

SOLIDARITY

*for workers'
full control*

● **Metal Box: Acton**

"Powellism"

Further Education

● **Glasse's of Perivale**



Pilkington Strike Appeal

[WEST LONDON] No.4

6D

METAL BOX: ACTON

VANISHING VOTER MYSTERY.

-- In the year ending Spring '69 Metal Box made £9 million profit after taxation. So the directors are by no means on the breadline. Yet in January of this year the company raised its can prices 10% (much to the embarrassment of the P.I.B.) to offset British Steel Corporation's 10% increase in tinplate prices. With an 85% monopoly of Britain's can market the company's action will lead to a major round of price increases for tinned food and canned drinks. According to Ducat M/B chairman, the increase in can prices is designed to bring some "relief to pressure on profit margins". In plain language M/B directors are determined to maintain their profit levels at the housewife's expense.

Sales in the company's 'Open Top' can making division were 8½% greater than in the previous year. M/B's 'Open Top' factories are notorious for their heavy labour turnover and absenteeism. The reasons are not hard to find. Apart from the company's persistent refusal to reduce the dangerously high level noise inside the division's plants, general workers throughout the 'Open Top' sites have the mixed blessing of being organised in the TGWU. The following report from Acton 'Open Top' site looks at a mystery that is perplexing the best minds among the TGWU branch officers there-- the vanishing voter mystery!

Saturday May 2nd. was a very hot day. It was also election day for M/B's TGWU branch I/596. At 1:15pm even the beer was warm in the lecture hut on the Acton site. Ten lads sat sweltering in their shirtsleeves. By 1:30pm the ten had risen to sixteen; sixteen that is out of a branch membership of 1150 plus on paper.

At Acton the branch is based on the site.

Some people wanted to get on with the nominations. They were interrupted by a couple of younger workers who had the cheek to suggest that an election with so few present would be a farce. The comment was quite rightly ignored by the older and wiser heads who considered sixteen members a sufficient no. to give the branch election some semblance of democracy. At the suggestion that the election be cancelled, people appeared to be in a hurry to begin.

Perhaps this was because the elections should have been held four months earlier-- (At the Saturday morning meeting held in mid-December '69 five people turned up-- the chairman and four friends!)

Nominations duly began, few disturbed by the significant absence of virtually all the younger black and white workers from 'A' and 'B' shifts. Their absence was explained away in terms of apathy or laziness. 'They' were only interested in money.

i.- "The branch election shall take place and be completed not later than December 31st in each alternate year."-- Rule II, (b) TGWU Rules.

Implicit in this was the assumption that the older heads present were interested in a strongly organised site. Unfortunately recent events at Acton have shown this to be a classic piece of self-delusion. By the time the meeting had ended tempers had added to the midday heat.

MARCH 2nd.-- MANAGEMENT GET THEIR KNICKERS TWISTED.

The explanation offered by the lecture hall pundits 'explains' nothing. Neither does it begin to come to grips with what happened on the can lines on March 2nd when production throughout the plant was halted by a walkout involving the majority of men on 'A' shift--the supposedly apathetic young black and white workers.

'A' shift moved 'en masse' across the site to the lecture hut and crashed a meeting of 'B' shift that was just getting under way. Back in the factory 'white coats' and management were left nursing the 'dead' can lines, their eyes popping out--- the first 'trouble' from general workers at Acton in 30 years!

What prompted it?

The chairman of the shop committee and his right hand steward, completely disregarding the wishes of both shifts had capitulated to management pressure and attempted to call two separate single shift meetings. In so doing they backpedalled on a previous demand of the men for joint shift meetings on the site when necessary during the working week (Mon-Fri.)

THE QUESTION OF CONTROL.

The walkout was staged over the issue of power. Who was to control the shop committee: Jones in Personnel as he had done in the past or the general assembly of men on the site?

As a factory with no previous tradition of militancy this issue of control was considered relevant and urgent enough to warrant a walkout. Not only didn't the men walkout on a money issue (not that that's a crime), they actually lost money by stopping the machines. So much for the self-righteousness of the lecture-hall brigade!

As the walkout was kept a secret from the shop-committee it also remained a secret from the management who couldn't this time use the long established stewards as industrial policemen. The sight of general workers acting on their own initiative and throwing up 'unofficial' spokesmen gave Metal Box a severe shock---production was endangered!

THE POLITICS OF MANIPULATION.

Unsure of the strength of the movement the management were afraid to take on more than they could handle. Significantly they dropped the threat to 'discipline' the whole of the 'A' shift and concentrated on a 'ring-leader' to victimise instead. This had two advantages:- (a) It allowed them to climb down from a major confrontation with 'A' shift without losing too much face.

(b) It allowed them and the shop-committee to explain the whole thing away in terms of 'agitators' manipulating innocent workers.

Of course the TGWU shop committee here are so accustomed to disregarding the men's wishes or even deciding what their wishes should be that they can't imagine any relationship between stewards and members other than one of representatives 'looking after things' and generally leading the men up one garden path after another. While the chairman and his friends treat the membership with contempt as so many sheep they are still at a loss to explain how it is the cunning 'reds' can 'lead' the men out while the shop committee, even at the second attempt, can't fool them into forfeiting a sunny saturday to play at branch elections. But of course the members aren't as sheeplike as the officers would like. If their wishes are perpetually ignored why should they play ball once every two years in a farce of electoral participation to gratify the branch officers?

The younger workers were absent because they've realised that the structure of saturday branch meeting and shop committee is increasingly irrelevant to the task of building up a strongly organised work force on this particular site. Indeed, in the past the shop committee has even retarded the growth of such power.

A SITE TO MAKE EYES SORE

Workers' organisation here has failed to take account of the changing conditions of work on the factory floor. In the last few years productivity bargaining has tipped the whole balance of power in the management's favour. The shop committee has failed to adjust to a new situation.

THE LINES ARE DOWN

In the productivity agreement before last general workers here moved from day work to double-day shift and surrendered their teabreaks for drink vending machines. As a consequence we are now tied even more tightly to the can lines having only a half hour meal break in which to eat and talk together.

On the can lines themselves intensive mechanisation has led to fewer men minding the same amount of plant. Their physical isolation one from another (feeders are stuck on lone platforms surrounded by timplate and lids) is reinforced by the noise levels on the factory floor which make normal speech impossible.

The whole setup is a manager's dream. There is little interchange between shifts and an 'incident' in one part of the factory remains localised because shop floor communication is so bad. When a man wants a steward he has first to find a relief (easier said than done); consequently there's usually a supervisor on the scene to intercept him. Anyway stewards are notoriously hard to find at Acton when needed. When one is found the matter is invariably 'lifted' off of the factory floor and settled above the head of the man concerned.

THE NEED FOR MASS MEETINGS ON A 'LIVE' SITE.

Before shift work came to Acton there were opportunities for the men to talk and even meet during the day. Today there are none. This alone is reason for pushing the demand for mass meetings on a 'live' site when necessary.

