solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 12

Punfield & Barstow Strike

WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Vauxhall: THE CRISIS APPROACHES

LETTER FROM A TEACHER

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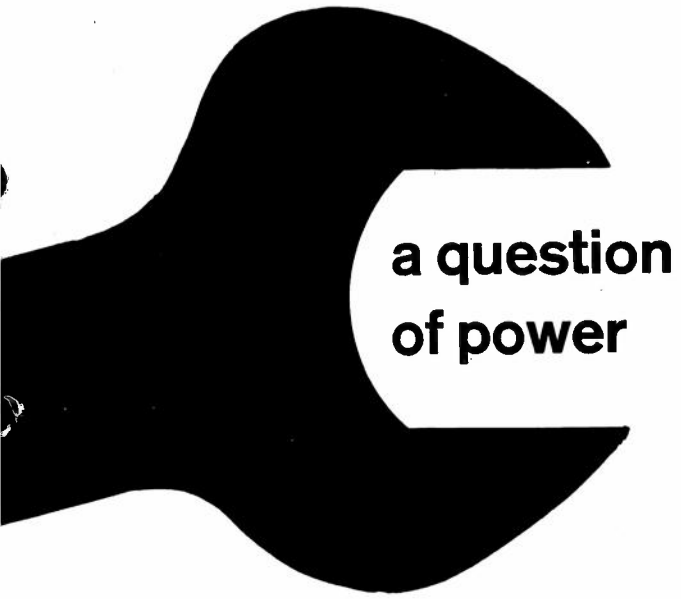


a question of power

Few of us run our own lives. This is because we have no control over the main decisions that affect us. These decisions are made by small self-perpetuating minorities. This situation cannot be 'democratically' changed. What our rulers call 'democracy' is a system which operates for their own protection. As long as their 'democracy' is not seriously challenged, their dominating position in society is secure

Their threatened use of violence is intended to frustrate any challenge. It is implicit in the large police force, the courts, and the armed forces which they control. The limited freedom that their 'democracy' allows us is further restricted or curtailed altogether whenever they think their power is seriously threatened

They hold the power to maintain their power. This is the key to their security. They determine the kind of education provided, and the ways and means of providing it. By controlling what and how people are taught, those who rule us seek to preserve the structure of existing society. Children are educated first through the family - i.e. through the already-conditioned parents. Then the education factories (schools and universities) take over. Their aim is to produce people conditioned to fit into this rat-race society

Printed by the Stanhope Press, 96a Stanhope Street, N.W.1

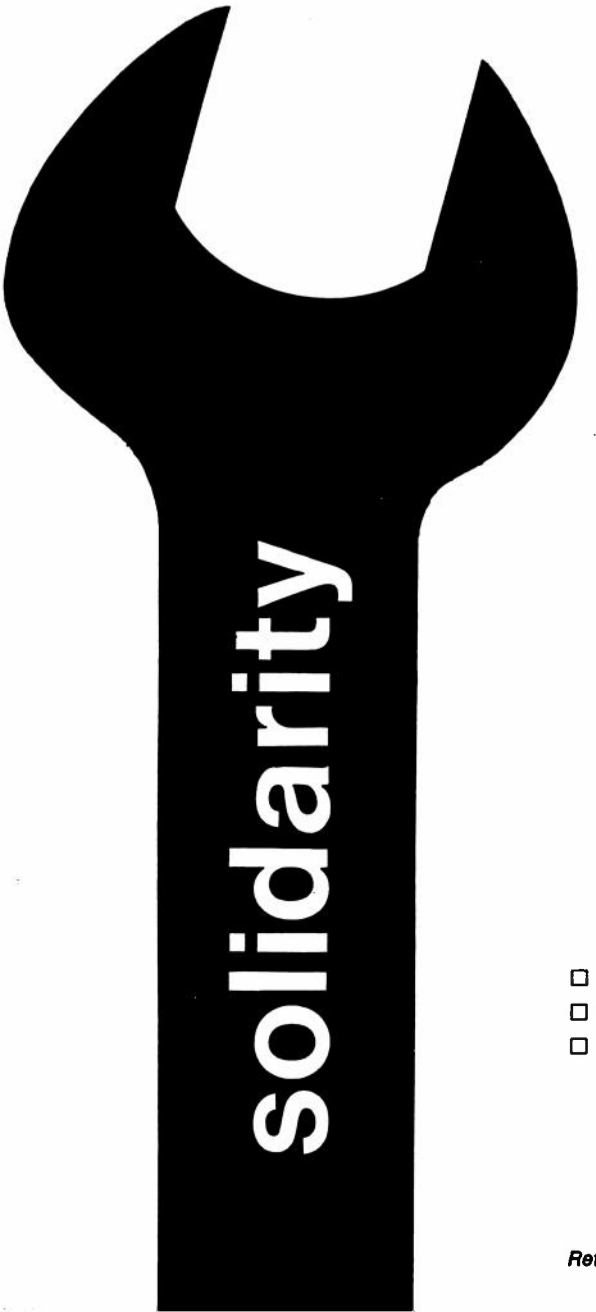
Workers created Trade Unions and Political Parties to change all this. But by gradually adopting similar patterns of organization to those of their oppressors, and by concentrating the struggle almost solely on improving working conditions and living standards, the original revolutionary intentions have been bypassed. Working people have gained considerable material advantages but they have lost control of their own organizations. Today the hierarchies are in control. They can neither be removed nor brought back to the initial aim of freeing people

Those who dominate production dominate society. So long as they have their kind of industrial stability, control will remain in their hands. This control enables them to continue deciding what is to be produced, who is to produce it, where, when, how, and in what quantities. All this conflicts with the interests of the real producers - the workers. Those who run our live continually seek ways of blurring the conflict and of manipulating workers into accepting that management alone is capable of making these decisions

The union hierarchy assists them in this fraud. While acting as middlemen in the labour market, the union bosses do all they can to frustrate any awareness in workers of their own ability to run industry. In fact, so-called working class organisations are today an essential part of the set up. The formation of new unions or parties would not solve the problem. In today's conditions, they would suffer the same fate as the old ones

But the system is contested. There is a constant struggle in which the objective is self-management. In a large majority of disputes, workers have taken real democratic decisions to act without the consent of the union bureaucrats [so-called unofficial strikes]. This is one of the signs that our rulers' 'industrial stability' is under strain. The strain is also visible in the education factories, where students are increasingly demanding the right to take decisions on fundamental issues. There are many other signs of the crisis that is affecting every aspect of this society

Solidarity participates in the struggle wherever possible. We try to expose the true situation. We seek to strengthen the confidence of working people in their *own* ability to manage their *own* lives - at work and outside of it. People's reliance on others to do things for them has led to defeat after defeat. It is time for victories! Victories depend on people consciously taking action themselves. To help in the development of this consciousness is the only reason for the existence of **Solidarity**



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THE PUNFIELD & BARSTOW STRIKE

On the small Queensbury (Middx) Industrial Estate history is repeating itself.

