From our first issue we have claimed that the struggle to change conditions and relations at work is at the centre of meaningful working class action.

While many socialists moan about political 'apathy' in the affluent society, we have repeatedly stressed another aspect of modern capitalism. The growth of monopoly and of bureaucratic planning, of streamlining and of coordination from the outside, of 'rationalization' and of nationalization—all require of management that it exert ever greater control over the work process. The worker has to be assessed, calculated, predicted. Every expression of his individuality must be destroyed. But workers obstinately remain human beings, not machines. They resist. They assert their humanity. The struggle increasingly invades the key area: who shall rule inside the factory. This struggle has tremendous potential. For who rules the factory rules society.

This summer an important wave of strikes took place in Northern Italy, which illustrate many of these points. Our first article describes these struggles. The article is based on a text first published in the French weekly 'L'Express' (27/9/62). It fills in the background: the way Fiat tries to dominate every aspect of the lives of its workers, the determination of the younger men to resist, their gradual realisation of their own power. The numbers involved, the fantastic size of the industrial empires challenged, the radical demands, the level of militancy and consciousness achieved, all make the great strikes of 1962 among the most important of recent years. What is remarkable is that the author, who is not a revolutionary, clearly perceives the importance of these struggles over conditions of work.

The French author retains certain illusions. A much deeper analysis is needed. We hope to provide this in our next issue, in the form of an article written by a group of revolutionary socialists in Turin, in very close contact with the Fiat workers themselves. This article first appeared in their journal 'Quaderni Rossi'. It gave rise to a great hue and cry in Turin. It describes in detail the organization of labour at Fiat's. It clearly shows that the right to control the labour process is not something that management will bargain away piecemeal. It is the heart blood of their system. They may grant periodic wage increases. But they cannot lessen alienation by three per cent per annum!

The text of the Italian comrades dispels all illusions about the origin of the strike. An irrepressible surge of rank-and-file action had forced a resourceful and reluctant union machine to take up certain demands. At every stage of the struggle the activities of the union bureaucracies tended to fragment and divide the movement, isolating the more militant sections, demoralising the less determined, dragging out negotiations, etc. The Italian workers will not be content with 'solutions' such as 'the right of the union leadership to negotiate'. Such demands often lessened the power the workers themselves had achieved, in the course of the dispute. Only when there is nobody left with whom to negotiate will the struggle end, which began in the summer of 1962.
One million Italian workers downed tools on September 13. They came out on strike at the very moment the Left-Centre Italian Government* was voting the nationalisation of electrical energy and was preparing decrees radically affecting agriculture, reforming education, granting certain regional autonomies, and instituting certain types of economic planning. On all these issues the Government enjoyed the full support of Communists and Socialists. Why then the strikes?

These strikes were unlike anything previously seen in workers' movements of Western Europe. During a few days I witnessed them in Turin, capital of the Italian motor car industry, the town of 250,000 engineering workers, where a sacked engineer can find another job within the hour — and in Milan, Italy's Chicago, with its 300,000 engineering workers, a town with one of the highest incomes per head in the whole of Europe.

I can now understand how certain Italian workers leaders can defend the viewpoint that 'far from lessening the combativity of the working class, economic progress in fact increases it. To claims for more wages are now added claims for a change in the conditions of life'.

MASS PICKETS

Three days on strike, three days at work. And so on. Such is the tactic of the Turin engineers. I am in front of the gates of the R.I.V. ball-bearing factory, part of the Fiat Trust. The strike is about to resume — after three days 'off'. Last week 95 per cent of the workers were supporting the movement. What will it be like today? A few minutes remain before the gates open.

On my side of the road, behind a solid wall of rifle-carrying police, a few hundred strikers are waiting, armed with posters, whistles, and a loudspeaker.

On the other side, helmeted police are walking up and down on the empty pavement, onto which buses periodically disgorge their cargoes of workers.