The second reason is probably even more important. In the conditions operating today the shop committee has become divorced from the members, and hardly answerable to them at all. The men are never together long enough to impose their wishes on the committee, and once imposed ensure that they are carried out. In these circumstances the demand for joint shift meetings on a 'live' site (Mon-Fri) is of crucial importance. So much was recognised by A shift when it took action on March 2nd.

The joint meeting will ensure that the area of struggle remain at factory floor level and is not 'raised' to committee level or into the factory manager's office out of the control of the members. If the men allow the committee and management together to squash the demand for joint shift meetings (something they show every sign of doing) general workers here will remain as disorganised and as weak as they have been for the last 30 years.

Neither diverting Saturday branch meetings on a 'dead' site, nor all the closed shops under the sun will make the slightest difference.

THE 100% MEMBERSHIP DRIVE.

While 100% union membership does often contribute to strengthening workers' organisation, it doesn't guarantee it. The shop ctte seem to view 100% membership as a substitute for shop-floor strength. It isn't! Union cards at Acton today have even less value than Co. toilet paper-(that doesn't leave red print on your backside). A site can be 100% (dis)-organised in the union.

A factory is only strong when the members are not only informed and involved but control and direct all action taken on that site.

Ed End-Bender

In subsequent issues Ed hopes to examine:-

- (i) The noise problem at Metal Box, exploring the possibilities of legal action against the Co.
- (ii) Some of the agreements signed by the T.G.W.U. Executive with the Company.
- (iii) He also hopes to find out who gets the 'bargains' in Productivity Bargaining.

POWELL - THE WHOLE MAN FREEDOM & REALITY

The following article is not a theoretical piece on the politics of J. Enoch Powell, but rather it is an attempt to develop a practical understanding of the social forces he represents in present day capitalism; for a militant rank and file movement must develop theory and practice hand in hand. It is therefore essential to understand all the major ideas of this man, who has risen to national prominence because of his racialist policies. Part of the development of opposition to racialism must be to oppose his meetings, no matter what they concern. For wherever he goes and whatever he talks about, he takes with him an aura of prejudice and perversion of the facts, which has been greeted with acclaim by those who are seeking a scapegoat for the inadequacies of Tory and "Socialist" leadership.

POWELL IN BRENT

His visit to Brent in mid-May is significant; Brent is a high-density immigrant area where strong links have been formed between black and white militants from all over West London in opposition to his politics.

Before his attack on the dangers of immigration in April 68, he was known for three major contributions to the actions while in power, and the formulation of policy whilst in opposition, of the Conservative party, which are:

- 1) His advocacy of a free market economy
- 2) His opposition to Trade Unions
- 3) His authorship of the 1957 Rent Act

FREE MARKET - FREEDOM ?

The twentieth century has seen the rise of the managed economy; the State has taken on new and larger roles in the development of the economy which used to be preserved for private enterprise. The need for the development of these roles arose from the periodic slumps in capitalism. These slumps, with unemployment for the working class and the destruction of the middle class's savings, were an inevitable characteristic of the capitalist system. Those who suffered most were those who had least power in the economic battle - the working class. The desire of capitalists to eliminate this human misery (which greatly weakened their credibility) led to proposals that capitalism - the private ownership and direction of capital - could only be preserved with a degree of intervention.

THE NEW TORY PARTY

The new State intervention economics have been gradually adopted by the Tory Party. After the failure of the post-war Labour governments, with their reformist approach to seriously changing the balance of economic power against the real governors of the country, the owners of capital, the Tory Party under Churchill, Eden, Macmillan and Home, did not denationalize all the nationalized industries, nor did they completely dismantle the Welfare State. Instead, they realized that nationalized industries like the Railways could help capitalism, and the Welfare State could keep the workers happy by occasionally giving them cake instead of bread. This new approach to economics within the party is now personified by Heath, who likes to style himself as a progressive. This shift to a new form of capitalism greatly annoyed one rising young theoretician in the Party, namely J. Enoch Powell. He believed, and still does, that the only thing that capitalists should be worried about was not productivity and efficiency, but PROFIT:

"Profit is deserved by anybody who can find a way to make it, within the framework of the general law, and of open and honest dealing. The idea that profit might be related in any particular case either to efficiency or to anything else except supply and demand is misconceived." (Uckfield, October 21 1967)

We will later return to his notion of "open and honest dealing" in relation to the 57 Rent Act.

RELATIONS WITH THE CENTRE

The justification for the existence of the Tory Party is that it is born to rule. It is a party built up on the confidence and patronage of power; in fact it has no consistent policy except its desire to rule. Since the War there has been a general trend to consolidate the moderate Centre of the Party, but this has often been under the slogans of the Right. Indeed, the Tories are very embarrassed by open debate of political principles and can only talk of the issues that have been chosen to foist upon the electorate. Yet Powell wishes to engender just that debate of economic principles that Heath and the Centre cannot really tolerate. They can mouth the platitudes of productivity, getting the workers to do more work for increased power in Union bureaucracy, so that that bureaucracy can discipline the workers; but they have no cohesive economic principles except for the preservation of capitalism in some form, and the preservation of the party in any form. Powell is fighting a determined rearguard action against their progressive policies, and proposes army of the same ideas as the National Front.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THIS ?

What are Powell's reasons for attacking the new policing powers of the State? We can only assume by his thundering silence that Powell

believes in a class society. No doubt he would confirm this with platitudes if he thought it was a subject that needed his attention.

He believes in a stratified society which corresponds to the different roles played in production, which he admits to be fundamentally the acquisition of profits. He never mentions the work situation of all those in capitalist societies, who have to do mindless jobs in production. It is not, the, in an attempt to emancipate man, to end the class society and exploitation and to destroy capitalism that Powell is attacking bureaucracy. In his attack, Powell is trying to preserve the life of the middle class as he knew it when he was younger. He does not mention the powerlessness of man under capitalism; no, he only mentions the virtues of thrift and self-dependence, denying the essential collective nature of life. He wishes to take away the meagre social benefits that exist with a phrase or two which remind one of the villains in Dickens' novels.

THE PROFIT OF LABOUR

Surprisingly enough, he does understand the role Trade Union bureaucracy plays in controlling manpower. (Surprising, that is, for a man not engaged in production, not seeing individuals every day being handled at shop-floor level by a management-Union coalition, which exists explicitly in some factories and implicitly in all). Yet his opposition to Trade Union power does not spring from a desire to free man and his work through the establishment of workers control in production, but from a desire to throw labour onto the open market as yet another commodity. He does not propose a fundamental change in the relationship of man and work; a destruction of the mental and physical prison of labour under capitalism, but attacks Trade Union bureaucracy as part of his rearguard action in favour of an old form of capitalism. Modern capitalism seeks to integrate the Trade Unions into the power hierarchy, to make sure it works for the ends of productivity within capitalism. The old school of capitalists, championed by Powell, is implacably opposed to the Unions and their power, which they regard as an evil:

"The evil lies in the coercive power of combinations which the trade unions possess, and which they use, either by threatening to withdraw their labour collectively or by actually doing so, in order to try to obtain more for their services than those would command in the open market without this coercion." (Cheltenham 10 June 1965)

And what is the worker's place in Powell's right-wing paradise? Powell says little on this subject, but it is possible to state that the worker would have less command over his job than he has now, and that his wages would be lower. Powell is proposing that the worker be trapped in a steady downward economic spiral.

