

—SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKER'S POWER

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6_D

THE NAKED AND THE DEAD

Uncouth, unkempt, loud-mouthed, like an uninvited guest gate-crashing a wedding, the class struggle erupted rudely into the final stages of the election campaign, shattering the smooth talk of the professional politicians. The London tubemen were on 'unofficial' strike.*

In unison, like stuck pigs, the representatives of 'official' society squealed and squirmed. Mr. Godber, Minister of Labour, 'expressed regret' at the strike. Ray Gunter, prospective Minister of Labour, announced that the Labour Party 'condemned the action of a small group of men who..... etc, etc.' Viscount Blakenham (a previous Tory Minister of Labour) called this a 'statesmanlike' attitude. For Harold Wilson, 'whatever grievances the men may have, their action was intolerable'. A Labour government would be 'tougher and more effective in handling this sort of industrial situation'. Before their arses were even on the government Front Bench the Labour leaders were giving people a foretaste of things to come.

What will the Labour Party now try to do? Will they succeed? And, more important, what attitude should revolutionaries take to their endeavours?

Harold Wilson's move to Downing Street heralds a big step forward in the attempted 'rationalization' of British capitalism. Labour's programme is to raise the British economy to a competitive level and to render it independent of American support (this in the era of international State capitalism). It is to 'rationalize' production on a gigantic scale and to attempt this from the outside, without the intervention and active participation of the mass of the people (i.e. without allowing the workers to take over industry). Both these objectives are utopian. Both will require an all-round intensification of labour, of discipline, and of every authoritarian tendency in modern society. Labour's era promises to be the era of the stop watch, of time and motion study, of 'labour mobility', of the computer, of automation, of 'scientific' management, of the industrial psychologist, of production targets set by a technocratic elite. The Labour leaders dream of an 'efficiently' organized, well-fed, and docile labour force, actively participating in its own exploitation and enthused with the mystique of production for production's sake. Their dream is each man in his pre-determined place in the great productive hierarchy - and the use of every device of modern technology to maximalize production. Their dream is battery-hen Socialism !

What stands in the way? The resistance of the working class and its determination to fight tooth and nail, here and now, to defend and expand its rights in production. The Economist sees this quite clearly. On

* The men refused to work new schedules, negotiated 'on their behalf' by trade union officials. Their freedom and the lengthening of their effective working day were not to be bought by 'efficiency payments' and 'compensation allowances' of a few shillings. The dispute was in fact partly a lock-out. The men, refusing to be re-allocated to different depots under the new schedules. presented themselves at their usual places of work to operate the old ones, but were not allowed to.

October 10, 1964, it published an editorial which should be compulsory reading for all those self-styled marxists who still talk of the Labour Party as 'the party of the working class'. Urging its readers to vote Labour (sic!) it stated: 'The task ... is to lift the world-tested efficiency of British management in industry and commerce to the peak that Britain's interests and purpose require ... Proper reforms in the laws ... should determine the preservation of the British economy from the crippling restrictive practices that are the defensive habits of the trade unions. This biggest block to growth must be blasted away ... This is what, when they won in 1959, the Conservatives were going to do. This is what since 1959, they have not done. The nettle of trade union reform has just not been grasped at all.' In plain language: 'The Tories haven't disciplined the workers. Labour might. Vote Labour!'. The Guardian (October 15, 1964) with much the same preoccupations in mind, also called on its readers to vote Labour.

With such influential quarters giving 'critical support' to Labour (because they realize it is NOT a working class party), how ridiculous appear the antics of Stalinists and Trotskyists of all ilk * also urging 'critical support' (because they think it IS !). The traditional Left today, with its outmoded schemas and loyalties, has become a gigantic obstacle to a genuine breakthrough of revolutionary socialist ideas. When a paper like 'Young Guard' can write, through its editor, (November 1962) that 'our support for the return of a Labour government is not dependent upon its having left-wing policies', one can see how far the traditional left (including its 'revolutionary' wing) is itself affected by the decomposition of established society.

Within the next twelve months thousands of young people in the anti-bomb movement and in the Young Socialists will suffer bitter disillusion. They will have the bottom knocked out of their political thinking. Painful as it may be, they will have to unlearn much that they had previously accepted. Their categories will need remoulding from top to bottom. If we are patient and consistent they need not be lost to the libertarian movement.

This could be the beginning of a new epoch which will change the face of British politics, an epoch as important as the one which started with Suez and Hungary and which witnessed the growth of CND and of the Committee of 100. It could be the era of the birth and rapid growth of a vigorous and united libertarian left, evolving an ideology and forms of action of its own. Some young people who came to politics during the long, bleak years of Tory rule may have harboured illusions that things would somehow be different under a Labour government. Now they've got one. Cousins, the Aldermaston marcher and 'unilateralist', has taken over responsibility for the Atomic Energy Authority and is now in charge of both civilian and military nuclear development. Examples of this kind will recur with increasing frequency. The previous alibis will not last for ever. The days of 'double talk' and 'double think' are clearly numbered.

* For those interested in the esoteric, even that arch-Bolshevik organization The Workers League, is in favour of 'assisting in the return of Labour Party candidates, provided it is based on the united front tactic'. (Workers News Bulletin, August 3, 1963).

AUTOMATION IN THE TYPING POOL

or

'TAKE A HUNDRED LETTERS, MISS SMITH !'

Much has been written about the effects of automation in industry, and about the effects of speed-up on the men on the shop floor. Hardly any attention has been given to automation in the office. What happens when the typing pool is automated? What happens when the dictating machine takes the place of the shorthand notebook?

Manufacturers of dictating machines have been publicising their wares on two levels - to the boss, and to the typist (or "secretary" as she is invariably called in their leaflets, flattery being the first move in the campaign to win her acquiescence).

The propaganda addressed to the boss, or "dictator" (!) stresses speed, ease of dictation (the machine is portable so the lucky man can dictate while travelling or at home) and, above all, a miraculous increase in productivity. "Tapc-Riter" even assure him he can place a microphone on the conference table so that the minutes are ready for typing the moment discussion is over - after the typist has eliminated of course various references to the weather, to their cars, to 'that shop steward', to the floor show, to the Test Match, etc., etc. These promised benefits, together with man's love of gadgets with plenty of buttons, switches and lights, sell the machine to the boss.

To the typist, however, the manufacturers say - "You no longer have to miss a date because your boss wishes to dictate after office hours. You avoid tiring overtime" (Rex-Recorder). "With no annoying interruptions she can easily match the incoming work by keeping her transcribing apace of the last-filled disc" (Edison Televoice). "The crystal clear recording does away with mistakes" (Tape-Riter). "Transcription is made easy by the use of lightweight headsets and foot or hand controls" (Aga Dictating Machine Co.). The daddy of them all is a strip cartoon leaflet by Stenorette: BEFORE - "I don't think Mr Reynolds will keep me much longer - I'm so behind with my work!" AFTER - "Joan darling, as you're so far ahead with the work, would m'lady consent to take the day off and choose the ring!"

MYTH AND REALITY

To digress from one kind of productivity to another, let's take a look at the claim that these dictation systems produce more letters. One of the few informative booklets on the topic is published by Assman, and is entitled "Planning Data." It appeals to the engineer-manqué in

every office manager. It talks of minimum collision, input rate, loading, cycles, decibels, frequency, automatic input volume control, etc. This beginner's guide to electronics gives a table of typing output per day achievable once the system has been installed. This is scaled according to length of material dictated, number of copies and typist's speed. It is stressed that this output can be gained by audiotypists of average ability, assuming (a) good machine intelligibility, (b) fully corrected text, (c) good working conditions, and (d) a 7-hour typing day (after allowing for tea breaks).

