards-controlled Works Committee is played down, in relation to the role of the full-time officers. This is in line with the policy of the Company since the defeat. The new policy is aimed at strengthening the hands of the officials. They now have an office placed at their disposal within the plant and are given every facility for 'seeing their members'. At the same time Works Committeemen and shop stewards are obstructed. The meetings of the Works Committee have become a farce.

SOLIDARITY is not calling on the management to cooperate with the Works Committee. We don't call for 'improving' the procedure agreements. We believe that managerial actions show quite clearly what managerial attitudes are towards both the full-time officials and towards the men. What is wanted at Dagenham now is a basic change in the level of shop floor organization. Militancy must be on the basis of conscious and solid rank-and-file strength. Ford workers will then be able to take a firm hand in their own lives. They will then burn the agreements, if they want to. And let the men who signed them carry them out!

In Ken Weller's 'THE BLSP DISPUTE' (Solidarity Pamphlet No. 8) we give a break-down of 'York References' for the six months ending August 1961. During this period there were 84 references. Only 3 were settled in the men's 'favour'.

THE PATH TO AGREEMENT

The agreed Procedure for dealing with problems at work

1

YOU take it up
with YOUR FOREMAN



YOU and SHOP STEWARD
to FOREMAN

if no agreement

2

if no agreement



PERSONNEL MANAGER
PLANT LEVEL MEETING



YOU and your STEWARD
to SUPERINTENDENT

3

if no agreement

4



T.U. DISTRICT
OFFICIAL and
PERSONNEL
MANAGER

if no agreement is reached
then problem is progressed
to

5

← EITHER OR →

5a

JOINT WORKS COMMITTEE



if no agreement

6

if no agreement



T.U. NATIONAL OFFICIAL and
LABOUR RELATIONS MANAGER

if no agreement

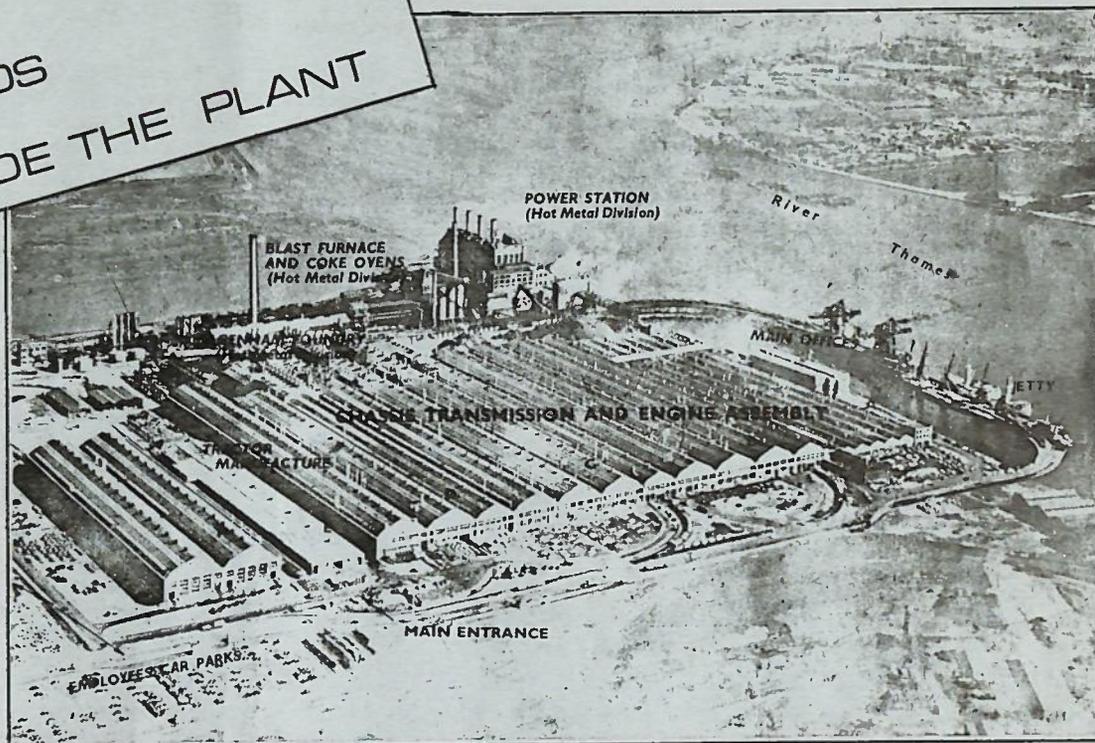
7

NATIONAL JOINT
NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

**EXTRACT FROM THE
PROCEDURE AGREEMENT
(SECTION 1D)**

The parties agree that, at each stage of the procedure set out in this Agreement, every attempt will be made to resolve issues raised and that until such procedure has been carried through there shall be no stoppage of work or other unconstitutional action.

