
solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

6^D

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The Balkanization of Utopia

Until he has witnessed an Easter march, the average citizen can have no idea of the number of groups hellbent on the balkanisation of Utopia and the diversity of magazines and badges which they produce. Yesterday, Ilford Liberation Group, the Fellowship Party, and the Anarchists were groups for the connoisseur, while the Young Communist League, the district committees of London area Communist parties, and the Young Socialists provided more familiar forms of dissent.

THE GUARDIAN

APRIL 19th 1965

The Press, the police, and representatives of the established political parties must share a certain incredulous surprise on occasions like Aldermaston. For there, surfacing into broad daylight, emerging from the anonymity of their daily lives, are literally dozens of different political (or anti-political) groupings, scores of rank-and-file papers, subversive to various degrees of the Established Order, and thousands upon thousands of individuals - with strongly felt opinions of their own - united only in their opposition to the Bomb and in their determination to take responsibility for their own actions.

What vision of the future do these people hold? The categories of traditional politics are quite inadequate to define them. These crowds are unlikely to be demonstrating for either Mr Wilson's or Mr Gollan's 'alternatives' to the established order. This mass of humanity on the road, 'hellbent on the balkanization of utopia' must be a bureaucrat's nightmare.

The procession - as is well known - is filmed and photographed from every angle, dissected, enlarged, submitted to the most refined techniques of identification known to the Special Branch. This rabble, this horde of potential trouble-makers must be identified, their affiliations established, the files kept accurate and up to date. How much easier it would be to treat them all as 'reds' or 'pacifists', as 'communists' or 'anarchists', without having to worry about the finer shades of doctrinal difference, without having to document this massive dissent.

But that wouldn't do in this scientific age! The clerks and computers must be kept busy. Tagged, the rebels must be. Who is 'dangerous' and who is 'daft'. Who owes allegiance to Moscow and who to Transport House? Who lives in the past and who in the present? Who believes in non-violence and who doesn't? Who believes in Parliament and who does not? Who are the 'resolutionaries' and who the 'revolutionaries'? And how the hell can we make sure their beliefs remain static, and that they won't split, and shift allegiance, and bugger up the card index? Who are sheep? Who are goats? And in which pigeon-hole do we put the hybrids?

The politicians must view it much as the police does. Why don't all these people just stay at home and leave it to us? Why don't they trust their elders and betters? Why aren't they happy just to vote for us every few years? Why do they argue so much - and in the streets too?

And is all this just the top of the iceberg? How many others, today, think as they do? How many will, tomorrow? Could this scruffy lot be the 'don't knows' of the Gallup polls? Are these the solid core of non-voters? How often does their 'don't know' mean 'won't tell'? And how often does 'won't tell' mean 'fuck the lot of you'?

Why, oh why, won't all these people accept our 'realistic', parliamentary alternatives? Why don't they leave complicated things - like their own life and death - to the professional politicians? If they must have their utopias, why can't they accept our standard models, prefabricated, provided and priced by official society itself? We may bemoan their apathy, but surely this is better than having them turn up in hundreds at May Day and shout us down, or make awkward comments about 'Vietnam' or 'MPs salaries' or 'old age pensioners' or other unpleasant subjects.

The press - although aware of the newsworthiness of the esoter - is less concerned about getting facts straight. They worship at the altar of power. They are the mouthpieces of those who have arrived. And these marchers are getting nowhere. They are all 'weird' anyway. Why bore our readers (and tax our own grey matter) by going into their beliefs more fully? Our political vocabulary is limited, our knowledge of sects anatomy more limited still. We have so consistently got things wrong when venturing to the left of the Communist Party that we had better keep to safe ground. So let's tidy-up reality a little. Let's just call them all 'beatniks', 'anarchists', the 'lunatic fringe'. After all Gaitskell called them 'peanuts'.

And what about the demonstrators themselves? The 'balkanization' of their respective utopias is too obvious to deny. Geography and history get muddled. For some Mecca is Moscow, for others Peking. Some live in Petrograd (in 1917) - others in Barcelona (in 1936). Internationals and ideologies interpenetrate. Revolutionary Gods (Marx, Bakunin, Luxemburg, Malatesta, de Leon, Lenin and Trotsky)

jostle one another on the narrow summits of a revolutionary Olympus. The truly godless are also clamouring for room to breathe.

For some, this fragmentation has solely negative aspects. These groups echo the views of the powers-that-be: dissent should be centralised, coordinated, channelled along the lines of one particular orthodoxy. For these comrades there is a pre-ordained pattern for revolutionary development, which they alone, of course, have grasped. Everything else is diversion and irrelevance. They alone are the conscious agents of an Almighty Historical Providence. They alone have understood the 'laws' of history. They alone are carried forward by the historical floodtide. Such groups are elitist to the core. They (and they alone) are potential leaderships. Other groups are dangerous competitors in the permanent auction for revolutionary clientele. The masses, by themselves, can do nothing. They are but an amorphous infantry at the disposal of a self-appointed general staff of revolutionary generals. That ordinary people could themselves make history - and could make it in ways unforeseen and unsuspected by the professional revolutionaries - would never occur to the residual legatees of Bolshevism. History is thus turned upside down. Monolithic conceptions of the road to 'utopia' foreshadow utopias in their own image, i.e. monolithic to the core.

For others in the movement 'men make their own history' - and in ways much wider and fuller than is usually conceded. There is no one road to utopia, no one organization, or prophet, or Party, destined to lead the masses to the Promised Land. There is no one historically determined objective, no single vision of a different and new society, no solitary economic panacea that will do away with the alienation of man from his fellow men and from the products of his own activity.