(cont'd p. 14)

* A coalition of Christian-Democrats, Republicans and Social-Democrats, supported by the Nenni Socialists.
The seventeenth Congress of Zengakuren (All-Japan Federation of Autonomous Student Bodies) was held in Tokyo, in the middle of July, 1962. It was attended by over 300 delegates from all parts of the country, representing some 300,000 students. One of the main subjects discussed was the campaign against nuclear weapons. Zengakuren pledged itself to develop this campaign in every possible direction.

Just about this time the Russians announced they would be resuming tests. The Zengakuren Congress resolved to struggle as vigorously against Russian tests as it had previously struggled against American tests and nuclear alliances. The story of these struggles will be known to some British readers.* In 1960 we had waged a sustained struggle in the streets of Tokyo against the ratification of the US-Japan Treaty. So vigorous had this struggle been that it had led to the cancellation of the proposed Eisenhower visit.

A Zengakuren delegation had been invited to attend the Congress of the International Union of Students which was to be held in Leningrad, in August 1962. Zengakuren decided to utilise this opportunity to demonstrate against the Russian resumption of tests.

ACTIVITIES IN MOSCOW

Three of us (our President, Nemoto; our International Secretary, Kawahara, and myself) left Yokohama on July 30, on board the Russian ship 'Ordjonikidze'. Our President understands Russian, but most of our conversations in Russia were to take place in English, through interpreters. Already aboard ship our interpreter seemed particularly interested in the purpose of our visit and in the policies of Zengakuren which he doubtless considered 'subversive'.

* See article on 'Japan' by Kan-ichi Kuroda in 'International Socialism', Autumn 1960 issue.
We landed at Nachotka, near Vladivostok. From there we travelled by train to Khabarovsky. From Khabarovsky (where most of the children seemed to be bare-footed and in rags) we flew to Moscow.

We were met at the airport on arrival (August 3) by a delegate from the Soviet Student Council and taken to a well-furnished 'Yonost' or Youth Hostel. A full-time interpreter was assigned to us. He would arrive at the Hostel at 8.00 am every day and stay with us till about 10.00 pm. (we didn't ask him if he was getting overtime!). His main concern seemed to be to get us to spend as much of the day as possible in cinemas and theatres.

On the evening of August 4 we heard from Japanese press representatives in Moscow that the Russian Government had just exploded a nuclear device. We decided to hold our demonstration as soon as possible. In Tokyo we had had brief reports of the demonstration staged in Moscow by the Committee of 100 during the 'Peace' Congress. We had been very much impressed and encouraged by it.

We had taken with us a portable hand duplicator, about the size of a small typewriter. We had been asked at the frontier whether we had printing material and had denied it. Russian Customs officers seem as obsessed about printing material as British ones about watches and eau-de-cologne.

Our first problem was to obtain the right sort of paper for duplicating our leaflet. We found this difficult. Even the biggest stores in Moscow only stocked fairly rough paper, quite unsuitable for our purpose. We got round this one by buying about 50 children's notebooks. We tore out the pages and made leaflets of them.

Our President wrote the stencil by hand, in Russian. It only contained three sentences:

'We protest against nuclear testing by the Soviet Government'.

'We protest against nuclear testing by the American Government'.

'Let us fight against nuclear testing by the struggle of working people in the whole world'.

Our next problem was to make a banner. We succeeded in shedding our interpreter in the Moscow Metro, went to a big store and bought a sheet. We inscribed it, in Indian ink, with the same three slogans. We made rough poles from branches found late that night in a garden, near the hostel.

By August 6 (Hiroshima Day) we were ready. At about 4.00 pm we left for Red Square. We had found out the previous day that the Square was most crowded at about 5.00 pm.

On reaching the square I started distributing the leaflets. My comrades held up the banner. A crowd immediately gathered. At least 300
leaflets had been distributed before there was any attempt to stop us.