On the one hand he argues that the real wages of the worker have not

risen since the War:

"The employees ... money income since the War has barely kept pace with the rise in prices and production." (Chippenham 14 May 1963)

The Trade Unions, with all their power, have barely been able to hold the economic position of the workers for over 25 years. On the one hand, Powell wants to destroy the institutions which in the past, even with all their strength, have barely been able to hold the status quo. By putting the last two quotations side by side, we realize that Powell wants to make the workers defenceless and depressed. The other effect of his proposal to make labour another commodity on the market, like coal or detergents and dismember the Trade Unions, is to create a structure of rigid wage differentials. As Paul Cardan says in 'The Meaning of Socialism'

"Private capitalism and bureaucratic capitalism use a common method of maintaining people tied to their work and in antagonism to one another. This is the systematic policy of wage differentials."

"The incomes policy is supposed to help the lower paid workers, which means pretending that the least valuable services are relatively more valuable, and the more valuable services relatively less valuable." (Powell)

All low paid workers, including the Brent dustmen, teachers, nurses and others have their own answer to that one.

A PROUD MOMENT

Powell could put into practice some of his theories on economics when he was Housing Minister:

"There was no prouder moment in my life than when I rose in November 56 to read the second reading of the Rent Bill which began the dismantling of restrictions on private housing...." (Wolverhampton Express and Star 2 October 64)

The major provisions of the act were twofold: in the place a large area of private housing was taken out of the jurisdiction of the Rent Restrictions Act so that the landlords could charge whatever rent they wanted. Secondly there was the establishment of 'creeping control' of the rest of private housing to eventually produce the position where all private housing would be outside the Rent Restrictions Act.

The effect of this introduction of the free market was spelled out in the 1960 White Paper published by the Tories. Landlords sought by unfair means to oust the tenants who had the defence of the acts, and install new tenants who could pay higher rents. The price of flats shot up. The land market was also on the free market and there was no new building to provide new housing on the scale that it was needed, because of the high price of land in the areas where it was most needed - in the centre of towns.

"The remedy lay in building still more houses, not only to remove the shortage but also to satisfy the increasing demand for still higher standards of housing. House building was hampered by the operation of a free market in land, which became very costly in the congested urban areas." (Francis Boyd - British Politics in Transition)

The Act, of course, had a special effect upon immigrants, forcing them into delapidated housing in the twilight zones at high mortgages.

"Peter Rachmann became the champion of the free market in Notting Hill. Gangsters and terrorists, white and coloured, flourished in the free housing market, the creating of which was the proudest moment in Enoch Powell's life." (Paul Foot - The Rise of Enoch Powell)

THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

It is interesting to look briefly at the relationship which would develop in a free market economy system between western industrial "democracies" and the developing nations, those very nations which provide the immigrants Enoch Powell has come to abhor.

When Powell first came into politics, he had been for many years in India. He had become very attached to the British way of life in the colonies and advocated to Churchill, when he was a junior planner for the Central Office of the Tory Party, that the Conservative Government should develop plans for the re-conquest of India! Yet in his rise in the Tory Party, he claims to have rejected all the modes of thought that go with having an empire:

"...the imperial myth of the 1890's, under the spell of which we have misinterpreted our past and therefore misinterpreted our present." (Trinity College Dublin 10th November 64)

His approach to the developing countries, many of which were part of the British Empire, has changed from his attitudes to those countries when he was attacking the British Nationalities Act; this Act made differentiations in the citizenship of the fast declining Empire. His attitude now to these countries struggling with their inheritance of colonialism is that they should not expect and certainly not get aid, but should be given trade. And no doubt, because Mr. Powell poses as a logical man, this trade should be directed by the same economic laws as it is with other nations, indeed the only law that Mr. Powell wants to apply to economics: the law of PROFIT.

It must be obvious that the developed countries have the manpower and technology far in excess of the undeveloped countries. Trade will be more profitable to the richer nations, and this will only widen the gap of development. This is Powell's great plan for the third world: to reduce the undeveloped nations still further into a position of economic colonialism, giving the western democracies an Empire, in fact if not in name.

UNITED STATES CAPITALISM AND RACIALISM

I do not think that there is any necessity to say anything about the reason why Powell erupted about immigration exactly when he did. The timing of his outburst and the fact that he claims to speak for his constituents are subjects analysed by Paul Foot in his book "The Rise of Enoch Powell". There are, however, a number of observations which have to be made on this matter in relation to his total political ethos.

SOLIDAFITY (WEST LONDON)

We invite support and help with our magazine and group activity, from all those in basic agreement with us.

We welcome letters, articles and information from black and white workers, tenants and students; in fact anyone involved in struggle locally.

The Group now offers a free legal advice service as well, covering areas like the law on picketing rights; tenants and landlords; the individual and the police.

Solidarity (West London) No. 2 and 3. A few copies still available. 10d post free from M.Duncan, 15 Taylor's Green, W.3.

Contents include: No.2:-Wembley Furniture Workers; N.W.Poly. Punfield and Barstow Ltd., Italy - 'Potere Operaio'.

No.3. - Ealing's 'Comprehensive' Scheme; Report from Metal Box (Acton); Purges in Perivale;

Firstly he is worried by the spectre of rivers of blood being spilt over this issue if there is not something done about it pretty soon. In fact, he is worried about an outbreak of violence on the American scale:

"The tragic and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic, but which is there interwoven with the history and existence of the States itself, is coming upon us by our own volition and our own neglect." (Birmingham 20 April 1968)

"With the lapse of a generation or so we shall have at last succeeded - to the benefit of nobody - in producing in England's green and pleasant land the haunting tragedy of the United States." (Eastbourne 16th Nov 68)

The American President's report on racial violence in the United States quite plainly outlines the causes of this violence, which haunts Powell. The causes were essentially economic: Housing, employment and job opportunity. These evils are deeply rooted in the American System of private enterprise in a laissez-faire market, the very type of economic organization that Mr. Powell has openly praised in the United States in the past. The far-seeing Mr. Powell becomes a short-sighted man when faced with the consequences of his economic theories in a concrete form and instead of blaming the economic system, he picks the weakest, the immigrants, and uses them as a scapegoat.

Mr. Powell has done his own little bit to increase the tension along the lines of the US with his Rent Act of 1957. And it only remains to

His speeches have been dotted with rumour and hearsay about excrement and old ladies; many of such stories can be found in popular belief about the life and habits of coloured immigrants in this country. Although immigrants have the same birth rate as comparable white age-groups, it is said that they breed like rabbits. It is also rumoured that they come to feed off the social services and they take up homes that white people could have had. The following table is proof that the immigrants contribute more to public spending through tax etc. than the native population of these islands.