For groups holding such views the 'balkanization of utopia' need convey no disparaging overtones of incapacity or futility. Established society is being corroded at many points, in many ways, here and now. Hundreds of thousands are contributing to the process, both consciously and otherwise: brick-planting policemen and lying Labour politicians, young people rejecting traditional sexual morality and students questioning the categorical imperatives of death 'for Queen and Country', train robbers and 'Spies for Peace' evading arrest month after month, and well-paid trade union officials pontificating about the merits of an 'incomes policy' for their members. All are playing a worthy part in a vast and essential process of demystification.

So are South Bank clergymen de-godding God and Catholic priests acting as salesmen for Durex. So are Trots still building left-wings in the Labour Party and calling on Labour leaders to legislate for workers' control, while Labour MPs vote themselves a £30 a week wage increase and thunder against those who 'rock the boat'. So are French Stalinists supporting de Gaulle and Chinese Stalinists supporting the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, Negroes exposing the whole fraudulent nature of the American judicial system and White House

politicians showing the world their notion of the 'rule of law' in the Dominican Republic. So too, finally, are workers at Paisley using sit-in tactics and having to be carried out by the police, while Labour leaders lambast latent Luddites, confer baronetcies on the Brockways and Sopers of this world and encourage the half-pissed platitudes of 'brother' Brown.

For those who hold that mass consciousness rather than a change of leadership is an essential precondition of social change, the events of the last few years can be viewed with reasonable satisfaction. Starting from very different premisses, various groups are making fundamental critiques of established society. Some have been through the mill of traditional 'left' politics, others not. Some start from their experience in production, others from their experience in the anti-Bomb movement, some from the total crisis of culture and values in the admass society, and others still from the void of their own daily lives. These critiques are slowly converging. They are literally ploughing up every acre of established thinking, including the so-called revolutionary ideologies. They are preparing a resurgence of libertarian thought and action, based on more genuinely socialist objectives than at any previous period of history. The era of closed ideologies (including totalitarian 'revolutionary' ideologies) is slowly coming to an end. The cults of efficiency, of hierarchy, of production for production's sake, of consumption for consumption's sake, of organization for organization's sake, of 'ever more' (of the same) are slowly being subverted and replaced by genuinely human values.

The 'balkanization of utopia' bemoaned by bourgeois and Bolsheviks alike is therefore neither tragedy nor farce. It is the sole guarantee that 'utopia', if we ever get near to it, will be worth living in.

DEMYSTIFICATION

Readers will need no reminding that our last issue (our first experiment with offset litho) showed a few signs of technical teething trouble.

We signal two major ones, which may have confused readers (even more than the contents of the paper in general).

On p. 12, the third paragraph should come after the first line of the second. And on p. 24, the second column should start with its final paragraph (5. Back to Work).

We are reminded of a certain crate we once received. It was labelled 'OTHER SIDE UP TOP MARKED BOTTOM TO AVOID CONFUSION'.

About Ourselves

Only eight weeks since our last issue! With the help of our readers we hope to improve our regularity. Indeed without their increasing participation we cannot exist.

We need your help in two main ways; we need letters, articles and reportage so that we can extend our news coverage.

We also want to extend our sales. Owing to our change to offset-litho the initial expenditure for plates etc. is much higher than formerly. But the cost of printing is lower. So that the more copies we sell the lower the cost per copy. We want to increase sales substantially. We need your help. Why not increase your order?

May Day

We produced a leaflet for May Day calling on the Libertarians to participate actively in the Labour Party London Rally. We said:-

"May Day once meant something. It meant working class struggle, internationalism and the vision of society without rulers. The Labour Party not only does not talk of these things. It is in fact against them

The Labour Government fully supports American policy in Vietnam. It supports gas, napalm and torture against Asian working people. It stands for East of Suez bases. It stands for Buccaneers for Verwoerd. It stands for Polaris submarines.

At home it stands for wage control (while Labour MPs vote themselves a £30 a week rise). It stands for speed up, rationalization and attacks on hard won working class rights in production (described as 'restrictive practices') It denounces as Luddites those who won't buy this 'battery-hen socialism'.

Labour represents socialism about as much as Hitler represented the Jews."

The Labour Party was not amused. But we were (at the sight of Bessie Braddock waving copies of the leaflets - ours and the one produced by Glasgow Solidarity - and screaming that they were the work of the Fourth International!)

In the near future a group of London Solidarists will be making a flying visit to the north of England to get in touch with groups and individuals there. Would interested supporters please write.

Readers will see that many of our international articles deal with the problem of the struggle against Trade Union bureaucracies in other countries. This is no coincidence. We selected them because we feel that this problem is a universal one.

The Cardan book Modern Capitalism and Revolution (4/1 post free) is going very well with over 700 copies already sold. We are faced with the prospect of having to reprint when the first thousand copies are sold.

For Workers' Power

London Solidarity group has been discussing having a statement for the back page of the magazine. We have decided to have a series of statements expressing different approaches and different aspects of our ideas. The first of these appears on the back page of this issue.

Modern Capitalism

My neighbours are washed, shaved, lotioned, manicured perfumed, married, harried, carried, reserved, preserved, housed, soused, standardized, harmonized, modernized, cretinized, vitaminized, tranquillized, acclimatized, civilized, categorized, capitalized, socialized, communized, televised, dehumanized, atomized, watched, patented, liberated, dominated, manipulated, inflated, mated, hated, sublimated, elated, baited, conned, canned, planned, formed, reformed, deformed, pressed, repressed, compressed, de-compressed, courted, sorted, escorted, thwarted, aborted, studied, timed, fined, treasured, leisured, erected, elected, respected, petrified, crucified, deified, reified ... and generally buggered about.