After five minutes we were stopped by plain-clothes militia men. A few suddenly appeared, blowing excitedly on their whistles. Others soon joined them. They started shouting: 'Fascists! Fascists!' and looked as if they meant it. They tried to snatch our banners and leaflets from us. We, of course, resisted. A non non-violent scuffle took place, which lasted several minutes. A very big crowd then gathered. They watched with interest. They did not help us, but neither did they molest us.

'TOVARITCH!'

It took five or six policemen ('simple Soviet citizens', of course) to drag each of us behind the Lenin Mausoleum, to a part the public could not enter, but to which they, somehow, had access. There, we were kicked and punched for several minutes. We tried shouting out in Russian 'We are opposed to Russian AND American tests'. It did not seem to help. Perhaps they did not understand our Russian. Perhaps they were immune to the argument.

At this stage part of the crowd had reached the back of the Mausoleum and were following events from over the top of a parapet. The crowd became quite noisy... arguing mainly amongst itself! Several people shouted: 'Tovaritch!' at us. We saw a number of people being arrested. Apart from us.

After about half-an-hour a big, fat, beribboned, Japanese-speaking militiaman-Inspector arrived on the scene. We explained we were an official delegation. This seemed to impress him vastly. After our comments had been translated, the leader of the group which had arrested us ordered us to be released. We returned to our hostel, bruised but not seriously injured.

Next morning (August 7) we organized a press conference. Our interpreter (who would now have been most useful) did not turn up. We described what we had done to the representatives of a number of foreign papers. A few lines, we understand, reached the outside world.

On the evening of August 7 we received a visit from a representative of the Soviet Student Council. He did not comment about our demonstration (which he repeatedly referred to as 'your action'). He seemed mainly concerned at convincing us that it was not true that the Russian Government had resumed tests. It just couldn't be true. 'The Soviet papers and news services', he assured us, 'have given out no such news'.

We think our demonstration was well worthwhile. Such actions deserve the support of working people throughout the world. They expose two myths, the myth of 'peaceful co-existence' and the myth of 'the workers' Bomb'. We feel sure there will be certain repercussions in Moscow itself as a result of our demonstration and of the demonstration organized by the Committee of 100. Perhaps the leaflets may even be reproduced.
THE LENINGRAD CONGRESS

We reached Leningrad, by train, on August 17. The Congress of the International Union of Students started on August 18. It lasted a week and a half.

We found the President of the I.U.S. to be a rather elderly (38 year old) Czech 'student'. He was called Pelican, but didn't look like one. He was extremely reluctant to discuss tests of any kind. He would not even discuss American tests. A discussion on tests might lead to God knows what dangerous thoughts. All he would discuss was 'general disarmament'. By this he meant the kind of 'general disarmament' that the perennial 'Summit Talks' might one day lead to.

On the fourth day of the Congress, Nemoto, our President, made a report on the Japanese student movement. He spoke of the problems of students and young people everywhere. He spoke clearly on the issue of tests, denouncing those of both East and West. The Stalinist delegations were very hostile. They too seemed composed of very elderly 'students'. But several delegations from Africa, Asia, and Latin America listened to our viewpoint with interest and even supported us.

The report of the Russian delegation to the Congress denounced the Zengakuren delegates as 'drunkards'. So did Leningradskaia Pravda. As a matter of fact all three of us are teetotallers. This was their substitute for a political argument.

IN A FACTORY

Towards the end of the Congress several of us were taken on tours of Leningrad factories. My group visited a factory in Viborg employing over 6,000 workers and making dynamos and heavy electrical equipment. At first we were taken to an office block. We talked for a long time to the factory manager, to the trade union secretary, and to the 'leader of the youth group'. They all spoke their set pieces. They all spoke exactly alike. While drinking cider with us they all praised the good conditions under which the workers were working.

Our group was escorted to the factory itself by an interpreter. The manager remained in his office. The trade union secretary disappeared.

