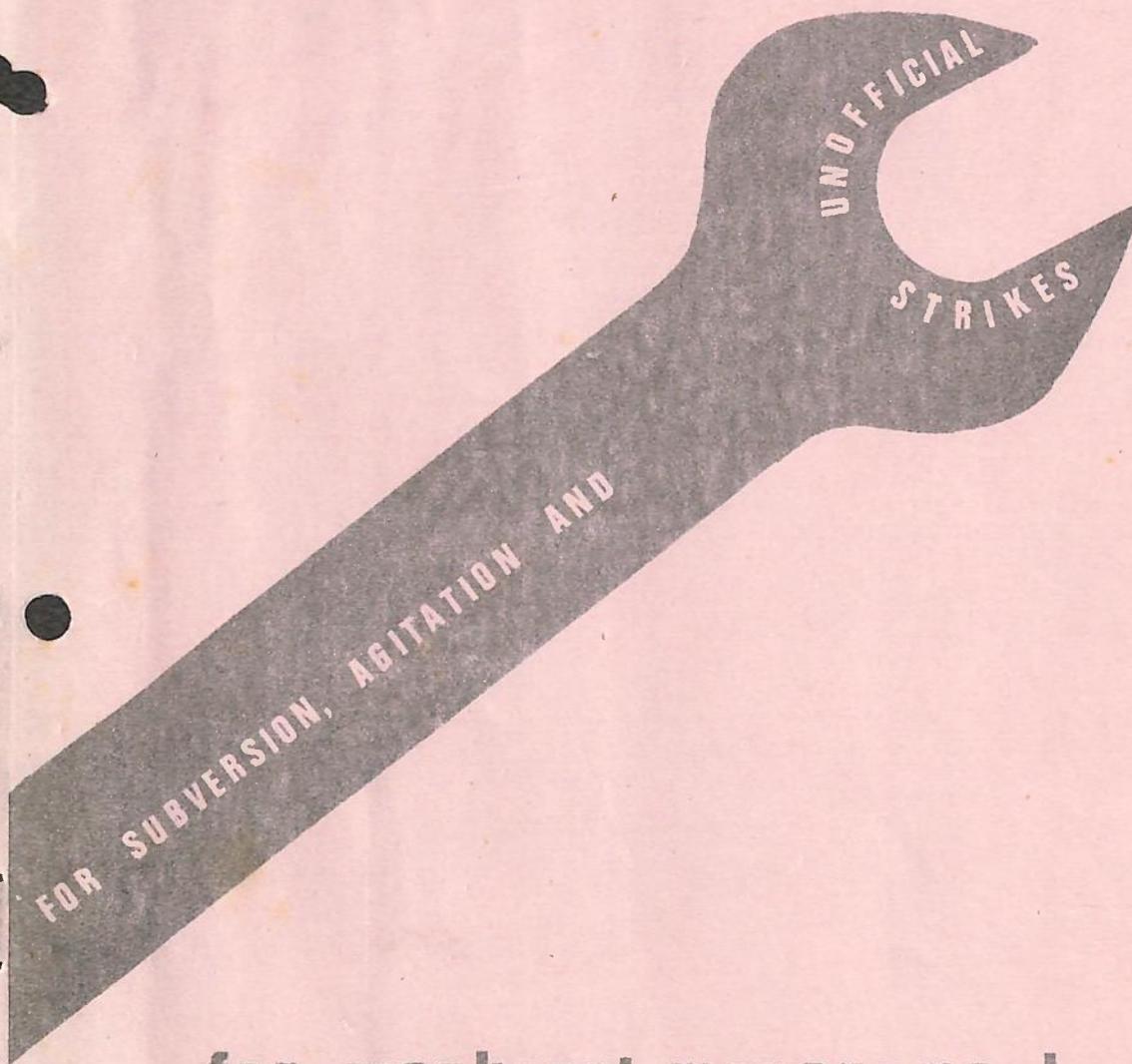


solidarity

central scotland



for workers' management

EDITORIAL

Hullawrerr! How's it gaun?

It's over two years since a regular Solidarity magazine was published on Clydeside. In fact, the last edition of Solidarity Scotland was produced in Aberdeen. The Aberdeen Solidarity Group have since been publishing their own magazine, but this is of a more localised character than either Solidarity Scotland or the present magazine.

Since the last edition of Solidarity Scotland, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge. We have had National Conferences in Leeds, London, and Manchester, at which many important issues were discussed.

In particular, we have been forced to see Solidarity as a growing organisation - something which we had not originally foreseen or intended. We now have groups or 'embryo groups' in many parts of Britain, and in Scotland, which is our main concern, we have established a 'presence' in all four Scottish cities.

The Aberdeen Group has, of course, been for the past two years the strongest, although it has had its ups and downs like everyone else. The Clydeside Group has been re-organised and over the past year has produced three theoretical pamphlets as well as a fair number of leaflets. In this way we have gradually worked our way back to the strength required to produce a magazine again after a period of total collapse lasting for about a year. Dundee has also seen the formation of an 'embryo group', i.e. one which as yet is unrecognised by the Solidarity National Conference as being totally self-sufficient, able to produce leaflets, pamphlets, etc. on its own, without the help of any other group. Edinburgh also has a small nucleus of people who are committed to Solidarity's ideas.

The present magazine is produced on Clydeside but is the magazine of Dundee and Edinburgh too.

As we said earlier, there has been a growth nationally of Solidarity, and at present there are five other Solidarity magazines being published.

SOLIDARITY AS AN ORGANISATION

The growth of Solidarity as an organisation has forced us to look closely at our theory regarding organisation and to re-iterate one of our basic statements, i.e. that we are not seeking to build an organisation, certainly not a revolutionary party. This is a major theoretical difference with the traditional groups on the 'left'. Of course, we want people to come and help us promote our ideas, but not at the expense of their own organisations. What is important to us is that our ideas on organisation should get across to the workers and students, and that they should organise themselves along the lines which we suggest. Our whole concept of revolution is to get people to think for themselves. Only if there is mass socialist consciousness can there be a true revolution; only if people think and act for themselves, without the 'guidance' of trade unions,

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political parties, 'leaderships' etc., can there be mass consciousness. The Workers' Councils start now - before the revolution. 'Workers' consciousness is the key to workers' power and workers' management of society.