As for me, I'm just damn tired.

With apologies to J P George, 'L'Illusion Tragique Illustree'
Paris 1965.

17 Admin

Porto Marghera

This article was specially written for SOLIDARITY by a group of young Italian workers in Porto Marghera. We hope to publish further articles from them in the future.

Porto Marghera is a huge industrial complex near Venice. Its factories are close together and similar in type. In fact the place is virtually just one large factory, directly employing 40,000 workers. The town has recently been the scene of violent and continual industrial struggles.

Porto Marghera lies in a rural area. There is a big division and even hostility between its industrial workers and the local peasants. The employers took on many young peasants hoping that with their reactionary and religious background they would accept worse conditions and remain quiet. However this proved to be a false hope. Once within the factory, the peasant ceases to be a peasant, and is subject to the same pressures as any other industrial worker.

This is one of the reasons for the rapid industrial expansion of Porto Marghera, and for the subsequent increase in militancy. The managers are finding that they cannot do as they like. They cannot control production. They fail because the workers are united in the factories, and every struggle is carefully organized by the men themselves, a rather unusual circumstance in Italy.

The struggles which are taking place inside the factories are against the very basic capitalist organization of the work process. The bosses are continually attacked at their weakest point, on the shop floor. Traditional strikes are less and less frequent. The workers consider them as the last line of defence, while what they want to do is attack. Many examples in Italy prove this. One of the most clear examples was the 1963 strike at Sic-Edison, the largest factory in Porto Marghera. This was not only against the boss, but against the trade unions as well.

All the trade unions do is negotiate with the employers. But the workers have to organize their own strength and then confront the trade unions. They are becoming fed up with this. What the workers want cannot be 'negotiated' with the employers. They feel that they must fight and defeat the employers within the factory. The trade unions actually hinder this struggle. With their negotiations they, in fact, save the management by 'solving' conflicts between two opposed interests by cash settlements.

✓ The employers in Porto Marghera (and for that matter in the rest of the world) always try to destroy job organization by their oldest weapon: victimization. We say job organization, not trade union organization, since the unions have no real vital organization within the factory itself. The employers always go for some vital centre of the workers' informal organization by these sackings. But they fail, because every worker is potentially a centre of job organization.

In recent months workers in Porto Marghera and in the rest of Italy have been struggling against victimizations. There is every sign that the sackings are centrally inspired. A good example was at SIRMA (a firm of the Fiat group) in Porto Marghera. What happened there contains all the elements already mentioned, and shows the general and real process.

SIRMA's workers are highly skilled and are paid relatively high wages. All recent struggles have been decided upon and organized by the workers themselves, in forms of their own choice. (For example the preferred form since 1955 has been the 'wild-cat'). The men were united in every struggle, without any intrusion of the trade unions.* These trade unions squabble amongst themselves, but all act the same. Until two years ago virtually no one was in the union. The workers then decided 'en masse' to join the CGIL in order to develop links with other factories. But after this, wherever negotiations were carried out by CGIL officials, every struggle ended in a compromise. This was the beginning of the hostility between the workers at SIRMA and 'their' trade union. Meanwhile the management was pleased: the workers were actively controlled and restrained, and their demands shifted from questions of job control to mathematical problems of economics.

* These are the CGIL which is the largest and Communist Party dominated, the CISL which is controlled by the Christian Democrats, and the UIL controlled by the Social Democrats.

But struggles within the factory continued. Job organization was strengthened. Eventually, in February of this year, the management in order to control production was forced to bring in a system of time cards. The workers responded at once: they stopped work and surrounded the management offices, shouting and laughing. This went on for a few days and the management then announced the sacking of 156 workers due to 'shortage of work'. Everyone knew this was a ridiculous lie, since the firm had had to import products made under licence in Yugoslavia in order to fulfil its orders. In fact they had just completed a new factory to cope with the increased demand.

The workers then decided to occupy the factory, and to prevent both management and police from coming in. Needless to say, the trade unions were opposed to this. Petrol was poured into little channels surrounding the two adjoining factories (SIRMA One and Two, the latter being the new factory). The plant was turned into a death trap for unwelcome visitors. The workers occupied the factories for a whole week. At an assembly lasting several hours the trade union officials finally persuaded the men to leave the factories 'so that negotiations could start'.

The negotiations failed. The workers immediately re-occupied the factory, while the trade unions tried to clam them with appealing letters and gifts from petty-bourgeois. They even called three ridiculous sympathy strikes lasting two hours! At every meeting deep hostility to the role of the trade unions was voiced.

The second occupation of the factory ended in a violent clash with the police. The occupation was turned into an ordinary strike, with another fight with the police three days later. Negotiations continued. Only 16 of the 156 men sacked were offered their jobs back. The strike continued for a month, ending only because the unions refused to distribute to the strikers the money collected on their behalf by other workers in Porto Marghera. This fact alone shows how the trade unions sabotaged the SIRMA struggle.

No one can say that the workers were overcome cheaply. The local daily paper, controlled by the employers, said: 'It will need many months, if not years, to repair the damage done at SIRMA'.

western Humanism

Trappes, Nr Paris, December 15th 1964

A lorry today knocked over a pedestrian here, crossing the road. A second, a third and possibly a fourth vehicle ran over the man, sprawled on the road. None of them stopped. Then some 400 cars passed the spot, swaying out to avoid the body, but not stopping either...