The walls of the factory were covered with official slogans: production; productivity; targets. The conditions struck us as much the same as those in any big factory in Japan: noise, dirt, poor ventilation, not much light.

A group of several dozen workers assembled around us. The news of our intervention at the Congress had reached the factory. Young workers had been present at the Student Congress as observers and one of them had probably come from this particular factory.
Several very young workers asked why we had protested against Soviet nuclear tests. We tried to explain. They showed none of the hostility and dogmatism of the 'official' student delegates. Like many ordinary people everywhere they felt their country was justified in exploding bombs as long as other countries were doing it. When we told them of our struggles against our own rulers and against American tests, they said nothing. They seemed genuinely perplexed. A few seemed interested. They never called us 'Fascists' or 'provocateurs'. They asked us many questions about our activities and our movement in Japan. The interview was then cut short. We left on friendly terms.

ON OCTOBER 5, 1962, A MASS MEETING OF OVER 2000 WORKERS AND STUDENTS WAS HELD IN A PACKED TOKYO HALL. ITS PURPOSE WAS TO PROTEST AGAINST RUSSIAN AND AMERICAN NUCLEAR TESTS AND TO MOBILISE WORKING CLASS SUPPORT FOR THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BOMB. THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE INDUSTRIAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE OF 100 WAS READ TO THE MEETING AND LOUDLY APPLAUDED.

Dear Brothers,

We are very pleased to hear of the joint meeting of industrial workers and students being held in Tokyo on October 5 to protest against all tests, whether American or Russian. Like yourselves, our Committee aims at bringing workers themselves into action against nuclear weapons, whatever their origin.

Our Industrial Committee has groups in the Docks, Transport and Engineering industries. Some London dockers have already refused to handle materials connected with atomic weapons. Building workers in Liverpool and Stevenage have recently held protest strikes against the insane nuclear policies of our Government.

As well as protesting at the activities of our own rulers and at the actions of the American government, we have also produced leaflets in Russian, protesting at Russian tests. These were recently distributed in Moscow by some of our supporters attending the 'Peace' Congress. Our docker comrades have distributed these leaflets to the crews of visiting Russian ships.

The Industrial Sub-Committee of the Committee of 100 sends fraternal greetings to the demonstrating workers and students of Tokyo. We follow your struggle with keen interest and wish you great success.

Like you we are convinced that in every country of the world the real power to change society lies in the hands of the working class. When we decide really to mobilize ourselves for this struggle - when we decide to struggle on an international scale - no force on earth, neither Imperialism nor Stalinism, will be able to stop us. Together we must fight to the end. We must struggle to achieve a world where working people will be masters of their own fate and will be able at last to live in peace and friendship with one another.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!
A hundred years ago capitalists would only pay workers starvation wages. Such wages just about allowed the worker to survive and procreate further wage slaves for the rapidly expanding enterprises of the capitalist class.

A century of working class struggles have changed this state of affairs. Real wages have risen. But many workers are now aware of a new reality: the social system which 'allows' them — in fact encourages them — to hire-purchase television sets is at the same time becoming an increasing threat to their health.

Sociologists, psychiatrists and specialists in industrial medicine are forced to note that the intensification of labour under modern capitalism creates many new problems. One of the main ones is how to maintain the worker at the minimum level of health which will allow him to continue at work, providing an 'adequate yield' and generally helping the system to tick along.

The central contradiction of class society is still the same. It has in fact intensified. It is the need at the same time to secure and to eliminate the participation of the workers in the work process.

The article that follows* is an interesting example of this. A telephone operator has to use her human faculties of communication, her ears and her voice. Yet it is precisely these faculties that the system attempts to treat as if they were purely mechanical attributes, excluding from them whatever is human in them. These faculties, destroyed at work, remain mutilated during leisure...

We have recently noticed that among patients attending certain psychiatric clinics in the Paris region were a significant number of telephone operators. Their main troubles were:

1) physical and mental fatigue, somnolence, inattention, impairment of memory.