For eight weeks through the summer of '68 predominantly immigrant organised workers fought out a picket line battle with scabs and a nineteenth century-minded management.* On the evening of June 12 this year the night shift of Punfield and Barstow (Mouldings) Ltd. were removed from the premises by the police at the request of the managing director after they had attempted to repeat the occupational sit-in staged by the day shift. Next morning the 42 members of the AEF, four-fifths of the total machine shop labour force began picketing outside. The strike is now entering its fifth week and the men are still determined to go back on their terms only.

What is happening in this industrial backwater and others like it happened elsewhere decades ago. This struggle is a classical example of the fight that is still being waged in hundreds of small factories today to achieve better conditions and shop organisation. A feudalistic management is waging a vicious rearguard action against the right of 'its' workers to organise in trade unions. This kind of battle is contagious, and for that reason is being watched with particular interest by the non-organised work forces elsewhere on the estate. Several of the companies have made it their practice to employ a high percentage of immigrant labour, the estate being readily accessible to the immigrant communities of N.W. London.

It is quite obvious that the example of Injection Moulders' workers has inspired their next door neighbours, many of whose demands are those of parity. Links between the workers in the two firms are strong. In June of last year Punfield and Barstow sacked one of their workers for collecting money in the machine shop for the Injection Moulders' Fund Appeal. On June 27 an Injection Moulders' worker was arrested by the police for 'breach of the peace' when a P. and B. scab tried to pick a fight with him.

Together these two struggles have driven a horse and cart through the old tale that immigrant workers will put up with wages and conditions that white workers wouldn't touch. At P. and B. reduced production continues - the scabs being predominantly white and non-union.

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* See 'Solidarity', vol.V, no.3 - 'Injection Moulders Lockout'

THE FIRM.

The firm produces precision plastic mouldings for a variety of customers, the best known being the General Motors subsidiaries Frigidaire (Hendon), A.C.Delco (Dunstable), and Vauxhall (Luton). It also supplies Smiths (Cricklewood Broadway) with plastic dials and clock facings.

Towards the end of '67, P. and B. was swallowed into the Capseals Group centred on the Greenock Trading Estate in Slough. Mrs. C.E.Punfield and Mrs. R.Barstow resigned from the Board of Directors, their places repidly being taken by Capseals' whizz-kids G.A.Lillywhite and F.R.Heath, both of whom collect company directorships like other guys collect beer mats.

Heath, apart from a seat on the board of P. and B., is a director of Capseals Ltd., Capseals Tubes Ltd., Heathfield and Co. Ltd. Lillywhite has gone one better, recently adding Packaging Products Group Ltd to the above four. A.P.Lambert, the third director, was allowed to stay on his backside as managing director at Punfield and Barstow to keep an eye on the Queensbury scene, the other two having bigger things to play with.

At the time of the takeover Capseals also grabbed most of the shares from the previous holders. In December '67, 12,019 £1 preference shares were transferred to them, together with 8,597 1/- ordinary shares. In the 15 months ending December '67 Punfield and Barstow made £181,438 clear profit, which is not too bad for a little place. Much more interesting of course will be the profit figures for the year ending '68 which ought to reflect the increased production that has been squeezed out of the labour force at Queensbury since the takeover. Unfortunately P. and B. have been a little slow getting last year's figures to the Board of Trade. Capseals itself, however, seems to be coming along quite nicely judging from the dividends recorded in recent years: 1961 - 25%; '62 - 25%; '63 - 33½%; '64 - 25%; '65 - 29 1/6%; '66 - 29½%; '67 - interim 16 2/3%.*

DIVIDE AND RULE.

Punfield and Barstow also donates to the National Scheme for disabled men, yet its philanthropic gestures stop short of its own workers. Language difficulties are exploited to the full while cultural differences on the shop floor are also used by the foremen. Preferential treatment of the mainly non-English speaking Italian group has successfully ensured their non-fraternisation with the industrially-experienced Pakistani workers. Press operators of five and six years' standing are made to wait while setters repair their machines. Promotion to setter, while virtually impossible for a Pakistani trade unionist, is only too easy for other non-union workers. It's rumoured that one of the Italian group was promoted so quickly from operator that he can't even start some of the machines he's meant to repair. With the recent trouble staff status has been con-

* Quoted from 'Stock Exchange Official Year Book VII, 1968'.

ferred on the 'setters' to separate them even more rigidly from the rest of the machine shop. The foremen have done a 'good' job. The Italian group are under the mistaken impression that they have more in common with the management than with the pickets outside.

This outlook was encouraged by the management's crude policy of penalising and victimising shop floor activists. Two previous attempts to organise the labour force at Punfield and Barstow ended in a spate of selective sackings. By February of this year, however, the management were forced to change their tactics as a majority of the shop floor had become AEF members. They resorted to petty spite instead. Everything has been tried, from intimidation of shop stewards (the night shift steward has been threatened 'jokingly' with the sack three times since February) to restriction of overtime (by as much as ten hours each week) for labourers in the grinding shop who admitted to being union members. On a labourer's basic rate (6/5d - 6/7d) it's impossible to exist without overtime. Also since the influx of men into the AEF a fifteen minute allowance for clearing up, washing and changing at the end of the eleven hour shift has been cut. The men now have five minutes to get out of the place.

'THEY ARE FREE TO COME BACK TO WORK' - A.P.LAMBERT.*

Machine operators here are also 'free' to work a 55 hr. week of five eleven hour shifts. On a basic rate of 6/9d an hour it's not surprising that they 'choose' to do just that.

The pill is sugared by an incentive bonus of 8d per hour. Unfortunately the minimum job rates necessary to earn a bonus are pushed up by the foremen whenever an operator sweats his way up too frequently to the set target. The blatant swindling that is practiced by the weighing clerk in the weighing and recording processes ensures that bonus payouts are kept to a minimum.

Two recent examples are fairly typical of this creep's method of operating:

a) a steward, himself weighing the product of his eleven hours' work, entered a total of 1,772 moulded pieces in the record book, in the presence of the foreman. The following morning his output slip indicated only 1,570 pieces. Not only had his total shrunk by 200 pieces, but his bonus payout for eleven hours' work was cancelled as the second figure was now below the incentive target.

b) another operator on a fully automated machine produced 35,000 pieces in an eleven hour shift. The weighing clerk entered only 23,000. When approached by a steward he apologised profusely and begged him not to tell anyone about the 'mistake'. The clerk had only weighed the contents of two instead of three boxes.

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* 'Edgware and Mill Hill Times', Friday, July 4, 1969.

Occasionally, the clerk goes the whole hog and erroneously records an operator's total eleven hour output as 'scrap'. Yet these same pieces still go out on the next delivery.

NINETEENTH CENTURY CONDITIONS.

In their enthusiasm to increase production the foremen naturally dislike stopping the machines for anything at all. Some time ago this enthusiasm cost a machine operator three finger tips. They were sliced off in a machine with a mechanical fault. Previously the foreman's attention had been drawn to the fault by the operator in question. He ignored it. Needless to say the company has still offered no compensation.

In their enthusiasm for economy the management haven't thought it necessary to supply the men with lockers or workclothes. Roll towels are left up for as long as two days and used by as many as sixty people. When one side is filthy they are turned inside out.

There are no hot meal facilities whatsoever and the night shift can't even get cold snacks as the works canteen shuts down in the evening. Working eleven hours through the night the lads are expected to get by on cups of tea. In the machine shop itself there are broken windows that have been that way since '63. The men have blocked them with cardboard but it's still freezing cold in the winter.

