

—SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKERS' POWER

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6_D

'SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER...'

The fireworks fiesta of 1963 is unfortunately drawing to a close. It has been a noisy year. More myths have been exploded in the last few months than at any time in living memory. The institutions of class rule, the pillars of the hypocritical society stand shaken and mud-bespattered. We have done none of the shaking and have thrown little of the mud worse luck. So despite Lord Denning's appeal to forget the whole beastly business, we will take a last look at the wreckage.

What exactly is it that has gone for a Burton this summer? Firstly the myth of the 'moral superiority' of our rulers - the myth which in their own eyes justified their right to rule. The more percipient mouthpieces of the ruling class, papers such as The Times and Sunday Telegraph have fully realised the tremendous damage done to the Establishment, to its prestige and to its image, by the succession of scandals, revelations and further scandals that kept us enthralled for weeks. As we watched, their 'moral' standards, not ours, came crashing about their heads!

'The essence of Toryism' wrote Peregrine Worsthorne in the Sunday Telegraph**, 'is that good government depends far more on men than on measures, and that its unique contribution is in the high quality of the leaders it can be relied upon to produce. Do not judge us only, the Tories say, by what we do, by the efficiency of our administrative methods, or by our skill in oiling the political machine. Far more important than what we do is what we are, the values for which we stand, the intangible virtues which we are able to inject into the body politic by reason of our superior background or tradition. ... It is vitally important to the Tories that the public should continue to believe that there is at least some substance to this claim.' It is indeed! And that 'strange amalgam of morals, taste and prudence that traditionally goes by the name of "English gentleman" ' is one of the main victims of the recent commotion. For never was so much high class linen washed so vigorously or for so long before the enraptured gaze of mere commoners.

It was all a wonderful, democratic shake-up; a glorious casserole in which randy Tory ministers shared pretty popsies with Bolshevik bureaucrats (between lies to Parliament and visits to Ascot with the Queen Ma);

* What traditional marxists might care to think of, perhaps, as 'the Theoretical Organs of the Executive Committee of the Bourgeoisie'.

**

June 9, 1963.

in which versatile osteopaths painted Royalty (between massaging ex-prime ministers and other, more enjoyable, varieties of massage); in which pooves, policemen, Pakistani premiers, rent racketeers, titled gentry, flagellation addicts, security-conscious social democrats, coloured jazz artists, dope peddlers, newspaper editors, lascivious duchesses, black-mailers, 'learned' judges, hard-working prostitutes and gentlemen of leisure mixed in a stew as tasty as any to come from the fair shores of Eire.

And that wonderful epilogue! What is the British Empire coming to, Sir, when one of Her Majesty's ministers has to have the size (and number?) of his balls checked * to ascertain whether he is or is not the 'man without a head'? And then has to have the result divulged by official Government Report, at 7/6 a copy!

* * * * *

The second myth exploded was that of the 'efficiency' of the Special Branch and of M.I.5. What a delightful spotlight the Denning Report cast on their inter-relations - or lack of them - and on their relations - or lack of them - with various Ministers and government departments. Everything we have been saying about the division of labour within the bureaucratic apparatus itself has been underlined: the irresponsibility, the 'in-fighting', the systematic feeding of misinformation both up and down the bureaucratic ladder, the downright incompetence in the pursuit of their own objectives ... all these have been shown up as the inherent accompaniments of this hierarchically organized and secret set-up, snooping on people from the outside. Not that we shed any tears! The funniest bit of all was probably when Lord Denning told the people, their 'representatives' in Parliament - and probably most members of the Security Service itself - that the Home Secretary and not the Prime Minister was in charge of the whole outfit. No wonder Malcolm Muggeridge claimed that 'our Intelligence and Security Services seem to consist almost equally of fellow travellers and Soviet agents, and disgruntled, indignant anti-communists'. He 'respectfully ventured a word of advice'. 'The mess is now beyond clearing up', he said. 'The only possible course is to disband the whole show, fumigate the premisses and begin again.' ** We can forget about the 'begin again'. But we agree with his diagnosis.

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* By a ballistic expert?

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Sunday Telegraph, July 7, 1963.

A third myth to go - if any still believed in it - was that of the decency of the police. Our bobbies, aren't they wonderful? Our bobbies with their rhino-whips, their intimidation of witnesses, their inability to find the inconvenient ones (even when on remand), their perjured evidence * and their repeated violations of the dubious legality they are supposed to enforce. Our rulers no longer hold up the police as examples to the young. It might result in a massive increase of the already widespread contempt for 'law and order'. Even the Sunday Times ** had to admit it: 'There is not a criminal without tales of police bribery, perjury, violence, framing, theft, receiving, and tip-offs to the criminal world...'. Non-criminals are beginning to realise it, too. Old ladies wanting to cross the road had better look out!

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Judges and their antics have also been much in the public eye of late. The notion that these wigged weirdies dispense 'Justice' has taken a good hard knock. So has the notion that their decisions are independent of state requirements.

Mr Harold Wilson has recently incurred the wrath of the non-Labour sections of the Establishment for some 'naughty' suggestions that the Executive (that is, the government) had been tampering with the judiciary (that is the judges and the Courts). Ministers had shown a blithe disregard for the constitution, Mr Wilson claimed. They had allowed the barriers between their political and their judicial functions to become blurred. The Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor were furious. 'Non-sense' they shouted, 'you are casting a slur on British justice and British judges'. 'No, only on those Ministers', answered the bright boy from Huyton, 'who in their judicial capacity had been acting like Party politicians'.

Now Mr Wilson, as is well known, believes in the neutrality of judges and of the Law. After all it was Sir Hartley Shawcross, a Labour Attorney General who prosecuted the leaders of the striking dockworkers in 1951. And it was under a Labour government that ten members of the Beckton Gasworks Strike Committee were prosecuted and fined at Bow Street Magistrates Court, in October 1950. This was done just as efficiently as under any Tory administration. Which just shows that the Courts are neutral, doesn't it?

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For further information about Donald Reoum, John Apostolou, juveniles 'A' and 'B', and certain rare 'plants' that grow at West End Central Police Station, see FREEDOM (August 17, 1963) and PEACE NEWS (October 18, 1963). But perhaps the cops aren't lying. Perhaps they are just rather clumsy. Sort of dropping bricks!

** October 6, 1963 (supplement, p.13).

'And anyway', Mr Wilson continued, 'squalid attacks on the leader of Her Majesty's Opposition should not be launched from abroad'. (Most un-British these Tory chappies, not like us Labour blokes!).

Amid all the shouting about the geographical proprieties and about whether any judges had been successfully tampered with (ugh!), the main point seems to have been missed. The judiciary does not need to be manipulated. The Evening Standard (September 26, 1963) is dead right that 'it is quite ridiculous to see any sinister links between the judges and the Executive'. It is indeed. The link isn't sinister at all! There is nothing hidden about it. It is visible to anyone with half an eye to see.

The judiciary, after all, didn't fall from Heaven onto their Benches. The Sunday Times (August 18, 1963) recently reported some interesting facts about the beaks. Of 100 English High Court judges - the 76 currently at work plus the 24 most recently retired - 18 were sons of or closely related to peers or baronets. A further 17 were 'unequivocally upper-class', had been educated at top public schools. Their fathers were either Knights, military officers above the rank of major-general or listed in Burke's 'Landed Gentry'. Clearly a representative sample of the British population! No wonder even a Tory paper has to admit that 'the idea of an absolutely impartial judge is, in fact, a legal fiction' and that 'judges, however well meaning, do not act ... irrespective of social background'. It even admitted that 'to some extent a criminal case represents a conflict of social groups with the defendant normally a member of the lower-middle or working class and the prosecutor in the upper-middle or upper class'. 'England', you see, 'is administered by remarkably few people, who have developed by their education and training a strange homogeneity of thought and manners'. In plain English they're all alike and they don't think like us.