WHY HAS THERE BEEN A GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF SOLIDARITY GROUPS?

Basically, there has been a growth in awareness among members of the working class that the trade unions and political parties have sold them out. With every unofficial strike this awareness spreads, with every strike declared official the awareness is doubled as the bureaucrats tell the workers that they have 'negotiated a settlement' and they must go back to work in the same miserable conditions which they were striking against. The events of France in May '68 have shown the more politically conscious the sterility of the traditional 'left-wing' parties and some of these people have joined Solidarity.

HOW HAS SOLIDARITY FACED THE PROBLEM OF WAKING UP TO FIND ITSELF GROWING INTO AN ORGANISATION?

The first obvious problem was how to ensure that these new groups contain people whose ideas are those of Solidarity, and not those of I.S. or the anarchists. Unlike these two groups, which are probably the nearest to us in the political spectrum, Solidarity has generally had one coherent theory. The anarchists, on the other hand, are split into totally opposing factions, e.g. Individualists, anarcho-pacifists, anarcho-syndicalists, anarcho-marxists, to name but a few. Similarly in I.S. we have seen the growth of a democratic-centralist faction, a libertarian faction and a 'micro-faction' suspended in a sort of political limbo of 'give the people a Party if they want it in the future'. To ensure that new groups are really Solidarity groups, a decision was taken on what constitutes a Solidarity group, the main provisions being its sponsorship by an existing group as a group holding Solidarity's beliefs, its ability to publish a magazine and its ratification by the next National Conference. The Manchester Conference amended this to sponsorship by two groups and by publishing material of some sort, not necessarily a magazine.

To give some sort of National identity to these scattered groups and individuals, a National Internal Bulletin was instituted to provide information and discussion within the movement. This was originally produced on Clydeside and has now been taken on by the Lancaster section of the North-West Group.

In this way each group has complete independence. No orders come from any centre, whether in London, Glasgow, Aberdeen or elsewhere. There is no bureaucratic structure, or, under the present system, any possibility of one, as there is no permanent national committee. Even the national conference only makes recommendations which are not mandatory on any group. This conference is not a delegate conference and voting and speaking rights are open to all Solidarity members. Neither is it an anarchist free-for-all, as those present and voting must be Solidarists, duly accredited by recognised Solidarity groups. Thus we hope to avoid the bureaucratic sickness of the traditional 'left' and the chaos of the anarchist movement.

SOLIDARIST THEORY

Solidarity believes that the form and activities of a revolutionary group reflect the kind of society which it would tend to create in a 'revolution'. We see the bureaucratic state-capitalism of the communist regimes as an inevitable development from the Leninist theory and practice of the Bolsheviks and their successors. The 'leadership' concept in a revolutionary party is merely a scaled down version of the leadership structure which they visualise for the post-revolutionary society. The degree of control exerted by the rank and file in the traditional political organisations is virtually nil; so also would be their control in society after the revolution. Of course a certain amount of control is exercised, e.g. the deciding between two or three candidates or resolutions. This is control, but it is not management. Extended into their vision of post-revolutionary societies, these 'revolutionaries' visualise this type of system as 'workers' control' - and so it is, but it is not workers' management. Workers' management involves not merely workers' control of industry, it goes much further:- it involves deciding what the choices are to be, if indeed there are to be choices; it involves more than the worker in his role as worker, it involves the worker in his role as consumer of the goods he produces; it involves the worker during his leisure. What we stand for, is in short, not workers' control of industry, but workers' management of society.

What difference is there between the conditions of workers in the 'free' world and workers in the 'communist' bloc?

Both go out to work, both earn a miserable wage, both are burdened with bosses and bureaucrats poncing off them; neither has any say in the disposal of his product. If anything, the capitalism of the state variety is more demanding than that of the private variety, for in this we see the ultimate oppression of the working class - integration of the management and unions against the interests of the workers. More and more, in the West, this is what the bureaucrats are striving for - co-operation, consultation, integration, subordination, exploitation!

The trade unions which are supposedly the voice of the working class, are merely the voice of themselves, a hollow echo of ideas expressed many decades ago, an echo of socialist thought and action which is now becoming so faint as to be non-existent.

The unions and political parties of the left have become putrifying corpses filled with maggots gorging themselves on the hopes and aspirations of the working class. But the stench of these decaying corpses is reaching the noses of the masses of the ordinary working population. More and more strikes are unofficial, the workers often neglecting even to bother to inform the union they are going to strike, for if they do the unions will tell them to go back, or declare it official with the sole purpose of selling them out. Mostly, though, the 'unofficial' strikes are the result of frustration - frustration caused by the long delays in neg-

otiating, frustration at the lack of militancy of the union leaders, frustration at the lack of either bosses or unions. Strike action is forced on the working class. No-one wants to go on strike, particularly on unofficial strike, when they don't even get the miserable pittance the union calls strike pay. Slowly but surely it is dawning on the working class that its so-called 'leaders' have sold out. Actually they haven't sold out as, generally speaking, they were never on the side of the workers in the first place. Gradually the working class is being forced to realise that it must fight on its own behalf and that it must think for itself. This is the manifestation which we call self-activity and consciousness. When we have these two factors in conjunction we have revolution. The Revolution is now! The very fact that workers are thinking and acting now is revolution. Naturally there will be a flash-point some day, a situation like France in 1968, but whether or not it bears fruit and is successful depends on the growing consciousness of the working class - and that consciousness is slowly growing now.

Where does Solidarity fit into this picture? What is our position as a group?

We do not set ourselves up as a new leadership, we do not claim a monopoly of the truth. Some of our ideas may need revision. We hope they do, for if we were infallible we would not be human.

Solidarity exists basically as a propaganda group. We are here to make our ideas known. As we hope we have made clear, we feel it is our ideas on organisation which we want to spread - not our organisation itself. We are not here to produce a blueprint for the revolution and post-revolutionary society. The working class will decide when, where and how on its own. These are our ideas; you can call us 'Do-it-Yourself Revolutionaries', for that approximates to our position. Our facilities are available to workers in struggle and we have been of assistance in quite a number of cases. We do not and will not censor what the people we help, produce, but if it is, in our opinion, mistaken, we will say so. But even if our advice is ignored we won't condemn those involved, for if mistakes made now are recognised as such, there is a de facto increase in consciousness and they are less likely to be made in the future.

