solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

ABERDEEN

TRAWL STRIKE

tenants struggle

FRANCE: *revolt that failed*

LATEST *from the* PAPER MILLS

6D

EDITORIAL.

This being the first issue of SOLIDARITY ABERDEEN, it is perhaps fitting that we give some account of the Aberdeen group in relation toyhe ideas of SOLIDARITY as outlined in AS WE SEE IT at the end of the magazine.

As with all SOLIDARITY groups, the Aberdeen group is relatively small. The basic idea is that SOLIDARITY is not out to recruit members in the same way that other left organisations are. Solidarity main activity is to spread its ideas and to encourage workers to form their own organisations, rather than to force them to adapt to the organisational forms and leadership of others. Accordingly, the ideal size of a Solidarity group is that where every member can participate fully in the activity of the group. Once some members become underemployed, another group should be formed to ensure that effort is not wasted, and that valuble members are not lost due to boredom from lack of activity.

In Aberdeen, we have not yet reached that stage, indeed the group has only in the last few months grown enough in size and committment to enable it to undertake complete responsibility for its own activities.By this I mean that it is now able to control its own publication of material. In the past, we in Aberdeen have sold SOLIDARITY, the production of the original group, North London, which, while it has often contained articles on Aberdeen, has never contained as detailed articles as we would of liked, and more important, has never been under any editorial control by us.

This idea of local control is most important, for it is one of Solidarity's strong beliefs that local organisations such as factory committees should be autonomous, and therefore each Solidarity group should be self reliant, which is what the Aberdeen group has made itself with the production of its own magazine.

The new capability for the group to produce a magazine will make a difference to its activity, owing largely to the group's small size, local activity was centred around the paper mills. This was a deliberate policy for the best utilisation of our limited numbers in the local industry with the largest units and the most modern equipment. However, even although the group has been its present size for some months now, there has been little to widen our scope, and this can at least be partially attributed to the fact that we could only publish one article per month. Now, with the need to fill a magazine from Aberdeen sources, there will be considerable pressure to widen our scope, the results of which are evident in this first issue, with articles on tenants and fishermen.

Of course, the publication and selling of magazines is not the goal in itself, but the regular selling of a magazine at a factory, with the occasional article on the situation in that factory, disseminates Solidarity's ideas, to the workers and this can help

them towards forming their own seperate organisations.

As AS WE SEE IT points out, these workers organisations should be firmly under the control of the workers themselves. They are not shop stewards committees under the thumb of the Union district organiser. In fact, they should be completely divorced from the Union and should indeed veiw the Union as part of the enemy. For whatever good the Unions may have done in the past, they have steadily become accessories to the bosses exploitation of the worker's - have you ever heard of a Union negotiated productivety deal which did not ultimately mean more and harder work for more pay.

This matter of Unions is one where the difference between Solidarity and other Left-Wing organisations is most marked. Generally they support the Left-Wing leaders of some Unions and are always amazed when they finally sell out the workers. Generally they demand that strikes be made offical and are always amazed when the Union negotiators finally sell out the workers. They cannot understand that the Unions are fully integrated into the system, and that the Union leaders are so much on the same wave-length as the bosses that some sit side by side in the House of Lord's. But, even more important by demanding that strikes be made offical they are trying to prevent workers from organising their own affairs, for they are inviting the Union bureaucrats to dissolve the strike committees * send the workers home or back to work, while their fates are negotiated by men who do not share their work nor their way of life.

To sum up Solidarity believes that autonmous workers organisations are the instruments for the overthrow of Capitalism, not political parties with their limited veiws of what is important and their heirarchical structures. Accordingly, Solidarity believes its role to be a largely propaganda one - disseminating its ideas and encourageing the formation of these autonmous organisations. Aberdeen Solidarity with the publication of its own magazine is reaching the size and capability to more properly fulfil these tasks.

* See article in this issue on Trawlers Strike.

For :- ORDERS, ARTICLES & COMMENTS.

I. MITCHELL.
3 SINCLAIR ROAD,
ABERDEEN.

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JUST OUT !