SEX ALIENATION

Evening Intercourse

Flex fingers
absolute contact
finger light tips
touch
brush
smooth
handle carefully
this end up
stroke up down
up down
the voice
barely audible
sweet choking sound
interplay of hands
and body
mouths wet
and open
eyes hot
and closed
fingers coil
contact
twirl
twine
in out
buttocks moving
electric bodies
sweating dancing
tension demanded
tension granted
stinking bodies
locked together
arms round
legs bound
in out

crazy
up down
both stare
grasp hair
wrench
push
pull
never mind
her yellow skin
her rolled
and folded buttocks
slack empty breasts
are full
and young
for the moment
the mouth
doesn't smell
and she
isn't tired
her hands
though hard
and calloused
are hot
on your body
she's yours
bulging blind
and stinking
but she's yours
your hers
gods for a moment

I love you ugly
if you love me

DEL FOLEY

German May Day Leaflet

50,000 copies of this leaflet were distributed in factories in Munich and other German cities before and on May Day 1965.

Those who think the rest of the world is simply an extension of England (where people happen to speak other languages) will completely miss the significance of actions such as this. Hitler and the Occupation had largely destroyed any tradition of 'direct action' in Germany. Cases are on record, immediately after the war, where American Occupation commanders had forced back to work workers striking against former Nazis, forced upon them as foremen or managers.

Besides this the actual situation in Germany is different from that in England or the USA. There is no Habeus Corpus. You can get six months in jail on suspicion, then have the charges dropped, and you have no recourse at law, or indemnity, or damages.

In the last analysis, it is true, law and justice are everywhere the tools of the ruling class. But the last analysis and the concrete practical situation are two different things.

The opinion poll referred to in the leaflet was carried out by the Allensbach Institute.

HOW TO STRUGGLE

45% of the population of the Federal Republic would like to live in a country where there are no rich or poor. Because of this, the working class is being attacked more and more vigorously by means of thought-manipulation and brainwashing by advertising psychologists. We are meant to be tied tighter and tighter by the golden leash. We are meant to accept as freedom what is really a complete lack of freedom. The rat-race at work and the anxieties of a consumption society degrade us into robots, while at the same time the Unions stick their heads in the sand and feed us fairy tales of 'social partnership.'

70% of the population and 72% of workers would consider it fair if no one was allowed to earn more than 10,000 Deutschmarks a month. Despite this, profits pile up in millions and billions. And to secure these profits millions are wasted on armaments and other useless State expenditure. Meanwhile the Unions bargain for piennigs.

84% of workers believe that prices could be lowered immediately if big business wanted to. But the union leaders negotiate behind closed doors. They act as brakes on militants. They align themselves with the Establishment, finding comfortable places for themselves in it. Meanwhile they feed the workers phrases - sometimes even 'radical' phrases.

39% of workers believe that big business can only earn its profits from the work of others, and that it is superfluous. But the Union leaders do not even grasp this point. They continue to support an outmoded economic system, whose driving force is not the satisfaction of the needs of all, but the private profit of the few. Automation creates a crying need for social change. Even the bourgeois scientists are convinced of the necessity of factory and economic democracy. And economic democracy means workers self-management.

ARE THE UNION LEADERS AFRAID OF WORKERS SELF-MANAGEMENT?

Marx said that 'the emancipation of the working class was the task of the working class itself'.

Yet look at the Bureaucrats and the Apparatchniks! They still believe they have to coddle the working class. On one point at least the trade union, Socialist Party and Communist Party bureaucrats are in complete agreement: 'the workers have no consciousness'! With this they justify their policies. But do they really want the workers to be conscious?

The bureaucrats carry on secret diplomacy. They treat 'their' members as voting cattle. But workers' democracy means 'lay your cards on the table'. It means control from below.

The bureaucrats are opposed to strikes when the workers want them. At the same time they demand obedience when the Executive decides to call the workers out. But workers democracy means 'decide things for yourself. Plan yourself. Do it yourself'.

The bureaucrats fill jobs with paid functionaries, absolutely dependent on the Executive, and not responsible to the members. But workers' democracy means election of officials for limited periods, with the possibility of recall at any time, and the mandating of these officials.

The bureaucrats have forgotten that they have their desks on loan, and that their wages are paid by the workers. They are turning the unions into insurance companies. Elements hostile to the working class gain more and more control of the inflated apparatus. They seek to force their bourgeois capitalist ideas down our throats under the cloak of an 'up-to-date economic policy'. But workers' democracy means 'do without "experts" and specialists', who are strangers to the aims of the workers' movement'. It means abolition of professional leaders. It means that officials' wages should be the same as those received by the workers they represent. Officials should return to the factory floor after a period of office to prevent the organization from becoming bureaucratic, and to prevent the officials from developing independent interests.

+ + + +

The opinion poll proves that the consciousness of the workers is higher than that of their 'leaders' ! Organizations are tools. The job of working class organizations is to fight for the interests and aims of the working class. If they no longer do this, then as tools they have become blunt. Blunt tools should be sharpened or replaced by new ones.

Brothers in factory and office, the bureaucrats will be calling on you again this May Day. They will tell you of the 'heroic deeds' of the Union. Wake Up! Remember what August Bebel said: 'Don't look at your leaders' mouths, look at their hands!'

Key Unionists

Among jobs being threatened is the honourable job of prison 'screw'. Prison officers who are unionised and whose journal carries the evocative title of 'Penitentiary Awakening', are claiming there is no future in their job; they foresee a shortage of 1000 men for 1965.

The main grievance of prison officers is the amount of unpaid over-time inflicted upon them. They are talking of industrial action and are hoping the big union federations will support them.

It will be a beautiful day when we see the comrade 'screws' parade to the tune of the 'Internationale'.

From Informations, Correspondance Ouvrieres, No. 38 (April 1965)

WHO'S KIDDING WHOM?