If we are able in any way to contribute to and hasten the inevitable increase of consciousness of the working class, which must lead to the elimination of the parasites and the seizure of power by the working class, then our efforts will have been worthwhile.

Clydeside, May 1970.

INTERNATIONAL-ZIG ZAG

We keep hearing about the international spirit of the leadership of the Clydeside Strikers in 1919 for the 40 hour week. These two reports make interesting reading. In the Glasgow Evening Times of Jan. 23rd Emmanuel Shinwell, one of the leaders of the strike, at a meeting of the Seafarers Union, of which he was secretary 'pointed out that the reason British Seamen were unemployed was due to the Government refusal to exclude Chinese labour from British ships.'

See foot of facing page.

EDINBURGH STUDENTS ON RAMPAGE

What Happened?

On January 19th of this year, 40-50 students formed a picket outside the University Appointments Board Offices. They were protesting about a visit of Barclays Bank to recruit potential graduates, as part of an anti-apartheid campaign which had begun in the university with the Springbok's visit. The picket spontaneously turned into an occupation of the offices to prevent the interviews being carried out and by the evening 120 students were involved. The staff of the Appointments Board left immediately the sit-in began and set up shop elsewhere in the University.

A leaflet put out that Monday afternoon said:-

"The University should not offer facilities to firms supporting apartheid. The University should declare any investments in such firms.

Join the Occupation now - and act against collaborators in Apartheid."

The occupation lasted a week and over 200 people were involved at some stage or other. Each evening saw a general meeting, usually attended by 100 people, which agreed most of the policy decisions of the occupation.

Initially debate centred round the apartheid issue and what demands should be made to the University Authorities. The demands were soon widened and issued in a further leaflet, to include the University publicly condemning all forms of racial discrimination, appointment of a committee to investigate its investments and other issues such as overseas students' fees, scholarships for victims of apartheid etc.

Though all these 'demands' were communicated to the University Authorities, they were resolutely ignored, and at no stage did the University make any pronouncement on the issues of the occupation. The issues, however, broadened later in the week because of the casual discovery of files and documents lying around the office. These revealed evidence of social and racial discrimination within the Appointments Board itself. Quite by chance, the Edinburgh students had stumbled on the sort of information that students would never normally have access to. This issue of secret files was soon to spread throughout a dozen or more other British Universities.

The discovery of the files and discussion about it led to the publication of a document ... 'Apartheid, The Appointments Board and You'. This revealed the contents of the files, and was distributed in thousands around both staff and students in Edinburgh and other Scottish Universities.

Continued from opposite page.

On the 23th Jan. the Glasgow correspondent of the London 'Times', in a vitriolic attack on the strike, described Shinwell in overt racist terms as a 'Polish Jew'.

Up to this point the Authorities remained silent. They had even left on the electricity and gas in the occupied offices. Principal Michael Swann did reveal at a later date that he and his solicitors had been racking their brains trying to discover a law for the police to evict the occupants. Having no luck he decided to join the law and order campaign to have the Trespass Laws tightened up! His tactic had instead been to send in apparently sympathetic stooges to persuade the occupants to leave.

First of these was your friendly Fabian, Rector's Assessor (a student 'representative on the University Court') and Labour Candidate, George Foulkes. One can picture Swann peering over his double chins saying "Be a good chap Foulkes and see what these students are up to." Foulkes was later given short shrift, but many of the occupants were taken in by a later visit of four lecturers from the Anti-Apartheid committee, including the Dean of the Law Faculty, Prof. McGibbon. The latter's approach was more subtle than that of Foulkes. Foulkes' reaction created an Evening News headline:

WARNING ON SIT-IN, IT COULD TURN VIOLENT

McGibbon's statement to the Scotsman was:

"From what they had seen, it was clear that those involved were not all anti-apartheid. There were other causes involved. They are not all full-time students, and that is the pity of it."

The only way to attack the sit-in, it seems, was to make out that the participants were not really students, and some were fighting other causes than anti-apartheid So what?

One of the other causes - the files, however, prompted action by the authorities, and led by fearless Charles Stewart, the Secretary of the University, one early Saturday morning, several staff invaded the offices and removed, not the students, but the filing cabinets.

Following this the occupation was called off, mainly because it was no longer possible to show personal files to students who had been tramping in to see them.

Thence followed a lull until threats of disciplinary action began to circulate. It was rumoured through 'reliable and sympathetic' professorial channels that six students involved were to be expelled! It was suggested, however, that if 50 or 60 signed a statement of solidarity saying they were 'guilty of disrupting the administrative work of the University by taking part in the sit-in', then the six would get off and the 50-60 get a light sentence.

The militants were taken in by this trick and though several of us argued against this action, 55 signed a statement confessing their guilt. The issue at stake at this point was no longer whether the occupation had taken place clearly all those who had taken part were 'guilty' of disrupting the administrative work of the University, this had been their intention. But it was quite wrong to plead guilty because of the 'validity' of the disciplinary procedure. The disciplinary procedure makes a mockery of all principles of natural justice. It is simply a tool of the authorities and is even under attack from fairly middle of the road academics.

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By pleading guilty to the 'catch-all' charge, the militants were setting a precedent. Their complicity in the use of disciplinary procedure to attack political protest was a big mistake. Militants in other Universities should learn from this.

The mythical six who were to be expelled could have been defended far effectively by mass student pressure and liberal academic support if they had refused to accept the validity of the disciplinary procedure. It was never possible to recover from this mistake.

Part of the 'deal' was to hush things up.... a move of tremendous advantage to the authorities who got away with threats and blackmail in the next few weeks. Ultimately when the sentences of the farcial disciplinary proceedings were announced, they were far more severe than had been expected:- £20 fines for undergraduates and £40 for postgraduates and suspended stipendations for all (i.e. student committing any further indiscretions could be immediately sent down effectively ending their university career).