**Cost per head of the Social Services, 1961-1981
£ at 1961 prices**

	Health and Welfare	Education and Child Care	National Insurance and Assistance Benifits	Total
1961				
Total pop.	18.5	12.4	31.2	62.1
Immigrant pop.	18.4	13.3	19.2	50.9
1966				
Total pop.	18.6	12.1	31.7	62.4
Immigrant pop.	17.4	13.9	17.4	48.7
1981				
Total pop.	19.0	15.3	33.5	67.8
A. Immigrant pop	16.9	21.6	19.1	57.6
B. Immigrant pop	16.8	22.9	18.1	57.9

A. Assuming no further net immigration.

B. Assuming some continued immigration.

Table from the "National Institute Economic Review" No.41, Aug'67.

WE HAVE BEEN WARNED

It is necessary that all workers understand the real message of Enoch Powell. We should have no qualms about seeing his policy as a whole and attacking it as a whole. He may well be a man of integrity and courage, but this does not change the social effect of his proposals, an effect which would divide and destroy the working class through the introduction of higher differentials and a socially regressive policy in the field of housing. Immigration has been used as a scapegoat for the failure of his free market economy and as a boost in his attack upon the Centre of the Party. He has forced the Centre to move further to the right in its attacks upon immigrants, and this has dragged the Government along with it in an aura of prejudice. We must guard against splits in the growing working class movements which are championing the only policy which can emancipate man in modern industrial society: Workers Control of Industry.

PILKINGTONS

For seven weeks, 8 000 men on strike at the Pilkington Glass Works in St.Helens,Lancs., have resisted fantastic pressure from the management, the General and Municipal Workers' Union and the Government to go back to work. Despite this pressure at the last mass meeting only 30 men voted to return.

The actions of the G.M.W.U have been fantastic even for this union. They have backed the management all along the line, refused to make the strike official and are now offering the men £12 if they return to work. The mens' reaction was to break up the union office and thousands have torn up their union cards. Even the Daily Sketch agreed that one of the causes of the strike was the cosy relationship between the union officials and management while the workers were left out in the cold.

The men have been fighting a magnificent battle and have shown how effective a well organized factory can be, even when the forces fighting them are very strong. Pilkingtons are already losing £500,000 a week and solidarity action with the strikers has now spread to the continent. With the Government now putting the pressure on their families' social security payments, it is vital that every penny we can spare goes to help them in their struggle. For this reason we print below the following appeal.

Tele.- 29941

J. Potter (Treasurer)

63, Parbold Ave,

Blackbrook,

St.Helens,

Lancs.

PILKINGTON OTHERS.

Dear Brothers,

We appeal to all our fellow workers to help us in our fight with Pilkingtons.

We are fighting for a £10 a week rise on our basic rate of £13-8-0.

The strike is now in its fifth week and we urgently need funds to continue the struggle.

Our Union, the General and Municipal Workers, is not supporting our claim, in fact it is siding with the management so we are not receiving any strike pay.

Yours Fraternally,

JOHN POTTER.

(Treasurer, For Rank and File Strike Ctt)

STOP PRESS : Whatever the outcome after the secret ballot hardship still remains for the militant rank and file.

GLASSO'S MAGIC INGREDIENT.

The workers at Glasso's have won yet another victory. Several months before their old pay agreement ran out they managed to gain 1/- an hour rise plus a guarantee that each man would be offered 1 hours overtime a night and 5 hours on Saturday. And this is just an interim award. Roll on June!

I must point out that last year's agreement contained the following clause, "No application to be made for a minimum period of 12 months, with effect from 30th June 1969, which will result in any increase in pay or allowances." The workers at Glasso's were able to break this agreement and achieve their demands without even going on strike. HOW?

This is the question we are going to try and answer in this article and we hope it will prompt you to ask some questions in your factory, on your shop floor.

Glasso's is organised by the Chemical Worker's Union. The CWU is a small but militant industrial union. Despite its small size it has more guts than the TGWU and the GMWU put together. In fact, over the years it has fought a spirited battle with several of the big unions who have tried to smash it by using their block vote inside the TUC against it. The main reason the CWU hasn't grown is because of the tactics used by the general unions. (We hope to do an article on the trials and tribulations of the CWU in the next issue.) It's not often that you see a good word for a union in Solidarity but this little terrier has its differences. The struggle is keeping it that way. I'm not saying that you can make the revolution with it, but at least it won't get in your way.

One of the best things about the CWU is that it has no national agreements to hamstring its members with. Anybody reading this who has been through the mill in other factories, because of national agreements, usually made years ago by some union official, will know exactly what I am talking about. In the CWU handbook the phrase that catches my eye is "Branches have virtual autonomy". This is not just an empty slogan but a fact.

However, it wouldn't matter a damn how good the CWU was if the organisation in Glasso's wasn't up to scratch. The first thing is that the branch is based on the factory. The advantages are obvious. Meetings can be held directly after work thus ensuring a full turn-out. There is no conflict of interests between different factories competing for branch time and attention. Best of all, you don't have a small clique making policy for several different factories. Of course if we had a small clique in Glasso's making policy, it would be just as bad. But on the contrary everything of any importance goes back to the shop floor to be discussed and voted on. This is one of the most important points. It ensures that each and every person is well and truly involved in the action. For anyone that disobeys a decision made at the mass meeting, justice is swift and sure. Glasso's has 100% organisation so anyone who loses their union card loses their job as well.

It's very seldom anyone scabs, but a couple of years ago we did have two men stay in while we were in dispute and although the management even tried to promote them, they still had to go.

Another thing is, that we do our own negotiating. Here I must say a word about our Chief Shopsteward, Wally Lawless. He is highly regarded in the factory as a man and as a good steward. Indeed if he wasn't, he wouldn't be Chief Shopsteward. Mind you, Wally would be the first to admit that if he was to go tomorrow, the work would carry on as before. This is the way it should be because it is very dangerous when a man or men begin to think that they are the only ones that can save the workers. The only time an officer is called in, is towards the end of the disputes procedure. Full advantage is taken of whatever help he may have to offer, but it is recognised that he acts in an advisory capacity only and is at all times subject to the will of the shop floor. Another good thing which has just started is this: Normally when negotiating with top management the Chief Shop Steward, the Branch Secretary and the steward from No.2 factory are the only ones to go in but now a fourth steward goes in so that everybody can get the experience of talking with management.

A very important thing is the amount of control that we have over what goes on on the factory floor. In the first article it was said that the only contribution that the management made to production was strictly coming relief. This is perfectly true, but there are still areas of control that can be extended and consolidated. For instance, the way the management install new machinery without consulting us. To extend our control of our factory does not necessarily mean a concerted mass effort but it can be done on a department or even an individual basis. The object of the game, for one man or many men, is the same and that is to subvert and destroy in every possible way the authority and power of the management. One basic way to do this is to make it as difficult as possible for them to gain concessions from us-- as it is for us to gain anything from them.

Control over the job should not be underestimated when it comes to making a claim for anything. It is the most important weapon we have.

THINGS TO WATCH

Before we all get carried away with how good we are, we should remember that if we puff out our chests too far we are liable to get a bit lightheaded and fall over our own feet. None of the things I have written about are unique in themselves, what is unique is that they are not just nominal as in so many other places.