So let's have no more of this 'independent judiciary' lark. The people aren't quite as thick as Harold Wilson and Lord Beaverbrook imagine. A Gallup poll taken last September (Daily Telegraph, September 16, 1963) showed that less than half of those interviewed believed that the courts dispensed justice impartially! Less than half! A large number felt 'the courts favoured the rich and influential'. So put that in your pipe, Mr Wilson, and smoke it.

* * * * *

In 'Suddenly Last Summer' Tennessee Williams depicted a society in full decay in which the collapse of synthetic values revealed nothing but greed, incompetence and cruelty. A gruesome human sacrifice provoked the critics to loud and patronising protest. Some even attributed to the author the sickness he was merely reflecting.

In the last few months our rulers have entertained us with a macabre farce, containing many of the same ingredients. Thousands now see that their values are false and their institutions so many theatrical props. Everything they have created to hold people in mental and physical submission was exposed, questioned and criticised. Such are the crises which arise - and will continue to arise - in a society in which everything is dominated, controlled, organised and manipulated from the outside, without the participation of the mass of the people.

'WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT IN ENGLAND'

By KEN WELLER.

This article is meant as an initial contribution to a discussion of the problems facing militants in the power industry. To continue this discussion 'SOLIDARITY' would welcome further articles or letters on this subject, however critical, from workers in the industry.

All meteorological forecasts point to another very cold winter. There is however every prospect that it will be balanced by a warming up of the industrial struggle in the power industry.

The last few years have been a boom period for the industry. All indications point to this continuing for many years. Consumption of juice is increasing by about 11 per cent a year. The industry's surplus has also been soaring. The figures went up from £27 million (profits) and £93 million (interest and other financing expenses) in 1961-62 to £43 million (profits) and £103 million (interest payments) in 1962-63.

Between 1948-49 and 1962-63 there has been a 221 per cent increase in the amount of power sold (from 36,000 million Kwh to 115,500 million Kwh). For the same period the number of workers employed only increased by 40 per cent (from 167,000 to 206,000). The position for manual workers is even worse since most of the expansion in staff has been in the white collar grades. In fact the increase in the number of manual employees has been less than 20 per cent. This shows there has been a substantial increase in the productivity of labour. Wages in the industry have increased but they have not kept pace.

The result has been that the relative position of workers in the power industry has drastically deteriorated compared with workers outside it. A fully skilled electrician who at the end of the war received $\frac{1}{2}$ d. an hour more than contracting electricians today receives 10d. an hour less! A turbine driver at the large power station owned by Ford of Dagenham (which is connected to the National Grid) receives over 2 shillings an hour more than one employed by the Central Electricity Generating Board. (He gets 8/1 and hour, plus on average 6d. an hour 'merit money'. He also works a shorter week of 40 hours).

The national situation is paralleled by the situation on the various Regional Boards. For example at the most important of these, the London Electricity Board (which is responsible for the distribution of electricity in the London area), the amount of power sold went up by 15.1 per cent in the period 1961-62 to 1962-63. During the same period the surplus rose from £2,250,000 to £3,781,000. The latter figure does not include £9 million spent on capital expenditure from 'within the Board's own resources' nor the £2,710,000 spent on interest payments.

SECRET PROPOSALS.

At the height of this period of prosperity at the expense of the workers in the industry, the Electricity Council chose to come forward with proposals for even further increasing the rate of exploitation without offering the workers anything in exchange. Their proposals, entitled 'Proposals for increasing the status of manual workers in the Electricity Supply Industry', were made in secret. They were discussed in an undercover way for nearly a year before the rank and file paper 'POWER WORKER' got hold of them and published them in full in its issue of August-September 1963.

The heart of these proposals is paragraph 8 which I quote in full:

'8. As outlined in our preliminary paper on this subject last October, with the acceptance of the principle of 'staggered' day working, and the virtual abolition of average weekly working hours in excess of 42, we would wish to seek your agreement, with suitable recompense, to the following points:

(a) the replacement of the present system of abnormal conditions payments and other 'plus' payments by an annual fixed sum. This recognizing that all work that may arise at a particular work point can be regarded as normal.

(b) the modification of a number of existing practices and limitations, this to encourage the most efficient deployment of labour. It would also be our wish to agree to a system of temporary upgrading particularly to assist in operating flexibility.

(c) the wider use of craftsmen's skills.

(d) greater mobility between adjacent work points for temporary periods, to assist in carrying out maintenance and emergency work.

(e) full cooperation in the use of modern management techniques such as operational research, method study and planned maintenance.

In fact the employers proposed the scrapping of all agreements and practices which protect the worker at work: 'restrictive' practices, demarcation agreements, etc. In return for what? The reward would simply be a redivision of the wages cake. Some workers would get an increase in their basic wages, at the expense of other workers by the reduction of overtime or even the reduction of the number of workers in a particular station or distribution centre. In some cases the Board would graciously allow men to do 60 hours' work in 42. It would then give them an 'increase' in their hourly rate to partially make up the difference.

There were officially inspired leaks that under the new proposals a skilled man could get £1100 a year. One doesn't have to be a mathematical genius to realise that if the total wages bill remains the same and some workers' basic wages increase by 75%, someone has got to lose... money-wise or job-wise.

Other points in the proposals are the ending of the Monday to Friday week and of the 8.00 to 5.00 working day. Workers would be expected to work a staggered week, in which Saturdays and Sundays would be treated as normal days. There could even be the introduction, in some cases, of a two-shift system.

Another proposal is the virtual ending of the 'rate for the job'. Workers doing the same work could get widely different wages. They also propose the ending of overtime payment as such and its replacement by a 'time off in lieu' system.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the whole affair is that the Trade Union officials were quite prepared to accept the conditions proposed by the Council. The talks didn't break down on this question at all. They broke down over the exact size of the mess of pottage for which the birthright of the power workers was to be purchased.

Faced with the firm refusal of the Electricity Council to even consider any increase in the total wages bill of the industry, or any reduction in the basic week, the union negotiators came out with their trump card, namely that if the Council refused to budge 'unofficial leaders might manage to take control again.' (Daily Mail, October 17, 1963).

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM ?

The confidence of workers in the power industry in their union leaders was never very high even at the best of times. It has reached an all-time low. Some workers are leaving the unions altogether. Many more are turning towards the idea of one union for the power industry. It is this feeling which is leading to important manoeuvres behind the scenes by the various Executives, who are seeking to gain a commanding position from which to make a bid to take over the whole industry. This has led to a breakdown in the usual united front of the trade union bosses. It culminated in the decision, on October 20, of the executive of the ETU to withdraw from the 'status' talks and in their recommendation to the other unions to withdraw from the three year wage agreement (of 2½d. an hour increase, every year, for three years).

Unfortunately there is no reason to believe that the gaining of industrial status by any of the five unions involved in the industry would benefit the rank and file one iota.

Of the five unions concerned, two are in fact the TGWU : the TGWU itself and the National Union of Enginemen, Firemen, Mechanics and Electrical Workers. The latter is the only union of the 5 which caters solely for power workers, but this fact is without real significance since it is itself purely a minor and subordinate part of the TGWU. The TGWU has already a pretty lousy record as the industrial union for dockers and London busmen. There is no reason why it would be any better in the power industry. Indeed, Tudor of the N.U.E.F.M.E.W. has played a leading role in attacking the militants in the industry.

Another candidate is the NUGMW. This union is quite strong in a number of provincial power stations and distribution centres at some of which it is virtually an industrial union. However the NUGMW is also the industrial union for the Gas Industry where conditions and wages, in spite of a rapid expansion in capacity, are even worse than in the power industry. The record of its officials is, if anything, worse than that of the TGWU officials. A leading NUGMW full-time official proudly boasted during the 'go-slow' last winter that he had actively encouraged workers at Portsmouth (who were not working to rule) to work up to 16 hours a day, to increase the output of electricity.