That some policemen lie, beat up innocent people, and plant false evidence is, thanks to the 7 days' wonder of the Challenor case, generally accepted. But it is often naively ascribed to 'a few weak men being led astray by a mad-man' (from my own fairly wide experience, ranging from Superintendent to Constable, the vast majority of policemen in that case must be either 'mad' or 'weak').

But many people believe that the state security organizations in this country do not go in for those other decidedly 'un-english' practices of telephone tapping and letter interception. The fact that they do so is revealed, not by any means for the first time, by the publication of a pamphlet 'MAIL INTERCEPTION AND TELEPHONE TAPPING IN BRITAIN' (published by the Hampstead Group, Committee of 100, and Housman's Bookshop - 1/-).

Its publication is timely. It follows fairly hard on the heels of the 'half-bricks' case and - if given sufficient publicity and circulated widely enough - will remove a few more of those fly-blown and consequently cherished illusions about the democratic and free nature of our society and of the beneficent intentions of our rulers.

When questioned about telephone tapping and letter interception people tend to fall into three groups. There are those who abhor it and refuse to believe it happens in this country. There are those who dislike it, but believe it is OK if used only in cases involving 'grave security risks'. And there are those who know it exists but profess not to give a damn. This pamphlet is addressed to all three groups.

Firstly it shows in reasonably convincing detail that these practices go on in a fairly widespread fashion, being aimed not only at the more militant libertarian organizations of the Left, but also at those relatively innocuous (nowadays) organizations like the Committee of 100, the Communist Party and the ILP. Some evidence is also provided of wholesale 'blanket' interference with the mail of foreign students at further education colleges. In the nature of the case the pamphlet cannot provide absolute concrete proof of its allegations, but the cumulative build-up of evidence points unmistakably in the one direction: that mail interception and telephone tapping are commonplace features of the British 'way of life'.

A PHONE CALL
brings you together

— G.P.O. ADVERTISEMENT

Again, no one, after reading this pamphlet, could possibly argue that most of the people treated in this way were 'grave security risks'. Can the organization of jumble sales, vigils, parties, pickets, poetry readings and prayer meetings (which seem to be the main occupations of a least one of the more 'militant' organizations previously named - no prizes for guessing which one) really be endangering the octopus-like tentacles of the state?

To the third group, the pamphlet presents a challenge. It says that if you don't protest and kick up a hell of a fuss whenever you come across a case of suspected telephone tapping or mail interception, then by your 'couldn't care less' shrug of the shoulders, you are guilty of an act of betrayal of your fellow men in the common struggle to build a society based on freedom instead of coercion.

Where the pamphlet fails is in its suggestions for 'effective action against all such encroachments'. By some strange fantasy of non-logic, its (oddly enough anonymous) authors argue that the only real answer is to 'avoid all deception and secrecy and to have as open an organization as possible' (p.12) and 'be as open in all your personal and political dealings as you possibly can be' (p.3). In other words, as you cannot beat the security organizations at their own game, give them all the information they want on a tarnished silver platter inscribed 'surrender'. Inform them who your members are, where your money comes from, what demonstrations and activities you plan down to the finest details. And then finalize the sacrificial rites by offering yourself for arrest on a charge of incitement (or under 'Section 1' if you really want to be 'with it').

All this sounds pretty nonsensical and has proved nonsensical in practice when acted upon by the Committee of 100 in its far-off golden days before it sank into political oblivion. Much more effective would be a campaign aimed at firstly informing as many people as possible of what goes on (this after all is why the pamphlet presumably was written) and secondly urging post office workers - in particular the G.P.O. engineers and the Post Office sorters - to stop acting as 'coppers' narks' either by open refusal or by quiet sabotage (a few switched lines could cause substantial havoc).

SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE
is waiting for a letter from you

— G.P.O. ADVERTISEMENT

Other possible lines of attack include harrassing the authorities by counter action. When you suspect your phone is being tapped, or your letters are being opened, be sure to invent details of fictitious demonstrations and strikes; give the names of 'professional' celebrities and active members (take your pick at random from the 200 sponsors of the new Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding); give complicated, meaningless messages in as involved a code as you can discover. Or say loud and clearly on the phone that you are sure your line is being tapped. Equally loudly and clearly give your friends details of all 40 or so public telephone boxes in each of London's main line railway stations, giving him details of which of these booths to ring, at what time and on which day. Action of this sort could speedily snarl up the whole system or else make it so cumbersome that it would fail to be effective (as well as giving yourself a lot of quiet, democratic fun in the process).

If this plan of action were carried out successfully it would of course lead to even more agents provocateurs and spies being planted within the libertarian ranks than usual. To meet this threat in advance the photographs of every known or suspected Special Branch officer/agent should be published now - how about it Solidarity, Resistance, Freedom, Direct Action, Peace News?

ROBIN DAVIS

Resistance. Monthly bulletin of the libertarian peace movement.

Current issue includes:-

- Army on the march, the case of Barry Easter.
- An interview with Joan Baez.
- Spies or Pirates, by Nick Walter.
- Tonbridge Wells Housing Struggle, by Clive Fetter.
- Tenants Associations and their Possibilities.
- Gypsies, two articles on their problems.
- Committee of 100 Survey.

Send 10/- for 12 issues to 'Resistance' 13, Goodwin St. N.4.
(the old Committee of 100 address).

THE DEFEAT AT FORDS:

Some more lessons

Ken Weller has done a useful service in giving us a factual survey of some of the ingredients which produced the Ford defeat. It is an eye opener to read in their own words that our 'leaders' are cold-bloodedly proud of their arselicking. We must pay more attention to those turgid agreements; a little study will always disclose the give-away clause which stultifies everything else. However, I don't think this is all the story. Ken seems to skate very gingerly over the question of the extent to which the Dagenham Shop Steward Committee was itself partially responsible, either deliberately or through incredible naivete, for its own downfall, dragging with it the whole set-up of shop organization.