But it must be remembered that our organisation must at all times be extended and defended against the management because what seems like a small thing at first can rebound on us. Everything the management does must be examined for its future implications. They are bound to try something in the future. One possibility is the Productivity Deal in June. We must not give any of our power away. Our biggest fault is that we are very inward looking so we should make proper contacts with other Ault & Wyborg firms. On our own estate are Metal Box, Davalls, Hoovers etc. It is immaterial that they don't make paint. We may need them just as they may need us. We should express solidarity with nearby strikes and ask what help they need. Eventually we will be in a position to use our collective power for the good of the community. G.C.J.F.

EDUCATION FACTORIES

The exam season is beginning for the 400,000 students in this country and the many sixth form pupils. But just what is their education about? Can schools, Universities, Technical Colleges, specialist colleges etc. be separated from everyday life or are they controlled by the same forces as the factory shop or office? The article in the last edition of SOLIDARITY showed plainly that whatever reform there is in secondary education it will be twisted in favour of the middle class because of our modern class society. What is the position in Higher Education? The following article focuses on the period 1960-70; this was the time when student numbers doubled in seven years, when Government expenditure on education shot up to £300m. in 1966-67, which saw the first serious outbreaks of student unrest, and the first time that industrial management ideas of efficiency and productivity were applied to higher education. It was a period when both Tory and Labour Governments tried to rationalise the hotch-potch of different colleges.

The trouble really starts with the troops coming home from the war. For the years 1946-48 were known as the boom years for the birth rate. Children born in these years would be eligible for higher education from 1964-67 and it did not look at the beginning of this decade as if the higher educational system as it then stood could deal with the influx of numbers. To study the problem a Royal Commission was set up under Lord Robbins and told to report upon the whole of post secondary school education in 1963. The impact of this report has been far reaching not so much in the recommendations of the Commission but rather through the attention that was focused on higher education. Before 1963 there had been no really serious attempt to co-ordinate all those areas of higher education which had grown up as a response to different needs of the class society. A close study of the history of education reveals that 99% of all types of college were established to meet the economic needs of the time as seen by the ruling class. As all economies apart from those based upon workers control rely upon exploitation it follows that these colleges serve this exploitation.

THE SYSTEM

The report stated that there were several aims for education after secondary school. These are :

A. " It must be recognised that in the modern progress - and particularly the maintenance of a competitive position - depends to a much greater extent than ever before on skills demanding a special training. "

B. To promote the general powers of the mind.

C. The advancement of learning.

D. The transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship.

THE ACADEMIC FACADE

What these four aims mean is quite plain. The first is as the production process gets more complex and as new machinery is used to cut out the 'human element' then specially trained technicians and managers are needed to keep the economy of capitalism in the accelerating treadmill of progress. The aims and effect of the industrial process is not questioned in the effect that it has upon the workers caught in it; production is everything and to stop stagnation capitalists must constantly modernise. The second aim is a liberal catch phrase which is meaningless : it is a sop to those many teachers and professors who believe in education for its own sake. The third aim is much more specific. It means the promotion of research that can later be used in the class society by the ruling class. Sociological and scientific research is paid for by Government and industry in the hope that discoveries about the social action of man will be of use to them in controlling society. Much of modern sociology is dominated by the need to fit the man to the machine. The objects of the machine are not thoroughly questioned by research of this kind, it is the man that must adapt. Out of this type of research rise new methods of managerial technique such as time and motion studies.

The "transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship" is the acceptance of the status quo and the development of the ideology of the class society. The four stated aims of the higher educational system are therefore the training of manpower, the development of technology within the existing way of organising society along class lines.

THE PIPER AND THE TUNE

The reasons for government finance of higher education are now plain through the aims as stated by the Commission, yet on what grounds should the government decide to allocate places? There are two approaches to this problem. You either gear the number of places in the Universities and Colleges to the needs of industry or you provide places for the pupils of secondary education that are going to get the necessary qualifications, while keeping the same disappointment rate. The first approach was rejected by the Commission because of "their doubts about the possibilities of accurate estimates of manpower needs". It must be implied from this that when these calculations can be accurately made the necessary sums will be done to provide the places in higher education so that Unilever, EMI etc can have the trained

manpower that they need for increased exploitation.

"RATIONALISATION"-- BINARY SYSTEM

The real impact of the report of the Commission was the interest and debate that was launched in the wake of its publication. In an attempt to co-ordinate all the areas of higher education in the interests of efficiency and economy through the heavy use of plant etc the Commission had proposed the combination of all areas into comprehensive universities. Up to this time all governments had looked at higher education in a piecemeal way. Colleges that were expanding rapidly in the late 1950's and early 1960's had hopes of being made into Universities with all the status that that involved. The Labour Government's answer to this proposal came very quickly. Anthony Crossland, the then Minister of Education, spoke at Woolwich Polytechnic in 1964 and rationalised the existing system into the Binary system. Higher education was to be officially divided into a public and a private sector. The public sector would be those colleges under direct government or local authority control, the private sector was to be the Universities with their traditional autonomy. Robbins had proposed a ladder system so that colleges that offered sufficiently high standard courses could achieve University status. Crossland rejected this stating that it would create a rigid hierarchy and dispendency in the lower orders. The government and local authorities could exercise the necessary social control, the type of pressure that Universities were not open to.

"It is desirable in itself that a substantial part of the higher education system should be under social control, and directly responsible to social needs. "

WHOSE NEEDS ?

This argument begs the whole question of whether or not the local education authorities are responsible to social needs, and what these primary needs are. As one instance of 'social needs' it is in the technical colleges that student unions are controlled by the Principles of the Colleges ; no doubt it is in the interests of future employers that their trainees should have no experience of real union organisation, but it is far from being in the interests of the skilled and semi-skilled workers of tomorrow.

How many workers would allow their boss to have the veto on all decisions of the Union? These are the powers that many Principles have. The 'social needs' are those of the employers and managers of capital who need a docile labour force to increase exploitation.

PRICES AND INCOMES PLUS EDUCATION

The judgement that the Department of Education and Science and the local education authorities are the best barometers of social needs springs from an idea of the economic needs of

modern capitalism. For 1964, the year of the Crossland speech, was the year in which the Labour Government began its unsocialist attempts to right British capitalism at the expense of the worker through its incomes policy. As Crossland feared the rat race for University status developing he saw many of the intermediate positions of technicians etc not being filled by the educational system. Crossland saw the Binary system giving new impetus to a particular role of higher education which was vital for the economic needs of the country under modern capitalism.