A meeting had been arranged the day of the sentences (March 2nd) to discuss further action and was attended by about 200. At this meeting the majority of the 55 decided not to pay their fines. In their excitement they also just remembered to call a general meeting to gain support from the mass of the students.

On the Wednesday, March 4th, a general meeting was planned. The doors of the main lecture theatre were locked, however, on some pathetic excuse. The numbers who arrived soon filled a nearby lecture theatre to overflowing. For the first time in Edinburgh University there was a spontaneous mass interest in a 'political' issue. Eventually it was decided to occupy the nearby foyer of the First-Year Science Building, which was big enough to hold the meeting.

The meeting of over 800 people that followed gave over whelming support to the militants in opposition to the authorities. A message was sent to the Principal, inviting him to attend, but he refused, so the meeting moved en masse, at a run, to the Old Quad, where the administrative offices are located. Hundreds of students swarmed into the administrative building, blocking all exits, and the Principal was left with no alternative but to come out and speak to this 'unruly mob' in the forecourt. An amazing experience this for all the sour-faced lefties who had perpetually damned Edinburgh students as reactionary and apathetic.

The Principal hoped to diffuse the militancy by calling a further meeting (in the same lecture theatre that earlier wasn't available!). About 150 remained occupying the administrative building, however, though things were too chaotic for anyone to know why. Whilst the meeting with the Principal proceeded a quarter of a mile away, a steady build up of police took place in the Old Quad 'to protect property'.

When the news of this reached the general meeting the Principal immediately pleaded innocence of calling in the police, and blamed it on the Secretary. A militant motion to transfer the meeting to the Old Quad, however, was defeated and a delegation was sent instead. Most people

immediately left and went anyway. The occupation was called off, without arrests or any violence, and the night was spent with 500 or so occupying the basement cafeteria of the Arts Faculty Building (the DHT).

This feature of Edinburgh's tiny revolution was the most interesting. The cafeteria took on a spirit of its own. Even when everyone was demoralised the basement provided a rallying point. Its windows soon became covered with slogans (not the walls too hard for the authorities to clean off) and a discotheque emerged; the place was also used for the performance of plays by a revolutionary theatre group and so on.

A general meeting was planned for the following day. Attendance at this was staggering, probably because of the interference of the police. This meeting, however, was the beginning of the end. No-one had planned what would come out of it, and 1500 people gradually drifted away as the same old points were debated over and over again. Any chance of militant defence of the 55 disappeared. At the demoralising end an abortive occupation of the library was attempted, but was soon given up.

Amazingly 700-800 reconvened that night for a further meeting and to continue an occupation that was not really any sort of threat to the authorities. The general meeting at lunchtime the following day was not so well attended however, and achieved little. Though the occupation of the DHT continued over the weekend and a free university and a march through the town on Sunday (when no-one was about) took place, the militants were left further back than they had started out. The following week was the last of term exams week and nothing more could be expected.

The militants had actually been forced to retreat from their initial position. Having decided not to pay their fines (they had two months to do so) they were forced by the general meetings to reconsider the possibility of appealing against the sentences to the University Court. Chaired by the famous hanging judge, Lord Cameron, (of the N. Ireland report) the Court had already made statements on the occupation and hardly seemed an unbiased court of appeal however, there seemed little alternative but to do this now.

Over the vacation plans have been made for a teach-in, and the campaign to defend the 55 is not over, but many have, or intend to pay their fines, and it will be very difficult to raise much support as the position becomes even more confused.

THE PRESS

Before discussing the complex politics of these events, it is worth taking a look at the role of the Press during this period.

Throughout, the Press played a political role. While reporting the contents of the pamphlet, 'Apartheid, The Appointments Board and You', they did little else to fairly represent the militants cause. Once a large number of students became involved they attempted to split 'the moderates' from the 'extremists'. One way in which this was done was to report highly conjectural statements by Principal Swann as 'facts', while

giving the impression that the students' action was vandalistic and mindless. They also, by overexposing the events, attempted to swing public opinion against the students. One interesting technique used by the 'Scotsman' was to print pictures of trusty Scottish Bobbies in front of one tiny smashed window next to a picture of a riot in Nanterre.

The following are quotations from some of the newspapers:-

Evening News, March 5th "Principal Swann warned a small core of extremist that neither he nor his staff would be intimidated by their militant action."

Daily Express March 5th "600 furious students rampaged through Edinburgh University yesterday."

However, for distortion, nothing can beat the Daily Record, March 5th "Rampaging students stormed into a Scots University last night and barricaded themselves in the main administration block. The 80 students (what happened to the other 520?) burst into the building, smashing windows and breaking down doors."

Thus the scene of pointless violence has been set.

Then

Evening News, March 6th headline:-

"STUDENT MILITANCY OPPOSED BY MAJORITY"

evidence for this, however, came from, guess who, - Principal Swann.

"A very considerable reaction against militant students. Professor Michael Swann said today Opposition to the demonstrators was now being expressed by other students who represented the majority."

Now we get the absurd concept of the 'silent majority'

Scotsman Headline March 6th:-

"THE SILENT STUDENTS ACT AGAINST REVOLT."

"support for Edinburgh's militant student minority crumbled yesterday under strong attack from the normally silent majority who made clear their disgust with continued protest, sit-ins and occupations." The evidence, again, from Professor Swann.

The newspapers dropped all pretence of objective reporting, fabricating the mythical opposition of the silent majority. At no stage was there any genuine expression of opposition; it was the militants' own incompetence that brought about their downfall, rather than action by 'moderate' students.

The Daily Record did us a great service, however, in expressing 'Their View'

"If the 50,000 or so apprentices in Scottish industry decided on a sit-down strike because they didn't like the management personnel files what would happen?"

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There'd be a few thousand queuing for the dole; and the rest would be back in no time at all with a swift and painful kick in the pants from their dads or their union.

And quite rightly."

"We will never have time for student rowdies who put themselves in the same class as the incurable thugs of Easterhouse."

And this was before we did anything!