FORDS INSIDE THE PLANT



As usual I am late in writing. As you well know factory work is not conducive to mental alertness, work at Fords even less so. When one arrives home at night your back aches, your feet ache, and your head aches. And you are still aching all over hours later. You still hear the whine and shriek of the machines and power tools. That is what it's like to be a Ford assembly worker.

The Bill Francis tragedy was a victory for the Company. Ford workers suffer from this defeat to this day. At the time many men considered that the management would bungle the battle and were bound to be discredited. However we forgot a very important factor on the boss' side: the loyalty and faithfulness to him of the trade union leaders, whose skilful manoeuvring 'conned' the workers back to work and finally sold their victimised members out.

The very organization of work in this part of the factory (the Engine Plant) leads to a break-up of the group solidarity which normally exists between workers. The boss is well aware of this. Speed-up leads to a certain inner tension. The men are tense, each concentrating on their own particular assembly operation. This limits contact with those in the immediate vicinity and leads to a sort of armed neutrality to others on the same line. So instead of one cohesive group aimed at improving conditions, we have many smaller groups each suspicious of each others' motives.

On a fast assembly line a man can work day after day for years on end only a few yards from a workmate, yet neither will know anything of each other. They will often not even speak to each other - the few yards might as well be miles separating them.

Tense, sweaty work, always on edge, wondering whether the foreman and his cronies might try to duck-shove more work onto you, half suspicious of your colleagues (have they accepted an extra penny or two 'merit' money in return for more work?). This is the atmosphere in one of the less militant sections at Dagenham, following the break-up of the old unofficial communications network and the drastic speed-up.

The shop stewards try to put up a show of militancy. But few men allow themselves to be nominated as stewards at election times. Quite apart from the added vulnerability within the plant, as an 'ex-Ford shop steward' he will, when he leaves or is sacked, be given a wide berth by any potential employer quite irrespective of his record as a militant; many have been out of work for months.

Brian Jeffreys, TGWU.

FORDS

WHAT IS TO BE DONE ?

This article is by Johnnie Cross who was AEU member of the P.T.A. Shop stewards Committee.

As one of the victimised Ford shop stewards, I have had more than two years in which to reflect on the worst blot on Ford trade unionism.

The great sell-out came after Bill Francis was sacked for speaking in the dinner hour to workers on the small car trim line who were refusing to be further exploited by speed-up.

The reaction of the workers was in the best tradition. By next day, the whole of the Assembly Plant (where Bill Francis was Chairman of the shop stewards committee) was on strike. Thousands in the Body Plant soon joined in.

I am sure we could have won the dispute.

But after a while, the old cry went up: 'let's get the officers down and make the strike official'. Then, and only then, did the rot set in.

Of course, the first thing the officials did was to say: 'back to work': The gremlins of King Street and their sheep backed up the order. And from then on the workers were confused into defeat. Victimisation followed without any resistance from the trade union leaders.

The root causes of the defeat, however, go back much further than the dispute itself. Ford workers used to have a very good

link with all other car firms in England as well as with some from France, Italy and Germany. Once a year there were meetings including shop stewards and committeemen from the whole industry. This had the makings of a national shop stewards movement.

But inevitably the trade union bureaucrats, in the form of the Grand Knight of St. Gregory, Sir William Carron and that Grand Old Left Winger, Frank Cousins - and lots more who are not worth wasting space over - cracked their whips.