Any dictation typist will say that's more than she has ever assumed! To take them one at a time:

Good machine intelligibility:

Neither I nor anyone I know has ever experienced a recording which did not sound as if the speaker had speech defects and asthma. Regional accents and mannerisms of speech are grossly distorted until, for instance, a normal educated Scots voice sounds like Andy Stewart on New Year's Eve.

Fully corrected text:

"If the audiotypist has to watch a slip for corrections, and spend time sorting them out, her output will suffer". In other words, if the dictator says exactly what he wants to say, having thought it out before dictation, the typist will be faster. This applies even more to shorthand dictation. You would be out of the boss's room in no time if he dictated without lengthy pauses while he thought of the next phrase, and didn't ask you to read back for alteration of whole paragraphs. Yet bad dictation to the shorthand writer isn't nearly as frustrating as to the audiotypist. At least when the former leaves the boss's room she knows she's got the wording right and all she has to do is look out for grammatical errors. But the girl typing straight from the dictation machine is in constant anxiety that any correction coming up (the position of which she can see by a pinprick in the dictation slip inserted in the machine, or by other methods) will be given in time to prevent her starting to type a grammatical form which will not fit the correction given. If not, she has to tear the whole thing out of her machine and start again.

There are few more disheartening sights than a correction slip full of pricks. You know that the letter you're about to type has one chance in a thousand of coming out right. The best thing you can do is just bash it out, mistakes and all, and then copy-type it from your rough. The boss knows you're slower than you need be, but it's less trouble for him not to bother sorting out his ideas beforehand, and you are made to feel incompetent.

It's perfectly true, of course, that the wasted time is no loss to the typist (unless she's on bonus). But all pride in her ability to do a good job is taken away. Office managers will quite openly refer to her as "only a typist", indicating the absurdity of spending any thought, let alone money, on her welfare.

Although typists have had to spend time and money on training, they are generally paid less than clerks/esses simply because their work neither produces nor saves wealth for their employers. Every penny of their salaries is grudged. For instance, a girl who used to work in my office was hired as a secretary/ shorthand typist, and was constantly referred to by her boss as "my private secretary". But when she asked for upgrading to secretarial pay, she was told they couldn't possibly pay more to a mere typist!

It is interesting to note how firms big enough to establish salary scales, etc., and not quibble about raises of a few shillings will also tend to be more careful that office machinery is put to economical use. Dictators will be well warned to avoid wasting typists' time in corrections. Thus they gain higher output and can cut their wage bill at the same time.

Good working conditions:

The booklet spells these out: "a good typewriter, a desk of the right height, a comfortable chair, good light, and sound-absorbent material on the ceiling."

These conditions are extremely rare. The boss's secretary often has all of these, because a nice electric typewriter on her desk, good furniture, etc. increase his status (visitors usually wait in her room). They are also, of course, an attempt to increase her feeling of separation from the other office workers and from the girls in the pool. Unfortunately, this works only too well: how often have you read articles about the "perfect secretary" which, in their discussion of the boss-secretary relationship, imply that no-one else exists!

The perfect secretary is not as other workers; she does not get friendly with people her boss doesn't like, she doesn't accept dates from the clerks or business acquaintances (it would be bad if people thought she was using her influence with the boss on behalf of a clerk wanting a raise or a salesman wanting an interview). She never wears the kind of clothes he doesn't like. The time clock only exists in the morning, but not at night when the boss has more work for her to do. In short, every boss sees himself as a Perry Mason looking for a Della Street. If I make it clear that I'm selling my labour power, but not myself, he's a very disappointed little man.

Good working conditions are however the exception for the bulk of the typists in the pool. They have the worst typewriters, rickety desks with one or two drawers, chairs with dinner-plate sized seats. There is rarely any soundproofing and the lighting will be more often than not badly placed. Maybe they will have to work in artificial light in a windowless room.

Seven hour typing day:

The pamphlet means seven hours after allowing for tea breaks.

Miss Smith is supposed to get away on time, now that there's a dictation machine. This is based on the fallacious assumption that "typists rarely start a letter at the end of the day unless they know that they can finish it." But what if the boss is waiting to sign that same letter?

HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY? AT WHAT COST?

Even supposing all these conditions were fulfilled, what is this amazing output per day that dictating machines will allegedly achieve? To avoid showing the whole table, a few random samples will do:

1. At 45 words per minute, 38 medium length* items with a small number* of copies.
2. At 55 words per minute, 44 items of short length* with a large number* of copies.
3. At 65 words per minute, 39 long* items with a small number* of copies.

These outputs are quite usual for a copy typist, benefiting from few or none of the conditions stipulated, and at the mercy of more interruptions than if she had earphones plugged in her ears, which discourage communication very effectively. A shorthand typist, on the other hand, produces less copy (because so much time is wasted by the dictator). It is from her that the extra productivity is to be extracted if a change is made to auto-dictation, and the dictator obeys the injunction to have a fully corrected text.

The boss is, in fact, faced with a choice: either save himself the bother of dictating properly (with resultant poor output) or dictate accurately with high output from former shorthand writers, and a consequently smaller wages bill.

The higher output is gained, however, not only because of greater accuracy on his part, but also because the dictation typist is chained to her desk by the machine from morn till night, with the exception of tea breaks and lunch hour

She has no reason, now, to go up and down stairs on the way to dictation. She has no opportunity to stretch her legs and have a brief chat with friends on other floors. The earphones cut off conversation with the girls sitting at her side. From start to finish of the record she is deaf to anything else. She could, of course, pull the earphones out between letters, but the tendency is to keep on without interruption until the end of the record. Removing the earpieces is an overt act saying plainly "I want distraction" and is apt to incur the disapproval of the supervisor.

* Definitions: short = 10 lines; medium = 15 lines; long = 25 lines.
small = original and 1 copy; large = original & 4 copies.

The machine manufacturers try to get round this by talk of having plenty of time to spare at the end of the day for conversation and knitting. But what happens if the bosses see about twenty girls all sitting idle for half an hour? No prizes for guessing: one sacked and another offered part-time. This would save about £900 a year, to add to the director's salary, the increase being 'justified' by the economies he had achieved.

1984 COMES TO THE TYPING POOL

Taken from one leaflet:- "The 'Eminet' supervisor can see at a glance what is going on. She has a small panel in front of her which shows exactly what each girl is doing and which one can take a rush job. A light on her panel indicates when any of the girls vacates her machine. When the heat is on, the supervisor can take over from automatic operation and plan the work distribution herself, without anyone having to leave her machine."

"A complete record of the daily output of each typist is given by 3-figure digital counters. This dictation system puts priority work ahead of routine material and a typist starts on a rush job before the boss has finished dictating it."

And how do they persuade the girls to accept such intolerable scrutiny of their work? "Working with the 'Eminet' an ordinary typist is transformed into a secretary/typist! She deals directly with executives. She gets to know them and their personal whims and preferences. She takes a more active interest in the company's business. She gets the satisfaction of doing a rewarding and enjoyable job, and because she gets through more work she earns more money too - which is why firms with 'Eminet' have such a small turnover in staff."

I.B.M. recently made a study of typing costs. They recommended the following as means of increasing actual typing time:

- "1. Efficient supervision of typing staff which cannot be too highly stressed.
2. Introduction of a certain competitive element by means of incentives.
3. Introducing dictation machines to even out work flow amongst typists.
4. Introducing electric typewriters, thus reducing fatigue, and thereby increasing typing speed.
5. Improve physical conditions and make easy access to stationery."

Audio typists are often worn out at the end of the day. This is due to being confined to their desks, to the close supervision, and to the incessant burr in their ears producing a dull headache and irritability.