SOLIDARITY(NORTH LONDON)

Vol 5 No12:includes articles on Vauxhall;Punfield & Barstow Strike etc.

SOLIDARITY(SOUTH LONDON)

No 4 includes articles on Fiat;Construction Industry,etc.

Available from adresses on P5.

MILL WORKERS FIGHT

We are continuing our analysis of events in Stoneywood, begun in Solidarity Vol 5 Nos 6 & 10 with the article below. We appeal to workers in the Mill to send us letters, information, articles to help inprove our coverage. In no circumstance would we reveal the writers identity.

The first stage of the Job Evaluation[1] at Stoneywood Paper Mill in Aberdeen has been completed and the workers in the different sections have recieved their gradings. The workers initial reaction was anger; in the beater-house for example the men made plain their refusal to accept down-grading, and many went to voice their objections to the committee responsible for the Evaluation which they were entitled to do. Indeed so many went that this dubious 'right' was stopped! In Waterton as well the men were almost unanimous in their objection. After the initail excitement it was decided to wait for the actual wage rates for the gradings.

The management were worried by the mens reaction and issued a statement saying that they were aware of the dissatisfaction, but that once the rates were finalised, everyone would benefit. This awareness of what is going on inside the Mill is a new depature for the management. As recently as last September, the general manager, C.G. Bannatyne, only learned of a walk-out in the despatch dept. through the newspapers.

Late in June a circular was put round saying that it was expected that the proposals would be finalised at a Union-Management meeting on the 25th June, and that a further meeting on the 28th would be held at which these bodies would explain to the men the new proposals. Appeals by the men to the Donside branch secretary of SOGAT, Bill Taylor for the quarterly meeting to be held prior to the finalising of the proposals had been ignored, and many of the men were in a militant mood for the meeting. But for little apparent reason, the next day the meeting was postponed for almost two months Hostility towards the Unions secrecy was mounting, and 50 men in the Despatch Dept and cutting and Rolling Dept managed to get a hold of Taylor (an amazing achievement) and demanded a Union meeting. Taylor seemed little worried, after all he has already got a £2 a week rise for himself. We feel that a Evaluation on Taylor might reveal that he's not worth the dues we pay for him.

inside stoneywood

Inside the Mill the tightening up on security and disipline continues. The ability of workers to leave their machines has been severely curtailed in Waterton. In the section working on paper for American Express, workers have been locked in the building during working hours. The bosses have been having trouble with this particular order, and such is their fear of losing it, that the workers could have those doors unlocked any time they demanded it.

The bosses are not having things all their own way how-ever. Leafletting and sales of "Solidarity" (averaging about 100/issue for the last six months) have helped to spread information and make contacts. Previously isolated militants have been able to meet each other.

As in early 1968[2] the bonus in the Mill is gradually being cut following upon a ballot on wages. This allowed for three wage increases of 3½% over the next two years to be paid out of bonus-meaning no rise at all. The bait held out to entice the workers to accept this was a full three weeks holidays with pay by 1970. However the ballot recommended for acceptance by O'Leary the paper-making secretary of SOGAT, also allows for any increased wage costs due to this to be made up "by manpower savings, reduction in un-productive overtime or any other savings to ensure that there is not an overall increase in the wages bill of the Mill". So we can expect no help from the Union if redundancies are fought by the workers in the future.

conclusions

Firstly, nothing will be gained from waiting for hand-outs from the management. The paper-industry is Britain is one of fairly low profits and an agglomeration of small Mills, under fierce competition from Scandinavian Mills. Unless we fight for our demands we will gain nothing.

Secondly, nothing, should be expected from the Trade Unions in a struggle, their help is the 'kiss-of-death'. Can you ask the Unions to fight a Job Evaluation they helped carry out? Or to oppose the implementation of a national ballot they helped draw up? A Union bureacrat has as much power and pay as a Mill Manager, and is as much an enemy.

Thirdly, there is a need for organisation at shop-floor level It is important that militant workers in different sections of the Mill meetto disuss experiences, action, grienvances. New forms of struggle should be considered occupations of parts of the Mill,

demonstration in and out of the Mill, regular leafletting to extend the struggle. A great help would be a short, regular bulletin written by and for Stoneywood workers our services are available to print this if required. However, the form and content of any struggle must always be decided upon by the mass of the workers themselves.