Perhaps the funniest distortion of all was the allegation by Professor Swann that 200 of the 500 who invaded the Old Quad were not Edinburgh University students. The Press loved this one. We were of course grateful to the Chinese Embassy who arranged for 200 secret agents disguised as students to fly in specially for the event.

THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

The Occupation of the Appointments Board carried out by activists (a better word than 'extremists'). They were already politically motivated people, from the Socialist Society, radical christians and others active against apartheid.

There were others whom one might call the 'freaks', motivated more by an anti-authoritarian attitude; they were there because it was a good scene. (This is not to say that they aren't against apartheid)

The socialist Society was the main dynamic. Edinburgh Soc. Soc. has developed quite well since October 1969. It has been the most active of Scottish Soc. Socs. and generally free of attempts to take it over or toe a particular political line. It tended to have a very libertarian form of organisation which permitted flexibility in response to issues. It was essentially an action orientated group, however, and theoretical and political discussion was at a low level.

It is probable that only a mere handful had any idea of what they were trying to achieve, and they usually didn't talk about it.

This is partly because the bourgeois education system does not require students to think. They simply have to learn and regurgitate packaged information. But it is fatal when those opposed to the system do not reject this attitude of mind. Left wing students need to work twice as hard, they need to educate themselves about socialism and their own position through reading, discussion and so on. Unfortunately very little political discussion occurs outside the 'left wing pub'.

Some kind of dialectic of theory and action should be possible in student politics but this rarely seems to occur. When it came to the general meetings of the left were totally impotent. Whilst the general meetings dragged on in confusion, the socialists were off boosting their own egos in newspaper and television interviews. Quite how some of them thought they could make statements without the knowledge of the general meeting is beyond my comprehension.

Because of the lack of any solid, well informed socialist presence in the general meetings, the meetings were dominated by a group one could call the radical liberals. These are people who cling in some way to an ideological liberal position but become radical when the Authorities let them down. Because of the strategic impotence of the general meetings the radical liberals got nowhere; they could come up with no effective method for defending the 55 sentenced students. They soon fell prey to yet another group, this time a very small one ... the professional moderates. These are political careerist students, in the Tory Club or the Students Representative Council. Their slogan was 'We must exhaust all the constitutional channels before taking direct action'. i.e. we must give the authorities every chance to be reasonable before taking direct action.

The point was that the militants could have shown that the authorities were unreasonable, but they made little attempt to do so and offered little resistance to the professional moderates case, other than scorn. Thus the attitude of the professional moderates eventually won out.

The impotence of the left in face of coherent liberal debate was appalling. Many of the militants seemed relieved that others were doing the talking. With only a few exceptions the left abdicated complete responsibility and they have only themselves to blame. Few seemed to have any idea how to work in a mass democracy situation; in many cases they seemed to resent the inevitable ignorance of students coming fresh to political debate and action.

The left showed particularly marked distrust of the radical liberals, many of whom could in time come to take up a socialist standpoint. But the left would have none of them. They now feel let down and many even feel that their fears about the reactionary students of Edinburgh have been confirmed. How mistaken can you get?

The Politics of the Actions

The real reason that no effective action came out of the general meetings to defend the 55 was not the backwardness of those attending, but the repeated mistakes of the militants and their refusal to put issues and decisions in the hands of general meetings till it was too late. They took up an essentially elitist, and naive position. It is worth recapping on what happened to clarify the political nature of decisions.

Initially the occupation of the Appointments Board was on liberal terms. Outrage that a liberal academic community should allow apartheid supporting companies on its property. It took days of arguing by some socialists that it was impossible to achieve 'something against apartheid'. Attacking the complete involvement of the University with capitalist society was, in the long term, the only way to attack apartheid. This was best put in an anonymous document produced during the occupation.

"If we want to do something against apartheid, we don't ask for concessions from the authorities - that only further validates their position. We must instead weaken their position and thus weaken the structure of society which supports apartheid."

Thus ultimately all realised that the University would not and could not accede to the original demands, so the files issue became much more important. Some copies of the document are still available ... the following extract should explain to any worker quite why the capitalist University acts against him and socialism.

"... the Appointments Board are filtering out those people whom they think cannot be easily assimilated into the world of management. Outside this category (of management suitability) are those who attracted comments such as 'possibly a Jew', or are classed as having 'undesirable political affiliations', a history of mental or physical illness etc., or as being 'slightly against authority'.

The Appointments Board also takes an interest in the sort of careers that graduates can have. They are usually in middle management in the large industrial concerns. Usually their job is quite unrelated to their subject of study at the University. An Arts graduate, for instance, with a degree in Geography at Cambridge wrote in a career profile put out by Guest Keen and Nettlefold describes how he worked his way up from Assistant to 'full industrial relations officer'.

'This extremely challenging job involved preparation for and assistance in negotiations with trade unions; drafting agreements including those concerned with productivity bargaining, maintenance of a job evaluation system and a large number of 'one-off projects'.

Productivity agreements, job evaluation systems etc. are the modern management techniques for maintaining control of the workers the role of the graduate here is seen clearly as one of operating the system without qualms. His geography degree left him quite unaware of the class struggle and thus with the help of the Appointments Board, he is excellent material for the managerial elites who defend the interests of capital against those of the workers."

The tactic of student politics is always to bring as many students as possible into a political situation and teach them something about the nature of the institution and thus of capitalist society. This was achieved to a certain extent by the pamphlet ... but far more could have been done if, instead of accepting the disciplinary procedure, attempts had been made to involve large numbers of students shortly after the occupation. This was not to be, and by the time the general meetings did arrive the issues raised had long been forgotten.

Lack of any simple political expertise made any advance from the original occupation impossible.

1. The occupation had little validity in liberal eyes ... demands made beforehand would at least have given an ostensible reason for the occupation;

2. No attempt was made to gain support through a general meeting during the occupation;

3. A superb case of victimisation was abandoned (though recent events in Liverpool make one wonder if the authorities would have been stupid enough to expel 6 students);

4. When the sentences for the 55 were passed, instead of allowing a general meeting to determine action, 48 steamed ahead, deciding not to pay, thus leaving the general meeting nothing to decide.