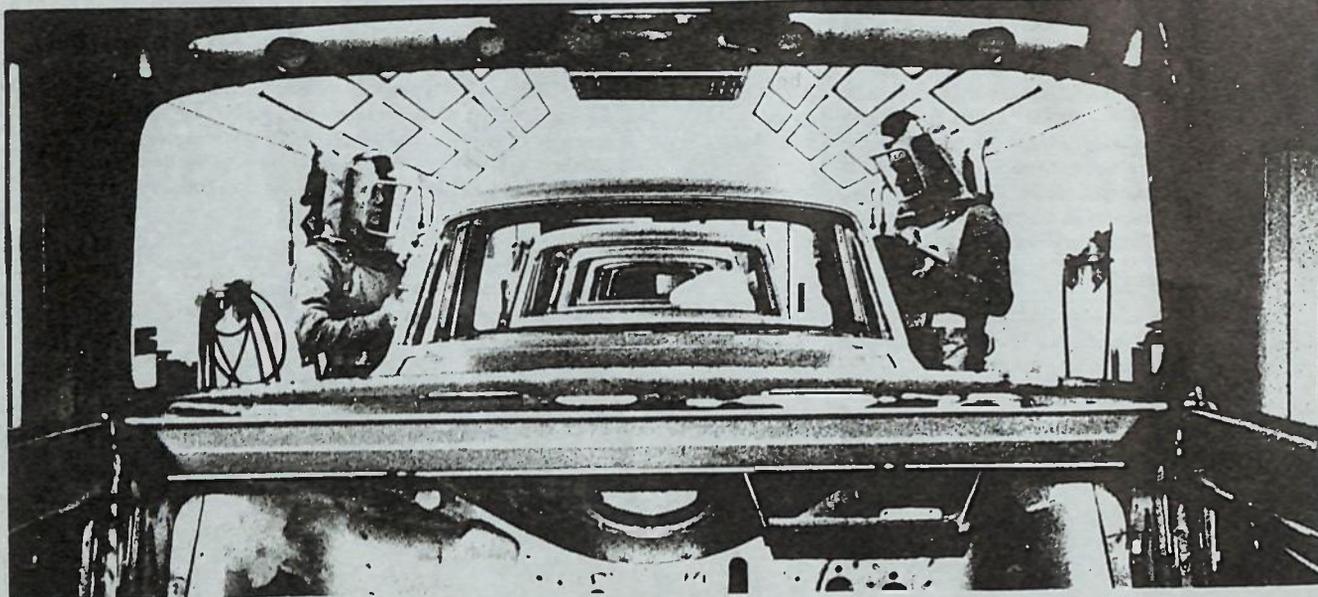
These so-called trade union leaders said they would expel any of their members who attended any of these meetings, even though they were held at weekends. Why it mattered what they ordered, I can't imagine. They should have been told to get knotted. But not on your life. The leading Party members among the leadership of the stewards movement ducked down their little holes and stopped there.

I would say this was when the trade union movement in the car industry started slipping backwards. The managements knew they could start smashing up the workers' organizations. Things have now gone from bad to terrible at Fords. Only a ghost of the old organization exists. The Company is having a ball.

So what can be done? It's no easy task to pick something off the floor and make it work straight away. I would say the workers have not only got to think about a joint shop stewards movement. They have got to think much wider than a national shop stewards movement. The movement will have to be international, because all the big car firms have gone this way.

Naturally, this will not be achieved overnight. But the car workers have got to start on this right away and forget all about officials. The only time to think of them is at election time - and then get them OUT.

When we get this national and international shop stewards movement, then we can have one union for the motor industry with revocable officers who are simply administrators.



SKETCHES - NOTTING HILL

Come the night
 our men will
cluster the paving
to stare in one direction -
drunks, whores, peddlars, cops and
 bystanders
attention fixed for hours
eyes pierce
on other men
tensing.

I hear
 the rhythms of feet
 isolated splinter of bottles
 laughter
 tickles of violence
 between the walls.

Des downstairs
is cleaning his car,
spends a good nine hours of each week
in shining the black.

Labouring man
Hunched jaws below eyes
recalling enclosures of six kids
bawling their mother to lash
out pain as bluebeat skids
in a nextdoor basement,
Strides the night
his mouth bitter with whisky.

Admire her dark face
beside tenements
 But leave it at that -
for smoke would expose
more thought than her fine
black wall of flesh.

Dominica and Carnival.

Look you -
this child who beams pride
at the pile
of crap he's produced.

Hall-ways that reek
And the cats squall through the night.

andrew lloyd

CARDAN MEETING

'The vast majority of politically active workers and supporters of traditional 'left' organizations, whatever their good faith and good will, cannot make their reconversion. They remain trapped in the ideology of a previous period. They repeat mechanically the lessons and phrases learnt long ago, phrases which are now empty of all revolutionary content. They remain attached to forms of action and organization that have collapsed.'

SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM
(Solidarity Pamphlet No.11
p. 19)

On Saturday, June 5, 1965, Solidarity organized a meeting in London attended by about 100 people. Paul Cardan (coeditor of SOCIALISME OU BARBARIE) and Alasdair McIntyre (of the Editorial Board of INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM) spoke about Cardan's recent book 'MODERN CAPITALISM AND REVOLUTION'. The meeting lasted four hours. It gave rise to much heat, fog and noise, a combination known in traditional 'left' circles as a political discussion. (1)

The two main speakers, although approaching the problem from different angles, did not disagree on fundamentals. The similarity of many of their views led one comrade, who had come 'expecting a debate', to deplore the presence of 'two Cardans'.

The comments from the floor, following the opening statements, soon introduced the appropriate acrimonious and polemical note, without which some comrades would seem incapable of discussing anything, even the weather.

Mike Kidron (I.S.) accused Cardan of indulging in 'amalgam techniques' and of not discriminating sufficiently between the various species of the genus 'marxist'.