I have known girls stay off work or go home after a few hours on what the womens' mags call "difficult days". They simply couldn't face all the discomforts of the dictation machine added to their cramp, heaviness and going hot and cold. (Incidentally, the best cure for period pain is exercise - exactly what they have no chance of getting). You won't find this reason given in the firm's reports for absence due to sickness. Most girls are embarrassed to have to explain this to a male boss and make up other reasons such as headache, toothache, etc.

The installation of these machines is another attempt to dehumanise us. This may have a worse effect mentally than physically on female workers, because the majority take a more personal attitude to their work than men do. They think of their work in terms of "Mr. So-and-So" rather than "Such-and-Such Company". Bosses for generations have been capitalising on the personal loyalties given by women, more often from motherly than romantic motives. Many typists assume this loyalty to be two-sided. Then one day she no longer works for Mr. Brown. In his place there's a gabbling machine giving her letters from people all over the building she's never heard of, and may never see. To her, a letter isn't just a letter. To give her work interest she has to know what the person at the other end is like.

As in industry, the tendency in the modern office is for the worker's control over her job to be minimised, her task routinised to the last refinement and thereby made utterly dull. She is now supposed to be an automaton, plugged in like her dictation machine, and obeying without thought the instructions given to her. Yet, if she really did so, what chaos there would be!

'TYPING TO RULE'

And here lies the answer to how to combat the introduction of these machines. They want you to be an automaton? Then be one!

1. Do exactly as the disc or tape says. Type letters without punctuation or paragraphs unless dictated. Type dictated grammatical errors, without correction. If he says, "Yours etc." type 'Yours etc'. If he mutters aside to himself, type it all down. If he coughs or sneezes, type something 'kukh, kukh!' Or 'atchoo!!!'
2. Don't assume anything. Unless the dictator gives specific instructions, the size of letterhead and number of copies should be what you've been using all morning, even if wildly inappropriate. If the dictator doesn't give a full or

- proper address, type what he does give you, such as: "To Mr. Black, the steel wool people". Or as you sometimes get from bosses who don't know the difference between a limited company and a partnership - "To Messrs. Jones & Smith Company Limited".
3. Keep the same margin setting and line spacing throughout the day, regardless of the length of the letter. Don't set it out for sub-paragraphs. And don't underline headings.
 4. If you come across an unfamiliar word, don't look it up in the dictionary. Type the phonetic spelling. After all, a machine would either "make a mistake" or break down!
 5. When you can't make out the words being spoken, tap your space bar until the dictation becomes clear again.

United mickey-taking on these lines would result, of course, in all the letters being sent back for retyping. In which case you can make the corrections noted and ignore any not marked. There will be an ever-increasing backlog of work. They will ask you to do overtime, which you can refuse on the ground that you were told the machines would put a stop to your working late. In their anxiety to send off important letters a few people will give them to you in longhand or dictate shorthand. Do such letters accurately, delivering them yourself.

By this time, the men at the top will be having a conference on how to deal with the rebellion. If you are in a union they will call in your "representative", to discipline you for taking 'unofficial' action. Point out that you have not stopped work. You have not even slowed down. You are doing exactly what you've been told. Tell your official he'll have mass resignations from the union if he doesn't fight your case. And carry out your threat if you find you're not sure which side he's on.

The bosses will probably threaten a lock-out. Bureaucracy is so vast however in most firms (in comparison to the production side) that they will not relish the thought of all those letters unwritten and forms unfilled. Agency fees for replacements or temporary typists are much higher than your wages. Naturally you should picket any blackleg staff.

They might attempt to sack you, but a reason has to be given. "Incompetence" would sound a bit funny if you've been there awhile. The other workers would come out in sympathy if, at the beginning of your campaign, you explained your case and asked them for co-operation. Clerks who dictate letters could be asked not to use the machines. The production workers, whether in the same union or not, should be kept in the picture, so that the management can see their "divide and rule" tactic just isn't working.

The capital cost of these dictation machines and their accessories is so great (approximately £100 per machine) that the majority of managements will not buy them outright, but will ask for hiring arrangements or for a trial period before purchase. Here's your chance! To ensure success your campaign should be carried out during this period, when they will more easily let go of the equipment. Why not make it a real trial?

MARIA FYFE.

ARE YOU
IN-FIGHTING MORE
BUT ENJOYING IT
LESS?

DO YOU THIRST FOR
DOCTRINAL PURITY?

Do you believe in YOUR organization, right or wrong (or in YOUR grandmother, drunk or sober)?

Do you believe in a vanguard party, group or ideology ('consistently correct since 1864, 1871, 1904, 1917, 1921, 1923, 1938, etc')?

Do you use words like 'theoretical continuity' and 'historical heritage' as a means of treating your intellectual constipation?

Do you follow: Moscow or Peking? Healy or Pablo? I.S. or the Raisins? The 'official' or the 'unofficial' Fourth? The middle or the end of Clapham High Street?

Does ideological monolithism cramp your thinking? Do you get attacks of organizational xenophobia? THEN WHAT YOU NEED IS A REGULAR DOSE OF

SOLIDARITY

the (more or less) monthly voice of the rank and file. Obtainable (9/- for 12 issues) from B. Potter, 197 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1.



NEWS FROM DOCKLAND

At a mass meeting of dockers to discuss their pay claim, held at Tilbury on September 8, 1964, an interesting leaflet was distributed. It was accurately described by the Financial Times (Sept. 9, 1964) as 'an unofficial guide for working to rule, to be used if the present deadlock develops into open warfare'.

At the Tilbury meeting a spokesman for the men said 'we have waited long enough. If union officials won't act, the rank and file will. A work to rule is the best weapon to employ and I am sure we will get the support of all dockland.'

Thousands of copies of the 'work to rule guide for ship gangs and quay workers' were sent to other dockers in London, Hull, Manchester, Grimsby and Southampton.

In view of the present stalemate in the wage negotiations and of the possibility of big dock struggles ahead, we felt SOLIDARITY readers would like to read this remarkable leaflet for themselves. It was sent to us by a sympathiser in the docks. The commentary is our own.

WORKING TO RULE

SHIPS GANGS

1. No rigging of gear or placing of derricks.
2. No work until all faulty hatches are refitted and placed.
3. All ladders in ships holds must be static and in good order.
4. All gangways must be secured and all handrails in place.
5. All cargo in slings to allow for reaving.
6. All boards loaded to ensure the utmost safety.
7. No winches, even with the slightest fault, to be worked.
8. No winches to be worked unless blocks behind drivers head have preventors.
9. All cranes must plumb the centre of hatch (no bonds under combings).
10. No tea breaks on ship. Mobile surroundings to be clean, if not go outside.

11. In no circumstances must piece work be attained.
12. All wires, ropes, boards and slings to be in tip-top condition.
13. All lightermen to be in attendance of craft and all barge shunts and shifting of same to be done by lightermen only.
14. All ropes for securing craft fore and aft to be supplied, guy lines must not be used.
15. Safety nets to be used down the holds at all times, including all hand rails round tween-deck combings.
16. Ensure sufficient walking way around tween-decks containing cargo for other ports.
17. No gangs to work short handed.
18. Working times from 8 to 12 and 1 to 5 (no plugging before or after).
19. Special attention to be paid to vision of all winch drivers.
20. All beams to be made secure and bolted.
21. Where protective clothing is supplied all washing facilities to be made available.
22. No sorting of cargo and no books or papers to be held by any member of the gang.
23. All cargo to be worked in the interest of safety.
24. Make sure proper lighting is available at all times.
25. All craft to be worked to gunwhale height only.