The fourth union is the AEU which is not really a contender in the struggle. Its craftsman members are however very strong in the main power stations. The AEU has also victimised militants for participating in the rank and file movement. George Wake, secretary of

the National Power workers Combine, was for instance suspended from holding office by the AEU Executive.*

The main and most conscious challenge in this take-over bid comes from the ETU which, with nearly 50,000 members in the industry, is by far the largest force. However its main strength is in the distribution side, which is less compact, homogeneous and militant than the tightly knit generating side. It is this bid for power which explains the 'militant' stance adopted by the ETU over the three year agreement (which they accepted) and their withdrawal from the 'status' talks (on which they had negotiated for a year). This 'militancy' didn't stop them from expelling Charlie Doyle for his role in last year's 'go-slow'... or from issuing a letter denouncing the unofficial action and instructing its members not to participate in it.

There is much loose talk and thinking in the left today about the question of 'industrial unionism'. The demand for an industrial union is only progressive if it is understood as an organization really controlled from below. If this is not the case the demand can have the opposite effect from the one intended. The squabble between the unions' top brass can result in splitting job organization into warring factions, setting members of one union against members of another. WHAT IS NEEDED IS UNITY AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN WORKERS ON THE JOB, not 'one big union' with the same sort of structure and the same type of officials with which we are already only too familiar. The only way in which such a union would be more 'efficient' would be in victimizing militants. It would be a very great mistake for militants to follow this red herring.

Another factor in the complex situation in the industry is the 'Power Worker National Shop Stewards Committee', which is the de facto national unofficial leadership. Full credit must be given to the stewards active on it. The editorial policy of their paper 'POWER WORKER', however, leaves a lot to be desired, to say the least. For example its reaction to the 'status' negotiations was simply to call on 'every station, every T.U. branch to send resolutions to the T.U. side of the NJIC and to each of the five union executives: Demand no secret negotiations - no settlement without reference to members.' (POWER WORKER, August-September 1963). It was in fact suggesting appeals to the very people responsible for the evils against which it was appealing. And it didn't make one single proposal or suggestion for preparations for action by the workers in the industry.

Again in its February-March 1963 issue 'POWER WORKER' went out of its way to editorially criticise the exponents of 'do-it-yourself' trade unionism. Such an attitude is especially ludicrous in view of the bitter experiences we have been through when we have relied on 'let-the-leaders-do-it' trade unionism.

This subordination of the urgent, practical necessities of job organization to electoral manoeuvres has been a consistent aspect of the policy of the Communist Party. It has played a major part in the acceptance of inadequate wages and conditions in the industry, since all the important agreements were signed by the 'Communist' leaders of the ETU, whom the militants were not supposed to criticise. It has paralysed those parts of the industry which are dominated by Party members.

* See 'Solidarity' pamphlet No.3, 'What Next for Engineers?'.

'NOW IS THE HOUR FOR US TO
SAY GOOD-BYE ...'

It seems to 'Solidarity' that any further reliance on the goodwill of full time officials, however many resolutions may be sent to them, is ridiculous. They will never fight our fight for us; the only answer is to 'do it yourself'.

Anyone with half an eye can see that there will almost certainly be another fight this winter. The time to prepare is NOW. The people who must prepare are the RANK AND FILE. If this struggle is to be effective or even take place at all, it will be UNOFFICIAL. By this we mean that it must be controlled by the workers on the job, as any other

action in the interests of power workers has always been. * It is just as well to state this clearly.

There is no need to go into this struggle unprepared like last year. NOW is the time to organise, to start building up the national framework again, so that information can be exchanged, so that a clearly defined and nationally applied method can be used, so that in the event of another 'work to rule' there will be some uniformity in its application. And now is the time to decide the minimum demands of workers in the industry. If the union leaders and the Electricity Council don't like it, let them lump it.

* See 'Solidarity' vol.II, No.9, for a detailed account of the struggle last winter.

WHO'S COVERING UP?

A local petty entrepreneur has been selling Marx sweatshirts to leftists who want to avoid controversy. The Marx portrayed on the sweatshirt is intentionally ambiguous. He looks like he's in his fifties, which would make him the Marx of 'Capital'. On the other hand, he has a warm, kindly smile smacking of the 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts'.

Wearing a Marx sweatshirt on the Terrace, where everybody is more or less a Marxist, is a crude way of hiding one's politics. Plans are afoot to bring politics into the open by making sweatshirts bearing the images of Wilhelm Reich (for the hippies), Castro (for the Trotskyists), Trotsky (for the left YPSL's), Kerensky (for the right YPSL's), and Franklin D. Roosevelt (for the Communists).

Reprinted from 'The Wooden Shoe', 'a forthright fortnightly published a week late in Berkeley, California.' Editors: Barbara and Marvin Garson, 1937 $\frac{1}{2}$ Russell Street, Berkeley 3, Cal.

HOT AIR

DAILY TELEGRAPH

JULY 15, 1969

STOP PRESS

British Atmospheric Ltd have announced an increase of two shillings a lb. in the price of air, effective from August 1.

Sir William Gasper, chairman of the board, blamed the increase on "constantly rising costs

which have resulted in a profit squeeze. Without adequate profits we will be unable to supply the breathing public with a continuous flow of high-quality air."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

JULY 16, 1969

A storm of opposition has greeted British Atmospheric's announcement yesterday of the long-anticipated increase in the price of air.

Opposition spokesmen demanded an official investigation into the air industry's price structure. "Across-the-board increases like these," said Opposition leader Harold McWilson

M.P., "always hit the poor harder than the rich. The consumers of high-oxygen grades like Forest Scent will hardly notice the change. But ordinary people (and I must remind you that one third of the British population still use air with only 10% oxygen and a high sulphur content) will have to pinch and scrape to pay the new rates."

Mr. McWilson would not say whether Labour proposed nationalization of the air industry. "That would depend," he said, "on the results of the enquiry." "The whole affair illustrates," he said, "the backward, tradition-bound attitude of British Industry and of the Government. In an age of mass consumption, we need scientific policies that will stimulate both demand and investment and give Britain her rightful place as a major industrial power."

DAILY WORKER

JULY 16, 1969

The rise in air rates demonstrates once again the domination of Britain by the American monopolies. British Atmospheric, as everyone knows, is a subsidiary of International Atmospheric, in which Americans hold a controlling share.

The Americans are using Britain as a testing ground. If they succeed in this price

increase, they will begin a campaign to squeeze air consumers everywhere in the so-called 'free world'.

Soviet air policy offers an interesting contrast. In April the USSR announced a downward revision of air prices, with the greatest price cuts in the more popular grades. This has been made possible by the great increase in Soviet air production (10% annually vs. 3% in the United States). Soviet experts expect to surpass America in less than ten years.

THE NEWSLETTER

JULY 18, 1969

more than ever necessary to build the left-wing. Free oxygen for all! Labour to Power! Change the leadership! (Re)build the Fourth Internationals!

THE NEW STATESMAN

JULY 20, 1969

The air crisis has cast a strange light on Britain's 'affluent society'. It has revealed dark spots of poverty blemishing the dazzling surface of our new prosperity.

One million British families get their air on National Assistance. Another five million can only afford air of low oxygen content.

Together they comprise the 'submerged third' of which Mr McWilson speaks. At the other end of the scale are the 'high breathers', with their purified, scented air and their notorious 'oxygen orgies', in which our gilded youth sniff themselves into a stupor.

The Conservatives seem incapable of any imagination in dealing with the problem. As a result, their administration has suffered a general loss of confidence. They will find it increasingly difficult to postpone yet further the General Election.

DAILY MIRROR

JULY 22, 1969

A man was fined £5 at Bow Street Court yesterday for opening his window. Twenty-two year old Martin G., a labourer, apologized to the court for his action.