Cardan replied that today a superficial common denominator among marxists - or would-be marxists - was that they simply did not listen or try to understand when something new was being discussed. A genuine dialogue was virtually impossible. They had gramophones in their heads, which automatically switched on at the appropriate place. He had been at pains to differentiate between Marx and different

varieties of marxists. But at a deeper level the 'amalgam' was permissible. All marxists today shared a common basic belief. They all made of the distribution of the social product the dominant moment of society, deriving everything else from it. Marxists refused to accept the new facts of economic life, for to admit them would, according to their own mentality and criteria, be tantamount to admitting that capitalism could control the universe. They saw nothing else in capitalism than the anarchy of market mechanisms. The real problems and crises of modern bureaucratic capitalism were not primarily at this level. Those who thought that they were had a vision of socialism which was basically just a more efficiently managed society.

Tony Cliff then set about to prove - albeit unwittingly - the unity of theory, method and style in traditional marxism.

Cardan's 'whole book was a plagiarism of Marx pure and simple, a distortion of Marx pure and simple and a kick at Marx pure and simple'.(2) The 'distortion' was exemplified in Cardan's statement that in the pages of 'Capital', nothing opposed the tendency of the system to reduce wages to the biological minimum. Curiously enough, Cliff did not challenge the chapter and verse with which Cardan had documented his assertion. Instead Cliff sought to 'refute' what Cardan was imputing to Marx by pointing out that 'Marx had supported the 10-hours bill, had been involved in a debate in 1864 about higher wages and had been a member of the General Council of the First International which, as was well known, had fought for higher wages'.

(1) A recording was made of the proceedings. We hope to publish the main contributions in a pamphlet, which will also deal with the various reviews, criticisms, queries, comments, deafening silences and apoplectic strokes provoked by the book.

(2) If the whole book is a plagiarism of Marx, it is difficult to see why it should so annoy traditional marxists.

Continuing at this level, Cliff saw another 'filthy distortion' in the allegation that there was some kind of connection between Marx's economic theories and bureaucratic politics (which Cliff, rather modestly, only equated with Stalinism). 'It is simply not true' said Cliff, 'that Marx proclaimed "we are the General Staff and we will use the rest of them as cannon fodder".' Cardan, of course, had said no such thing. He had merely argued that 'objectivist views of economics and history could only be (and had only been) a source of bureaucratic politics'. He had been at pains to point out that 'Marx himself had not drawn such conclusions from his economic theories and that in fact his political positions were usually the very opposite'. Unless all history was a monstrous succession of accidents - a most unmarxist supposition - there was probably some connection between ideas which set out to alter the course of history and the historical reality in which they found embodiment. When ideas achieved institutional forms their impact on real life was often very different from what their originator had hoped for. The Sermon on the Mount had spoken of brotherly love... yet the Catholic Church had indulged in the Inquisition.

In relation to alienation, there was 'not one comma in Cardan's book that Marx had not written much better before'. Cliff instanced the 'Philosophical Manuscripts' (but didn't claim that, in their present form, they were suitable for agit-prop purposes). And when it came to 'moving forward from Marx' all we get in Cardan was 'description of what everybody knows'. Cardan's analysis lacked laws, rules and perspective. 'There was the present status and one fine day a revolution would come... one fine morning everything would be marvellous'.(3) This reminded Cliff of the Stalinists and of their conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat (small dollops of 'democracy' granted from above).

As for the final chapter of Cardan's book, Cliff thought it 'quite fantastic' and 'stinking elitist of the first order'. It dared propose an organization of a new type. It didn't accept people as they were. Summing up Cliff stated that Cardan himself had once been in a traditional organization. The book was therefore only 'spitting into the well from which one drank'. He found this unhygienic!(4)

Alasdair McIntyre said there was 'a very bad tone in what Kidron and Cliff had said. This was because it was translated from the Russian, about the year 1905'.

'The crucial difference between those who managed capitalism in the 19th century and those who managed it today was that the latter had achieved a degree of consciousness as to what they were doing'. 'This doesn't mean - and Cardan never alleged that it meant - that there weren't innumerable obstacles, limitations, etc, to the functioning of the bureaucracy...' 'Understanding the movements of the bureaucracy was a question of understanding partly the economic setting in which it operated, partly the history of the bureaucracy which had made it what it was, and partly the fact that it had a dynamic of its own. To define it as simply a reflection of the need to control the anarchy of the national or international markets was to ignore the important self-moving aspects of bureaucracy.'