1See Solidarity Vol 5 No 10
2See Solidarity Vol 5 No 6

I.M.

AUTONOMOUS 'SOLIDARITY' GROUPS

Aberdeen: c/o Roy, 138 Walker Road, Aberdeen.

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

London(south) c/o A.Mann, 79, Balfour Street, SE17.

London(north) c/o H.Russel, 53A, Westmoreland Rd, Bromley Kent.

Both of the London groups produce their own magazines; which are available either from us, or from the adresses mentioned. We also have a wide range of pamphlets available from the Aberdeen adress.

France: (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10).

a new President last month, with candidates ranging from the Gaullists to the Communist Party and Krivine for the Trotskyists. The realisation that none of these parties can ease the alienation and frustration which is the daily lot of the producers has not yet dawned. This is hardly surprising, since few people admit to feeling alienated or frustrated, yet their actions in everyday life show that they are. The feeling of 'let's bugger things up', is still there, as shown by the continuing spate of strikes, etc.

Consciousness is continuing to rise in France as in every other industrialised State; struggles are being fought and lessons learned from them. True consciousness, leading to a change in society, will be reached when a real awareness of the relationsof production is attained.

K.N.

TENANTS REVOLT

The following article,written by a part -icipant,tells of the struggle of a group of Aberdeen tenants against their land-lord.'Solidarity' has been co-operating with the tenants by duplicating leaflets and supporting demonstrations.The exper-ience gained by autonomous tenants groups can be invaluable in the struggle for workers power,already tenants are asking themselves just who it is that our 'demo -cratic' press,courts and police defend,

INTRODUCTION

In the area of the junction of Hutcheon Street and Holland street a Tenants' Association has been formed to take action on all things that will help to make this area a better place to live in.At present the area is verging on being slum property and the aims of the Association are to improve conditions generally and to promote some social community life.

The Association was started by a few of the tenants discussing the faults of their houses,and it was found that many of these were a breach of contract by the Landlady.

THREATS OF EVICTION

When one of the tenants recieved notice to quit which in our opinion was unfair,it was decided that action had to be taken immediately.The tenant applied to the Rent Tribunal to have a fair rent assesed and to obtain security.

By spotlighting this case it was brought to the notice of other tenants how easily they could be thrown out of the property simply because they did not know their rights. By leafletting the area a number of tenants decided to apply to the furnished rents tribunal to have a fair rent assesed.

Soon there were too many people gathering for meet-ings to be run smoothly without office bearers being appointed and this was duly done.We have also drafted a constitution & the members meet once a week in one of the members homes.

When all the rents had been reduced by the Rent Tribunal(see enclosed leaflet),the landlady,Mrs. Grant of Aberdeen Furnished Homes began to retaliate through her solicitor,Mr.McKendrick.His methods made it quite clear that he was ignoring previous verbal agreements with the tenants, One case is of a tenant,who,as he is paid monthly,paid his

CHAIRMAN:Mr.R.Brandie,
I30,Hutcheon St.
(Ist floor right)

VICE-CHAIRMAN:Mr.D.
MacDonald,I38 Hutcheon St.
(Bottom right).

TEL:21937
for contact.

ARE YOU SAFE FROM EVICTION.

HOLLAND STREET AND HUTCHEON STREET TENANTS' ASSOCIATION.

We meet every week.We are out to have action to demand what we feel are our rights.We feel that we are paying far too much rent for the conditions we are living in.

Action brings RESULTS-

THE FACTS: I00% sucess.9 flats out of nine have had their rents reduced.