It seems to me that the Shop Stewards Committee at Fords was itself bureaucratic. Since it was largely under the aegis of the Communist Party, this should be no surprise.+

The crisis of the Ford tragedy was the sacking of Bill Francis. Here was surely a classic case, where the whole factory should have been brought out. For some time, the Press, employers' organizations and politicians of all parties had been calling for a showdown at Fords. Fords had dropped hints that the factory might be closed down. And the shop stewards were in the public dog-house. Their own bureaucratic set-up was their greatest obstacle in combating the propaganda aimed at the workers they claimed to represent. It seems to me that the sacking of Bill Francis was merely a try-on by Fords. If it miscarried, not much was lost, since the dismissal was so obviously unjust. Of course the E.C. of the AEU ought to have done something, but no one in their right mind expected that, since the union leadership were just as keen as Fords to break the shop steward.

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I distinguish between the Communist Party elite and the ordinary card holder. We all know of the Party steward who has degenerated into an 'industrial cadre'. His duty is clear: orders come from King Street, and his job is to see that they are carried out. The others, no doubt a majority, are a good cross section of the best militants. They join the Communist Party because they believe it to be revolutionary. It is only to the practitioners of Party inmanship that I direct my criticisms.

(For more information on the role of the C.P. at Fords, see SOLIDARITY, vol. II, no. 11. Eds.)

Ford's bluff was not called, and the heat was turned full on. The Party stewards took fright for their own bureaucracy. They argued that if they called on the Union executives, brother would surely rush to the aid of brothers. Only dyed-in-the-wool bureaucrats could be so innocent. The union officials noted the stricken cries, and went to work with a will. Between them and the Ford management, the shop stewards organization at Dagenham was thrown back to square one. There is no need for us to think that the Party in-men were guilty of anything more than an act of self-preservation for their own bureaucratic machinery. If there are any lessons to be learnt they appear to be rather obvious ones: firstly that choosing the lesser evil is the prelude to compromising every principle, and secondly that the price of bureaucracy even in basically working class organizations, will be the sacrifice of working class interests.

Jim Petter, AEU.



THE KEVIN HALPIN STORY

Since the publication in our last issue of Ken Weller's article 'The Defeat at Fords: Some Lessons', a very interesting document has come into our possession. It is a statement by Kevin Halpin, the convenor of the P.T.A. (Paint Trim and Assembly) Plant at Fords and one of the seventeen victimised men. Halpin prepared this statement for Claude Berridge, member of the AEU Executive (and fellow Communist Party member) for Berridge to use as defence material at the Jack Court of Enquiry.

Halpin's statement clearly illustrates one of the main points of Ken Weller's article which said:-

'Amongst the many lessons to be learned from the Ford defeat, a turning point in post war labour history, was the cumulative effect of the apologetic and defensive attitudes which everyone (even the men themselves) adopted towards the militants and towards unofficial action. The arguments put forward against the sackings by the officials, whether 'left' or 'right' were that the sacked men were not milit-

ants... and therefore should not have been sacked. The only valid argument, and one that would have rallied massive support, was that the men were militants, and for that reason had to be defended. Even the Shop Stewards Committee's main emphasis was that the sacked men were 'respectable, loyal long service employees'. The real issue (the defence of job organization) was played down'.

What follows is the record of Kevin Halpin, written by Halpin himself. It records the number of times he was thanked by the Ford management and the number of disputes⁺ which he was instrumental in lifting. It is worth pointing out that Halpin was not quite as bad as his statement implies. In his statement he was simply trying to emphasise his 'loyal', 'responsible' and 'constitutional' aspects.

Kevin Halpin is a leading member of the Communist Party. He was being groomed for full-time office in the AEU by the party. He had also stood as the Communist Parliamentary Candidate at Dagenham. After an initially good record as a steward, his associates began to notice an increasing subservience to King Street⁺⁺, and his growing 'big headedness'. During the final

+

This term includes walkouts, overtime bans & blacking of work.

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This subservience to King St., goes back at least as far as April 1957. After the 20th congress and the Hungarian Revolution, the Party had to set up a Commission on 'inner-Party democracy' to cope with the growing discontent; the Commission was composed of both full-time Party officials and rank-and-file members. Only two of the rank and file members supported the executive. Halpin was one of them.

struggle at Ford his role was a dual one: he was one of the victimised men, but he was also the leading representative of the Party at Fords. On several occasions he acted on his own, contrary to the wishes of the other victimised men and of the shop stewards. On one occasion a vote of no confidence in him was only defeated by the Chairman's casting vote.

We do not say that Halpin was a bastard, or that he "sold out" the disputes to which he refers. What we do say is that he was a victim of his own ideology and that his attitudes contributed to the lack of preparedness of Ford workers. Halpin, whatever his failings, was a militant. That was why he was sacked.

The Communist Party abandoned the Ford struggle in mid-stream, because they feared it would affect their image, their electoral chances and the position of some of their trade union officials. This had led to an extremely healthy distrust of them at Dagenham. A number of militants left the Party. It was a very expensive lesson.

The document below certainly illustrates an attitude which contributed to the Ford defeat. But it is much more. It records the role of a Communist Party steward within the factory. It is also of interest because it gives some insight into conditions within the plant.

Halpin's statement clearly shows the absence at Fords of a consciously independent rank and file organization, responsible to the men who elected them. (Responsible in both senses: that is answerable to, and also in the sense that it would not engage in any behind the scenes manoeuvres or 'militancy' without accountability to the shop floor.) This organization need not make a clear break with the trade union machinery, just have a sense of its own independent strength.