5. When the Old Quad was stormed and the Principal called a meeting that evening, a lot of the militants stayed occupying the admin building - they did this without any sort of meeting or attempt to gain wider sanction for this action. Thus at the general meeting later on it was impossible to argue for mass support for them.

6. The left abdicated responsibility for putting concrete proposals to general meetings to counteract those of the professional moderates - they were probably scared of losing a vote.....

And so on. All these details are important because future student action must learn from these, often basic, mistakes.

It is important to realise that things could have gone much better, because there is a big tendency in the student movement to feel embarrassed by taking part in such petty bourgeois politics. When things go wrong this is attributed to the reactionary nature of students, and many socialist students decide the only real struggle is that of the workers. There are always plenty of groups hanging around who pay homage to the idea of the working class struggle and they are happy to recruit these socialists with guilty consciences about their class role. Paradoxically, these groups who are so obsessed with the working class are often made up mainly of petty bourgeois elements from the student revolt.

It is wrong to have a guilty conscience about being involved in non working class political action. There is much valid work against capitalism to be done in the Universities.

There are three main ideological definitions of the student position.

"(A) Those which stress the economic importance of trained man-power to contemporary capitalism. These depict students as a 'new working class' and ascribe contradictions that formerly afflicted factories to the Universities."

"(B) Those which stress the ideological functions of the Universities. The role of Universities as centres of intellectual and ideological production and propaganda contains the possibility of independent intellectual criticism. This enables them to comprehend issues such as the Vietnamese war in a manner not initially possible for the rest of society."

"(C) Those which stress the need of 'consumer society' to sell its wares. Students here are inculcated to persuade the population of the virtues of bourgeois avarice, whilst they themselves must understand its social underpinnings."

David Adelstein.....'LSE and Liberalism'

David Adelstein, of course, points out that the most poignant analyses are those which synthesise all three of the above.

Student politics must thus become less apologetic and more sophisticated so that something can be achieved. Many of the mistakes made in Edinburgh could have been avoided if the militants had bothered to read documentation of previous student action. E.G.

"The politics of outrage and confrontation which have so far characterised the waves of international student action, have carried us a considerable way. But increasingly their limitations are making themselves felt. Everywhere the students who have 'provoked' the authorities to expose their illiberality are finding that this tactic creates more problems than they can solve by simple repetition. The counter-attack of the campus and state authorities is difficult to fight; an offensive response all too often cannot be made viable. Forced into the defensive, the prospects for students seem grim. The need for 'perspective', 'theory', 'ideology' to interpret, justify and shape activity is more acutely felt by the militants."

'The Crisis of the Student Movement'
(A Bristol paper)

Students cannot solve these problems in isolation - their struggle is only an adjunct to that of the working class, but they must turn to build an alliance, not simply in a rhetorical sense, but an active one.

"How can we represent anyone else? All we can do is involve them. We can try and get a few movements going, inject politics into all the structures of society To bring real politics into everyday life is to get rid of the politicians."

Cohn-Bendit.

Edinburgh's events showed the confusion and problems of student politics. There are many groups keen to exploit this confusion to win recruits for their organisations. They come along with their cries of 'what we need is organisation', and 'we need a national movement'.

This is not the answer.

"the type of organisation we must build can neither be a vanguard nor a rearguard, but must be right in the thick of the fight. What we need is not organisation with a capital 'O', but a host of insurrectional cells, be they ideological groups, study groups, we can even use street gangs"

Cohn-Bendit.

This is what the socialist students and others must learn from the Edinburgh events, whether they are outraged liberals or are socialists. They must decide whether they are really prepared to put in the hard work that being an activist in the community and in their own institution - reading, discussing, learning about the nature of society and propagandising - really involves.

TOM WOOLLEY.

THE BUS STRIKE

The record Scottish Bus Strike in March is important, not only because of the large numbers of workers involved, and the extent of the area of Scotland without buses, but because there are several lessons to be learned both by the strikers and those (namely Solidarity and our sympathisers) who gave them assistance.

INTRODUCTION

The following are some comments on a strike of some 10,000 Busworkers in the Central S.M.T., Western S.M.T., Eastern Scottish, Alexander's (Fife) and Alexander's (Midland) sections of the Scottish Bus Group, which left no buses running (except for a few private companies and the municipalities) in the densely populated area of Scotland south of Perth.

The strike, lasting over three weeks in the Midland, Fife and Eastern Scottish areas, and over two weeks in the Central S.M.T. and Western S.M.T. areas, was for a basic weekly wage of £18. Overlapping this was an eleven week strike at the Kirkcaldy and Methil Depots on the additional demand for equal pay for conductresses.

Unfortunately, apart from a short overtime ban in some Highland Omnibus Depots round Inverness and the Aberdeen Depot of Alexander's (Northern), the strike action of the Southern workers was not supported by the 3000 busmen in the MacBraynes, Alexander's (Northern) and Highland Omnibus sections of the Bus Group.

THE BUS BOSSES

The following facts taken from the Annual Report (H.M.S.O.) of the Transport Holding Company - 1968 (1969 Report not yet available) shows that the Scottish Bus Group along with its sister groups in England and Wales, Tilling and British Electric Traction, gave 80% of the 'stage carriage'(1) class of service in Britain outwith London Transport and the 100+ municipalities.

In Britain (and the Scottish figure is roughly the same) if London Transport and the municipal buses are included, only about 5% of the stage carriage is done by totally private companies.

In other words, the pickings for the government-owned or local government-owned buses are extremely lucrative. Profits for the Scottish Bus Group for 1968 were £3.4 million amassed from labour of 13,000 platform staff and 5,000 other employees, running 4,750 buses.

(1) 'Stage carriage' is regular passenger service as against excursions, trips, special hires etc.

SCOTLAND'S BUSES

AREA

Principal
Private Companies

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee.
Concentrated mainly on the Ayrshire Coast,
East Renfrewshire and North Lanarkshire.

Scottish Bus Group:-

Central S.M.T.

Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire.

Western S.M.T.

South West Scotland.

W. Alexander (Midland)

Central Scotland.

W. Alexander (Fife)

Fife.

W. Alexander (Northern)

North East Scotland.

Eastern Scottish

South East Scotland.

Highland Omnibuses

North of Scotland.