Q U A Y G A N G S

26. Before commencing work ensure that red flags are displayed at both ends of shed.
27. All barrows inspected as to wear and tear.
28. All mechanized bogies, fork lifts and mobile cranes thoroughly inspected.
29. All quays inspected for potholes and jutting railway lines.
30. All lorries to be loaded or unloaded in bays and not in sheds.
31. No splitting of gangs.
32. No overloading of ropes, slings or boards (Reave all sets).
33. All delivery gangs to draw out at 4-hour periods for re-allocation
34. No delivery under cranes which are in motion.
35. Essential, no splitting of striking gangs.
36. No lorries on quay except for ships stores and then only one at a time.
37. All non-continuity men to draw out at 4-hour periods. This includes gearers, needlemen, coopers shop, etc.

WE DO INSIST THAT ALL MEN BE ALLOCATED TO WORK, TO PROTECT OUR MEMBERS FROM THE UGLINESS OF VICTIMISATION.

THIS MEANS MASS ALLOCATION.

comment

The docker's life, like the miner's, is one of the most dangerous there is. There are over 5,000 serious accidents each year in the docks, of which a dozen or two are usually fatal. Many of the work-to-rule proposals are designed to ensure elementary safety, as laid down by Board of Trade or P.L.A. (Port of London Authority) regulations. If insisting on working under reasonably safe conditions results in complete dislocation of work in the docks, this is surely the most powerful indictment there could be of the existing set-up.

One of the most frequent cause of accidents is defective equipment (frayed ropes, rotten boards, unsecured hatches, inadequate handrails or ladders, ropes or cables slipping from blocks (pulleys), unsafe winches, etc.). Rules 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12 and 20 aim at lessening accidents due to causes of this kind.

But even when the gear is in reasonable order, the conditions of the job itself are often dangerous. Cargoes may slip. Men may be knocked down by moving cargoes or may fall down hatches. A moment's inattention may have very serious consequences. When loading barges above gunwhale level, men may fall directly into the water. Lighting is often appalling, both in holds and on the quay side. Early morning or evening work in the winter months is often carried out under conditions of very poor visibility. The state of many quays has to be seen to be believed. Not only may men trip in potholes but there are lorries moving in all directions and shunting railway wagons add to the hazards. Hence rules 15, 16, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 32, 34 and 36.

Some of the suggestions (rules 27, 10 and 21) are aimed at making work more tolerable. Why should heavy loads have to be carted on rusty old barrows, devoid of proper ballbearings, and often themselves weighing 1 or 2 cwt? Why should tea breaks for ship gangs be spent amid the dust and dirt on board? Why should the surroundings of the mobile (canteens) be refuse heaps or junk yards? Why should gangs who have to handle lamp black or charcoal not be provided with decent washing facilities? Buckets of hot water on deck are no substitute for mobile shower vans, which should be available for any job considered dirty enough to warrant the issue of protective clothing.

Other suggestions are designed to ensure that particular workers or gangs don't do work which is properly that of other workers. This is always the thin end of a wedge as far as the employers are concerned. The other end of the wedge is sackings, in the interests of 'rationalization'. Hence rules 1, 13, 14 and 22.

Many of the suggestions for the work-to-rule are for men on day rates. They would be difficult to apply by men on piecework. They could only be applied if very considerable solidarity developed among the gangs, putting an agreed ceiling on work done. Mobile stewards would be needed,

checking that ceilings were not exceeded. Rule 5 for instance increases the safety of loading or unloading procedure, but at the expense of shifting smaller loads at a time (and hence diminishing piecework earnings). Although it is a Board of Trade regulation, Rule 9 is not usually complied with when the men on piecework want to unload quickly. Rules 17 and 31 are also usually ignored if the job is a better paid piecework one. These last 2 rules would have to be rigorously applied for any work to rule to be really effective. There would have to be 12 to 14 hands for ship and quay gangs - as laid down in the agreements - and 8 hands for the 'striking gangs', who handle cargoes between lorries and sheds.

The most important suggestion, however, is that the men should collectively challenge the infamous 'free call' system known as 'going on the stones'. In this practice, reminiscent of conditions a century or two ago, the men assemble and are picked like cattle, by foremen, for particular jobs. The Tilbury men suggest that instead of this, they should report for allocation at the Sector Offices of the National Dock Labour Board, as they are entitled to by law. They should put their work books in one at a time, in an orderly manner. It might take quite a few hours each day to get all the men allocated but that is hardly their fault. The law also lays down that delivery gangs are entitled to re-allocation every four hours. Full advantage could be taken of this, to break the monotony of the work. 'Non-continuity' men could act in the same way. They are on day-work jobs anyway. Among the gearers (who provide nets, ropes, hooks, blocks, etc, from the stores and who rig the derricks), the needlemen (who repair bags in the holds) and the coopers (who repair broken casks and cases) there is a fair proportion of older men, who could do with an occasional breather.

A successful work-to-rule has many advantages over a downright withdrawal of labour. Firstly the men get paid - at least until such time as the employers lock them out (when the blame for chaos is clearly placed where it belongs). Secondly, by working to rule the men draw widespread attention not only to their immediate grievance, but also to what working conditions in their industry are really like. And thirdly in a work-to-rule struggle the control of the dispute remains firmly in the hands of the rank and file. Instead of being turned on and off like a tap, from above, at the behest of the union officials, working class pressure in a work-to-rule results in the men becoming aware of their own strength and capacities. The men develop their own initiative and self-confidence. And when all is said and done this is surely the essential pre-requisite for achieving any genuinely socialist society, in which working people themselves manage production and don't leave the decision to 'right wing' or 'left wing' 'experts', allegedly acting on their behalf.

Those who say that 'it is much better if strikes can be made official..... We do our best to encourage such a course wherever possible' * cannot be of much help to workers in struggle. They have not themselves understood that this means surrendering the leadership of the struggle into the hands of the permanent trade union officials, whose basic interests differ from those of the workers.

* Mr. G. Healy, National Secretary (permanent) of the Socialist Labour League, in a letter to 'The Guardian', October 26, 1961.

tea for two.... hours

'By the class struggle we do not only mean the massive and grandiose pitched battles which are well-known features of working class history. We also mean the permanent struggle in production, where, so to speak, half of each gesture made by a worker has as its objective to defend himself against exploitation and alienation. This hidden, silent, informal and daily resistance plays a formative role in history, quite as important as that of great strikes or revolutions.'

These lines are from Paul Cardan's forthcoming book on CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM. The article below was written by an engineering militant, in a big North London factory.

The job is rebuilding old motors that customers send in. The motors aren't clean to say the least! Greasy black hands swiftly tear the parts from the motors. What can be salvaged is used again.

The process starts here. Then on to the man who fits the parts to be replaced. And so on to the tester. and to the man who sprays them a matt black colour. Finally they reach the last operation where a small nameplate (label) is rivetted on. The complete motor is popped into a carton and away she goes to a customer.

For various reasons the men aren't happy on this section. One is that they get less money than men working on other assembly lines - because, says the gaffer, they aren't as 'conversant'* as the others.

(This just isn't true because there is only one sort of motor being rebuilt in the factory so the men have no opportunity to learn to handle other types).

Another reason for discontent is the dirty nature of the job. Practically every one gets greasy. Some of the motors come off tractors still caked with mud. But mostly the men moan because of the friction caused by one operation - the last.

The man on this operation has to make up cardboard cartons by stapling them together. Then he places the motor in a jig and rivets on the nameplate. Having done this he wraps the motor in a sheet of rust-proof paper, pops it in the carton and packs it into a crate. Very simple. But he really has to work. The starters aren't exactly light to handle. Bending down to place them into the crate is back wrenching. But this he can bear. After all, he's paid to work!

* The B.F. means 'adaptable'.