'When Mike K. got up and said "I am a marxist", one was tempted to say "and jolly good for you, mate, too". When Cliff accused Cardan of half-plagiarising, half-falsifying Marx, the key lay in the fact that classical marxism was not in fact a consistent system'. What matters now is not whether one calls oneself a marxist or not, but which roots of marxism you think need to be developed in order to deal with the situation TODAY. Anyone who says "I am a marxist" as if there was a single monolithic lump on which he had managed to sit - and which he was very proud of sitting on - was ludicrous'

'The majority of people in politics today come, it was true, from the traditional organizations. But the question was whether these organizations today touched those sections of the working class and of the community at large who had to be moved into action if there were to be successful struggles.'

(3) We recommend chapters 15, 18 and 19 of MODERN CAPITALISM AND REVOLUTION - the book allegedly being discussed - to those comrades who really wish to know how Cardan sees the crises of bureaucratic capitalism. In these chapters he describes fully how the class struggle itself modifies both the milieu in which it is fought and the ideologies of the contenders. Its own self-development results in the accumulation of the 'objective condition for an adequate (i.e. genuinely socialist) consciousness'.

(4) We would suggest it was healthy vomiting, not mere spitting. The water after all has been pretty suspect for a long time and has caused repeated epidemics of political blindness, deafness, sterility and impotence!

'It was all very well to say "we belong to the movement". Movement was precisely what we hadn't got. It would be terrible if continued discussion of Cardan's thesis had to be either in terms of defence in a libel action (in which Karl Marx might be suing Cardan) - or in terms of thinking that if only we managed to sell enough copies of Plekhanov and Kautsky - and of what they had said to people about 1900 - we would all be home'.

'Kidron and Cliff know this won't do. We know it won't do. And perhaps Cardan won't do either. But there is a problem posed here between the bureaucratic political forms and the economic transactions of our society which isn't in traditional marxism and which Cardan's book poses very sharply'.

Constance Lever (I.S.) stated that 'the crude mechanistic picture of a thing called economics which is the base, and of a superstructure arising from it, arising out of it, and purely determined by it was not a marxist one'. It was in fact only 'the interpretation of Marx which was given by modern bourgeois critics of Marx who hadn't in fact read him. Cardan seemed to be saying that 'politics was now the base and economics the superstructure. Sometimes one even got the impression that for him economics didn't exist'.(5)

Paul Foot (I.S.) admitted that the book was useful, but 'to people who are not here rather than to those who are'. The general points made about Eastern Europe, Russia, the role of the State, the bureaucracy and about there being no slump tomorrow were 'all extremely useful and extremely important'.

But after the descriptive analysis, one could do one of two things. One could say that because there had been no slump since 1945 one had to reject marxist economics and try to build a new system of ideas - which was what Cardan was doing. Or one could look deeper and see that the 'competitive dynamo still drives the economy on'. 'The struggle may not be so much between firms within a nation but was now between nations and blocks of nations'. The vast expenditure on armaments still showed the competitive dynamo was building up the economy of one country against another. This was 'precisely the same type of competitive pattern which existed in traditional marxist economics and which one could not reject.'

Paul Foot then went on to say that 'the slogan of those who attacked the traditional working class organizations was: be a blackleg'. (Loud protests) 'It MUST be... If you say you are against working in the traditional organizations you must

say that you are against membership of them'.(6) 'You must tell people to be blacklegs... The protests provoked by my remarks are most interesting. If you say "blacklegs" they are horrified. But it is the logic of saying: keep out of the traditional organizations... Go into Solidarity. Work outside'.(7)

Ken Weller (Solidarity) stated: 'This method of discussion is in the true tradition of the Leninist movement. We've heard talk of amalgams! We were described as Stalinists earlier on. Now they say that the attitude of SOLIDARITY to the traditional organizations makes us black-legs.

'Now let us look at what the traditional organizations are saying and at what they are doing and at what SOLIDARITY says. Let's look at what is really happening. What does a blackleg mean? A blackleg is someone who breaks a picket line and goes to work when there are men on strike. What are the official organizations (both unions and Labour Party) calling for when there are unofficial strikes? "Go back to work! Cross the picket lines!". What does SOLIDARITY say? What does I.S. say? We say the same thing...'

(5) Where comrade Lever gets this idea from beats us! On p.47 of his book, Cardan explains why he describes changes in the structure of the economy in detail before getting down to analysing the modifications that have taken place in the realm of ideology. 'For us ideology neither "follows" nor "precedes". It is simply the expression of the same social reality, at its own level'.

After struggling with the Appendix of the book for several hours, we find it difficult to follow comrade Lever when she asserts that for Cardan economics no longer exist! There's just no satisfying some people!

(6) We say nothing of the kind. On p.92 of 'MODERN CAPITALISM AND REVOLUTION' it is explicitly stated: 'This does not mean that revolutionaries should leave the unions. It does not mean that they should be uninterested in economic demands. It means that neither of these points has the central importance formerly given to it.' Some marxists seem completely incapable of dialectical thought.