The machines are never cleaned from one week to another, and the floor is washed once in a blue moon. Oil and muck are left to accumulate. Given time the operators would willingly clean their machines; the management, however, are more interested in production, so the machines gradually get filthier and break down.

FIRST ROUND: THE FEBRUARY DEMANDS.

By February the men had had enough. A series of demands were presented to the management, the crucial one being 'a guaranteed bonus for guaranteed production and a standing bonus' (in the event of machine breakdown, etc.).* Other demands covered a wide range of grievances from machine rates, arbitrary sackings, lack of tea breaks and an end to discrimination in basic rate pay.**

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* 3/6d per hour was demanded for 'guaranteed bonus', and 1/- per hour for standing bonus.

** An immigrant 'powder man' oiling machines on the day shift gets 6/10d per hour. A man on the night shift doing the same job receives 12/- per hour.

The management ignored the lot, and in a press statement to the Harrow Observer (June 20, 1969) they claimed to have received no official notification of the men's grievances. This was a blatant lie. The men spent twelve weeks waiting for an answer from the management.

PICKETS VERSUS SCABS: NEW QUEENSBURY RULES.

In the four weeks since the walk-out reduced production has continued, the scabs working 14 and 15 hr shifts to please the management. Office women have been seen enthusiastically pushing trolleys piled up with sacks of raw powder.

On the picket line the men are in surprisingly high spirits. The London (North) District Committee of the AEF endorsed the action of the men almost immediately. Lorries from I.C.I. Anchor Chemicals and British Rail have respected the picket line and refused to deliver or collect. A running battle with a scab lorry from A.C.Delco division of General Motors (Dunstable) was won last Friday (July 4) after a windscreen wiper was pulled off in a scuffle when the police encouraged the driver to go through the picket line.

Since then P. and B.'s only large lorry has been knocked out - the windscreen mysteriously smashed out altogether. Teams of strikers together with workers and students from 'Solidarity' have leafleted the estate and support has been given by Poster Workshop, who produced a poster especially for the strike, 'International Socialism' and 'Tricontinental'. Workers from both Injection Moulders and Rotaprint have been very sympathetic.

BOSSES BEGIN TO WOBBLE.

Last Monday (July 7) the Engineering Employers Federation met with AEF divisional officials Elliot and McLoughlan and threw out some concessions to see if the lads would bite. They offered to raise the operators' basic rate by 3d per hour to a magnificent 7/-, together with a guaranteed bonus of 3/6d on the condition that three eight hour shifts be implemented in place of the two eleven hour ones previously operating.

However the men have been out too long now to go back on anything less than their terms. They are demanding a basic rate of 8/- for operators and of 10/6 for labourers (the latter being outside the bonus system). They also want the reassessment of all machine rates as soon as possible in the presence of a shop steward and a management representative. Until such time as this is implemented they are demanding a temporary standard bonus for all operators. Finally they are demanding that all machine shop workers (and this includes setters and foremen) be limited to eight hour shifts.

It is quite obvious that no matter how long it takes these men are going to win, and when they do things will never be the same again inside Punfield and Barstow. Lambert, the managing director, expected them to crawl back after a few days to eat dirt again. He was so sure of himself that he sent each of them a letter inviting them to come back to work.

It's no thanks to the National Executive of the AEF* that this didn't happen; and the men know it too. They now realise that their strength lies ultimately in their own determination and solidarity one with another.

The lesson is one that other labour forces on the estate might benefit from. If men are prepared to fight together they can beat even the most reactionary management. Links between workers in the different factories on this estate ought to be encouraged as a weapon to be used against any individual management that is treating its workers like dirt.

There is already plenty of evidence that workers on this industrial estate realise the need to break out of the limits their company imposes on them, and to talk with workers in neighbouring factories. Injection Moulders are now strong and organised after their struggle last summer. Punfield and Barstow workers are following their example. Their experiences could be of great value to workers who are not yet organised.

APPEAL FUND

At the time of writing this strike is still on, and funds are badly needed. We appeal to all readers - please send donations to:

M. Bashir,
5, Clayton Avenue, Wembley, Middx.

M. F.

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* It has taken the National Executive of the AEF almost four weeks to recognise this strike, during which time the men have received no money from the union other than that raised by the London (North) District Committee which has supported them all the way.

REVIEWS

THE HORNSEY AFFAIR, a Penguin Educational Special by Students and Staff of Hornsey College of Art. (1969). 6/-.

This is the documentation of a lost struggle by those actually involved. The grievances, frustrations and apathy at Hornsey prior to the Crouch End 'Commune' are carefully drawn, and the Student Action Committee's preparations for the meeting that was to establish the Commune are set out in detail. The six-week sit-in (May-June 1968), the effect of the action on the participants, and the reactions of authority, press and public are all lucidly presented.

Brilliantly illuminating scenes from the occupation offset the intricacies of the Educational Debate in which the significant development of mass consciousness can be traced. For example the original demand that 'our Principal' should be in 'his college' is later seen to be inadequate. Returning from Manchester the Principal is told he is no longer necessary. Subsequently he was removed from his office altogether for issuing his own press releases on an office phone, bypassing the student-controlled switchboard.

The local education authority's attempts to make the art student academically respectable rebounded. Some General Studies lecturers allowed the students to think for themselves. This is always disastrous from the point of view of a ham-handed and repressive authority.

If the short-lived Commune proved one thing, it was that collectives can organise themselves much more efficiently and rationally than can authorities imposing structures from without. Food was bought, cooked and distributed, rubbish disposed of far more efficiently than under the old system.

Rooms were brightly repainted and decorated with posters. The Commune issued its own press statements, manned the switchboard and posted up the latest press cuttings. People enthusiastically discovered dormant creative abilities that had been crippled by the sterility of a hierarchical system.

In contrast, Haringey Council wanted only a return to the dead 'normality' they could control. Once persuasion had failed they used force in an attempt to regain control of the Commune's 'weapon' (the occupied building). The abortive "Day of the Dogs" offensive made the Council look fools and hardened the student solidarity, yet the authorities took their revenge later. The college was kept shut for six weeks of the following term; the General Studies department was 're-organised' and about fifty staff members were not 're-employed'. (The police were called in to remove the member of staff who refused to leave his department.)

The students are left with few illusions. They quote tellingly from Thiers comparing his suggestions for the defeat of a revolution with the treatment and manipulation handed out to them.

At the moment a state of truce exists - the authorities hold the weapons, yet nothing will be the same again at Hornsey. The students have learnt more about themselves, society, and art than could have been shoved into them in a dozen Diploma Courses. Having experienced how things might be, they are unlikely to forget.

Their struggle failed. But they wanted a Revolution and not Reform - they now realize this, as they didn't in the beginning.

A heartening postscript is the story of the three thirteen -year old school girls who arrived politely asking for a poster for school; the slogan - 'Don't let the bastards grind you down'.

G. W.

* * * * * *

EVICTED (The story of the illegal evictions of squatters in Redbridge), by Ron Bailey, T. Mahony, and M. Conn. 3/-, post free, from London Squatters Campaign, 128 Hainault Road, Leytonstone, E. 11.