But is he? He doesn't think so. Nor do people who have been on the job or the lads who 'packed it in'. The bonus is extremely poor by any standards. Men don't stay on the job long and therefore the assembly line is constantly interrupted. Months go by. Then a young Irish worker joins the team. He's strong and appears willing. After a couple of days he shows another side of his character. He's nobody's fool! A word in the tester's ear, a few sentences down the line and something is arranged.

The whistle blows, the tea trolley pushed by a stout friendly looking woman comes into view. A small queue forms. This is most unusual for a start. Normally the lads rush the old girl off her feet, grabbing buttered rolls and shoving their mugs under the tap of the square tea urn. Mollie can't believe it. Have these men suddenly got themselves some manners? (The rush and bustle is only caused by the necessity to finish tea break in ten minutes).

At their places, seated, reading calmly and munching their food the men don't talk. Ten minutes pass. The chargehand blows the whistle, nobody moves! Another blast, just a little nervously. He can blow all day as far as they are concerned. The paper is interesting. And you don't have to bolt your sandwiches down or scald your mouth with hot tea. The charge hand (an ex shop steward) walks to his little glass office, opens the door and reaches out for the telephone. A few eyes are watching him over their papers. He hesitates and comes out. Perhaps he was going to ring the supervisor. But no, it looks like he's going to do an Errol Flynn (on his jack!). 'Come on, Lads, What's got into you?

I knew this was going to happen, you know!'. He's lying. The men themselves didn't know half an hour before!

The men sit on. The hands of the clock slowly move round. The supervisor has been and gone. So have the convenors. The management won't budge. 'No negotiation unless you start work!'. This is confirmed by the steward. The young Irishman tells the steward that nobody intended 'negotiating' anyway. What they wanted was an improvement of conditions NOW - and a rise. It had been done before and that was that! (What he meant was, conditions had improved during the visit of the company chairman a week previously. And the old buffer didn't even visit the section!).

Things were becoming serious. A meeting was held between the section super and stewards. Later a man from the line was invited! He stood firm on all the demands. And after two hours of teatime the management capitulated.

This is a true story. Things like this probably happen quite often in various factories. They are not given publicity because they are short-lived and because the number of people involved is usually small (18 here). Certain things stand out however. Over a period of months there occurred an unplanned spontaneous action. The men not only worked as a team, they thought collectively. In this case they triumphed. This simple event to my mind rules out the old crap about workers control not being possible. It is an insult even to listen to such rot when day after day you see workers discussing how this or that could be done or improved. They are full of ideas.

What puts them off and frustrates them each and every day is the fact that their ideas would be used not to lighten their burden, but to increase the gaffer's profits. No factory could run without the 'know-how' which the men accumulate on the job, without their own peculiar ways of doing things to earn 'top whack', and without their little gadgets and improvisations to ease work. I have seen m/cs which engineers from the manufacturers have been unable to get

going put right in five minutes by old boys who were not even considered 'semi-skilled'.

None of the men I mention in this article are political. Their solidarity is acted naturally. The stimulus comes from the job and their own feelings and thoughts. While there are men like this, no governor 'left' or 'right' can feel quite secure in his position of 'master'.

SID WATSON.

APPEAL

On August 27, 1964, Ron Bailey, Del Foley and Des Watson were convicted of charges in connection with break-ins to Civil Defence headquarters in the Ilford area. Fines totalling £350 were imposed, to be paid within a month. The alternative was 6 months in prison for Ron Bailey and Del Foley and 3 months for Des Watson.

An appeal for loans and donations was immediately launched (see RESISTANCE, vol.II, no.9, FREEDOM, vol.25, no.28, and INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM, no.18), and the fines were paid. However, most of the money raised was in loans which the three still have to repay. None of them can repay at a great rate (they are a student, trainee teacher and clerk respectively). Unless further help is received they will be financially crippled for a long time.

The three are members of the Essex Committee of 100 and Ilford YCND, and ex(pelled) members of Ilford Y.S. They have been active in asking the Ilford Civil Defence authorities awkward questions for several years. The comrades are grateful for the encouraging response already made to their appeal for funds to pay these vicious fines. It includes £18 collected at Fords Dagenham and 10 shillings given to Del by an unknown woman on top of a bus! SOLIDARITY urges all readers to send further donations to Del Foley (11 Knotts Green Road, Leyton, London E.10) who guarantees its even distribution and will acknowledge all monies received.

READ

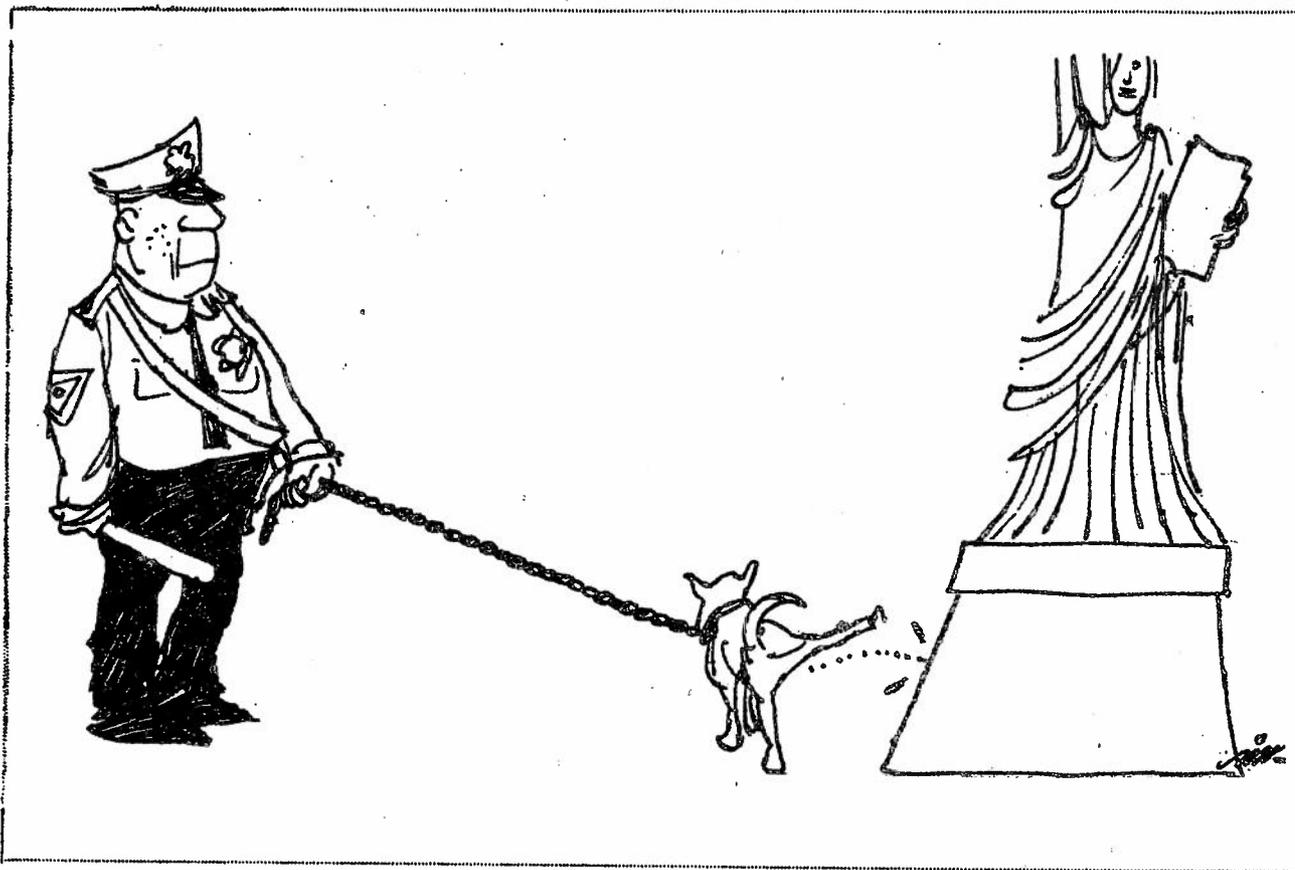
the following excellent rank-and-file journals

STRIKE

(K. Freedman, 2849 Mayfield Rd., # 1, Cleveland 18, Ohio, USA). A vigorous libertarian monthly published by comrades in the Cleveland Young People's Socialist League.