(7) It was the Stalinists, in the thirties who initiated the technique of referring to those one disagreed with as being 'objectively on the other side'.

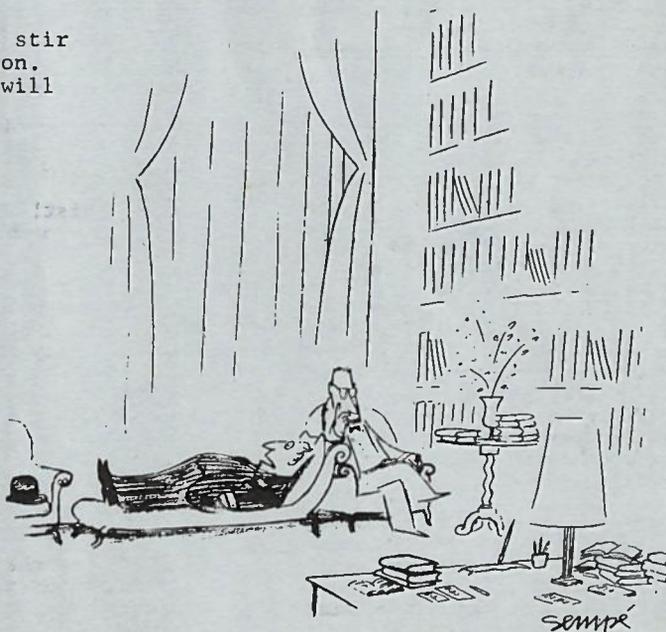
'Why am I a member of a trade union? Because it allows me to get in contact with other workers. And that is the only reason. And I say it. I don't call on loyal members of the Labour Party to do this or to do that, like in the current issue of 'Labour Worker'. I don't call for people to support this one or that one in the union hierarchy. I don't say there's a chance of getting it made official when I know very well there isn't. This isn't blacklegging! It's saying what I believe in and I think it's absolutely unarguable. Let's discuss on these terms. Let's argue on the practical, tactical necessities of job and factory organization. Don't let's juggle these phrases and use this absolutely disgusting method of argument. What SOLIDARITY says is "we will say to the workers exactly what we think their trade unions are, what their chances of changing them are, what the chances are of calling on the unions to organize militant action. That is: NIL." We say to the workers: organize on the job, where you are, with other workers. Join your unions because that's one way of getting in touch with

other workers. But don't rely on your unions for these contacts, because you'll fail. This is what we say. But this is nothing like what Paul Foot said we said. Is this what blacklegs say?'

Space prevents us from giving details of several other interesting contributions, some of which developed the ideas of Solidarity supporters. These views should not be difficult to ascertain for anyone who takes the trouble to read our literature. We have therefore deliberately emphasized the views of the comrades from 'International Socialism'.

Perhaps the most striking by-product of the meeting was its effect on uncommitted participants. Not only did different ideas (as to what socialism was and what capitalism was) seem to be confronting one another, but also two different patterns of political argument, two conceptions of discussion, two methods of attempting to grapple with the constantly changing reality around us. It is in this respect that we feel that the meeting will have been most fruitful.

When I was young I used to stir up things for the Revolution. Now I'm just terrified it will really happen



MAY DAY IN MUNICH

This is a report on the aftermath of the distribution of the German May Day leaflet, published in the last issue of Solidarity. The leaflet was produced by the (Workers) Council Socialist Group of Munich, an 'unofficial' direct action group.

Munich has a population of one million. It is one of West Germany's larger industrial centres. Its major factories include B. M. W. (cars and motorbikes) and Siemens (radios and other electrical goods). In real life Munich is very different from the popular idea of beerhalls, 'lederhosen' and the Bavarian Alps.

The leaflet has been distributed at various factories in Munich during the last week of April. On the May Day rally of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) the Council Socialists appeared with more leaflets and posters. These read:

'Don't look at your leaders' mouths. Look at their hands.'
'Not Co-Determination* but Self-Determination'
'For Workers' Management of Production'.

The workers carrying the placards were met by union officials who tried to tear the slogans down. Some of the bearers were quite badly beaten up. One lorry driver was beaten up 3 times. These union thugs were not prepared to discuss. They simply warned the posters carriers that if they tried such a thing again they would end up in hospital.

Police Guard For Young Socialists

Sunday Telegraph Reporter
BITERNESS between opposing factions in the Labour party's Young Socialist movement has flared up to a point at which some members have asked for and are receiving police protection.

... and for old ones too.

During this disturbance most workers stayed on the sidelines. They did not know who the people distributing the leaflets were, and German workers, not being stupid, are mistrustful. But they had an undisturbed view of the Nazi methods of their 'leaders'.