2) reduction of intellectual activity, difficulty in reading and in thinking, impossibility of discussing anything.

*The text was translated from 'POUVOIR OUVRIER' (issue No. 43, Sept. 1962) the paper of our French co-thinkers. They discovered it in a medical publication: 'Entretiens Psychiatriques, 1962', by Dr. G. Begou, a consultant psychiatrist.
3) the tendency to repeat - out of work - certain phrases used at work. For instance some girls would say: 'Hello, please hold on' when greeted by a friend.

4) irritability, nervousness, anxiety, screaming fits, attacks of weeping - all of which were prejudicial to marital and family relationships.

5) extreme sensitivity to loud or unexpected noises - or to repeated and monotonous sounds. Both of these were liable to bring about nervous attacks.

6) headaches, digestive upsets, cardio-vascular troubles, menstrual irregularities.

7) alterations in the sleep rhythm. Sleepiness by day and insomnia by night.

8) impoverished family and intellectual life.

The severe and lasting nature of these symptoms meant that they constituted a genuine neurosis. We soon discovered that it was not the environmental conditions under which the work had to be undertaken that were responsible for these disturbances among telephone operators. It was:

a) the nature of the work itself - in particular the speed at which it had to be carried out.

b) the psychological reactions that go with work of this kind. These in their turn influence the general atmosphere prevailing at work.

A third factor can also be identified. It is included in the two forementioned ones, but really reflects the general structure of this type of work. It is the total absence of 'motivation' at work.

This corresponds to the total absence of participation of the worker in his job. Labour is presented to him as something already determined, as a job in the organization of which he has nothing whatsoever to say. Work is imposed on him by an anonymous superstructure: management, supervisory staff, employers.

These conditions of work are genuinely 'inhuman':

1) the workers are obsessed by the rhythm of work they have to maintain.

2) the norms are worked out in relation to the average number and duration of operations carried out in a given time by each group of operators. This leads to competition between the girls for calls in the non-peak hours. This in turn leads to the paradoxical result that it is precisely these hours that prove the most exhausting. During peak hours the girls experience a more physical type of fatigue.

3) constant supervision of the work by means of 'tapping'. The purpose of this is to check whether the operators are carrying out the rules, i.e. using the correct formulae, giving correct answers and making the right type of requests, as laid down in the Regulations. The 'tappers' also check up on absent-mindedness, chatter, excessive or insufficient friendliness with customers, etc.
4) supervisors, moreover, are constantly moving about behind the girls, seeing that they behave, issuing the 'return tickets' (i.e. permission to leave for five minutes when needed - and not one more). These supervisors constantly keep up the tempo of work by calls repeated throughout the day: 'Hurry up, girls, hurry up! Watch your lights! Watch the boards!'.

All this creates a continuous atmosphere of tension, of worry, a constant feeling of humiliation, a loss of self-esteem, a constant impression of being misunderstood and needlessly bullied and 'put in one's place'.

The work moreover is increasingly automated. This gives rise to a feeling of intense monotony, which is related to the total absence of personal initiative. Work is experienced as the task of a robot.

The conditions we have described are to be found in many other jobs. People have tried to attribute these symptoms to the fact that mainly female labour is involved. But much the same is seen in many male occupations. Only a careful analysis of the total conditions of work allow one to understand such phenomena.

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BEAT THE HEAT  (continued from opposite page)

Commie in his right pigeon-hole and we find that the name Social-Democrat has a skunk for a brother. Looks like these socialists got to place those feet like neat.

Then little old lady gives out with a cry and asks, sound off. So we listen to the talk about the book, which is about square professors and where they should go! Our boy then reports in by saying 'Comrade chairman' and a cool breeze blows through the silent room. Looks like he booed, cause a couple of dentures fall, and someone has left a dog too long in the room as everyone but us put up a sniff. 'We were talking about the meaning of socialism', this cool cat says, and smiles like cheshire.