MacBraynes

Western Highlands.

(Govt. has half share).

A MAJOR WEAKNESS

Although it was an unofficial strike, the Regional Delegate Committee of Branches was used as its representative body. One weakness was the absence of an equivalent Regional Strike Committee representing the strikers in each depot to parallel, and when necessary pressurise, the Regional Branch Delegates. Indeed, not only was there no Regional Strike Committee, apart from the Edinburgh Area Strike Committee representing Eastern Scottish Depots, there were no other distinguishable Area Strike Committees. The need for a Regional Strike Committee was this. Although the Branch Delegates were carrying out their mandate (those representing the vast majority of the Depots on strike) this was all they were doing. Contact at Branch Delegate level was all that existed - and this body appeared to do little to try and extend the strike. And when the more active Depot Strike Committees attempted to do this job, they had great difficulty due to lack of contact addresses. In fact most of this work was left to the activists around Falkirk, Kirkcaldy and Edinburgh. Central S.M.T. and Western S.M.T. (the last to strike) did not help with this work. So the job of organising the picketing of Perth and trying to make contact with Aberdeen and Dundee was left in the main to the Falkirk Depot.

Despite the fact that the Branch Delegates carried out the mandate, the need for another organisation to create a 'dual power' situation was obvious:-

(1) to carry out elementary organisational tasks; and

(2) most important, to watch the Branch Delegates who, acting in their 'Union capacity' are automatically liable to the dangerous influence of the full-time Officials.

And, bearing in mind the lessons of the past from the Glasgow Corporation Bus Strike in 1964, when nine out of thirteen Branch Delegates 'took the advice' of District Secretary Grant (2) and voted against their mandates, and also the remarks made by some speakers at the busmen's mass meeting in Larbert on Saturday 14th March when it was pointed out that Delegates were sometimes under pressure to 'act as they think fit and not necessarily as mandated', it is important that strikers have this parallel organisation to keep control of the strikes in the hands of the rank and file.

(2) See Solidarity Pamphlet No. 17 - 'Glasgow Busmen in Action'.

SOME MINOR WEAKNESSES

It seems that no attempt was made to approach Municipal Busmen and Busmen in the Private Companies, if not to join the strike, at least to stop scabbing where routes overlap, and to make a contribution to the Strike Fund.

Neither were Railwaymen approached to take action, where B.R. were putting additional coaches on trains.

The lack of propaganda both to the public to offset the Press distortions (leaflets were distributed during the Glasgow 1964 Strike) and to the non-strikers in the Highland and Northern Depots was a crucial omission.

Some Northern and Highland Depots put on an overtime ban but that was all. The lack of support from these areas is due, according to some of the busmen, to:-

- (1) the lack of alternative work; and
- (2) what alternative work there is does not pay comparably higher than what the busmen can earn. (In The South 350 crews left the buses during the Strike).

OUR INVOLVMENT

The nature of the Strike - 10,000 scattered and fragmented strikers, covering a large and diverse area and the problems which this gives rise to; our knowledge of the Glasgow Bus Strike in 1964, and our help for the militant Busmen in Glasgow in 1966 prompted us to help again.

We printed 1,000 copies of a leaflet (see oposite page) and distributed them throughout Scotland; the object:-

- (1) to offer our services and advice;
- (2) to extend the strike to the 3,500 busmen still at work in the Northern and Highland Depots.

We learned important lessons. Firstly, our concept of organisation was put to the test. We have always said that the important aspect of revolutionary organisation is to see our ideas on organisation implanted in the consciousness of the working class, rather than have Solidarity itself become a mass organisation. In other words we look to people acting cohesively in the crucial situations which arise, without requiring them to be members of our organisation acting under orders from our 'centre'.

In this case a mass leafleting of scattered places throughout Scotland was accomplished. Using other Solidarity Groups, individual Solidarity members and a host of sympathetic contacts we were able to cover almost the whole of Scotland.

Full Support for the Bus Strikers

As members of the public we accept the inconvenience of the strike. As fellow workers we'd like to offer help and suggestions.

The T.G.W.U.

Busmen must look at the record of the T. & G. union in relation to Busmen. Let us look at some of the facts:-

No effective support for the London Bus Strike in 1958;

Sabotage of the Glasgow Corporation Bus Strike in 1964;

Isolation of the Liverpool Busmen in 1968;

Smashing of discontent, resulting in the sacking of a bus driver when Glasgow Corporation Busmen threatened to form a breakaway union;

Constant attacks on unofficial activity.

At the moment the union are not exactly helping the busmen. Cool tolerance might describe their attitude more accurately. It is only by the Busmen taking mass action unofficially and independent of officialdom that the union bureaucracy have been pushed into action. The strike being unofficial has the following advantages. It is more or less in the hands of the men on the job and not in the control of the officials in their comfortable offices. KEEP IT THAT WAY! The interests of the officials and yourselves are not necessarily the same.

COMMUNICATIONS

Nevertheless there have been serious flaws in the Busmen's campaign. Communications between depots and regions are not good enough. This problem has been with the Busmen for years. In 1968 we had strikes in Dundee and Edinburgh while Aberdeen and Glasgow remained at work. No attempt was made to bring everyone out together in all four cities. During the last few weeks we have seen a lot of depots striking in isolation, e.g. Kirkaldy, and fighting on their own. This makes them easier prey for the Press and management and the union bureaucracy.

We hope that the union recommendations will be ignored and the strike spread to the rest of the Scottish Bus Group and the private companies. An attempt should also be made to win support of corporation busmen in routes where services overlap.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Form a Strike Committee covering all Scottish depots, meeting and reporting back regularly. The management and the union bureaucrats are fully organised, therefore you must be too.
2. START STRIKE BULLETINS to keep everyone in touch. (We can print them, as we did for the Glasgow Corporation Busmen) The Bulletin and the committee could continue after the strike.
3. Finally we feel that in future consideration should be given to the idea of taking out the buses without collecting the fares. This should be on a lightning one-day basis to avoid lock-outs. This will gain the support of the public more than anything.