NAME.		number of rooms	orig. rent	new rent by tribunal.
Mr.McGreggor	I40 Hutcheon Street	2	£3	£2 I0 0
Mr Ritchie	"" "	2	£3	£2 7 6
Mr. McDonald	I38 Hutcheon Street	2	£3	£2 I0 0
Mr. McHardy	I30 Hutcheon Street	2	£3	£2 I0 0
Mr. Brandie	" "	3	£4	£3 I0 0
Mr Fay	3 Holland Street	4	£5	£4 5 0
Mr. Ellis	4 Holland Street	3	£4	£3 I0 0
Mrs. Birnie	8 Holland Street	2	£3	£2 I0 0
Mrs Anders	4 Holland Street	2	£3	£2 7 6

JUDGE THE RENT YOU SHOULD PAY BY OUR RESULTS.

Should you live in a flat

1. with mice.
2. where you have to pay for gas and electricity on top of unreasonable rent.
3. where there are holes in cupboards.
4. with dangerous wiring.
5. with no window catches.

6. with wash houses that are not fit for washing in.

7. with draughts when your contract states that the landlord is responsible for keeping the flat windproof and waterproof.

8. where you are paying 1/5 of your rent for furniture which we all know could have the 2nd hand value paid for in a matter of a couple of weeks rent.

The TENANTS ASSOCIATION has its own SOLICITOR. Every tenant has been given SIX MONTHS security of tenure who applied to the Rents Tribunal.

Did you know that the landlord can only evict a tenant for being a bad tenant? -What does a bad tenant mean?? This can mean one of four things:-

I) Regular non-payment of rent

2)Using the flat for 'illegal or immoral' purposes.

3) Damage to property.

4)Nuisance to neighbours.

We see our victory so far as being the beginning of a struggle for maximum rights.

We want our neighbourhood to be fit to live in.

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE:

AT .....

ON .....

AT .....

If you are at all interested, please attend. You are very welcome. You have nothing to lose by attending the meeting, and judging by our results, everything to gain.

We pledge our support to any tenant in difficulty.

are you safe from eviction.

rent monthly,with the verbal agreement of the landladies agent.His rent book shows that he paid his rent regularly each month.Because of the standard of furnishings in his home,and their scarcity,he applied to the unfurnished rent tribunal to have his rent fixed.

The agent retaliated immediately by serving him with a summons to the small debt court for three weeks erreans of rent,thus breaking his verbal agreement with the tenant. Since then the tenant has been served with a Summary Moving Petition and given I month to find alternative accomodation.

Another case is of a young divorced woman with two babies who applied to the tribunal and had her case postponed for four weeks.Two days later she recieved a letter from the agent telling her that since she was divorced she was now in fact a squatter,as the lease was in her former husbands name,and she was given five days to quit;the tenants know that the landlady knew of the divorce all along,but at the tribunal this was denied.

Next for notice to quit was the tenant of a flat in which four students live.These students were active members of the association;they were given notice to quit according to the terms of the missive.This means that only two of the tenants signed the lease and the others are sub-tenants or tresspassers.The agent has however accepted rent in the form of cheques from the two who did not sign the lease.

It would appear that the landlady and her agent are inhuman and unfair.Themembers of the association intend to see justice done and intend to stop victimization of tenants.It is also our intention to expand beyond our immediate area and we pledge our support to any tenant in difficulty.

THE DEMONSTRATIONS.

In support of the young divorced woman and her children 60 demonstrators held a protest march to the residential West End of the city,where a letter was delivered to the agents home.The demonstrators carried slogand like "STOP VICTIMIZATION OF TENANTS" and "CAN YOU TURN THIS WOMAN INTO THE STREET BECAUSE SHE WANTS A FAIR RENT?"

Another demonstration was held in the form of a march from the property to the landladies house via.the agents office.In this march we had the support of various other organizations(such as Solidarity,International Socialism,Crisis and Task Force.)

This time about I50 banner-bearing demonstrators gathered,and both demonstrations were well publicised in the local press and T.V.

THE FUTURE.

We have recently formed a womans'

committee as it was felt that the women did not perhaps say as much as they would have liked because of the presence of their husbands.The main aim of the womens' committee is tenants welfare.

Some tenants are now on a rents strike and will pay their rent into a bank account until the agent fulfills his part of the contract by making the property wind and water proof. This is surely little to ask when you consider that the landlady makes over £5,000 a year in rent from this property alone.