Man, did Marylyn and I have a ball on the way home. We got real animated, especially with this socialism.

Jorrocks

(Reprinted from 'PRESS' - A Socialist Publication (vol.6, No.5) 'Press' is obtainable from 1991 Banbury Rd., North Vancouver, B.C., Canada).
Man, she was weird to begin with. This chick is in the parade front row centre and the way she locomotes just warms me up and down the middle. So I strides in and helps carry the banner which bears 'We want peace'. Well, I want peace too! And so we pass the movin time away, just talkin and lookin for an opening. The fellows I leave by this time are falling over their britches and making sounds like merry. That reminds me to comb my hair, but me and Marylyn are gently twistin so we can match thigh-bones. Quite a trick — and we lay a date for that night.

My muffler split dad right out of his skin, but at 7.30 I pick her up on the piece of paper she'd slipped me. We leave with all the dogs in the block barking. Then she tells me! We are goin to a leftist meet. Well, with a standing symbol like they have, I go along for kicks. We stop for awhile on the edge of the sea and do some exploring - but she stiffens all square like as the minute hand creeps upwards. So I capitulate and we make for the old girl's pad where the meet is to be.

When we straighten out the rumple and troop in, the place is ablaze with hot light that makes a babe wrinkle. So we crowd into the window corner where the balmy breeze do blow near the rear and the light burns lowly. I groan, for this is a gas in low register. We go through the hellos of assorted types from square to beat, then the cats sit up as the lesson is unrolled. The little old lady that plays it solo for an hour on a tome that sounds like surgical progress in Canada sounded real cool. It was way out man — that music I never did hear before anyway. When she does break a string, man we sigh and we grab our partners and buzz for half an hour like mom and dad at the P.T.A.

This is by far the most kooky part. We gab like Frisco beats. Like, where ya goin? — what ya goin do when you get there? — real finger-clickin noises. Then two cats get spitting. One mentions the words Marx and Engels, and the buzz goes out of my crew, while these two circle one another, spittin the jargon.

Crazy man — I sized up this way. The big cat from Hungary don't want any Commie ideas gaining ground since he made the border just in time. The long lean and hungry boy wants it known that being hep to politics means knowin daddy Marx — and that to wash him out of a prole-brain is to leave a hole. The hole gets filled with gooey newspapers and love-them-all stuff which just ain't real livin. Well, as the chick says, he's got a point.

Well, we ply this guy for the rest of the time and we get answers with a new twist. He separates the sheep from the goats and puts the
I enclose a copy of the 'Ford Worker', the first after a long period of silence. You may, as far as I know, already have seen it. But I like to keep you posted on this. One thing that jolted me at work was the high incidence of sickness. In one department at Fords over half the men suffered from 'slipped discs', 'hernia', stomach disorders, etc. This department just involved light assembly. The increase in 'speed up', 'forced pacing', gradually wears down the men's health, so that even 'light' tasks eventually become 'man killing'. Hell knows what the health standards on the heavier operations are. In just the last 12 months, the men are getting really soured at the callousness of the management. Some are beginning to 'wake up' at last and as a tough management makes a tough lot of men, some good may come of this.

Peter M., Romford.

* * * *

I am a newcomer to the Left (by way of Committee of 100) and frankly I am still floundering about. I am not prepared to become a Communist as I am far too much against the State to be happy about the Utopias behind the Iron-curtain, neither am I exactly thrilled to bits by the British Labour Party. Who could be?

I like your attitude (as put over in 'Solidarity' and the pamphlets you publish). But where do you go from here? Can the working class of this country be brought back to a true form of Socialism? It seems to me (although of course I am quite possibly wrong, being politically a complete novice) that the real curse of this country is compromise. Very few people seem really willing to commit themselves to anything. I'm afraid most of them are too worried about what the neighbours might say, to get down to the essential matters of survival, the overthrow of capitalism, etc, etc.