This well-produced pamphlet is essential reading. It provides the background to the great struggle being waged since February by a handful of squatters and their determined supporters against the machinations of the Redbridge Borough Council, the violence of their hired thugs and the feigned 'neutrality' of the police.

This great story epitomises a whole number of points: the importance of the will to struggle, the ability of the struggle itself to unite people of widely differing political conviction, the indescribable (but in-built) stupidity of the authorities, whose vacillations between concessions and violence can be guaranteed to escalate any conflict (almost as effectively as their resort to concessions alone would have done, or for that matter their resort to repression alone), the importance of taking advantage of any loop-holes or weaknesses of the law, the role of the mass media, the delayed appearance on the scene of the traditional revolutionaries (with their objective of 'politicising' the struggle) - almost every feature of the King Hill events of 1965-66 has been repeated.

The affidavits alone - which occupy more than half the pamphlet - provide a social comment on our time that none should miss. Here is material enough to indict the Redbridge Council in the eyes of any honest reader - and possibly even (who knows?) in those of a Court of Law. Victory is in the making, but has not yet been achieved. Help is still urgently needed. Contact London Squatters at the above address or phone (01-539-8059).

It is not our custom to republish 'Solidarity' material. We feel however that the following article, which first appeared in our paper over 7 years ago is so apposite to some of the discussions now taking place on 'the organisational question' as to warrant republication. The overwhelming majority of our readers will never have seen this basic statement of our views.

WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Is Socialism a Utopian dream? Will there always be rulers and ruled? Will the working class always be exploited either by its class enemies or by those who claim to speak in its name? Is it but a modern army of industrial slaves, whose periodic eruptions into activity are without real social significance?

Or, on the contrary, do the conditions of proletarian life - and in particular factory life - lead the workers to develop a consciousness, ideas, and forms of action, whose deepest content is implicitly socialist?

Answers to these questions can only be found in an analysis of working class history and of working class experience. This must start at the most elementary level, from the social reality at the point of production. It must then look wider afield, at the organisations the working class has created throughout its history - and at what happened to them. It must finally look at the objectives of all previous mass actions of the class, during periods of revolution.

Such an analysis must lead to a drastic revision of traditional ideas concerning socialism. A different conception of socialism, in turn, implies different demands to be fought for by socialist organisations. And these organisations, in turn, must be of a new type, if they are successfully to challenge the social reality of today.

THE STRUGGLE IN PRODUCTION

The struggle of the working class against capitalism is neither purely 'economic' nor purely 'political'. It is a struggle which starts at the point of production. Its object is not merely more wages (i.e. a bigger share of the surplus value produced by the working class). Nor is it explicitly concerned with the general reorganisation of society. Its importance lies in the fact that the struggle in production attacks, every hour of the day, the fundamental reality of capitalism. For what it challenges are the relations of production in the capitalist factory, i.e. the relations of groups of men to other groups of men in the process of producing wealth.

Attempts to 'rationalise' production are constantly taking place in the society around us. They are an inevitable by-product of the concentration of capital, whether private or 'state-owned'. These attempts can be seen in the Docks, in the Engineering industry, in the Railways,

in building, in the mines and in banks and offices up and down the country. They affect manual worker and 'white collar' worker alike.

This type of 'rationalisation' creates a mass of contradictions which cannot be solved within class society. For it consists in 'reorganising' the labour process from the outside. The wishes and aptitudes of those who do the work are excluded. Capitalist and bureaucratic 'rationalisation' attempts to reduce to a minimum the creative intervention of workers in the productive process. This is intrinsically absurd... even from the viewpoint of 'efficiency' itself!

In all class society, 'rationalisation' only increases exploitation. It gives rise to a constant working class resistance which dominates the whole of factory life. This resistance affects every aspect of the labour process. Its objectives are not merely an increase in the wage packet. They are also to control the job itself.

In most cases the actual size of the pay packet is determined less by 'official' wage-rates agreements, and more by the realities of production in a given factory: the control of piece rates, the distribution of the workers' time between different kinds of work and especially the tempo and norms of work which the management is able to impose. All these are the subject of a permanent and irreconcilable struggle between workers and management. This struggle takes many forms. It is much more a motive force of the class struggle than is the more obvious struggle for the disposal of surplus value. The pattern of recent strikes should make this clear beyond question.

THE NEW RELATIONS

Whatever their wage level workers are constantly fighting against methods of production which daily increase the inhuman aspects of work. This struggle is not merely a defensive one, aimed at limiting exploitation. Production must somehow be carried on. While acting together against the bureaucratic apparatus of management, workers create, among themselves, a certain solidarity and discipline. They carry on a form of cooperation at work which in spirit and substance comes hourly into conflict with the everyday rules and regulations of the capitalist factory. In a sense the workers 'instinctively' seek to impose a form of workers' management.*

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*Anyone who has worked on the night shift in a large factory will know exactly what we mean. The bureaucratic stranglehold of management is a little less obvious at these times.

During work new relations are created between groups and between individuals. These new relations often challenge the capitalist morality of maximum individual gain. They even tend to replace it with a new morality, based on solidarity and equality. The more serious bourgeois industrial sociologists, such as Elton Mayo, have seen this quite clearly. It is strange to find most 'Marxists' unconcerned at or unaware of these basic facts.*

The capitalists constantly try to impose hierarchical wage structures or hierarchical patterns of wage increases, the better to divide the workers. The more class conscious workers sense that this can only divide them. It is no accident that at British Light Steel Pressings (Acton), probably the best organised and most militant engineering factory in Britain, the Shop Stewards' organisation had succeeded in establishing virtual equality in wages between skilled and semi-skilled.** The same tendency was seen recently in the London bus garages, which overwhelmingly rejected proposals to grant different increases to drivers and conductors.

This 'equalitarian' aspect of working class consciousness and this tendency of workers to manage the job themselves are no 'accident'. In one way or another they come to the forefront every time that capitalism attempts to alter the techniques of production, in order to 'solve' one of its own problems. They express a fundamental and universal tendency, the effects of which can be seen in Russia and in the United States, in France and in Britain. This tendency may remain latent for long periods. It has no formal organisational expression. It has no clearly formulated programme. But its content is to be found in the activities of the masses each time a revolutionary crisis shakes capitalist or bureaucratic society. In every factory throughout the world the workers struggle against arbitrarily imposed norms, and, more generally, against conditions of labour that they have not themselves determined. The 'abolition of the norms' was one of the main demands of the Hungarian Workers' Councils in 1956.

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* These 'Marxists' claim to be 'realists'. Their 'realism' consists in taking refuge behind the real or alleged 'backwardness' of sections of the working class. These 'revolutionaries' don't talk about these basic things for fear of being 'misunderstood', 'isolated' or labelled 'Utopian'. The workers, according to them, have been 'thoroughly corrupted by centuries of capitalism'!

We feel that those who use such arguments abdicate the role of conscious revolutionaries. They do nothing to develop the positive and potentially socialist aspects of working class consciousness.