We have also printed two editions of "Tenants News" which is a newsletter dealing with the struggle;we intend to sell this at local factories.A fund-raising dance was held,and this was a resounding sucess,so another was held soon after.An adventure playground is also being discussed.Once again we pledge our support to tenants of rented property who have any grievances or queries.

THOUGHTS ON THE FRENCH REVOLT

In May-June 1968 France came nearer to Revolution than any Western country has been in recent years.A general strike of 10 million workers took place,barricades went up in the streets of Paris and the might of the mod-ern State was openly challenged.What then led to the failure of this revolution?Why has French working class solidarity against the State crawled back into hibernation? Why was attention recently focused on the election of a new President?

causes of defeat

The French ruling class had two courses of action open to them during the troubles.They could attempt to crush all resistance,or they could grant a few concessions.They chose the later course,and the wage rises etc of the Grenelle agreements helped to take some of the wind out of the sails of the revolt.If a mad dog attacks you you can either kick it in the teeth,in which case it will probably attack you with even fiercer intensity,or you can throw it a few scraps of meat to distract its attention.

Part of the blame for the failure can also be laid at the door of the French Communist Party.For weeks prior to the events they denounced the students as disrupters,&

during the events themselves they limited their demands to wage increases and a popular front government.The Trot -skyists also made only economistic demands,only outbidd -ing those of the C.P. in an attempt to take over the movement.

The actions of both these groupings at a time when IO million workers were demanding self-management (autogestion),when some factories in Brest and Nantes were being run by the workers themselves,and when Action Committees were appearing all over France,will be remembered for years to come.

contradictions: old & new

A few points should be made here.Firstly the mass of the French workers and students who took part in the events were not deprived in the classical sense.Unlike the Revolution in Paris in I87I,or Russia in I9I7,there was no war ravished economy or miserable standard of living.During the IO years of the 5th. republic the gross national product had been rising by an average of 5% per annum and real wages by the same amount,and yet despite this there was a mass uprising.

This once and for all toppled the traditional left's criteria for social upheaval,ie.,proletarian misery,workers living at subsistence level,mass unemployment, etc.Marx's contention that "The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise,but to lower the average standard of wages."(Wages ,Price & Profit.Sel Works Vol I P447),has likewise crashed.

Most workers in France(and in Britain,as in all western industrialised nations)have cars,T.V.'s,fridges etc. Admittedly the nature of consumer society is such that people have become conditioned to want more and more;they want to change last years car,T.V.,clothes,wife etc.,for this years model,but to say that last years events in France were merely the result of desire for more material gains is to completely falsify the picture.The workers demands were not merely for a larger wage packet,they were rather that they themselves should control their place of work.The follwing is an excerpt from an Air France leaflet distributed during May:-

"We refuse to accept a degrading modernization,which means we are constantly watched and have to submit to conditions which are harmful to our health,to our nervous systems and an insult to our status as human beings. We refuse to entrust our demands any longer to professional Trades Union leaders,like the students we must take control of our own affairs into our own hands."

With the advance of automation and the assembly-line system of production,and with bureaucracy and hierarchy

becoming more and more entrenched in all walks of life, alienation is becoming more and more widespread. The manifestations of this are, wild-cat strikes, stoppages, apathy, in fact alienation is apparent in all the crises which occurr in modern society. All these things are a revolt against the established order; people tied to an inhuman system will try to disrupt that system as much as possible. And a system is inhuman which treats men as mindless automatons, who merely press the right button, or pull the right lever and are allowed no more involvment in production than their own alloted tasks permit.

consciousness

These crises in modern society, however, are not conscious blows against the modern system of production. There is no prevalent thought such as, "Right, we'll have a strike, or whatever, and that way the bosses will be smashed and we'll take control". Strikes, etc., are often no more than a blind revolt against the management and a true change in society can only occurr when a full consciousness is attained by the mass of the people, a change towards full work-ers control. This true consciousness is the realisation that alienation is a result of means of production being in the hands of a tiny minority, and not in the hands of the producers.