SEPERATE AND UNEQUAL

The pressures of the economy are not only in terms of manpower - but there was the more immediate pressure of public expenditure. Crossland's ideal for the public sector, which would be "a vocationally orientated non-university sector which is degree giving and with an appropriate amount of post graduate work with opportunities for learning comparable with those in the University and giving a first class professional training", was based on the assumption that the expenditure per student would be lower than in Universities. As the Times Educational Supplement said "he was certain that when educationalists appealed to him to go to the Chancellor and get more money for education they realised that the appeal would be totally ineffective unless he could show that the educational world in Britain, like other worlds in Britain, was seriously interested in productivity. "

The difference between Crossland and Robbins is not a difference of aim but one of method. Crossland believes that is cheaper and more effective to meet education to economic needs by keeping the present Binary system, the Chairman of the Financial Times believes it would be easier to do this by centralisation. Whatever party forms the next Government there will be little change in the approach. The Conservatives have endorsed the Binary system and proposed marginal economies that can be made in expenditure on education, such as an increase in the size of classes and more private (industrialists') money. We will see what the latter proposal caused in Warwick.

ECONOMIES

There were three important decisions made by the Labour Government in 1966 that reflect the demand made upon educational plans by the way they were tackling the economic problem. The Russell report proposing training for assistant lecturers because of poor standards of lecturing was rejected. The Pilkington report commented on the low usage of highly skilled teachers and the Government accepted its recommendations in the cause of productivity. The most significant was the plan for Polytechnics launched in 1966. Polytechnics were to be regional groupings of colleges in the non-University public sector

to save on plant and running costs with greater concentration on the needs of industry. In mid May 1969 Edward Short, the new Education Minister, proposed closer co-operation between the polytechnics and universities in the use of plant and student amenities. He designated the polytechnics to train the middle strata of management and the Universities the top stratas, emphasising that it would be to the advantage of the economy if these two groups came into closer contact.

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

A significant proposal made in the late 1960's was for a private university to be sponsored by industry. It did not receive much support from industry because higher education was meeting their needs sufficiently already. The Government was opposed to the proposal because it would take education out of its control. The academic world seemed opposed to the idea because it thought the running of the University would be an infringement of 'academic freedom'. The proposal will no doubt receive support from industry when the present system no longer meets its needs.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The economic demands upon higher education do not go unchallenged in the academic world. 'Academic freedom' is the rallying cry of all liberal students and professors who wish to preserve the traditional autonomy of the Universities from government or industrial control. The Universities are powerful bodies in terms of prestige, the government has therefore had to look to other areas from which it can get the manpower it needs to run industry. Colleges of advanced technology have been made into Technological Universities and technical colleges have been grouped into Polytechnics. In this manner the Department of Education and Science is trying to outflank some of the older Universities which offer too many humanities courses which, although they provide future management potential are not specifically geared to provide training to run industrial and commercial concerns. The Universities recruit their Professors etc from their own ranks and therefore there is a built in aversion to change of any self perpetuating group. The pressure on them is however increasing and it is difficult to see how they can hold out against the demands of Government and industry as their expenditure is so high.

THE COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS....

This is the liberal idea of what a University should be. A place where ivy-covered walls shelter the inhabitants from the pressures and conflicts of life outside, while they get on with the job of seeking out pure reason and truth.

If such a community ever existed, it perished a long time ago, but this does not prevent lecturers and professors

from trying to put some of the fragments together again. A Penguin Education Special "Warwick University Ltd - Industry, Management and the University" (Edited by E.P. Thompson, price 6/-) contains a personal comment by the Editor. He makes a good case for taking action to prevent students' grants being withdrawn by their Local Education Authorities, and against allowing a system of snooping to grow up on the campus. But one thing he is very careful not to do is to examine what function the University has in our present day society. If he gets his way and the students no longer fear withdrawal of grants for political reasons or records being kept of their political activities, how will the fundamental purpose of the University have changed?

BLINKERED ACADEMICS

A clue is provided when Thompson writes (p. 160): "...no one has argued that a university should be wholly self-governing without responsibility to the society within which it is situated. Clearly, a university can't grow in any direction it chooses, without regard to social needs and demands; and clearly, also, relationships with the community - with industry at every level, with the Shakespeare Memorial and Belgrade theatres, with local teachers ..." He goes on to suggest that workers from the shop floor should be elected to the governing bodies of the university, but the most important part of the paragraph is when he recognises that the university is not separate from the rest of society.

REPRESENTATIVES ABSORBED

What would be the situation, then, when we have added shop floor representatives to our secure, grant-snooper free liberal university? It would exist in a society where the economic system was controlled by a very small minority of people whose judgement was basically in terms of profit, a government whose Education Minister said in Jan. 69: "Universities should become increasingly aware of the demands of the economy, and it is difficult to see how they could maintain their autonomy without doing so."

In universities where the control and support of industry is not obvious, like Kent, the role of the university is still the same. At Kent, the VC has to go stomping round the country and even shoot across to the Continent on his fund-raising activities, but as his university exists in a society based on exploitation, it must inevitably serve this exploitation by suiting its courses to the 'needs of society', i.e. the needs of those who have money and power in industry.

DISSENTING UNIVERSITY ?

The last page of the book asks the question (it does not attempt to answer it) : "...Can we try by our efforts to transform (the university) into a centre of free discussion and action, tolerating and even encouraging 'subversive' thought and activity for a dynamic renewal of the whole society within which it operates ?"

The simple answer is No. If universities ever become such a threat to the ruling class, then money and support would leave them, while the polytechnic and private universities, much more closely disciplined and tied to industrial needs, would grow to provide the skilled submissive manpower that they need.

CONCLUSION

Complex technology demands high degrees of research and education for privileged elites. As modern capitalism increasingly relies on such technology, then it must provide the money for education. Reformist approaches to the problems of education can only lead to absorption into a system streamlined towards exploitation of brainpower. It is in this context that we must see higher education in this country.

DAVALLS STRIKE

The strike at Davall's in Perivale is now entering its ninth week. The solidarity of the 50 men has been magnificent despite poor backing from the AEF

The men are striking against a shameful bonus scheme and the victimisation of workers who refused to operate it.

The firm makes aircraft parts and the shortage is beginning to affect the big airports

The ineptitude of the management has even been condemned recently in parliament by the local Labour MP

But as usual the most useful help is coming from other rank and file workers. A meeting of shop stewards from all firms in London having dealings with Davalls was recently called in an attempt to isolate the company altogether.

Strike fund donations would be deeply appreciated
Please send to:

Bro Flynn, 51, Ridley Avenue; Ealing, W 13

EXPO'70 CEU EXEC

CHARACTERS

Hughie (Poodle) Barr : Shop Steward and Convenor on Kingsnorth; President of the CEU

Bill Thomson)

George (Singh) Taylor) Barristers and arse-lickers of

Ginger Richards) the C.F.

Len Kiely)

Bro. Reardon : Ex-CP, left in disgust at their politics a couple of years ago. Skilled steel erector; libertarian; strong trade unionist.

(The following is an abridged version of an article which appeared in Solidarity /South London/ No. 10)

The Kingsnorth Site at Hoo, nr. Rochester, Kent, has been buzzing with rumours for weeks. Hughie Barr, the Shop Steward and Convenor of all Shop Stewards on the Site and President of the Constructional Engineering Union, had sworn that he would have Danny Reardon "run out of the Union, run off the job and out of the industry" for allegedly distributing the journal Solidarity.