** See SOLIDARITY pamphlet No.8: The BLSP Dispute, the story of the strike - by Ken Weller, AEW.

THE EXPERIENCE OF REVOLUTION

Born in the trivialities of the work process, and in the experience of collective labour, this 'socialist' conception of society has surged to the forefront in every proletarian revolution. In these upheavals the working class has not simply revolted against misery and exploitation. It has sought to challenge the real basis of every established society: the relations of production, which determine the attitude of human beings to one another.

In these upsurges the working class has repeatedly placed before mankind the whole question of a new form of social organisation. And to this question it has repeatedly provided its own answers. The Commune of 1871, the Soviets of 1905 and 1917, the Russian factory committees of 1917-1918, the German workers' councils of 1919 and 1920, the Italian factory committees of 1921, the councils set up by the Spanish workers in 1936 -1937 and the Hungarian workers' councils of 1956 were at one and the same time organs of struggle against the ruling class and its State - and new forms of social organisation, based on principles radically opposed to those of bourgeois society.

These institutions, created by the proletariat itself,* should be studied most closely. They expose, once and for all, certain misconceptions about 'organisation' which have for centuries plagued all political thinking. These organs of working class power have shown that it is possible at one and the same time to centralise power and to safeguard the workers from political expropriation by those who seek to 'represent' them. In every instance the workers have instinctively sought to impose on 'their' representatives a permanent control from below. The revocability of all the elected representatives was a feature of both the Commune of 1871 and the early Soviets. Workers' management of production demanded by the Russian factory committees of 1917 was instituted by the Spanish workers in 1936 and 1937. It was a key demand of the Hungarian workers' councils in 1956.

The development of the working class towards socialism does not only show itself in the way workers constantly try to organise their own lives and their own activity in the factory. Nor does it only show itself during periods of great revolutionary

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*Parties of professional revolutionaries had very little to do with these creations. The members of the 1st International were taken by surprise by the spontaneous developments in Paris in March 1871. The Russian Bolsheviks were at first opposed to the Soviets in 1905. They viewed them with extreme suspicion. The Stalinists, as is well known, were the most vicious opponents of the independent class organs created by the Spanish workers in 1936-1937, and devoted much of their energy to liquidating them.

upsurge, when the working class has repeatedly demanded the most radical change in all social relations. The working class has also struggled against capitalism, and this from the very beginning of its history, in a conscious and explicit way. This tendency to organise for permanent and open struggle runs like a red thread through the whole fabric of modern society.

From a fairly early date, workers have seen the need systematically to challenge the whole organisation of the society around them. By creating political parties, they have attempted to go beyond the mere defence of their economic interests. They have sought to oppose their own conceptions of society to those of the bourgeoisie. They have sought to go beyond shop floor solutions and to raise the question of power at a national and even at an international level.

It is quite false to proclaim (as do the Stalinist and Trotskyist legatees of Bolshevism) that the working class 'is only capable of achieving a trade union consciousness'. In Germany, the workers started by creating mass political organisations, from which the trade unions subsequently developed. When trade unions were first formed in the Latin countries they were not merely 'economic' organisations, struggling for limited ends. They proclaimed as their objective nothing less than the abolition of the wages system. Many of the first industrial unions in Britain had much the same aim. The constitution of the Mineworkers Union, of the N.U.R. - and to some extent even of the A.E.U. - still bear testimony to this fact.

It is also false that working class political organisations have always been created by intellectuals. Some say this to stress the backwardness of workers, who, it is implied, could never have created such organisations themselves - i.e. without 'leadership' from above. Others make the allegation in order to smear the very conception of political organisation.

A moment's reflection will show that things could never have been like this. Whatever the role of intellectuals, the early organisations of the working class would never have grown and flourished had not many workers come to them, made them real, injected them with their experience, constantly participated in their activity and often sacrificed their lives for them. Workers recognised, in other words, their own fundamental needs in the programme of these organisations. This state of affairs persisted during a whole period of history. This period is now drawing to a close, both objectively and in the minds of the workers, and this despite the desparate attempts of self-styled revolutionaries to keep alive the slowly dying traditional organisations.

There is therefore an autonomous development of the proletariat towards socialism. This is neither a mechanical consequence of the 'objective conditions' of working class life. Nor is it due to some mysterious biological trend. It is a process which finds its driving force in the constant opposition of workers to capitalist methods of organising production. It is an historical process. And it is essentially a process of struggle. Let no one distort what we are saying. Workers are not 'born' socialists. They are not miraculously converted into socialists on entering a factory. They tend to become socialists - or perhaps one should say they make themselves socialists - in the course of, and through, the daily struggle against capitalism.

This is not to deny the importance of understanding the process theoretically. We are not philistines. The experience of groups of workers in one industry or in one country must be brought to others. The wider implications must be drawn out. Artificial barriers must be broken down. Objectives must be constantly redefined in the light of new developments. But such intellectual understanding can never be a substitute for participation in the struggle itself. If it is not nurtured in struggle, if it remains based on the reality of a previous period, it can only act as an impediment to effective action.

THE STRUGGLE WITHIN THE WORKING CLASS

What is the struggle for socialism about? Where does it take place? Against whom is it directed? What are the conditions for its success? Here again there is much sloppy thinking. In our previous publications we have dealt at some length with the struggle in production. But the working class does not only fight capitalism as something external to itself.

If it were only a question of the material power of the capitalist class, of their State and of their Army, capitalist society would long ago have been overthrown. Capitalism has no strength other than the labour power of those it exploits. It survives because it succeeds in getting its slaves to accept their status. Its most powerful weapons are not those it uses consciously: its police, its army, its courts. These are but adjuncts to its rule, important though they be. Other things help the ruling class. In particular the persistence and constant re-birth of capitalist ideas amongst the ranks of the workers.

The worker is no stranger to capitalist society. He is born into it, he lives in it, he participates in it and makes it work. Capitalist ideas, capitalist values and capitalist attitudes constantly permeate the working class. Workers develop or retain these ideas

precisely because they are an exploited class. From childhood on, patterns of thought are imposed on them by 'established' society. The perpetuation of capitalism and of its institutions tends to perpetuate capitalist ideas amongst workers. The 'patriotic' notions of even the most militant workers is one of the most striking illustrations of this 'dual consciousness'.

The working class is submitted to systematic indoctrination. It is deprived of the material prerequisites of culture. It is even deprived of its own past, of which it only knows what its exploiters - or its own 'leaders' - allow it to know.* It is deprived of an awareness of itself as a universal class. This results from local, occupational or national divisions, imposed on the working class by the present organisation of society. It is even deprived of an awareness of its present status, all channels of information being in the hands of the ruling class and of the labour bureaucracies.

Despite these handicaps, workers fight back. They make up for what is kept from them. They develop a healthy suspicion of bourgeois indoctrination and a basic indifference to its content. By many devious routes they tend to assimilate the culture of which they are deprived. They even lay the basis of a new culture. Scholastically they may ignore their past. But they find it in front of them, again and again, in the form of conditions and rights to be defended.

The situation of the proletariat in modern society is therefore profoundly 'contradictory'. In the course of production the class constantly creates the elements of a new form of social organisation and of a new culture. Outside of production it never frees itself completely from the influence of the environment in which it lives.