It can thus be seen that revolutionary groups who seek to lead or instigate revolutions in the name of the working-class and who use the working-class as cannon fodder, can in no way fundamentally alter the system of rulers and ruled, and can only execute a coup d'etat. Fundamental change must involve the raising of mass consciousness and revolutionary groups can do no more than to aid this rise and speed it up.

read: PARIS: MAY 1968

an eye-witness account. Events at Renault, the Sorbonne, the demonstrations. Available, with other literature, from N. Roy, 138 Walker Road.

Returning to the French events of last year, it is obvious that no Revolution occurred, instead what did occurr was a mass uprising against conditions of work and the content of education. The 'fuse' or 'detonator' of this was not the student rebellion as some on the left would have us believe. The fuse was rather the alienation caused by modern society and it is a slow-burning fuse; France last year was a minor explosion. The full blast is yet to come. Nevertheless important lessons have been learned from the May-June events, and the next 'French Revolution' when it comes will make even deeper inroads into the foundations of French bourgeois society.

There was a mass turnout to the polls to elect

(turn to page 5).

TRAWL STRIKE & THE FISHING INDUSTRY

The recent strike of over I000 trawlermen was the biggest labour dispute in Aberdeen for over I5 years; this article analyses the course of the struggle and also fills in some essential background on the fishing industry in the city.

THE INDUSTRY

Aberdeen is the second largest fishing port in Britain, being outranked only by Hull. While being the biggest employer, with over 8,000 people dependant on it, the fishingindustry is the most old-fashioned and backward in Aberdeen. The fragmented nature of the industry both at sea and on land has resulted in a low level of militancy. The only 'shop-floor' organization, and united voicing of grievances normally comes from a small section, the fish market porters, of whom there are only 200.

The three main sections of the industry-fishermen, porters and fishworkers- are interdependant; often the earnings of one section depend on an other and due to lack of contact, friction occasionally develops. This lack of solidarity between the sections, and indeed within them, on individual boats or factories, is ruthlessly exploited by the bosses. Wages are low and conditions bad throughout the industry.

FISH WORKERS.

The fish houses fillet and smoke or freeze the fish once it is landed. There are over 200 of these fish houses in the city, ranging in size from 8 to 800 employees at Claben's, the largest. Less than 30% of the 5,000 fish workers work in fish house employing more than I00 people. The four largest are Clabens, Ross, Allan & Dey and MacFisheries. Working in such small groups, and with little or no contact between the groups, expression of a common interest is difficult for fish workers; and this is reflected by the ease with which fish merchants keep wages down and conditions poor. A labourer can earn around £I2 for a 40-hour week (in some places 42½) and a filleter around £I3-I4 (including a productivity bonus) for a 30-

hour week.With such low wages,workers have to rely on overtime to make a living wage,and most merchants run their businesses on overtime and keep the fish houses understaffed.When fish is scarce,short time is common and Claben is notorious for paying off workers when the price of fish goes up,only to re-employ them when it falls.

Conditions of work in these places are bad; floors are wet and slippery,heating is inadequate(if present at all),and canteens few and far between.Protective clothing and even filleting knives are not always supplied.

THE MARKET PORTERS.

Market porters land fish from the boat & lay it out on the market ready for sale to the merchan-ts.The porters are the exception to the low level of militancy prevalent in the industry;the main reason for this being that the porters all work in the same place everyday,Due to their solidarity and willingness to engage in industrial action to emphasise their demands and highlight their grievances,the porters ahve secured slightly better pay and conditions than the rest of the industry,being the first,eg.,to win the right to protective clothing.

More important they have a measure of job control non-existent elsewhere in the industry.A porter can expect to earn an average of of £22 for a 30-hour week;he has a variable wage but is guaranteed £15.The wage is made up of a fixed payment for every boat landed + ¼d. for every box.The market,however,is casual, and if not many boats are being landed,not all the porters get work.On the landing of a boat,the owners arrange for one of the 'gaffers' to employ men to land the fish.When a porter arrives for work,he has to suffer the humiliation of parading in front of the gaffers who chose the strongest and fastest workers for their squad.The men would like to see the dirty and easy jobs being spread throughout the mass of the porters.