THE REBEL WORKER

(Chicago Branch I.W.W., 2422 North Halstead St., Chicago, Illinois 60614, U.S.A.). A disruptive duplicated paper, in the best Wobbly tradition.



LIBERAL'S LAMENT

White : Pardon me, sir, why are you following me?

Black : I'm your sit in.

White : Look, I do my bit! Every day I DELIBERATELY sit next to one of you on the bus! Don't I get some time off from liberalism?

Black : Have you ever taken a colored person home with you?

White : Hold on! I never mix my home life with politics! How long do you expect to stay with me?

Black : Whither you goest, baby, I goest.

White : Civil rights used to be so much more tolerable before Negroes got into it!

BEWARE
THE WHITE
BACKLASH!

DON'T COMPLAIN WHEN
YOUR SON IS MURDERED
BY WAGNER'S COPS. IF
YOU DO, NEXT TIME HE
MIGHT BE MURDERED BY
GOLDWATER'S COPS.

IN SEARCH OF HARLEM

the new york police

There's a story to the effect that a woman telephoned Police Headquarters screaming for help: "A man just broke into my house, shot my husband, beat up my son, raped my daughter, and now he's ransacking the place." The Desk Sergeant answered in a bored tone: "Okay, lady. Just take his badge number and we'll pick him up when he goes off duty."

Unfortunately this isn't that much of a joke to a great number of people living in the United States, nor particularly to those living in New York City. The New York City Police Department has a long and well-earned record of graft, corruption and brutality. This is not to say that all the cops are dishonest or brutal. I couldn't even say what proportion are, though I'd be happy to bet that it runs around 80 or 90 per cent. Certainly, there are policemen who've taken incredible risks, charging into burning buildings to extricate children and all that sort of thing. Moreover for about \$100 a week (legal salary) these guys leave the house in the morning (or the middle of the night) never knowing if they're going to get back to their families alive. But on the other hand quite a few people they encounter don't get home alive either.

Just a couple of days before whatshisname got shot down in Dallas two Puerto Rican kids in their teens were shot and killed by two policemen operating out of the 24th Precinct on 100th Street. The boys had been arrested and were in a police car on their way to the station house. The guilty policemen were transferred to the Lower East Bronx, perhaps because the graft is smaller up there. The kids had been accused (they didn't live long enough to be charged) of some minor offence like burglary; and even that accusation was never proved. We have a rather interesting crime ratio there: the "criminals"--suspicion of burglary; the police--double murder. Even if I were in favour of police "protection" I would want better odds than that.

The same 24th Precinct racked up another beautiful score while investigating a liquor store robbery in the building where I live. Somebody had heaved a rock through the plateglass window and stolen a bottle of liquor. The police came along to solve the crime and promptly emptied out the whole window. Final tally: robber -- one bottle; police -- fifteen bottles.

The fascinating thing about the police is how brazen they are. In the face of three separate grand jury investigations of police corruption now going on, Police Commissioner Murphy threatened to resign if a Civilian Review Board were to be established. He's running a "clean" police force, he announced indignantly.

If you stand on any street corner for any reasonable length of time you'll invariably see squad car after squad car pull up and get some free newspapers from the newsstand. They rarely pay for a meal; in fact I heard of a case where a new waitress gave a cop a check when he finished eating, and he just threw it at the cashier as he stormed out in fury. Police spokesmen hardly batted an eye when one of their off-duty minions gunned down a Puerto Rican youth who had just been voted "Boy of the Year". One might think that they'd at least have had the decency to be embarrassed, but they blandly showed the cop's coat with a convenient tear in it to news photographers, thereby "proving" that the boy had been attacking the poor maligned officer with a knife.

When a friend of mine was in court after a CORE protest, another case before the judge involved a negro charged with resisting arrest. He had been dragged into a doorway by two plainclothes policemen, but fought back when they started beating him up. He flatly denied that they had identified themselves as policemen although he admitted under questioning that he had begun to suspect it during the melee. The prosecution pounced upon what it thought was an opening: "Why?" The answer came back, "Well, who else jumps you in the street, and beats you up?" The whole courtroom convulsed, with the cops laughing as heartily as everyone else -- which is highly indicative.

A few years ago a policeman was trying to prove to me and my boss what vermin the Puerto Ricans were. As evidence he described how he had been walking down a street and some kids threw beer cans at him from a rooftop. "I shot three times but didn't hit nothing," he added casually. His idols of the force, however, were the Tactical Police Force -- a special contingent originally limited to anthropoids over six feet tall, but later extended to include Judo players. "They make the rest of us look bad," he complained, "because when they're assigned to an area the arrests go way up." According to him, "They arrest you even if you only open your mouth." "On what charge?" I asked. "Oh, loitering, disorderly conduct.....I could name about six offhand, including resisting arrest. Of course, that's after you hit him," he added nonchalantly as an afterthought.

If this monster is so unabashed as to evince these views in public, one shudders to think of what he deems necessary to keep private. I might add that his heroes, the TPF's, were the ones who pulverised the peace demonstrators in Times Square in March of 1962. A few months after that brilliant exploit a demonstration was set for Times Square during the Cuba Crisis. The Police Department immediately forbade it and announced a ban on all future demonstrations in Times Square which has continued to this day. This sort of behaviour is incredible, but invariable. Whenever their actions are so outrageous that they find themselves in a really embarrassing situation, they merely turn around and punish their own victims further. They never make amends. They just cover up one injustice with a newer one. This in essence is the police mentality -- when your victims squawk too much, grind them down even further.

Let me offer one further bit of irony. In 1951 Walter Arm, a crime reporter for one of the New York newspapers, wrote a book entitled PAY-OFF. It was published by Appleton, and was a sensational exposure of graft and corruption in the New York Police department. At the time he mentioned to a then acquaintance - a wholly reliable person - that he had another book forthcoming on the same subject which would make PAY-OFF pale by comparison. Somehow it never forthcame. Mr. Arm ceased to be a crime reporter. He became instead Deputy Police Commissioner.

harlem

Harlem is a negro ghetto located in the northern part of Manhattan. It is subject to far more police brutality and graft than the overall city average. Its unemployment rate is very much higher than other areas, and it boasts a substantially greater rate of drug addiction. Drunkenness, poverty, prostitution, and every other manifestation of our horrible social system abound there. On the other hand there have been some promising things happening: many rent strikes were organized and still continue; and there is one display of slum tenements with banners across the street proclaiming it "The World's Worst Fair." The primary police concern there as everywhere, is to keep things quiet. (The official police function is not to defend justice but rather to defend injustice - as institutionalized in private property.) But the police are recognized for what they really are by a larger proportion of their victims in Harlem than in other sections. The average Harlem resident can recite tales of police activities from first-hand experience that most of us would find incredible, although from my own few direct encounters with the police, there is little I'd dismiss as implausible.