"I was sacked last Friday," he said. "The same day the monthly air bill came. I knew I couldn't pay it. I looked at the kids, cough-

ing from the sulphur and blue from the low oxygen. And then something snapped. I just got up and opened the window. I know it was theft. I deserve to be punished."

THE TIMES

JULY 22, 1969

The American government have announced their intention to launch air containers into space as part of their surplus air disposal program.

The space containers are intended to supplement, rather than replace, other methods of excess air disposal such as forest fires, nuclear testing etc, which use tremendous

quantities of oxygen. The air surplus has been a blessing in disguise for the American economy. A vast prairie fire, lit by authorities in eight mid-Western states a fortnight ago, has already destroyed much of the grain surplus while making significant inroads into the air surplus.

TRIBUNE

JULY 25, 1969

The Americans have begun shipping surplus air into space - at a time when millions of people throughout the world barely have enough air to keep alive. What a disgrace! The United States government would be much wiser if it began a massive program of aid to the under-

ventilated countries. American pipelines carrying hot air to Asia, Africa and Latin America and selling it at cost price is the obvious solution. It is equally obvious that such a solution would cut into the profits of International Atmospherics. It could be done, however. There are times when human rights should come before profits, and this is one.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

AUGUST 2, 1969

Ten people were arrested in London yesterday for air theft.

Police noted that all ten had deliberately smashed their windows instead of merely opening them (as is usual in cases of air theft). This suggests wilful civil disobedience. It may have been a protest organized by communists,

beatniks, anarchists and supporters of the Committee of 100 against the new prices. The Special Branch is investigating the matter.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

AUGUST 3, 1969

Ten people were found guilty of air theft and incitement to air theft at Bow Street yesterday. They refused to pay fines.

Terry Chandler, spokesman for the group, claimed that British Atmospherics was 'tyrannical'. Asked if he favoured nationalization of the industry, Chandler said he would like to see it 'abolished'. He did not explain the meaning of his remark.

Magistrate Seeton noted that the offence was more serious than it appeared. "They have broken the law," he said, "they have also broken their windows. They have proclaimed an intention to incite others to do likewise. Suppose everyone were to smash their windows? Not only would law and order break down, but the air industry would be paralyzed and all of us would suffocate. If they feel strongly on these matters they should seek redress through Parliament. I must impose a stiff sentence to deter others. Ten years or five thousand pounds."

MARVIN GARSON

a docker's call...

A meeting of the ANTI-WAR INTERNATIONAL is planned to take place in BRUSSELS on NOVEMBER 23 and 24, 1963.
PARIS

This is a recall of the anti-war Conference held in Amsterdam, on November 10-12, 1962, which had been sponsored by the National Committee of 100 (Great Britain), by the War Resisters International, and by Zengakuren (Japan). The recall conference will be on the same non-aligned terms of reference.

In conjunction with the conference - same place, same time - there will be an informal meeting of portworkers, i.e. dockers, seamen, clerks, etc, to consider the particular possibilities of action against war at the ports. The Secretary of this meeting is John Papworth, 22 Nevern Road, London SW5, from whom further particulars can be obtained.

'SOLIDARITY' is pleased to republish below the call issued by Bro. Jimmy Jewers, a London docker, to dockers in other lands. We would like to see this occasion made known in every port in Europe.

We call on our readers and supporters wherever they may be to use their initiative and do everything they possibly can to get this message known.

Dear Brother Portworkers,

This is a plea for peace. A plea made by a dock labourer, the largest proportion of whose life must be spent amid sweat, dirt, exhaustion and sometimes blood in the never ending struggle for some sort of economic stability. A struggle which should and almost always does monopolise the whole of his consciousness and leaves no time for any original thought. This is the station in life into which I have been placed - one which, I am sure, you will easily recognise.

My position in society has been so carefully arranged by those responsible for such things that I am removed by only on week's wages from pauperism. Domestic tragedy, as you will well know, is always imminent. Sickness, accident, unemployment - the real ever-present enemies - always there to smash our pride and destroy any vestige of character and personality we might develop in spite of all the obstacles.

Is it any wonder then that the vast majority of us concern ourselves less and less with the major international problems and grab at the fruits of labour while they are going. We look at life through half-closed eyes and leave our destinies in the hands of people who have consistently betrayed us throughout the ages - and taught us to hate other working men just like ourselves.

We British portworkers have been taught in turn to hate Germans, Italians, Japanese, Russians and Chinese - and we have complied with fervour. We have then been commanded to go out and shoot them or blow them to bits and accepted as easily as if we were doing a normal day's work.

Such is the manner in which restricted minds react to abusive propaganda. I would willingly have machine-gunned an Italian portworker even though in the course of my whole life I have never met one. I could have quite easily condoned the slaughter of German workers' wives and children in Dresden or Hamburg, although my stomach would turn at the sight of a mutilated animal. I could have applauded the decision to atomise Hiroshima when the nearest I had come to a Japanese was at a performance of Madame Butterfly. And so it goes on. Tomorrow it might be the turn of the French. The day after that the man next door. Next year my own wife and children.

Authorities are rapidly failing to ensure the continued existence of mankind. We must begin to take control from them. We must reject the hate attitudes. Portworkers may be inarticulate, but they are also vociferous. They may be humble but they can be equally as powerful. They are an essential part of any nation's economy and are in the position to terminate anyone's aggressive aspirations.

Only when we stand together as one race, mankind, can we begin to end forever man's greatest scourge.

Let us begin by starting to know each other, by meeting and talking and laughing with each other and gradually find out that we are exactly the same, with the same kind of problems, then we shall soon reject the swindle that we have been involved in for centuries and really think of each other, after the comradeship we would generate, as brothers.

Yours fraternally,

Jimmy Jewers.

8th October 1963.

LETTERS

FROM BELGIUM

We managed to hitch-hike up here from Paris, last Tuesday. The first real town in Belgium, Charleroi, seemed very un-French and at the same time very familiar. We decided that it was really English in style, like Coventry, say. Belgium is ugly, like England, and the people have that same harried, worn-down look. But I prefer it by far to Paris, where they drench the corpse in perfume to keep it from stinking.

We've been in Brussels one day, running around from one group to another until we run out of French and can only talk to each other. So far they're all revolutionary chemists, trying to deduce the date of the revolution from statistics on steel production.

Last night we were at a meeting of the 'Jeunes Gardes Socialistes' (Pabloites working very, very deep in the Socialist Party). They were 'brainstorming' a 'Youth Program'. Ten people sat around a table: suddenly one says: 'Reduced fares for youth on the railways', and everyone writes it down. They also came out for the suppression of the capitalist cinema and the development of a cultural cinema for youth. At one point someone suggested, in all seriousness, 'Abolition de la religion'. While everyone was writing it down I couldn't help interjecting 'abolition de Dieu'.

After the 'Program for Youth' came the 'discussion with the American comrades'. They began by asking me what I thought of the Moscow Treaty. When I answered 'It's a deal between bosses. I can't get very worked up about it', they were taken aback. After several unsuccessful attempts to pigeonhole us, they were reduced to asking questions like 'how strong are the Black Muslims?'.

* * * * *

Today we spent six hours with a Maoist student who had a charmingly pathetic faith in dialectical materialism. A sample of his revolutionary science: 'The Russians have deserted Marxism-Leninism because production in the Soviet Union still remains to a great extent petty, artisanal, and peasant; bourgeois ideas will always keep their grip on Russia until production has become much more efficient and the division of labour much more intense'.

We pointed out the obvious flaw, namely that China was an overwhelmingly peasant country (much more so than Russia), but the Chinese leaders had not 'deserted Marxism-Leninism'. He answered that this apparent 'contradiction' was the result of 'specific factors on which data were not yet available'. The general theory remained sound.