The repercussions of this demonstration and of our leaflet were greater than we expected. The perpetrators of the leaflet (the 3 of us who had our names on the bottom) were expelled from 'our' unions by the officials. A lively discussion ensued in a number of factories. About 25 letters were received from interested workers along the lines of 'this is the language we've been waiting for', and 'your leaflet has incited a full-scale revolution in our plant'. The union apparatchiks used union money to send brainwashers into the affected plants to counter the leaflet. The word in SPD headquarters was that the Council Socialists were the only group that could be dangerous to them.

Some local SPD branches embarrassed the Party H.Q. by passing resolutions supporting our leaflet. Many workers who had been distrustful of us before May Day have now become active supporters.

I don't want to exaggerate. We have not initiated the world revolution. But we have started a discussion amongst the hitherto passive West German working class which has badly worried the Union and the SPD bureaucrats. The same sort of events would not be as significant in Great Britain or the USA, for the ball is already rolling there. But in West Germany it means that German workers are finally getting 'with it'.

Council Socialist

* 'Co-Determination' refers to the West German practice of allowing 'representatives' the chance of collaborating in the running of a factory.



DO IT YOURSELF SCOOING

Since February, the Ilford Libertarian Group has been mainly engaged in a campaign on education. What follows is a factual account of what has happened. A discussion of the ideas involved will, I hope, follow in a later issue of Solidarity.

We produced a first leaflet, directed at secondary pupils, critical of the whole educational system. Some of our members sneaked into Barking Abbey Grammar School one evening and put the leaflets into the desks of the pupils. Unfortunately they were spotted, the leaflets discovered and our first attempt foiled. The local press went beserk.(1) One paper, the Ilford Recorder, in its editorial called us 'anarchists' and 'nihilists' and likened us to Nazis brainwashing the 'Hitler Youth'.

Despite all this, we had been unsuccessful in getting the leaflets to the pupils. Our next major attempt was to distribute quite openly as the kids came out of school at 4 o'clock. We also realized that the first leaflet itself was pretty crappy and so produced a new and better one.(2) We informed the press of our plans. As a result the Ilford Pictorial, June 24th, devoted its main front page story to our plans, entitled 'Rebel Call to Pupils Plan'.

With the issue bang in the local headlines we decided to strike while the iron was hot. That very evening five of us stationed ourselves outside the gates of Ilford County High School for Boys and gave the boys the leaflet as they left school. They took it eagerly. One went running around shouting 'Hurrah! It's the Revolution!'. Out shuffled Harry Kenwood, the Headmaster: 'Err, don't bother to take the leaflet, boys'. This made the boys all the keener to get a copy. Unable to cope with the situation, Harry retreated and called the police. They arrived when all the boys had gone home and we had got rid of all our leaflets.

The next day, Friday June 25, the BBC contacted us. In their Home Service programme 'News in the South East' (just after the 6 o'clock news) they broadcast a report on the 'happenings' at Ilford County High, including an interview with one of us (fame at last!) and with Mr Kenwood.

On June 29 we 'struck' again - this time at Beal Grammar School for Boys. Word must have got around about the leaflet, for the first boys out, on seeing us, ran up saying 'Is this it?'. 'Yes, it is, hurrah!'

On July 1st the Ilford Pictorial ran a long story on the events, mainly concerned with throwing mud at us. We were called 'plain-looking girls', 'nervous youths', etc. Our ideas were declared to be 'impracticable'. A photograph showed us giving out the leaflet and several pupils walking away reading it. A quote from a Headmaster said that most pupils didn't bother to read it and tore it up immediately. (!)

On July 1st we also 'did' S.E. Essex Technical School and Barking Abbey Grammar School. At the latter a touch of humour was added to the situation. The Headmaster came out, recognized one of our members as one who had sneaked into the school back in February to put the leaflet in the desks, and announced: 'Stop here, this is a citizen's arrest'. 'No it isn't' said our member, walking off. Just then the police arrived. 'There they are' yelled the enraged Head, pointing. But 'they' weren't 'there' - they had hopped on a passing bus and gone home, leaving the police and the Headmaster to discuss the merits of a libertarian education among themselves.

We were getting quite blasé by this time. We knew for a fact that the leaflet had caused much discussion in the schools, and that many boys would have liked to have taken up our suggestions, but didn't quite know how.(3) The national press were becoming interested. A Daily Mail reporter had repeatedly tried to contact us and the Evening News had run a story on us.(4) On Wednesday, July 7, the Barking and Dagenham Post printed an interesting piece about two youths who, while reading our leaflet in Rugby Road, Dagenham, had been stopped by the police and had it taken away. The authorities were apparently getting annoyed!