Despite the apathy of the people of Harlem, caused in part by years of police oppression, some things are still unacceptable. When Police Lieutenant Thomas Gilligan killed a fifteen-year old schoolboy who purportedly had attacked him with a knife, this aroused much protest. The victim, James Powell, weighed about 120 pounds as against Gilligan's 200. Gilligan, moreover, had received three or four previous citations for disarming fully grown men. The police mentality, however, precluded their expressing regrets or suspending Gilligan pending an impartial investigation. Their rule of thumb is that when a cop steps on someone's face, the victim's mouth should open only enough to mutter, "Let bygones be bygones." In Yiddish this is called "chutzpah" and may be illustrated by the man who murders his mother and father and then pleads for mercy because he's an orphan.

Thus, after they had beaten the peace demonstrators in Times Square, the police banned all future demonstrations there. When they beat up Miles Davis (by mistake) in front of Birdland where he was the featured jazz attraction, they felt constrained to cancel his cabaret licence so that he was immediately prevented from

appearing in any New York City night-club. Since this is how they think - or react - what else could be expected but that after they shoot a young boy they try to offset it by beating up his friends?

what really happened

Rather than try to resolve a number of conflicting versions of the specific events touching off the so-called riots, I'll quote from I.F. Stone's Weekly (August 10, 1964). Stone's honesty is unimpeachable. The narrative he presented was that of Judy Howell, 17-year-old youth coordinator for Bronx CORE.

"Judy herself was one of the leaders of the youth demonstration which led to the Harlem riot and gave me her own account of how it happened. The purpose was to protest the slaying of 15-year-old James Powell by Police Lieutenant Gilligan, to urge the latter's suspension and to ask Police Commissioner Murphy to come to Harlem and speak with the people. She said that when the demonstrators marched to Police Precinct 28 on 123rd Street Inspector Pendergast would not let any of the youth leaders speak but instead received Rev. Nelson C. Dukes, a Negro Baptist Minister, who tried to take over the leadership of the demonstration. 'They didn't know who Rev. Dukes was and were suspicious of the report he made when he came out of the police station', Judy related. 'Inspector Pendergast wouldn't listen to any of us and the crowd wouldn't listen to him. Finally, he yelled, 'To hell with the niggers, get them out of here any way you can'. Then the police arrested me and the other 15 youth leaders and began pushing the crowd back. That's when the trouble began. We could have stopped it in a minute if they had just let us use the bull horn. Instead they rushed all of us youth leaders into the police station. The police aren't popular in the neighbourhood anyway and cans and bottles began to fly. I was the only girl arrested and a policewoman took me away after I had been kicked and hit over the head. The others were given a beating and the crowd outside could hear their screams. We didn't know a riot had started until we got out of night court at 2 a.m. The man to be blamed is Inspector Pendergast who is supposed to be experienced and have a reputation for fairness. If it wasn't for his stupid handling of the affair, there would have been no riot."

Then, in regard to beer cans and bottles being thrown from rooftops, it must be explained that not only is there a long tradition of such missiles being directed at baseball umpires, but also that it happens all summer long - in poorer neighbourhoods - with no offence taken. Youngsters wanting to cool off open fire hydrants. This proves great sport until the police, provided with steel helmets to protect themselves from the expected barrage from the roofs, come along to shut them off. There is always a plentiful supply of cans and

bottles because huge quantities of soft drinks and beer (illegally, but winked at by the cops) are drunk in the streets, the containers strewn about and little done to collect them. The bricks referred to in all accounts were probably very few (unless your Challenor got in on the act). Our streets are not cobbled, and unless there happened to be some demolition nearby bricks would have been hard to come by.

Also I think it quite obvious that these missiles were not thrown to hurt anyone - because no cops were seriously injured. I submit that if any substantial number of Negroes actually intended to injure anyone by winging bricks and bottles from tenement roofs, then at least two or three cops would have been killed and numerous others grievously wounded. Then there would have been a legal blood bath in Harlem that would have made the place look like the Warsaw Ghetto. To the best of my knowledge not one cop had so much as one stitch taken - a situation which would have been patently impossible if the Negroes had been other than a group of furious, frustrated, powerless unfortunates fully aware of how afraid they were that one of their ineffectual protest missiles might do some damage. Moreover if there actually had been a riot why wasn't there one cop - just one of all the hundreds and hundreds who were running around bashing in people's skulls - why wasn't there just one of these cops beaten up, and I mean beaten to a pulp? Obviously the Negroes weren't seriously fighting back.

I contend that if there had been even a semblance of a riot in Harlem instead of the spectacle we had of policemen clubbing and shooting terror-stricken non-resistants (with complete impunity) we would have seen them literally slaughtering them (with equal impunity).

As it was they killed only one protester whom they were at great pains to describe as an ex-convict who had been throwing bricks from a rooftop and who had not stopped when warned. (Imagine an ex-convict so immersed in the ecstasy of his brick-throwing that he ignored commands to stop issued by policemen approaching with drawn guns. Somehow it reminds one of the story of the 120-pound youngster wielding a small pocket knife, charging a 200-pound armed cop; and curiously still, not dropping said knife even after being shot in the hand. After which the strangely adhesive knife disappears for a stretch, but then reappears, is discovered by a teacher, and turned over to the school principal.)

One news report cited 35 policemen "injured". I saw no details so these obviously were nothing the least bit exploitable. Having once been on a demonstration where a policeman twisted his ankle by kicking at a participant (and then arrested his target for felonious assault) I am not very impressed. The picture I get is rather that of a few cops wrenching their backs in clubbing someone too hard, or tripping over their own feet while racing colleagues to the loot from some store.

looting ?

Incidentally there was some looting, I believe, on Saturday, the first night of the episode. After that I don't think there was much. Naturally what there was was played up in the news accounts -- but that was to be expected. There has recently been a noticeable attempt to make the negroes the baddies and the cops the goodies. In a city such as this where there are so many crimes per minute, a mere shift in reportorial emphasis can create any desired image. For example, right after Gilligan did his bit for law and order another cop was stabbed. Naturally, this was played up like mad. Given thousands of uniformed paranoiacs with a long record of beatings and killings, it stands to reason that every couple of days someone, afraid he is about to become the next statistic, may well decide to get his lumps in in advance. All the newspapers have to do is fasten on to one such item to make the dirty bastards look angelic.

At any rate there was some looting. I should like to think of it as the proletariat starting with the local pawn sbp and working their way up to expropriate General Motors. Unfortunately such was not the case. This was simply petty pillaging by the impoverished as they imitated what the police have been doing there for years. The news accounts portrayed it as the ruination of elderly widows and lovable old gentlemen whose absolutely uninsured livelihoods went down the drain. Certainly there was some of this. There were also a good many less sympathetic cases, people who had charged gouging prices for shoddy merchandise, hired no negro help, and in general had ruthlessly and shamelessly exploited Harlem's vulnerability for many years. They were primarily the victims of the police stupidity which caused the so-called riots.

Meanwhile the Federal Government -- ever the champion of the underdog -- stepped in. Johnson dispatched the FBI to Harlem, not to inquire about the welfare of the negroes, but rather to check on reports that "at least 10 Communist leaders" were fanning the flames of discontent up there.

This action came the day after Acting Mayor Paul R. Screvane officially charged the Communists with fomenting the disorders: "I don't think there is any question about the Communists fostering the strife." Two months after the so-called riots, good old Hoover, Head of the FBI, himself gave the CP a clean bill of health, which means that his own salaried agent/infiltrators (who probably constitute the bulk of that worthy organisation) had been falling down on the job. The Hoover exoneration of the Communists came just after the "impartial" investigation exonerated Gilligan.

the civil rights 'leaders'

But what of the civil rights mis-leaders? And how now non-violence? And what should radicals do the next time the police run amok and precipitate another non-riot? I can't offer a positive programme but what went on this time offers some good guidelines of what not to do. To the best of my recollection nobody came out of this scene smelling like a rose. I say "to the best of my recollection" because tedious re-checking of conflicting newspaper accounts to determine who said what, when and where would not affect the overall accuracy nor alter my basic contentions.