Among the sympathetic contacts were several students. And here we have another important point to bear in mind. There are two locations of the Student Left; one is in the Scottish Universities during term-time, the other is in a whole host of Scottish towns during the holidays. And so with the arrival of students back in their homes for the Easter vacation, we got leaflets to many depots we could not normally have reached.

We leafleted the mass meeting in Harbert on Saturday 14th of March, which was attended by bus-workers from Alexander's (midland), Alexander's (Fife) and Eastern Scottish.

At the end of the meeting our leaflet was read out amid general glee everytime the union was attacked. When the Busmen filed out at the finish representatives from depots in Fife, the Lothians and Stirlingshire queued for bundles of the leaflet, saying that they wanted them to distribute at their depots. We were then invited to a discussion with the Strike Committee (about 15 people). We offered help - reiterating the points in the leaflet and stressed the lack of a Regional Strike Committee. Immediately the whole problem of being simply a 'service organisation' for strikers without any politics, arose.

On sensing the initial suspicions of the strikers 'Why do you want to help?', we went immediately into the politics of the whole situation and presented our perspectives. The result was an arrangement made to address several Branches at a later date. We heard with interest the strikers ideas on the feasibility of taking out buses without taking fares and the need for solidarity between conductor and driver in these cases, since the driver would be doing his job by driving while the conductor would not. (We won't go into their plans here for fear of giving away secrets to the bosses via the Economic League, who we feel sure will be reading this with interest.)

We offered the use of our duplicator to the strikers - they had no access to the union's of course - and this was accepted. Although in the event no propaganda was printed. This contrasted with our own ability to distribute leaflets. However, we found ourselves tending to substitute ourselves for the busmen's organisation, especially when it came to getting them contacts. When we sent our leaflets off to the various places we asked our own contacts to send the names of any busmen in their area to the Falkirk strikers who were actively ^{to} consolidate and spread the strike. In this way we managed to get Western S.M.T. Central S.M.T. and Alexander's (Northern) contacts to the Falkirk men.

This Bus Strike echoed in miniature the sort of revolutionary situation we could find ourselves in, in relation to isolated sections of strikers not consolidating themselves sufficiently to get maximum strength from their large numbers. For the Democratic Centralists and Bolsheviks one would expect this to be an ideal opportunity to practice their organisational concepts, i.e. try and take over the fragmented strike and substitute themselves for the leadership. But all such groups were conspicuously absent.

Put a small group like Solidarity can take on the task of involving ourselves, and vindicate our political and organisational ideas. Because for us, the methods of struggle, the concepts of rank and file organisation, the development of workers' consciousness as a result of their active involvement, the confrontations with union officials are as politically important as the ultimate outcome of the strike. We therefore constantly try to achieve a balance between being a service organisation and political propagandists, and strive to prevent ourselves substituting ourselves for workers' own self-activity in their own strikes.

THE SETTLEMENT

In the end the strikers got £17.0.0. for drivers, and £17.4.3. for conductresses, as against the £15.6.0. and £15.16.0. respectively accepted by their English and Welsh counterparts in the N.J.I.C. Despite all the talk from the management about holding the men to the 61-30 vote of the N.J.I.C. on the 11th March in London which showed the English busmen's willingness to accept the lower offer, the Scottish busworkers' determination to stay out got the another £1 approx.

What the attached strings are we will no doubt find out in no uncertain manner, but it appears that for the moment they have won a reasonable victory.

It remains, however, a great pity that the 3,500 Northern Busmen didn't strike with the other 10,000 for the rise which they also got. It is important that this fact is impressed upon them.

S.M.T.

FROM THE GLASGOW HERALD 13/2/70:-

Proud Record Scrubbed

45 women staged a walk-out from their factory at Deal, Kent, yesterday, they wiped out a proud record held by the oldest trade union in the world.

The National Society of Brushmakers, founded in 1747, has never had an official strike till now.

The women stopped work over a bonus dispute. Talks between the union and the firm, G.B. Kent Ltd., have ended in deadlock.

Mr. Tom Thomas, secretary of the union, who have 5,500 members, said:- "It's ruined our record. It meant a lot to me and I'm upset and annoyed. I was hoping to end my term without a strike. It's something to be proud of."

!!!!!!!!!!!!

SCOTTISH PAMPHLETS.

SPARTAKISM TO NATIONAL BOLSHEVISM: THE K.P.D. 1918 - 24.

The history of the almost forgotten German Revolution; the independent activity of the world's second largest proletariat.

An Aberdeen Solidarity Pamphlet obtainable from:-

N. Roy, 138 Walker Road, Torry, Aberdeen, 1/6d + postage.

If preferred, it can also be obtained from Clydeside along with the following pamphlets:-

FROM BOLSHEVISM TO THE BUREAUCRACY by Paul Cardan. Bolshevik theory and practice in relation to the management of production. 6d.

THE FATE OF MARXISM A radical critique of the 'marxist method' and the relationship of its categories to content. By Paul Cardan 4d.

CAPITALISM AND CONSCIOUSNESS A collection of articles dealing with the central theme of working class consciousness. 1/-

REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION What revolutionaries must not do. The case against the democratic centralist revolutionary party. 6d.

All these available from:- D. Kane, 43 Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton.

AUTONOMOUS SOLIDARITY GROUPS

London (West)* c/o M. Duncan, 15 Taylor's Green, London W.3.
London (North)* c/o H. Russell, 53A Westmoreland Rd., Bromley BR2 OTQ
London (South)* c/o J. Shreeve, 44 Sturgeon Rd., London S.E.17.
Romford c/o Tony Reed, 26 Seamore Gardens, Ilford, Essex.
Aberdeen* c/o N. Roy, 138 Walker Rd., Torry, Aberdeen.
Clydeside c/o D. Kane, 43 Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton.
Dundee c/o F. Browne, 444 Perth Rd., Dundee.
North West* c/o P. Cockcroft, 102 Carter St., Moss Side, Manchester.

*Denotes that these groups also publish their own independent Solidarity magazine. Dundee and Clydeside are, of course, included in this magazine which is also available from the following addresses :-

Edinburgh c/o T. Woolley, 14 West Preston St., Edinburgh
Fife c/o L. Morris, 13 Woodlea, Kincardine-On-Forth.

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