* A demand which capitalism seems to tolerate and has in fact already granted

We were completely flabbergasted. Once again, Marxism-Leninism triumphed over those who, under the guise of revolutionary phrases, were only trying to struggle against the writings of the great Teachers and the correct line of the Marxist-Leninist Central Committee.

At the office of the 'Jeune Garde Socialiste', we came across the latest issue of 'The Young Socialist', the organ of our former group in the USA. It predicted a 'new drive launched by imperialism against a constantly growing mass of radicalized student and working youth who pose a socialist alternative within bowels of imperialist monster'. Dropping the articles clearly adds a note of urgency. (When I joined the group, the newspaper read like a translation from the Russian; now, it reads like a translation from the Chinese).

The curious thing is that I really don't feel bitter or even annoyed by all this. I feel like a patronizing adult who says, 'Ah, son, when I was your age....'.

Marvin Garson.

FROM ANOTHER PART OF CLOUD CUCKOO LAND

August 7, 1963.

Dear Sir,

That piece about 'The Land Crab' (Solidarity vol.II, No.12) was obviously an attempt to parody the S.P.G.B. because of its consistent adherence to its declaration of principles. The analogy is inapt and one wishes to know what inspired this rancour. Perhaps it is because the S.P.G.B., alone amongst political parties, is always right.

Yours faithfully,

J. Lee (Tottenham)

PEANUTS CLUB

KINGS ARMS, 213, BISHOPSGATE.
(LIVERPOOL ST. STATION)

SATURDAYS 8.00

FOLK SESSION

SUNDAYS 8.00

MODERN JAZZ - POETRY

BAR - SNACKS - etc.

bombe surprise

This year's CND Conference rubber stamped policies which make the Campaign look more than ever like a small boy political party politely asking to be let in on things. The principle of regularly churning out 'interim objectives' like 'Steps Towards Peace' was accepted. The Witney resolution rejecting 'Steps' and the way it was foisted on the movement was thrown out. Mervyn Jones said we must be realistic. So forward to more sheets of signatures for the waste-paper baskets of our rulers!

The Crewe resolution, urging people to work for unilateral disarmament everywhere was only carried with an amendment which recognized that Nuclear Disarmament in the USSR and USA was only likely 'by multilateral agreement'. So the movement which wants to achieve a 'breakthrough in the thought barrier' sees the butchers of Hiroshima and of Hungary as the architects of world peace!

The industrial action debate was nicely managed by the platform. Movers of amendments have no right of reply said the Canon - and the delegates agreed! Both the Bradford resolution, which the Executive refused to implement after last year's Conference, and an amendment which stressed that a campaign 'should be aimed at workers themselves and not at the official T.U. machinery' were lost.

A little ray of radicalism broke through the smog when Conference 'unreservedly' endorsed the Spies for Peace disclosures and demanded abolition of the Official Secrets Act. Amid groans, Peggy Duff had asked for the resolution to be remitted to the Executive, as they 'weren't too happy with one or two phrases', although they accepted the resolution in spirit!

On the organizational side, Conference passed a resolution rejecting the 'umbrella' concept of the Campaign. It voted for keeping the Executive Committee, a body which decides a 'correct line' for National Council meetings and whose members are not revocable. To those who opposed this Collins replied: 'As well try to run the country without a Cabinet'. No comment!

Conference elected to the National Council such revolutionary champions of the anti-war cause as Prof. (I-love-Stalin) Bernal, Kingsley (The-Trots-are-taking-over-CND) Martin, James (Punish-the-Spies-for-Peace) Cameron, John (No-diversions) Horner and Sidney (I-am-the-original-Left-wing) Silverman, etc, etc. Kingsley Martin and James Cameron have been weekly predicting the end of the Campaign. Now their election may help

to ensure that their prophecies materialize. Collins, of course, is back in the Chair.

As usual, there was 'no time' for anything at Conference apart from the Chairman's opening address (which was, in any case, available on six sides of foolscap!). Just to show how respectable we are, we found time to debate an emergency resolution deploring that 'the Conservative Party sees fit to appoint as Prime Minister Lord Home....'

Is the Campaign finished? Probably not. Its strength lies in the fact that it has always been something more than an Annual Conference and an Executive of 'names'. It is still not a membership organization and is not likely to become one. Even the Executive knows not to push things too far. But there is no question of waiting till next year's Conference 'to put things right'. Local groups and regions are, in practice, as autonomous as they choose to be. Some have become real centres of radical activity campaigning for industrial action, duplicating 'seditious' documents, etc.

Let the Canon keep his files of polite resolutions. Let the groups who want to follow him do so. And let those who are in CND to campaign for nuclear disarmament - and not to compete for New Year's Honours under the next Labour Government - continue to fight. The 1963 Conference was a triumph for all the tendencies which want to ensure CND's complete impotence as a means of struggle against nuclear war. The coalition of the Canon, the Communists and the 'respectable' element in CND have won a paper victory. They controlled the CND apparatus before... and still do so. Active CNDers in their local groups and regions will decide, in action, whether or not the bureaucrats win at the level that really matters.

ALAN HOLLINGUM

(delegate from Gravesend, Dartford, Crayford, Bexleyheath & Welling YCND)

OUR LEADER

Our Leader, which art in for Huyton,
Harold by Thy Name!
Thy Party come,
And 'get things done',
In London as it is in Moscow.
Give us this day our Science on Telly,
And forgive us our Luddite deviations,
As we forgive them that ponce off our labour.
Lead us into controlled expansion,
And deliver us unto Thy great bureaucracy.
For Thine are the Commanding Heights of the Economy, the Custody
of Empire and the Fruits of Office,
For ever;
What! Ever? NO, NEVER AGAIN.

BULLET IN THE BALLOT

Two pitfalls confront the revolutionary at election time. One is to urge people to vote for the 'lesser evil' and to succumb to parliamentary cretinism. The other is to pretend that the election isn't taking place at all.

To urge people to vote for the 'lesser evil' - i.e. to give 'critical' support to the Labour Party - is to participate in the whole monstrous process of mystification. Such a stand implies that one thinks the political parties stand for fundamentally different things (instead of just slightly different ways of doing the same thing, namely modernising capitalism). It implies a belief that MPs are free agents in Parliament, for there would seem to be little point in voting for mere dummies. It perpetuates the myth that the really important decisions governing the lives of ordinary people are taken in Parliament - otherwise why vote to send someone there? It implies finally that solutions to the problems of today can be reached by people not directly involved - in other words from the outside. This is how capitalism has always tried to run its factories and how bureaucratic capitalism now seeks to organize the whole pattern of its social institutions.