On the whole,the porters have won by their militancy better conditions than other sections of the industry.Their negotiations with the employers are conducted by a committee elected from the porters,enabling them to keep control of negotiations themselves. Such committees should be elected in other sections of the industry as a first step of the workers in gaining a measure of job control and improving working conditions.

FISHERMEN.

The main type of fishing done from Aberdeen

role of the union

During the first week of the strike, the T&GWU told the men to go back to work, but when it became obvious after a week that the men would not go back, the Union made the strike official and took over negotiations with the employers. For ten more days there was deadlock, but the strike was solid and the need for pickets ceased. At the end of the 10 days the Union recommended a return to work on the basis of an increase in basic rates of 4/5d. a day and a grant of £10 a year for gear.

At a meeting in a city bingo hall the men rejected this offer and staged a mass walk-out leaving the Union in an awkward position. Mr Bill Reid, district secretary of the T&GWU, claimed that the meeting was spoiled by militant disrupters, and announced a ballot to find out how many favoured a return to work.

The ballot was held over the week-end, and the result expected by the trawl owners was obvious from the fact that some boats were iced and provisioned ready for a quick getaway when the result was announced. The men voted 511 - 266 for a total rejection of the employers offer. It has been seen how unexpected this was to the owners, but the Union were also amazed. Bill Reid admitted his 'surprise at the reaction'.

The Union were now in a difficult position, and at a mass meeting following the ballot result, Raymond Macdonald, Scottish Regional Secretary indicated to the men 'through the medium of Jack Jones' that 'the union is right behind you! Few of the men were taken in by this, and mutterings of 'sold down the river again' were heard as the men poured out.

'Solidarity' gave out 300 of a leaflet "After the Ballot" at this meeting, attacking both the bosses & the Union and calling for the re-election of the original strike committee to run the strike.

In the fifth week of the strike, attempts were made by Lewis, one of the biggest employers, to break the strike by calling a meeting of his own employees - less than a dozen turned up! With fish prices rising in the city, & many trawlermen seeking new jobs, the bosses began to fear that a large part of the fleet would not sail again, and that markets would be lost. On the 21st. of July, the lowest landing of fish since the strike began was recorded.

At the end of the sixth week talks between the Union and employers were restarted, and the dispute is now well into its seventh week. Whatever the outcome of these talks, and whatever the final outcome of the strike, we can

make certain conclusions about this strike, which like many others has shown that the two main necessities for a workers' victory are autonomy and solidarity.

LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE

AUTONOMY :As shown on the previous page, the Union made great efforts to take control of the strike out of the hands of the men. We believe that workers' struggles should be waged by organizations conrtolled by the workers themselves: delegates in these organizations should be elected and subject to recall by the men.

The original elected six-man strike committee was an example of such an organization, and the men should have opposed its dissolution by the Union.

SOLIDARITY

Apart from conducting negotiations with the employers, another function of the strike committee could have been organization of solidarity action from other workers. Even the local press admitted the wide support which people had for the trawlermen, and dockers and porters contributed to the mens' strike pay, while the porters spontaneously refused to unload a large foreign Icelandic trawler which docked in the port.

If the strikers had initially appealed to ship workers, fishworkers and others in related industries, they would undoubtedly have recieved financial and even token industrial support. With fish workers and box makers being paid off, this will be more difficult to organize now.

conclusion

Apart from any financial gains which may accrue to the men, this strike has exploded the myth of the 'backwardness' of the working-class; the least organized section of workers in Aberdeen have shown a level of militancy and adopted forms of action far in advance of those advocated by the various revolutionary parties.

If, in addition, the men begin to realise the strength of their position, and the need to keep control of all their struggles firmly in their own hands, the strike will have been a major victory.

n.f.r.

AS WE SEE IT....

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

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

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

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

5. Socialism is not just the common ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, It means equality, real freedom, reciprocal recognition and a radical transformation in all human relations. It is man's positive self-consciousness. It is man's understanding of his environment and of himself, his domination over his

work and over such social institutions as he may need to create. These are not secondary aspects, which will automatically follow the expropriation of the old ruling class. On the contrary, they are essential parts of the whole process of social transformation, without this no change will take place.

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

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

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

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

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