Thus, the National Urban League played no role at all although they might have been represented at one of the conferences with the mayor who returned from a vacation in Spain (vultures of a feather...) during the week. The NUL is primarily a social agency founded in 1910. It is far too conservative to be involved directly, or even to issue a statement other than the safest kind.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is another conservative civil rights organisation, the oldest and largest in the US. Since 1909 they've been approaching the problem of discrimination primarily through formal legal channels. Nevertheless they deserve a good deal of credit: they were responsible for the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in the public schools, which is both the high point for them and at the same time irrefutable proof that their legal approach is inadequate. What little has been done to implement that decision in the ten years since has largely been the result of direct action. It could have been achieved sooner if the well-meaning NAACP hadn't in effect delayed it by wasting time in the courts.

Lately the NAACP has been shamed into using direct action tactics - sit-ins, rallies, pickets, etc. - by the more active organisations. The NAACP did little or nothing in Harlem. It did show up in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant section a few days later when the natives got restless there. They handed out leaflets which began: "Cool it, baby..." (presumably to show how hip and sympatico they were) - but there was a news photo of an NAACP man sitting in his car looking morosely through his shattered windshield, which hardly indicates a great deal of rapport. Other than that, they ran true to form. They condemned "all the violence and looting" (ie by the negroes, not at the negroes) and joining the Mayor at the Conference Table.

Neither the Urban League nor the NAACP actually advocated non-violence, although both condemn violence. There are two groups in the civil rights struggle which do advocate non-violence, though neither seems too sure of what it is. The newer of these and the most radical of all civil rights groups is the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee, formed about two months after the rash of southern student sit-ins broke out in February 1960. Their spokesman John Lewis, was the only person whose speech the famous March on Washington felt it necessary to censor, which is highly complimentary. SNCC played no active part in Harlem because it has only a fund raising office in New York, all of its direct action activities being carried out down south. Lewis, however, did attend the mayor's conference and was the only one who emerged honourably from that joust with injustice.

the role of CORE

The biggest disappointment, bar none, of the whole scene was CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, an erstwhile nonviolent, direct action group. Although they've had a phenomenal record of direct action since 1943, and although the heroism of some of their members is nothing short of incredible - William Moore and Michael Schwerner killed; and Jim Peck almost beaten to death in Birmingham, to name only three - most recently a rather gangrenous bureaucracy has been setting in. On a picket line, it's rather unnerving to hear, as I did, someone who has just finished sitting down in front of a construction truck be reprimanded - not thanked or praised, mind you, but reprimanded, by a twerp with an armband and clipboard. It seemed the malefactor had committed civil disobedience against CORE's rules since his name wasn't on the official list of authorised disobedients.

At one point during the World's Fair demonstration last April I was studiously ignoring a police van trying to get past me to load up with arrested sit-downers. When I was ordered to get out of its path, it was not by a cop, but by a CORE picket captain. More important on the national level CORE seems to wriggle out from under awkward situations with singular proficiency. Although CORE was in on the first New York City school boycott, a bit of complicated manoeuvring led to their refusal to support the second. When the Brooklyn CORE chapter announced a stall-in at the World's Fair, the national office immediately suspended them and did its best to sabotage the endeavour. When one of its leading proponents, Arnold Goldwag of Brooklyn CORE was given a 13-month jail sentence, ostensibly for parole violation, national CORE wrote him off as though he had never existed. To top it all off, their earlier militant direct action has now degenerated into voter-registrations campaigns, and pressure on the Republican and Democratic national conventions. All in all the record of late is rather unimpressive.

It might have been hoped that in a crisis situation such as Harlem, CORE would have re-discovered its old vigour, and that the two independent figures, Bayard Rustin and Martin Luther King, might have played a more positive role than they did. James Farmer, CORE's national director, creditably denounced the police atrocities loudly and often. But at the same time he was in effect working for them by pleading with all the Negroes to give up and go home quietly. Now any way you want to look at this it was an unadulterated sell-out of every single principle he is getting paid to stand for. First he sold out non-violence by co-operating with the pro-violence of New York Police Department. Second, he sold out direct action, by repeatedly advising the enraged Negroes to go home and keep quiet about the wanton murder of a teen-age boy. Third, he sold out integration by requesting that all white civil rights workers stay out of Harlem. (In one of the New Jersey "riots", with ne Farmer to prevent integration, blacks and whites together threw bottles at the cops.) He was assisted in his three-way sell-out by Bayard Rustin, who served as an enthusiastic general factotum. However it remained for Martin Luther King, at one of the mayor's conferences, to administer the coup-de-grace to non-violent direct action.

Before I continue I want to make it abundantly clear that Farmer, Rustin and King are three very great human beings. They've done yeoman work for brotherhood in the past. They've been jailed and beaten up to an extent I'm afraid to hear about, let alone emulate. But while freely admitting they are undoubtedly better than I, I still feel obliged to state flatly that as far as Harlem went they acted no better than Quislings. If they had nothing better to say than "Go home quietly" they would have been better off going home quietly themselves - or else shut the hell up and helped throw bottles.

Obviously neither Farmer nor Rustin could be expected, in the middle of a panic, to come up with some brilliant non-violent solution which would win the unanimous support of the Negroes, end police brutality and usher in an era of brotherhood. But whenever the police by their own ineptitude and cruelty, get themselves into an untenable mess, it certainly isn't CORE's job to help extricate them.

I thought at the time, and still do, that every available white civil rights worker - and there are very many - should have been in Harlem throughout the whole crisis. If they had done nothing other than stand on street corners wearing Brotherhood or Equality pins, it would have shown some visible loyalty and support. Better still they might have carried cameras to record as much as possible of the police in action. One way or another, there was only one place to be, and that was in Harlem, obstructing the police and instructing the people. That's more or less what I tried to do. But being alone I was relegated to the totally ineffectual role of observer.

Meanwhile Martin Luther King flew into town. Accompanied by Bayard Rustin (who waited outside) he went to call on the mayor. The next scene was a major conference among all the big deals: Farmer,

Rustin, King, Lewis, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and several others. Out of this conference emerged the prize to end all prizes: a moratorium on all demonstrations (except infinitesimal ones) until after the presidential elections! Evidently the underlying assumption is that every Negro complaint is another vote for Goldwater, and that the Negroes by their obstreperous refusal to lie down and die quietly are "losing sympathy" among white liberals. To his everlasting credit John Lewis of SNCC refused to sign it. Farmer weaseled out with an ambiguous statement to the effect that he was not empowered to speak for all CORE chapters.

non-violence ?

In a way all this was to have been expected. None of these people seems to understand what constitutes really consistent, positive non-violence. Martin Luther King's conception of non-violence includes calling for federal troops when things get rough - troops with penetratingly non-violent bayonets. James Farmer's conception includes public statements favouring speedy apprehension of those who murdered the three civil rights workers - which presumably means either non-violent imprisonment or non-violent lethal gas. Bayard Rustin's conception includes cautious support of Lyndon B. Johnson and his non-violent escalation of the war in South Vietnam. All of these people support a voter registration drive which obviously aims at getting laws passed, backed up in the only way laws can be by non-violent fines, non-violent imprisonment and non-violent electric chairs.

This, then, is where they all went wrong: none of them were non-violent enough when the chips were down. They consistently sided with the executioners instead of with the victims. Meanwhile CORE has gone on to bigger and better things: their Mississippi delegation was allowed to participate in a farcical vote acclaiming the nomination of our non-violent President. For this they gave their livelihoods and their lives.

As for Harlem, all was not a total loss. They have now a Negro Police Captain to help shoot down the school children.

H. W. MORTON

(Our man in New York)