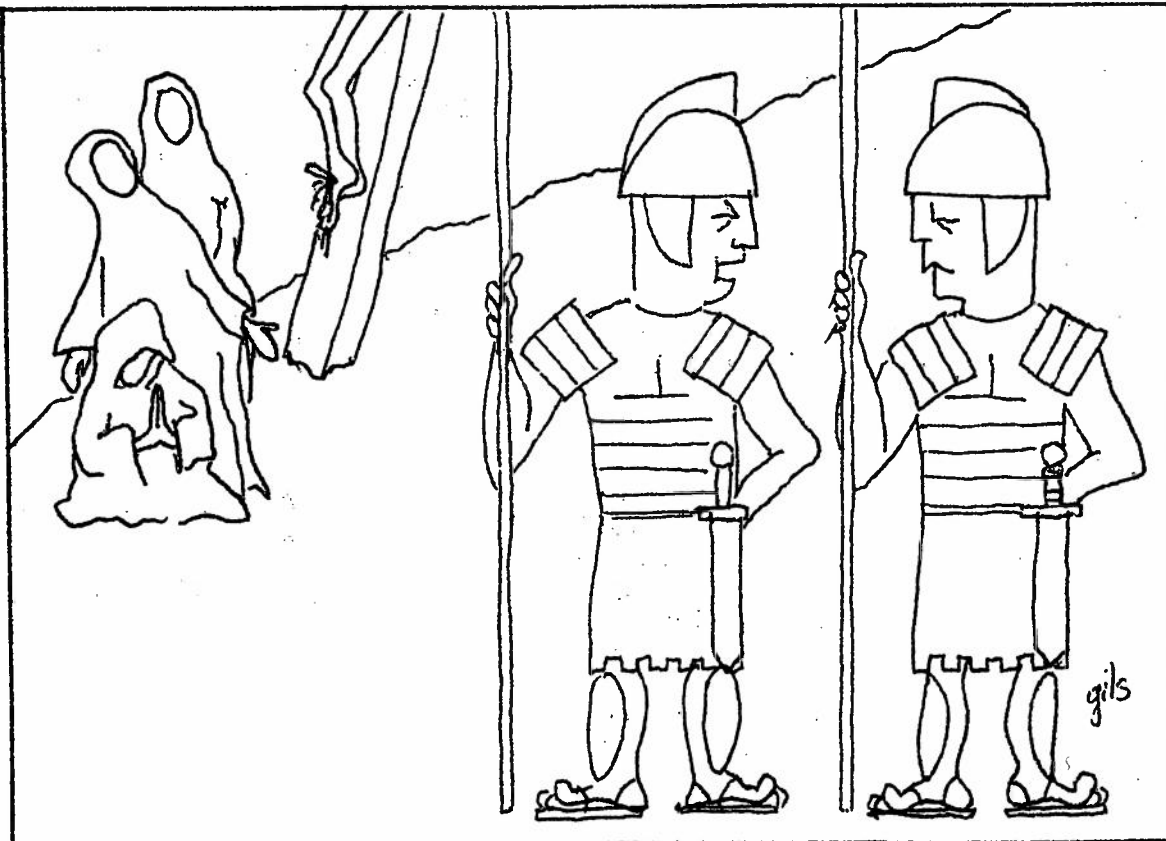
The other pitfall is to neglect the chances for agitation and exposure provided by Parliamentary elections. Abstention is usually a symptom of political passivism, not of political purity. The most should be made of all opportunities for assisting the development of a radical mass consciousness. We don't mean any nostalgic nonsense about 'utilising Parliament as a forum for revolutionary propaganda'. The compulsory oath of allegiance to the Crown, the compulsory niceties of parliamentary procedure and parliamentary language, the veil of silence with which the mass media now surround any genuinely revolutionary proposal or activity (no, the workers don't all read Hansard, comrade), all these mean that this 'forum' idea has to be relegated to the museum of Bolshevik mythology.

How then can revolutionaries intervene? In areas where they have not the material facilities for an intervention of their own, they should distribute leaflets and put up posters exposing the actions of all the political parties and the increasing irrelevance of parliamentary institutions to the real problems of today. They should campaign not for abstention but for the systematically spoilt ballot-paper. Let those who will not participate in the great fraud stand up and be counted!

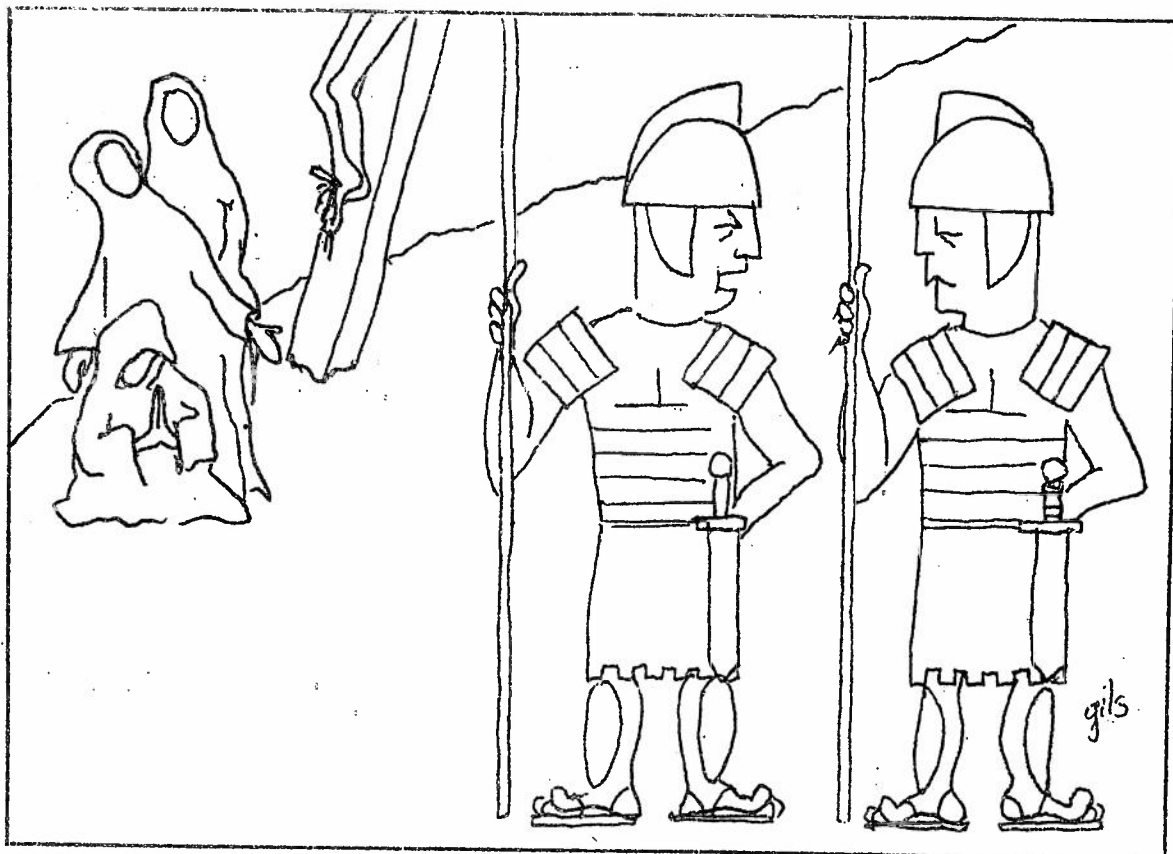
But in certain carefully selected areas they might consider putting up candidates of their own. Candidates who would raise the real issues by asking a stream of highly embarrassing questions of the well-

known politicians of 'Right' or 'Left'. A revolutionary candidate, say, in Mr. Harold Wilson's own constituency would focus a fair amount of national publicity. He might even succeed in forcing Mr. Wilson to take that pipe out of his mouth and commit himself on a thing or two. We would like to hear him discuss such interesting topics as 'How often would Labour use troops against strikers?'; 'How soon would Labour MPs vote themselves an increase in salary?'; 'Would Labour appoint a different set of bureaucrats to man the RSGs?'; 'Would it dismantle the Microbiological Research Establishment, at Porton, or would this be contrary to the interests of 'Science' (the science of genocide)?'; 'Would Labour use the Official Secrets Act to keep its 'socialist' secrets from the mass of the people', etc., etc.

Such candidates would of course make it abundantly clear, that nothing can be solved through institutions of the Parliamentary type, either by them or by anyone else. They would proclaim that the real power in society does not lie in Parliament, that Parliament, anyway, is a device for impeding rather than assisting social change. They would campaign for social organization based on workers' councils, composed of elected and revocable delegates and federated at regional and national levels. And to show that they are serious in this respect, they would resign immediately. A vigorous campaign along these lines would contribute to developing the necessary mass consciousness without which our objectives will for ever remain pipe-dreams.



'Personally, I feel that as a protest, it would have been more effective without the beard.....'



'Sure, it's a shame. But you've got to have some kind of deterrent....'

'If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a real moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle.

'Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

'Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue till they are resisted with words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.'

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, Negro abolitionist.

COMMITTEE OF 100

ATHENS CONVOY

BELGIUM AND GERMANY

On Friday evening July 27th we entered coaches at Victoria Station, caught the Dover-Ostend ferry at 1. a.m. the next morning, and were in Flanders with the sun shining.