The constant re-birth of capitalist tendencies within working class ranks is the most formidable obstacle to the development of socialist consciousness. This even takes place amongst the most advanced sections of workers. The most subtle and pernicious influences of capitalist society are found where least expected. They permeate social-democratic, Stalinist and Trotskyist thinking alike. They consist in fundamentally bourgeois ways of looking at things. Bourgeois 'common sense' is elevated into an absolute rationality. Inertia is systematically injected into the ranks of the working class, through appeals to 'leave it to those who know better' (whether these be factory managers, production experts, specialists in 'facts' of one

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* There has been a systematic distortion of working class history in which bourgeois, bureaucratic, 'elitist', and other interested parties have all participated.

kind or another, 'progressive' politicians... or professional revolutionaries 'with years of experience in the movement').

Capitalist methods of organisation also profoundly influence the working class movement. Spontaneous, 'unofficial' activity is frowned upon. There is a suspicious attitude to new conceptions (to any idea, in fact, which has not blossomed in the head of some 'experienced' comrade). Dogmatism and hero-worship abound. There is a tendency to live on the dwindling capital of the past rather than on the realities of the present. All these notions are systematically fostered by both bourgeois and bureaucratic societies. They seep into the workers' movement through its every pore. They are in fact reflections of the very society the 'revolutionaries' are supposed to be struggling against. They reproduce in the sphere of intellectual life, and in the sphere of organisation, the social relations which prevail in the capitalist factory: relations based on domination, inequality, and on alienation.

In times of revolution, capitalist state power may be militarily crushed... yet the old social relations remain. This will happen if, in order to overthrow the old society (or under the pretext of 'efficiency') the revolutionary army or the 'new' productive apparatus have to be 're-organised' along the old lines. All the main features of the old society will then soon re-emerge.

The building of a revolutionary organisation to express the aspirations of the working class is a tremendous task. But the working class can instantly destroy this achievement if it believes that all that is then required of it is to have unlimited confidence in the organisation it has created. The degeneration will set in, the moment the working class withdraws from the arena and hands over to 'its' organisation the solution of all its problems.

The problems of the class can only be solved by the conscious action of the class itself. There are no short cuts. This is the lesson of all previous history. The struggle of the proletariat against capitalism is therefore, to a large extent, the struggle of the proletariat against itself. It is a struggle to free itself of all that lingers on, in its thinking, in its habits, and in its internal organisation, of the society it is fighting against. The history of the working class movement is the history of the growing strength and consciousness of the working class, in the course of this struggle.

This text, reprinted from SOLIDARITY Vol.II, nos. 2 and 3, is based on an article which first appeared in issue no.27 of SOCIALISME OU BARBARIE, the theoretical journal of our French co-thinkers.

letter from a teacher

'You'll never change Hoxton, mate, it'll change you'- a fellow in a pub in Hoxton told me that twelve years ago. He was right.

Hoxton is a village in North London, in the borough of Shoreditch, near Bethnal Green. It's real East End in character. There's Hoxton Market, on every day of the week. Lots of pubs and cafés and stalls of junk. A place with history, a family place, which Booth described as the centre of the thieving industry of England. People can trace their families back in Hoxton for generations. An area suspicious of all forms of authority, an area which is both poor and depressed, and certainly criminal by society's standards.

Here I was sent as a wet-behind-the-ears teacher from a Methodist College, cloistered away like a monks' sanctuary. Whatever I was trained for itwas certainly not for Hoxton. Over the years it has changed, of course. The charming West Indians have moved in with their own culture. The place has been rebuilt. Down went the tenement houses and up went the cheap concrete towers, called flats, where overcrowding is worse and playing space less than before.

The Grammar Schools in the more desirable parts of that area stayed on, while the dingy Secondary Moderns were emptied of their souls which were used in turn to fill up the new Comprehensives. I say 'new' comprehensives. A few glass and iron buildings erected among ancient Victorian converted Sec. Mods. served as the hope of the new era in education. Here I was. A sprawling place, housing over a thousand kids, on a site well over an acre. The new and the old. Comprehensive in name only. Lots of courses offered. But who were the kids? They weren't the famed eleven-plus passes. They were the throw-outs, the left-overs from a depressed, multi-racial, poor, criminal society, where the privileged few went to the Grammar Schools. There they were, all streamed, all labelled and numbered right down to Ii and 2j. What was I to do? What were we all to do?

Branded as failures and labelled as such, all they wanted to do was get out and do a bit of thieving. Or have a quiet smoke in the bogs. Or better still get the teacher chatting on a few spicy bits of life. Here I was, then, with a seemingly undisciplined, rough, wild, untrustworthy lot. They loved going out for cups of tea, and when I could afford it we did this. Much more contact was made in those seedy cafés - over pin tables and dirty mugs - than I'm sure was ever done in a million classrooms. We would walk round to Brick Lane and Liverpool Street and see the Alcos and the City gents and come closer together through the misery and depression (and also the snobbery) of the society about us. We would talk of these things in their own language. And write. And so we progressed - them and me.

On Saturday nights I would go to the Roses pub. Here was a place representative of all Hoxton. The clientele outcrowded the smoke, and the raucous Cockney music hall show couldn't drown out the unending string of choice stories. And it was here, in the heart of Booth's 'criminal London' that I met the parents of some of the school's most difficult and neglected children. And where the responsibility lies to a great extent with the parents I couldn't but feel the tragic effect we were having on the kids themselves with our never-ending mania for cataloguing and grading these people who, by virtue of their rotten housing, poor jobs, and previously labelled heritage, were doomed at birth to be shot into a 'remedial' class.

Remedial meant not remedy, but easier work and no progress. It meant - do anything with them so long as they don't smash up the room. It meant hiring coaches and packing them off to Epping Forest for the day when the inspectors came round or when Open Day was on. But they were wonderful, intelligent kids, who could get you a suede coat or a radio or a tent at the turn of a card, kids who would snatch £100 from an office safe and in running down Hoxton slap ten quid into the astonished palm of an old age pensioner with the parting words 'ere's your pension, darlin'. Kids who would lean out of the windows and cheer you as you came in late, and ask you what sort of a night you had had, and pored over you with interest. Kids who would ring you up when you were ill, and sometimes arrive in the middle of the day and cook you a meal of baked beans. Kids who sympathised with you, alone in London. Above all, they were kids who loved you because you loved them and loved you because you knew they smoked and gambled and bunked off and yet did not report them, because you knew they'd be caned and they'd resent that, and besides it wouldn't do any good because they were branded 'remedial' and that was that. They were biding their time and exams were meaningless. School was a place to meet one's friends and chat up the birds, a place where teachers were to be avoided at all costs. Caning was a ritual which some masters used as a means of solving the problem of discipline because it was quick, and took no effort, and was approved.

But going into cafés with them and gambling with them and drinking with them was also frowned on. So I was alone with my kids. I suppose that, like them, I was an outcast. I enjoyed it and was content to breeze along with them. I was happy in their contentment and trust of me. I forgot about academic standards when I saw how they lived, and yet I learned to live with them.