We print the statement complete, except that we have used whole words in place of abbreviations. We have also made some corrections in spelling and punctuation. Where the text is in brackets we have shortened Halpin's original by amalgamating items.

STATEMENT OF Mr K HALPIN

CONVENOR OF SHOP STEWARDS PTA PLANT

Steward for approximately 12 years. Recent position in the PTA - since being elected as Convenor is as follows :-

NOVEMBER 3, 1960. Thanked by management for co-operation on Joint Works Committee. Minute 110; thanked for co-operation in mobility of labour. Minute 119; thanked for removal of overtime ban. In addition I have been thanked often without it being minuted. Some of the disputes and overtime bans I have asked to be lifted are :-

October 27. Came in at 6 a.m. to address meeting to lift overtime ban. Unsuccessful. Finally got ban lifted on November 10.

November 17. 109 E. Stoppage on speed-up. Asked for lads to continue on 'status quo'+. Refused by company.

December 19. 105 E, Trim. Departmental stoppage on dismissal of Cooney. Recommended and got resumption at shop meeting.

1960

October 26. Receiving Department. Raised blacking of truck.

+

That is at original speed. Eds.

1961

February 2. 105 E. Stoppage on removal of two men which cut across agreement. Recommended and got resumption.

February 8. Thanked for efforts to get 100% pension membership for Mr R Ramsay.

February 22. Canteen Strike : threatened walk-off of paint sprayers. Previous canteen strike led to factory stoppage. Got paint shop continue working on basis of sprayers going out for tea because of exceptional circumstances.

February 27. Partial overtime ban on enamel spraying availability. Got ban lifted on basis of agreement with Mr Cross. Thanked by him for lifting.

April 6, 10, 11, 12, & May 10. Three overtime bans and two stoppages raised after recommendation from Mr K Halpin. Three of the disputes were over merit money.)

May 18. 105 E. Mr Boxall asked for assistance in extending overtime after 6 p.m. Got agreement and overtime worked.

June 5. Overtime ban (when management) refused to consult steward on overtime. Lifted on June 6, on basis of future consultation.

June 8. Inspection. Agreed to lift overtime ban, on basis of future consultation.

October 5. Plant overtime ban re wages. Recommended that we lift all restrictions.

October 12. Given a letter for addressing members in canteen, on Oct. 11. Other departments stopped on basis of national negotiations. Protested at the letter. Some departments had stopped for one hour the previous day. The Company had insisted on sending them home at 1.45 but I addressed them to stay on the premises and see if we could negotiate on a resumption at 2.30.

(October 19 & November 14, 21, 30. Two overtime bans and two short stoppages raised after recommendation from K Halpin).

1962

(January 8, 24, & February 8. Two overtime bans and a stoppage raised at Halpin's recommendation).

February 19. Threatened work to rule on 105 E. Trim, came back at night and addressed a meeting at 2.a.m. on basis of resumption of normal working. Not successful but came in the following night until 2 a.m. with Mr Boxall and solved problem.

February 23. Problem on schedules and labour. Negotiated all day and came back from 9.30p.m. to 3 a.m. to address members and got a solution.

(March 5 & April 5, & 24. Three overtime bans, K Halpin was unsuccessful in raising two of them).

April 30. Sealer overtime ban. Fume extraction plant hadn't been fitted as promised. Got ban lifted on promise of full investigation and action on the problem.

May 15. Receiving. Stoppage for afternoon over charge hand working. Addressed meeting with a strong recommendation for normal work. Turned down.

August 23. 105 E. Trim Over time ban over cancelling of overtime without 24 hours notice; asked lads to lift it; they refused.

August 24. Mr Boxall and Mr Lanning raised allegations of malicious damage on Mk111. Thanked by Company for effort to raise the problem without committing. All Mk111 stewards thanked at the same time.

August 29. 105 E. Trim (line 4) overtime ban over chargehand Hodges. Self and Francis addressed lads and got ban lifted, Thanked by Mr Marshall.

August 30. Roll Test. As a result of recommendation from me they agreed to accept overtime.

August 30. 105 E. Main Line. Informed at 3.10 that department would be going home at 4 pm., due to changes on the line. Went to address members and got them to remove the threat.

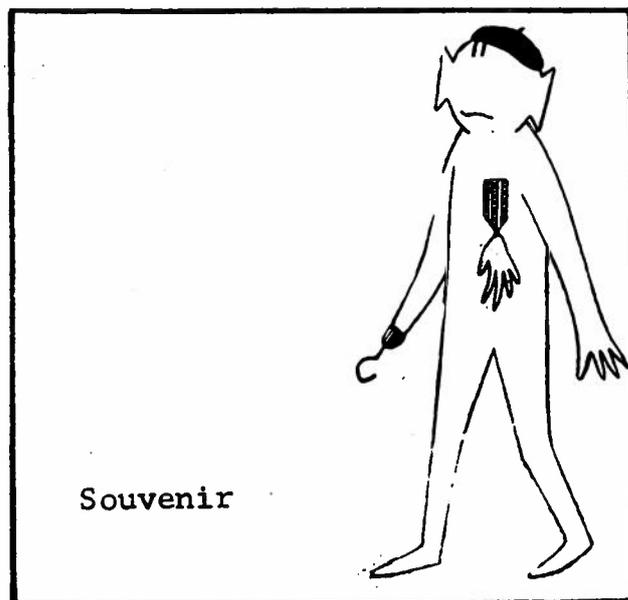
September 10. 105 E. Trim Headlines. Over training of new labour. I reported back and got ban lifted. Thanked by Mr Marshall for solution.