We were now informing the Press in advance of our exact plans. On July 8 the Redbridge Recorder (Wanstead and Woodford edition) announced on page 1 that we were going to leaflet Wanstead County High School within the next two days. The Headmaster of the school must have read this for he warned the pupils about us that morning in assembly and urged them to ignore us. The result? Six

(1) Barking and Dagenham Post, February 3 (front page story and editorial); Ilford Pictorial, Feb. 4; Ilford Recorder, Feb. 4 (front page and editorial).

(2) Reproduced in full in Freedom (July 17, 1965) and in Resistance (vol.3, No.7).

of them gave out the leaflet with us that evening, in school uniform. We got seven names and addresses from interested people and had some long discussions on the leaflet.

Our next, and last, leaflet raid (until next term!) was at Bancrofts School in Woodford - a really upper crust semi-public school - on July 14. Three of us turned up to give out the leaflet, and five pressmen to report it. However, I must admit that this time we were not so successful. Many of the boys are boarders and so did not know about us waiting outside the gates. And many stayed behind to watch a cricket match. So we only managed to distribute about 75 leaflets (compared with up to 400 at other schools).

By now we were virtually running the local press. The Woodford Times, July 15, devoted its main front page story to our activities, as did the Woodford Express and Independent, July 16. Both these papers reprinted the leaflet, almost in full. The Woodford Times was especially good, as it concentrated more than any other on the fact that we were advocating a new type of education based on freedom rather than fear and authority, and not on the 'rebellious' aspect of what we were doing. Further, on July 15 the Ilford Pictorial printed a 500 word letter from me, in full, explaining the ideas behind our actions.

The authorities were, by this time, getting potty. A factor that seemed to be worrying them more than anything else was that some teachers were actually involved in this campaign. On July 19 Redbridge Education Committee discussed this and their conclusions appeared in all the local papers. 'Teachers to be Investigated' said the Woodford Times, July 22; 'Teachers involved in "disobey" propaganda' (Redbridge Recorder, July 22, both Ilford and Wanstead-Woodford editions); 'Schools Rebel Group to be Probed' (Ilford Pictorial, July 22). The Woodford Express and Independent, July 23, ran the 'Teachers to be Investigated' story, plus an editorial entitled 'A Sure Path Back to the Jungle' and a very good piece in its chatty column 'Weekend Roundabout', while the Leyton edition of this paper might well have been subtitled 'Libertarian News' for, as well as including these three pieces, it had a main front page story called 'Teacher Tries to make Children Thwart School Discipline', which included an almost full reproduction of the leaflet. Furthermore, both editions of the Express and Independent, and the Woodford Times printed my letter in full.

School term has now ended. The dust is settling. Next term we will continue. The effect of the campaign has already been widespread. The father of one of our members, himself a teacher, has written a

sympathetic article for the magazine 'The Teacher'. One of us was asked to write an article for the unofficial magazine at Bancrofts School.(5) Some of us went down and spoke to Dartford Libertarian Group about our ideas. They distributed the leaflet outside Dartford Schools as a result, and also received front page publicity in their local press.(6) Some of us visited Summerhill School and told A.S. Neill what we were doing. We saw Michael Duane, Headmaster of Risinghill Comprehensive there. He agreed with the leaflet and will speak at a public meeting we are planning for next term.

Articles have been written for Resistance (vol.3, Nos 3 and 7) and Freedom (July 10 and 17). We have received enquiries and letters of support from all over the country. One letter from a teacher begins: 'Dear Pioneers'. Another teacher wrote: 'I support you in your stand'. But I must put this in perspective. Some people who support our aims have criticized our methods of going about things. I must admit that some of the criticisms are just.

The two main ones are firstly that we attack the old system without offering anything new, and secondly that in making an outright attack on all teachers we may alienate some who might be willing to go part of the way with the ideas.

When we restart next term we will overcome these criticisms. We will outline how a School Council, as at Risinghill Comprehensive, can be formed. The leaflet, as well as presenting the new ideas, will thus be an appeal to both teachers and pupils. Really authoritarian teachers won't want to know of course. But some may be willing to go some way with the kids. This will also answer the kids' question: 'How can we do anything?'.

We intend following up all our contacts and making this campaign as widespread as possible in the autumn. Will groups or individuals willing to join in a national campaign please immediately contact Ilford Committee of 100 Working Group, 57 Wellwood Road, Goodmayes, Ilford, Essex.

(3) A fault of the leaflet. We should have discussed School Councils like at Risinghill, with staff and pupils on them.

(4) July 6. (edition H H).

(5) The article was written, accepted by the boys on the Editorial Board, but vetoed by the master in charge!

(6) Dartford Reporter, July 16, 1965.