We didn't believe he would for a number of reasons : 1) he is always making rash threats and never doing anything about them, at least as far as management is concerned 2) Hughie Barr's election addresses have always said that he was against all forms of Blacklisting.

PROSECUTOR, JUDGE AND JURY

On March 16th 1970 Bro. Danny Reardon was summonsed before the CEU Executive Council to answer charges of "having distributed Solidarity on or about the 4th February 1970". None other than Hughie Barr himself was acting as prosecutor and judge, as he was chairman. No one knows exactly what went on at the actual meeting because no one was allowed in, not even Danny Reardon's legal advisor, a member of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

The next day Hughie Barr appeared on the Kingsnorth Site looking very pleased with himself but refusing to say what decision the E.C. had made, insisting that Danny Reardon would be the first to be informed.

Later in the week Danny Reardon told us he had received from the E.C. his expulsion notice. The whole site was up in arms and Hughie Barr and his three Spies began to look a bit sheepish.

REHEARSALS BEGIN

From 2nd March we knew something else was afoot; they timed the meeting on the Thursday, just before the Easter holidays began, knowing people would want to leave. We heard through the grapevine that they intended to challenge Bro. Reardon's right to attend the mass meeting.

THE MEETING

But Bro. Reardon came. The Chairman, George (Singh) Taylor asked Bro. Reardon to leave because he was no longer a Union member.

Bro. Reardon replied "I have been expelled from the Union by the E.C. but I have taken legal advice and intend to challenge that decision. I am prepared to leave the meeting if the members present indicate by vote that they want me to leave."

The meeting turned to uproar as members demanded that Bro. Reardon be allowed to stay. One member shouted "This is a CEU problem and shouldn't be discussed at a general meeting." Bill Thomson then shouted from the platform that it would be out of order for a non trade unionist to be present. An A.F. member asked for a vote to decide. Bill Thomson shouted back "It's out of order discussing CEU business, you can't talk about it." The member replied "Don't you dictate to me what we can talk about."

Danny was asked to leave again, and this provoked loud jeers and boos at the Platform, and several people proposed that the Chairman, George Taylor, put the matter to a vote. But he had been so well trained on the Kingsnorth Site that he ignored all proposals in favour of letting Danny stay.

Hughie Barr then asked him to leave the meeting again and said "If he doesn't, we will call off the meeting as per the rule", but he was too late, the majority of the men had already left the meeting in disgust at the tactics of Barr and his clique.

BROTHER REARDON - KIDNAPPED

On Tuesday 31st March, we returned to work. The Stewards announced that there would be another meeting after the morning tea break. Some of us asked Bro. Reardon if he intended to go, and he said that he did. It was soon after this that he was called into the office. Immediately the grapevine started buzzing with the news that the management was warning Bro. Reardon against going to the meeting.

We had already heard that Comrade Barr, who had been seen sneaking out of the office earlier, had asked the management to keep Bro. Reardon at his job during future Union meetings.

THE SNATCH

After tea break Ernie Hombden, Foreman, went up to Bro. Reardon and said "You're wanted in the office again" and escorted him round there while we went to the meeting.

The Barr Clique was on and around the Platform looking innocent and very pleased with themselves. Before the meeting opened, the Chairman, George ('This is a lovely way') Taylor, asked Danny Reardon to leave the meeting if he was present. This sparked off boos and jeers, men started shouting "Come off it - you know bloody well he's not here - the management's nobbled him, Barr's got the management to do his dirty work for him. Get Danny Reardon here and we'll vote on it - or are you frightened because you know we would vote to keep him here?"

THE SHOW BEGINS

Ignoring all the shouting and demands George Taylor attempted to open a meeting. For a full five minutes he was unable to make himself heard. When the noise subsided several men attempted to put resolutions demanding a vote on Bro. Reardon's attendance; on each occasion George Taylor ruled them out of order; some of the men reacted by calling him a dictatorial old b----- and demanded he resigned as Chairman.

Comrade Barr was asked to explain why Bro. Reardon was being held in the office, and he denied all knowledge of it.

The first item on the agenda was a report from Bill Thomson on the activities of the Safety Committee. This passed without much comment. The Chairman, George Taylor, announced that Poodle Barr would give his Shop Steward report, beginning with a report of management victimization of a lot of our members, followed by a blood-thirsty account of the Stewards attempts to discuss the redundancy payments issue with management - the first redundancy could be expected around September/October. During all this time, attention to the meeting had been very slack, and then suddenly all eyes were focussed on Poodle Barr, as without warning he made reference to the case of Br. D. Reardon.

THE CZARS SERGE ON SOLIDARITY

Comrade Hughie Barr opened his attack on Bro. Reardon by waving some sheets of paper and screaming "I have here a photostat copy of Solidarity which proves that Solidarity is anti-trade union and anti-trade union movement." Then he proceeded to read out the first part of an open letter to the CEU Executive Council, and then he accused Bro. Reardon of being an anti-trade unionist.

Further, not only was Reardon anti-trade union movement, but he also had told a pack of lies about his involvement with Solidarity at the E.C. meeting. At this point members demanded again that Czar Barr release Bro. Reardon from the managements office.

WHO'S A LIAR ?

Czar Barr continued by pointing out some four-letter word attacks that had been made on Union officials like Flexibility Fred Copeman, provoking yet more laughter.

With arms waving like a lunatic, Czar Barr went on to say that there was a tiny minority who distributed Solidarity on the Kingsnorth Site and these were the people who wouldn't speak at the monthly meetings. Men began shouting "We've been trying to speak all morning but it's absolutely useless when you have everything pre-arranged beforehand."

Still foaming at the mouth, Czar Barr lashed out at the Solidarity sellers saying that Solidarity was poisoning the minds of trade unionists "...because this," he said, waving the photostat copy of Solidarity, "is not just being distributed here, but is being sold all over the country ... Make no mistake about it, the CBU and other trade union leaders intend to crush Solidarity." (More laughter)

BARR TURNS RED ! ?

The, when Czar Barr was asked whether men should work with a non trade union member, he refused to commit himself, saying that he was waiting for a directive from the local Officials. Asked when he would receive it, he said that Fred Copeman and John Baldwin were both on holiday, but one of them would be visiting the site in the near future. This provoked more laughter and jeering. Someone demanded to know since when did two officials from the same office go on holiday at the same time, and how many holidays per year do Union officials have.

When the meeting ended it was quite clear that Hughie Barr's attempts to smear the good name of Bro. Reardon had failed completely and had only served to confirm what a pathetic but dangerous little creature Hughie Barr really is.

I have never written in Solidarity before, but I hope you will be able to publish the facts of this case in order that the broad membership of the CBU can see for themselves just how far the Union has degenerated in the hands of people like Hughie Barr and the rest of the C.P. hacks on the A.C., and how the men reject them.

Bro. Reardon has always been a good militant, and has never pulled any dirty strokes or scabbed; if he had done he would have been defended by the E.C. and fined at the worst.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN

We think that Bro. Reardon is a victim of our circumstances. For too long, the rank and file, at their own expense, have watched while the right and left wing of the Union has fought it out for control of the Union bureaucracy.