September 12. Paint shop overtime ban on being sent home as a result of Body dispute. Arranged for Bro. Bassett J.W.C. to come back on night shift as it was his department, with a view to getting it lifted. Not successful.

September 18. Threatened stoppage on 109 E. drag over polishing being done by chargehand causing congestion. Got members to agree to work pending discussions that solved the problem. 109 E. Trim. Door Glass. Recommended resumption of work.

For all the meetings that I addressed to solve problems I was never granted permission. Was always told: don't ask, carry on as usual. At times I had to turn off the lines to resolve a meeting but was never objected to. Practically every level of management, night and day, have thanked me for resolving problems. I have been back on nights and have been rung up by the stewards on the advice of the Company so often that my wife complained and the other people in the house raised hell.

On all the major PTA stoppages I had asked the Company to hold their hand until District officials had been in. This was refused.



Souvenir

Clark Kerr in Scotland

On Friday, April 30th, the new University of Strathclyde in Glasgow formerly the Royal College of Science and Technology - held a ceremony to install its first Chancellor, Lord Todd. At the same time, Honorary degrees were conferred on seven bigshots, one of whom was Clark Kerr, President of the University of California. The Strathclyde students took the unusual step in this case of commenting on the award of an Honorary degree. On Tuesday, April 27th, the Students' Association debated the following motion:

"That the Students' Association wish to dissociate themselves from the granting of an Honorary Degree of Strathclyde University to Dr Clark Kerr of Berkeley University, California, because of his illiberal views over the right of the students of Berkeley University to organise amongst themselves on the campus."

The motion was opposed by the President and Executive Committee of the Students' Association, but it was passed by 72 votes to 66. The President, Michael Barraclough, said that Kerr was a "liberal", that Draper's pamphlet about him was "rubbish", and that the motion was the work of "extremists". The local generally accepted this view, though the Glasgow Herald printed a fair report - unfortunately it misquoted the motion to read that the Strathclyde students disliked Kerr's illiberal views of the "riots" of the Berkeley students! The Glasgow Student Telegraph also accepted Barraclough's version - though to its credit it also printed an article in favour of the motion which was signed, appropriately by "Yossarian" +, and an editorial described the motion as "far too strong" and "based on insufficient knowledge of the facts", and suggested that it was passed because "prejudice against authority outweighed rational analysis". In fact, as one of the participants told us, the real reason was that "there is a substantial number of students who are prepared to act and think for themselves without bowing to authority" - a very different matter.

In the event, there was no attempt to take any further action against Kerr's visit, and the ceremony went off without interruption, though not without further comment. On the morning of April 30th, the Graduate Co-ordinating Committee at Berkeley, the senior partner of the Free Speech Movement, issued a press statement to American and British papers, regretting that Strathclyde University was to give to Kerr an Honorary Degree, tracing his illiberal policies back to 1959, and suggesting that "such policies offer a retrograde model for the educational expansion of Great Britain". On the same day, the Daily Cal - the newspaper of the Californian students commented that the Strathclyde students action bore out the claim that students all over the world knew of and supported the FSM. Back in Glasgow, Professor S G E Lythe Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Studies, who presented Kerr for his degree of Doctor of Literature, told the Student Telegraph that he accepted what he had been told by Lord Robbins - who has great influence at Strathclyde and a high opinion of the California "multiversity" - that Kerr was "the man in the middle", caught between the extremists of right and left, and deserved admiration rather than attacks for his part in the Berkeley struggle. Time magazine commented that the "Glasgow students had it all wrong. If anything, Kerr had handled the student rebellion too gingerly".

We think the 72 Strathclyde students are to be congratulated for the step they took. We hope next time some slob is given an Honorary degree by a British University, the students will take the next step, and move on from revolutionary activity to something more interesting.

+ Yossarian is the hero of "Catch 22".

The New 'Glasgow Solidarity'

(Vol. I, No. 3) is now out:

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For Workers' Power

The standard of living of workers has improved considerably during the last century. The impoverishment predicted by Marx has not taken place. But capitalism remains an inhuman system where the vast majority are bossed at work and manipulated in consumption and leisure. Increased wages are balanced by speed-up and the creation of artificial needs. Both East and West society is still dominated by ruling classes who control the means of production, use the state in their own interests and who are prepared to risk the destruction of humanity to defend these interests.

The decay of the trade unions and of the traditional parties has gone much further than is generally admitted. They cannot be reformed. They have come to terms with the existing system, of which they are now a key part. 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.

The same applies to the Communist Parties. They are equally impotent and although they seek to create a superficially different kind of society (namely state capitalism on the Russian or Chinese model) their aims can hardly be called socialist.

The road to socialism - and socialism itself - means the conscious and independent action of workers. It means the end of the division between leaders and led. By their rigid, hierarchical structure most 'revolutionary' organizations encourage precisely those divisions. A socialist society will be one in which decisions will be taken by workers councils, composed of elected and revocable delegates, and where the workers themselves will manage production.

The class struggle today takes mainly 'unofficial' forms. Revolutionaries should be active in these struggles rather than attempting to take over the traditional organizations. Working class resistance to the employers and the union leaders is as strong as ever. But these struggles are mainly reflex actions: their aims are inevitably limited. If the working class is to learn and generalize its experiences and if it is to struggle for socialism it must form revolutionary organizations. These must be instruments of struggle, not a general staff imposed from outside.

The idea that socialism can be achieved by an 'elite' party, however 'revolutionary' acting on behalf of the working class, is both absurd and reactionary. SOLIDARITY does not present itself as yet another 'leadership' but merely as a tool of struggle.