They were many, and money was scarce and the advantages of staying on weren't even considered. A School Journey was out of their reach, but for a few the excitement of Switzerland and winter sports did materialise, and to see them alive was a wonder in itself. But still they come in as before, created by the same problems, still resilient and happy. But I am not. I am with them and I identify with them, and I think they like me because I cannot get annoyed when they haven't a pencil, or if they curse

and smoke. And don't wear uniform. I'm happy if they come in as they are. People. Alive and wide oyed, chewing their gum and sitting around me in my office, just chatting, and in their own way working and talking. I like this freedom. It isn't licence. We have a framework now. A respect. Maybe they are not in rows and they don't jump to attention when I enter, but we get through the required stuff and still have time to play. And they are proud of their work and above all they still come back or yell out in the Underground 'Ere, there's old George', 'ello, Sir, ow yer getting on?'. I like that. I haven't changed anything but somehow I wish I could - and I'd change not Hoxton, but the system.

G. Reynoldson.

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VAUXHALL - THE CRISIS NEARS

This is the third consecutive issue of 'Solidarity' to carry material on Vauxhall. We make no apologies. Indeed we intend to continue our coverage. We have been receiving a steadily increasing stream of articles, letters and documents, which are very welcome and useful, even if we don't use them immediately. We would like to repeat our invitation to Vauxhall workers to send us their views.

Negotiations on the Company's diabolical proposals have continued.* In the process a number of anomalies have been smoked out at shop floor level and workers have gradually become aware of the full ramifications of the deal.

One example of this happened in the Body in White shop at Luton. The new proposals specifically exclude condition payments. But where, as a result of shop floor struggle, condition payments already exist, these will be consolidated into the basic rate, thus freezing an unfair situation permanently. For example door hangers, metal finishers and welders (after a struggle), and men on hoods, boot lids and lead discing will be on T.3 rate (which would mean 11/4 or 11/5 per hour by June 1970) while the rest of the shop, some of whom - for example men in the CO^2 booth - are in many ways working in worse conditions than the T3 men, will get the T4 rate (which is 5d an hour less than T3). This will no doubt have the advantage (for management) of being a potent divisive factor in the shop if the agreement is imposed. Another aspect of the ending of condition payments will be the ending of any incentive to the firm to improve or even maintain working conditions.

The first report back on the negotiations was at a meeting of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee held on May 15 in the main canteen. The AEF District Secretary Arthur 'Rodent' Sjogren opened the meeting by ramming it down our throats that 'we had reached the end of the road', that 'it was the company's final offer' and that we should accept it. When stewards attempted to question him on a number of points Sjogren and the AEF Convenor (Glyn Morgan) got their priorities right and decided that a free piss-up at S.K.F. Co. Ltd. was more important. They hurried off to the free booze and a picture in the local rag, thus ending the meeting which had lasted precisely 20 minutes!

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* For details of these proposals see 'Vauxhall militants, beware!' in 'Solidarity' vol.V, no.10.

On May 30 there was a further meeting at the Harp Social Centre, Luton, convened by the Production and Associated Services Shop Stewards Committee. About 90 stewards attended. For some unearthly reason Sjogren was again the main speaker. His first words were: 'This is the first time I have come here and it will be the last;* this is an unconstitutional body and entirely unofficial'. Glyn Morgan then spoke in a similar vein. Many present felt that these officials had attended the meeting specifically to make sure it achieved little. The meeting needed their negative comments like it needed a broken leg.

However the meeting did get going. Questions and comments flew thick and fast from the Trim Shop, Body Shop, Final Finish, the Van Line and the Press Shop. A call was issued for a mass meeting of production workers to discuss the agreement but this was never acted upon.

THE COMPANY APPLIES PRESSURE.

As resistance to the agreement began to consolidate, the management increased its pressure, both directly and through its various agents. It tried to stampede the agreement through before the summer holidays (which start at the end of July). Rumours were spread of the possibility of short time working. There were headlines in the local press, aimed at creating panic, as well as enthusiastic editorials about the proposed agreements. The Company's tactics were obvious: to use and exaggerate the present temporary recession in the industry**to get the men to accept an agreement which would permanently keep them at the bottom of the Motor Industry League.

The Company's case was not helped by the publication, early in June, of its report for 1968. This revealed that Hegland, Chairman and Managing Director of Vauxhall Motors Ltd., was paid £64,942 for the year - an increase of £13,000 over 1967, which means he gets an hourly rate of about £31. Altogether Vauxhall's 12 directors shared £263,254 in 1968, exclusive of certain hidden emoluments.

On June 6 a meeting of the Negotiating Committee was held in Chester, at which it was agreed that the proposals would be put to a ballot. Workers would be allowed to vote in favour of either of two slightly different alternatives designated 'A' and 'B' (both of which contained the objectionable clauses) or vote against. The stage was set. Management

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* We hope he's right!

** Home sales of Vauxhall cars fell by 14% in the first 6 months of 1969 compared with the same period last year. Vauxhall were less hard hit than any other British motor manufacturers. For the same period Vauxhall's car exports were up 4% and commercial vehicles sales up 68% - figures given by David Hegland, Chairman and Managing Director of Vauxhall, July 11, 1969. ('Evening Standard', 11.7.69)

and officials were confident the proposals would be accepted by a large majority, since hourly-paid non-production staff and skilled workers constitute an actual majority of Vauxhall workers (production workers only total about 40% of the whole), a fact which in the past has been used with great effect by management and the officials.

The Shop Stewards Committee at Vauxhall has in the past tended to represent the interests of skilled workers. It was this which caused the formation of the Production and Associated Services Shop Stewards Committee. Since most of the worst aspects of the agreement would affect production workers far more than, say, maintenance men and toolmakers, the management felt that these groups could - on past form - be relied upon to look after their own sectional interests. It should be noted that throughout the recent events the Joint Shop Stewards Committee has had, at best, an exceedingly weak line. At no time has it come out in opposition to the proposals. Indeed its leaflet, published before the ballot, emphasised the negative aspects of the situation. One can only hope that radical changes will be made in the critical months ahead. One is almost reminded of the description of the British Army in the First World War as 'lions led by donkeys'.

AN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME.

On June 23 there was a meeting of AEF and NUVB stewards at Ellesmere Port which decisively rejected the firm's proposals. This decision was endorsed by a subsequent meeting of the men. They proposed, as a minimum demand,* that:

1. Condition allowances would remain outside of Consolidation so as to discourage Management allowing sub-standard working conditions and that we at Ellesmere Port would require local negotiating rights on this matter.

2. That we would consolidate within the existing categories and that each category would have a starting rate, followed after a 3-month period by a full rate, in this way eliminating Special Grade, 1st Grade, and Grade and Merit Payments.

3. We would also require 3s. per hour rise on all of these categories which would be paid above the existing special grade rates of each individual category.

4. Consolidation of Merit Money, which only certain categories of our workers receive at the moment, would be abolished within the 3s. per hour rise.

5. We would expect our Joint Negotiating team to get Vauxhall workers on a parity with the Rootes car workers by March 1971.

6. One extra week's paid holiday every year, in exchange for the profit share-out scheme.

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* Joint AEF-NUVB notice for Ellesmere Port signed by T.A.Baker and K.Spain, AEF and NUVB convenors respectively, on June 30, 1969.

7. If these demands are not met within the lifetime of the present agreement, which expires in October 1969, the Shop Stewards Committee recommends the complete withdrawal of labour until they are.