The so-called left wing, in the shape of the Communist Party, has been winning the battle from an electoral point of view, although less and less of the membership participates. Having gained control, they are now refusing to accept criticism, while at the same time inflicting policies on the rank and file in the guise of Productivity Agreements and Union discipline that would delight the heart of Edward Heath. Bro. Reardon is not the only victim; members with no connexion with Solidarity at all have been threatened with disciplinary action - one only has to read the Executive Council minutes.

At Site level Bro. Reardon and a very small number of supporters, mainly C.P. members and fellow travellers, have successfully taken over effective control of the organization. It has taken this case of Bro. Reardon's persecution and the methods used to bring it all home to us.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

Bro. Barr's intention last week was obviously to attempt to justify his actions. We let him know in no uncertain terms that we are not as gullible as the E.C. Now we must go further and let the whole Executive Council know what we think of the expulsion of Danny Reardon, but even more we must ensure that Hughie Barr is not allowed to have Bro. Reardon run off the job and out of the industry; at the same time we, the rank and file, must take back control of the Kingsnorth Site so that the Barristers are never in a position to do this sort of thing again.

Hughie Barr is not an elected Convenor but a self-appointed one. We should start by sending him back to work, because we don't need a full-time Safety Committee and such like. If the Chairman of the Safety Committee must give reports at every meeting, he should be made to leave the Platform and not stay up there as Barr's Protector, and the next meeting should start with the election of a Chairman.

We haven't got a lot of time left on this Site, but we should use all of our endeavours to ensure that we, the rank and file, take back the power that has been so blatantly misused, for make no mistake, if Bro. Barr was successful in carrying out his threats, he would do it in our name.

p.p. Workers at Kingsnorth.

SOLIDARITY GROUPS & CONTACTS.

London (South) c/o 44 Sturgeon Rd, London, S.E.17.

Issue No.10 features a "full and frank report into witchcraft in the Constructional Engineering Union Executive"(in colour).

London(North) c/o H.Russell, 53A, Westmoreland Rd, Bromley, Kent.

Vol.6 No.4 includes - Economics of Self-Management - Nurses.

Aberdeen c/o M.Roy, 138 Walker Rd, Aberdeen.

No.6 includes:- Trawl Diary; Bus Strike; Consumer Society.

North West(Regional Federation) c/o J.Harris, 96 Doveleys Rd, Salford.

No.3 contains:- Manchester University Occupation; Guinea - the unknown revolution.

Clydeside c/o D.Kane, 43 Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyle, Dumbarton.

Dundee c/o F.Brown 444 Perth Rd, Dundee.

Edinburgh c/o T.Woolley, 14 West Preston St, Edinburgh. EH89PU

Hull c/o Ed Strauss, 32 Pearson Park, Hull.

Romford c/o T. Reed, 26 Seamore Gardens, Ilford, Essex.

There is a group in Melbourne, Australia. For information and first issue, write to:-

Lou Costelloe,

55, Union Street,

Brighton 3187,

AUSTRALIA.

AS WE SEE IT

1. Throughout the world, the vast majority of people have no control whatsoever over the decisions that most deeply and directly affect their lives. They sell their labour power while others who own or control the means of production, accumulate wealth, make the laws and use the whole machinery of the State to perpetuate and reinforce their privileged positions.

2. During the past century the living standards of working people have improved. But neither these improved living standards nor the nationalization of the means of production, nor the coming to power of parties claiming to represent the working class have basically altered the status of the worker as worker. Nor have they given the bulk of mankind much freedom outside of production. East and West, capitalism remains an inhuman type of society where the vast majority are bossed at work, and manipulated in consumption and leisure. Propaganda and policemen, prisons and schools, traditional values and traditional morality all serve to reinforce the power of the few and to convince or coerce the many into acceptance of a brutal, degrading and irrational system. The 'Communist' world is not communist and the 'Free' world is not free.

3. The trade unions and the traditional parties of the left started in business to change all this. But they have come to terms with the existing patterns of exploitation. In fact they are now essential if exploiting society is to continue working smoothly. The unions act as middlemen in the labour market. The political parties use the struggles and aspirations of the working class for their own ends. The degeneration of working class organizations, itself the result of the failure of the revolutionary movement, has been a major factor in creating working class apathy, which in turn has led to the further degeneration of both parties and unions.

4. The trade unions and political parties cannot be reformed, 'captured', or converted into instruments of working class emancipation. We don't call however for the proclamation of new unions, which in the conditions of today would suffer a similar fate to the old ones. Nor do we call for militants to tear up their union cards. Our aims are simply that the workers themselves should decide on the objectives of their struggles and that the control and organization of these struggles should remain firmly in their own hands. The forms which this self-activity of the working class may take will vary considerably from country to country and from industry to industry. Its basic content will not.

5. Socialism is not just the common ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. It means equality, real freedom, reciprocal recognition and a radical transformation in all human relations. It is 'man's positive self-consciousness'. It is man's understanding of his environment and of himself, his domination over his work and over such social institutions as he may need to create. These are not secondary aspects, which will automatically follow the expropriation of the old ruling class. On the contrary they are essential parts of the whole process of social transformation, for without them no genuine social transformation will have taken place.

AS WE SEE IT

6. A socialist society can therefore only be built from below. Decisions concerning production and work will be taken by workers' councils composed of elected and revocable delegates. Decisions in other areas will be taken on the basis of the widest possible discussion and consultation among the people as a whole. This democratisation of society down to its very roots is what we mean by 'workers' power'.

7. Meaningful action, for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. Sterile and harmful action is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others - even by those allegedly acting on their behalf.

8. No ruling class in history has ever relinquished its power without a struggle and our present rulers are unlikely to be an exception. Power will only be taken from them through the conscious, autonomous action of the vast majority of the people themselves. The building of socialism will require mass understanding and mass participation. By their rigid hierarchical structure, by their ideas and by their activities, both social-democratic and bolshevik types of organizations discourage this kind of understanding and prevent this kind of participation. The idea that socialism can somehow be achieved by an elite party (however 'revolutionary'), acting 'on behalf of' the working class is both absurd and reactionary.

9. We do not accept the view that by itself the working class can only achieve a trade union consciousness. On the contrary we believe that its conditions of life and its experiences in production constantly drive the working class to adopt priorities and values and to find methods of organization which challenge the established social order and established pattern of thought. These responses are implicitly socialist. On the other hand, the working class is fragmented, dispossessed of the means of communication, and its various sections are at different levels of awareness and consciousness. The task of the revolutionary organization is to help give proletarian consciousness an explicitly socialist content, to give practical assistance to workers in struggle and to help those in different areas to exchange experiences and link up with one another.

10. We do not see ourselves as yet another leadership, but merely as an instrument of working class action. The function of Solidarity is to help all those who are in conflict with the present authoritarian social structure, both in industry and in society at large, to generalize their experience, to make a total critique of their condition and of its causes, and to develop the mass revolutionary consciousness necessary if society is to be totally transformed.