We spent a long morning camped on a big German gunsite by the sea, outside the town, 'preparing' and discussing Skopje. Local people became very curious, especially as two huge white symbols had been painted in full view of the main road. We moved off in our Bedford vans, a Land Rover, and a large vehicle known as 'Big Bertha', drank some beer given us by members of the Belgian Peace Committee, and were in Brussels by late that afternoon.

There, we were filmed a lot, and invited into the offices of L'Union Federale, a 'World Government' organisation. The walls were decorated with many posters, among them adverts for Wethersfield demonstrations. Some well-dressed, fatherly-type gentlemen thanked us, offered their support, and advised us to help at Skopje. We told them that we'd offered help long ago.

By evening we were in Liege, where we spent the night in a sort of Co-op building run by 'socialists'. I said I was a 'pure socialist', and not a Marxist capitalist but they just didn't get it. They don't dig Anarchism over there yet. Anyway, they fed us well. We slept well too, many of us for the first time since Thursday night. Belgian beer has the texture, taste, and after-effects of urine, but that's just a personal opinion.

The next day we passed through Cologne, Germany, where about two hundred supporters of the Ostermarsch (which neither condones nor condemns Civil Disobedience) welcomed us and fed us in a bierhaus. Some had posters made of the front pages of a newspaper which shouted in bold headlines and photographs that the English Atomwaffengegner had created a 'scandal' at Dusseldorf airport. At nearly midnight we entered Frankfurt accompanied by a very large number of symbol-festooned German cars in an impressive motorcade. Well over a thousand delighted people joined us in a mass meeting, in a public square. We gave out hundreds of our five-language pamphlets (Russian, English, Italian, French and German) which state at length the aims of the Committee. We sang campaign songs with gusto. They loved

'The Glesca Eskimos'. We spent the night in a hall owned by the 'Friends of Nature' and were served with genuine foot-long frankfurter sausages. By means of broken German and broken English many of us made friends.

The next day we passed through Stuttgart where we received a small but effective welcome and arrived at Munich, Bavaria. At Munich we were met by many cars and we had another big motorcade, ending up in a Students' hostel. Later on, the Ostermarsch and the War Resisters International gave us a slap-up meal next door to the brewery to which Hitler and his mates marched in their first take-over bid. Many people got up and said things, in German and English. The best speech came from a Greek representative of the Bertrand Russell Y.S.N.D. He said (as near as I can remember) that he welcomed us in the name of his organisation. 'You will have to be like foxes to get into Greece. Come and save us. Save us from the murderers'. Underlined words were spoken with violence. On the whole, we had a great evening, although several went under due to the powerful beer served us in large mugs.

The next day we proceeded towards the border on the Munich-Salzburg autobahn, passing mountains, hills and churches with onion spires. We also passed a large number of U.S. Army vehicles, mainly heavy trucks, some actually carrying missiles, driven by crophaired all-American boys with blank expressions. The German Army, too, was very evident. The Germans and the Americans are all big buddies now. We passed Chiemsee, a large lake, which, we were told by flags and noticeboards, is a 'U.S. Army Recreation Area'. Sleek U.S. cars carrying flat-hatted top brass slithered past regularly.

AUSTRIA

When we were in Liege we had discussed for a long time what we would do if we were stopped on the German border, at Aachen. We had decided not to back down on anything if we were ordered about by frontier cops. We got through to Germany allright. But we never anticipated trouble on the Austrian border. We all thought of Austria as a quaint little place, full of mountains, wooden houses and men in shorts and funny hats who played accordions in beer houses. We were a bit off the mark there. The State there is just like any other. The thick-headed police at the frontier were typical.

I was in a van driven by Inge (a Swede) which arrived long before the rest of the convoy. The grey-uniformed border police took our passports, talked together a while, then told us to take all our posters down, as 'demonstrations by foreigners' were not allowed. Inge argued for a while and came back from the frontier station with the news that we'd got to strip off all posters or go back. We all got out, Inge pocketing the ignition key. A group of policemen immediately tried to push the van to the side (we were in the middle of the autobahn) but we were as quick as

them and sat down in front. There were half a dozen English people, Inge, Folkhardt (a German) and a Belgian and his wife in this sit-down. The cops were at a loss as to what to do. We sat for half an hour in the burning sun. Big lorries were unable to pass but hundreds of tourist cars of all nationalities passed by and took our leaflets. Many of the English cars shouted out support. Many took photographs.

After half an hour the rest of the convoy arrived. It was stopped on the German side (we were in Austria) by a cordon. This didn't prevent us communicating extensively with our friends, many of whom filtered through. I got up and handed leaflets to some lorry drivers. But by this time the big boys had arrived from Salzburg. We later learned that an emergency meeting had been held at the Ministry of the Interior.

A large man in a green uniform came up and grabbed me by the arm and I stood there while he spoke quickly to his partners in German. It was very strange: I suddenly forgot every word of German I knew (not much) even 'Verboten'. He pulled me towards the cop shop. As we passed the sit-down, I sat. I was then pulled across the road into the station where, behind the counter, they put the boot in a bit. After dragging me down a corridor, I sat on a chair for half an hour trying to communicate. ('We do not come to England to demonstrate; why do you come to Austria?'). Later they took me out again and I joined the rest who had been flung into a police van. One girl had had her head banged on the doorway. She was still in a daze. They said they'd take us to Salzburg. We said we'd like nothing better as that's where we were going anyway. So they drove us back into Germany and chucked us out in a heap, next to the rest of the convoy. One or two tried to sit in front of the van but were unsuccessful.

We held a conference and after an hour we all drove towards the border, to be stopped by a cordon. We sat down. They charged into us and dragged us with much brutality to the middle of the road. As soon as we arrived there we walked back. Most people were dragged backwards and forwards three times or more by the collar, one hand, one foot, or by the hair. In the end we ended up in a mass sit-down surrounded by a large crowd ... and cops with billy-clubs.

Some of us drafted a letter in German which we presented to the Minister of the Interior. After an hour or more he said we couldn't come through Austria with or without posters as they would have to 'protect us from the Austrian people and counter-demonstrations' if we did. We decided to sit another hour in spite of threats of firehoses. This we did. We later retired to a camping place on the German side a few miles down the road, after an evening meeting which went on till after dark.

The following day we camped by the side of the road outside Munich while Terry Chandler and Peter Moule went off to the Czech border to find out if we could go through that way. The same evening they returned with the news that visas took four days to get. That was too long. We were not very keen about poncing off three 'communist' countries (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Hungary). We decided to split into individual units and try to smuggle ourselves through Austria the next day.

I was in a German Renault car with the two Belgians and Jurgen, the driver. We slept in a lay-by that night after being turned out of three fields by German police cars who were following us. We got through at Passau. In Linz, Austria, we read about our sit-down in several newspapers (with big photographs). We met some other vans by chance ... but kept separate. The next day we were in Yugoslavia.

YUGOSLAVIA

We passed through Maribor and in the evening arrived outside the railway station in Zagreb where we met one of our Bedford vans. One of the excited onlookers spoke good English, and after a while we camped on some flats near a Motel and a free open-air swimming pool. The onlooker was a youth who had spent two years in gaol for 'criticising Communism' in the public square. I spoke to him for hours that night, in a cafe. (We may see a Zagreb Committee of 100 in Belgrade next Easter. But that's enough about that. The Yugoslav M.I.5. might be reading this as well as our own). The next day we went down through Belgrade (where a Peace Committee member gave us some friendly non-committal statements) to Nis, where we camped in a field.