At Luton and Dunstable the ballots were inconclusive. Of the AEF's 12,000 members, only 51.9% voted for either of the two alternatives. In the NUVB, which is smaller but contains a much higher proportion of production workers, the percentage in favour of the proposals was only 41%. The ballot had been a failure. The management is up shit-creek without a paddle. Hastily called secret meetings are going on at a number of levels. Vauxhall production workers had better watch out that their victory at the ballot box is not lost in the Conference Room. Let there be no mistake: the result of the vote was a victory. The whole object of the exercise was to weaken job organisation at Vauxhall's, thereby ending the possibility of forcing the management to concede parity with Midland car workers.

The ballot was an attempt to by-pass the stewards by going directly to the workers. It has blown up in the faces of the management and of their union lackeys. The union hierarchy is split wide open, with the local officials of the NUVB ('Weary' Leary and Co.) being opposed to the agreement and the National Executive (Roberts and Co.) being in favour. Conversely, the local AEF officials Sjogren* and Horner are in favour of the Agreement, while the national officials (Scanlon and Co.) are opposed.

But although the situation for militants has greatly improved they must remember that they have only won the first round. They must continue to organise and build up shop organisation for the larger struggles ahead. VAUXHALL WORKERS, BEWARE!

Black Pedro.

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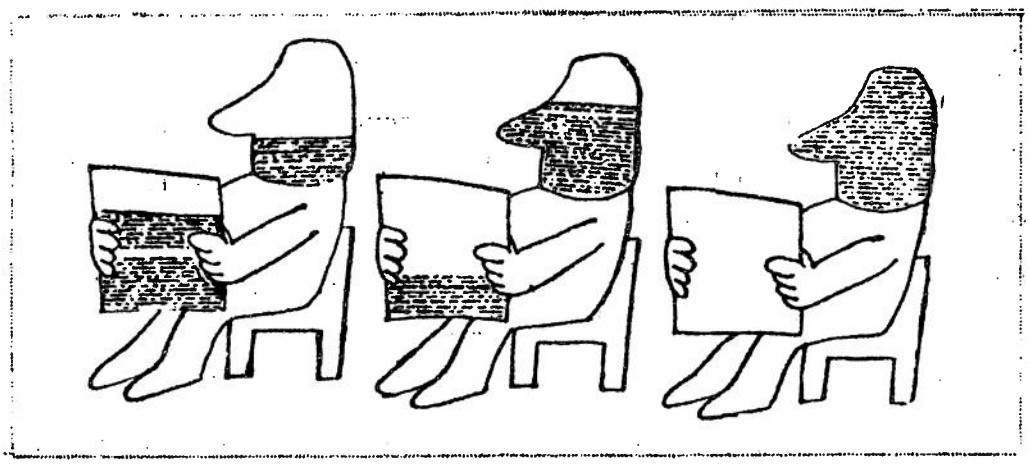
* Sjogren has even privately intimated that he would be prepared to sign the agreement unilaterally.



solidarity conference

A national meeting of Solidarists - held in London on June 21 - 22 to discuss 'organisational' questions - attracted some 40 members and supporters from Aberdeen, Bristol, Clydeside, London and Warwick.

Each group gave a report of its activities since the Leeds meeting. The reports revealed a wide spectrum of preoccupations, partly dependant on milieu of work, and of priorities.

In the following discussions attempts were made to define what constituted a Solidarity group (1) as distinct from a group of admirers, or consumers of Solidarity ideas.

In an attempt to defend a specific Solidarity viewpoint from the all-pervasive encroachments of the dominant ideology (whether in bourgeois or bolshevik form) it was recommended that self-proclaimed new groups only be considered part of the Solidarity movement 'if accepted as such by one of the existing groups', final assimilation into the fold to be conditional on acceptance 'by the majority of the established groups' members, at the National Conference'.

The opportunities for disseminating our ideas to a far wider audience (both in industry and among students) were stressed by several speakers. The Conference accepted (19 - 1, 11) a proposal that 'a major October conference on the theme 'Combat Liberalism! Combat Leninism! Towards Libertarian Revolution!' should be held - in the Midlands - but several comrades expressed reservations on whether we had the material and human resources to undertake this task.

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(1) "For an Autonomous Group to be accepted as part of the national Solidarity Organisation, or Movement, it should be in agreement with the basic assumptions outlined in AS WE SEE IT, and be prepared actively to engage in disseminating and implementing them.

We cannot consider those who form a Group, yet are unable to set up lines of communication in their own area and environment, as people who seriously believe in Autonomous Groups. This is a fundamental principle of Solidarity. It is not good enough to say, "We are an Autonomous Group. We sell other people's journals, ideas and experiences.

In building these Groups, the objectives should be:

(a) Each Group should have its own journal or broadsheet, in which members of that Group relate their theoretical ideas to their own immediate environment and that of their contacts;

(b) To link up struggles, industry by industry, and/or area by area;

(c) Finally, out of this, they seek to develop a general theoretical perspective for the analysis and criticism of the whole society.

CARRIED 27 - 0, 0.

Certain proposals were then put to the conference (and carried by the margins indicated (the principle having previously been unanimously endorsed that in a movement based on autonomous groups these decisions were recommendations only.

1. That an internal bulletin be produced by the Clydeside Group (the group to have no editorial rights on its contents). 18 - 0, 2.

2. That a Committee be elected to organise the next National Meeting. (18 - 3, 1). The following were elected to serve on this Committee: D.K., J.K., N.L., N.R.

3. That a National Coordinating Committee be set up with the following functions:
   (a) convening and organising (future) national conferences, schools, seminars and other meetings;
   (b) distribution of addresses of local groups and contacts and other information relating to its work;
   (c) organising speakers, if required. 15 - 7, 5.

4. That the National Coordinating Committee should not be a formally constituted body and need not actually meet. One member of each autonomous group should be delegated to deal with correspondence concerning the Movement in general. He will know the particular contact and will circularise all information, documents, etc., to each member of the Committee and will in return receive all necessary information from other members. 23 - 0, 7.

The gathering was dominated by the twin pre-occupations: (a) of coordinating the activities of the Solidarity movement which was undoubtedly growing; and (b) of doing so in a consciously anti-bureaucratic manner.

The London Conference recommended that: "No publication of any Group should appear to speak for all Solidarity Groups" and that "All Solidarity publications should prominently display their Group's name". To avoid (a) misunderstanding, or (b) any (mistaken) impression of hegemonistic inclinations, the Group which has produced the last 58 issues of this magazine and the first 30 Solidarity pamphlets has now renamed itself SOLIDARITY (NORTH LONDON).

This change of name, essential now that new Solidarity Groups and magazines are appearing, does not mean that we only sell, agitate, or recruit, in North London, or that we only deal with North London topics. Our field of interests and activities and our production of agitational, historical, and theoretical material will continue as before.

It is well known that a politically conscious animal, on being handed a leaflet or pamphlet, immediately turns to the foot of the back page to see who has produced it. We intend to do everything in our power to help militants in this task. (SEE BELOW).

Published by Solidarity NORTH LONDON
53A Westmoreland Road, BROMLEY, BR2-0TQ. July, 15, 1969.

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