The people in Yugoslavia are very friendly to strangers. As soon as we crossed the border we were in a different world. The main road to Zagreb is a cart-track and we kicked up clouds of fine white dust as we went along. The petrol (Bencin) smells foul and we had to sign forms, give in vouchers, and pay large sums to get. Petrol stations are rare. Peasant children from small wood-and-plaster cottages, brown, barefooted and snotty-nosed, grinned hugely and waved excitedly. Men, strong, wiry and sunburned, chewed on home-rolled fags and watched, fascinated. Women in gaily-coloured skirts and smocks, with bound-round heads smiled. Ducks slowly strolled the main road. Oxen dragged bulky cartloads of hay. Horses and tractors ploughed fields. There was a wonderful lack of advertisement hoardings. Groups of children wave you down to buy their water-melons. In the mountains you get waved down every five miles to buy practically anything from bunches of dandelions to bowls of figs. In the mountains down South in Makedonija there are thousands of war memorials dotted around. They all carry red stars or hammer and sickle emblems with lists of names or declarations in Serbo-Croat, Greek or something using the Cyrillic alphabet. In one camping place in the mountains we came across a battered metal five-pointed star with the red rusted away and a hammer and sickle cut out of it. It was four feet high. We turned it upside down and pissed over it.

In the towns many people own cars. The commonest type is the Fiat baby car, but Volkswagens are common too. At one garage we drove up behind a gleaming Mercedes. The number plate was 'BG' (Beograd) with 'CD' (Corps Diplomatique) underneath: the bosses apparently use these better cars. I saw many CD cars, all big. Some of them were Citroens. In towns all the flags were out at half-mast on behalf of the dead at Skopje. They were of two types - the National Flag and the Red Party Flag.

THE GREEK FRONTIER

After a while we arrived at Gevgelija, passed over the Yugoslav border and came up against the Greek border, half-a-mile further on. Earlier that day (August 4th) the rest had tried to get across legally, but unsuccessfully. It was now 1 a.m. and I was still in the Renault. A Bedford van nicknamed 'Fred' drove up behind. The police, behind a wood and barbed wire crash barrier, examined the passports in the light of an oil lamp. They got very excited when they came to mine, 'probably because my photo showed me wearing a N.D. badge. They kept running their fingers up and down a list they had. I think it was a mistake of the Committee to issue a list of everyone going.

After half an hour we were ordered to turn round. I got out and asked for an explanation and was informed that the Greek Embassy in Belgrade (hundreds of miles away) would provide me with one. The occupants of the Bedford then piled out and Michael Savvides, who speaks Greek, started an argument. We argued for some time but to no effect. After some thought we decided to retire and do something in the morning. We sat for some time on the steps of the Yugoslav border post, listening to portable record-players and one of us strumming a guitar, waiting for our visas to be returned. We were told by some of the others that the rest had gone a few miles down the line to cross the hills at night. The 'invaders' included the occupants of 'Big Bertha' and Terry Chandler. Our visas were eventually given back and most of us made our way to a hillside down the road, where we slept. There were a lot of tourist cars at the border and many of us leafletted them in the appropriate language. We had got our duplicated leaflets in English, German and French ('Why We Are Here').

In the morning at 7.0 o'clock it was like sleeping in an oven. The heat would take the guts out of anyone, especially an Englishman. We had a languid sort of meeting, saturated in sweat, under some olive trees by the river Vardar. The people who had been across the hills returned with their story: they had been arrested by violent Yugoslav border guards with automatics just over the border inside Greece. They had been gaoled but had walked out under their guards' noses and had been arrested again by soldiers at gunpoint. One officer had got hysterical and was shouting 'Capitalisti !' at them. After some hours the cops had turned people off a bus and had driven them back to Gevgelija, where after some argument they were released. In the olive grove several people were intent on typing out stories for 'Peace News', etc. Some cooled off by swimming in the river (very wide and shallow). Some bought Oozo (150% Aniseed liqueur) or Slivovic (plum brandy) to pep them up (there was a plush Motel just up the road designed for foreign tourists).

In the afternoon some of us went to the railway station to buy tickets to Salonika. There were eleven of us and we pooled our money but didn't have enough. A Greek supporter on the platform peeled off a few hundred dinars to make up the extra. Soon we were chugging into Greece. At Idmeni, Greece, the police jumped on and arrested everyone who had come from

Gevgelija, which was us. We were marched behind the railway station, brought back to the rear of the train and chucked into a cattle truck. Two sat down outside. We sang loudly to the people in the train, who were hanging out of all windows, agog. So they shut the one tiny grilled window and pushed us (by hand) a few hundred yards down the line. They then re-opened the window but we were weakening fast in the terrible heat. We had arguments in Greek with the police outside (all armed with billy-clubs) via Mick Savvides. We received the information that 1) Lambrakis had committed suicide; 2) he had not been careful crossing the road, and 3) he was not dead.

One of the cops let up a bit and after some argument he filled up a thermos flask with water for us. After a while the two sitters were dragged with much kicking and punching on the part of the police to the wagon and thrown in. The cops then got in too and we were all searched thoroughly. A female fuzz went through a girl's bun in her hair. A little fat man in shirt-sleeves confiscated some leaflets, posters, badges, newspapers, private correspondence, any films they could find (some of us had cameras and had been photographing each other in the truck), cameras, and many oddments. The door was then slammed shut again and after some time we were pushed back to the station (another train had pulled in from Athens). They opened some windows and we sang loudly and shouted 'Lambrakis' to the crowds on the platform. Some clapped. Some were too scared to. To our surprise the door opened again and two German boys, nothing to do with us, were flung in with us. They were, understandably, very annoyed, as they had been arrested just for travelling from the wrong railway station. They knew very little about our movement but were converted en route. We gave them addresses in Germany.

After some delay we were pulled back to Gevgelija. By this time we were all lying on the floor half-suffocated. We got out, got our visas back and camped for the night near the motel. In the morning we swapped stories, got the money back on the tickets, and prepared to go home.

DRIFTING HOME

Most went straight home, but I was on my own with the German and the two Belgians and we took our time coming back along the Adriatic coast and Albanian border. We later heard about the big rally in Athens.

Tito has some of the characteristics of de Gaulle. Although perhaps not quite so outrageous a figure as the latter, he still comes in on 'the war effort' to keep himself in power. I have mentioned the war memorials. Yugoslavia is heavily militarised. It is said there are no Russian rocket bases there. This is probably true, but there are lots of Official Secrets around. Several times we passed extensive areas fenced off (like Marham) with mysterious buildings and factories inside. Notice boards outside declared in several languages 'Photographs strictly forbidden'. Barracks

are very common, especially near Albania. Companies of khaki-uniformed soldiers with red-starred forage caps march past on the roads. Late at night on a lonely twisting mountain road you are quite likely to be stopped by inquisitive soldiers armed with tommy-guns. Around Skopje there is military law. From the start, looters were shot. All the roads are cordoned off and surrounding fields and towns are filled with pathetic groups of refugees lugging bundles and mattresses about. Tents and shacks dot the countryside. The army is there in force to demolish remaining buildings and dig out anyone left buried. Tito had arrived to give moral support. In a small baker's shop in Budva I was sold bread wrapped in a flour bag which had contained flour 'Donated by the People of the United States of America'. No doubt if America ever turns Yugoslavia into one big smouldering Skopje the missiles, too, will be 'Donated by the People of the United States of America'. The people are very cheerful, despite the nearby tragedy. In Dubrovnik, dim-looking north country lasses chatted broadly about the weather and ordered fish, chips and slivovic in the restaurants.

DICK WILCOCKS

LONDON-ATHENS REPORT

The full official (!) account of the Committee's Athens Convoy. Over 30 illustrated pages, the full story, facts and comment of this ambitious venture.

WHY did 80 Committee members travel 2,000 miles and back last August? WHAT happened to them along the way? WHY did the Austrian government forbid them entry to the country? WHY were some locked for hours in a Greek cattle truck others imprisoned at gunpoint in Yugoslavia? WHY were they kept out of Greece - with barbed wire and machine guns?

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