Sid L., Chalfont St. Peter

* * * *

Thank you for sending the copy of 'Solidarity'. I am amused by the magazine. It is not really serious politics at all. We live in a society where people largely do not agree about its moral basis or anything else so long as it gives them an easy time. You will never change this by your existing methods and I would have thought that two or three generations of trying to do so when workers' conditions were infinitely worse than they are today would indicate the futility of trying.

The Industrial Sub-Committee papers are well drafted insofar as they go. But my impression about the generality of people — whether you call them workers or anything else — is that they are utterly contemptuous of large scale organizations of any kind — even those which profess to be on their side (and don't they all?). To awaken their sympathies and then enlist them for our support presupposes we ourselves are going to operate
on the basis of a large number of small sovereign units rather than by a powerful central committee and all the rest of it. I feel this is the crux of our political dilemma regardless of the bomb, which only makes its solution all the more urgent.

John P., London SW5

* * * *

The last issue of 'Solidarity' contained an article on Vauxhall Motors Ltd., which to my mind seems to be a very accurate assessment of what you term 'scientific management'. I personally call it psychoid gone mad.

I am employed at A.C. Delco, No.2 Plant, Southampton. On reading this article, I gave it to management and received it back without comment. I also gave it to several shop stewards who agree that if one replaces the word Vauxhall with A.C. Delco, it fits perfectly.

To make it a subject for discussion amongst T.U. members of our union TGWU 2/221, would you be kind enough to send me six copies of this issue. I was till recently Chairman of the branch but resigned, so as to be able to fight over the behaviour of the union officials during our eight day strike last May.

No doubt you will disagree with my politics, but on this matter in question, I too am fighting for an enlightened approach to the problems that abound in industry today. This will call for radical reforms of industry as it is operated today.

If you have not read the report on Industrial Affairs by the Liberal Party, I enclose a copy for your perusal and any comments you may have on it. As a member of this committee I have consistently put forward views of the factory floor workers.

Leslie B., Southampton.

* * * *

I heard a story the other day which might do you as a funny. I went to visit a friend who originally came from Islington, but now lives in a New Town. She is an ordinary working class housewife. She remarked that she had not voted in the local Elections and stated that the local Labour Councillor was a Big Mouth. 'One of those I'm Mr. Big's. I'm on this Committee and on that Committee. I'm a School Manager' and she complained he was always in the school interfering with the children's work. 'It's only that nosy type of sod who'd go in for that job' she said. Then added that a new lavatory was being built in the town and the general consensus of opinion was that Councillor Big Mouth was bound to open this as he is 'always in everything'. The local housewives were discussing getting up a party to go down to the urinal on opening day and cheer on the Councillor as he proved that it could be used for the purpose for which it was intended!

ITALY, 1962  (continued from page 2)

Each time a bus stops the tension rises. The fate of the strike is at stake: will those arriving go towards the gates? Or will they cross over the road and join the mass picket?

'This way, lads. Don't be daft. The factory is tied up. The strike is solid' shouts the loudspeaker. The crowd cheers. A group crosses the street and joins the pickets. But soon after, all noisy hell's let loose: two employees in blue overalls are moving towards the gate. Lonely, deaf and blind, they walk on slowly, head turned away. The shriek of the whistles pierces the air. Crusts of bread and insults are flung in their direction.

'Scabs, punks, bosses' men!'.

As the gates close behind them there are some 2,000 men and women, mostly very young ones, left on this side of the street. Perhaps 30 people have gone in. The strike is 98 per cent solid.

'The struggle continues' booms the loudspeaker. 'Come back tomorrow for another mass picket'. The following day the strike is again 95 per cent successful. And this despite proposals from the employers offering wage increases of up to 15 per cent in certain factories.

MILAN

Next day I'm in Milan. I witness the onset of the strikes at G.C.E. and at Borletti. Milan, like other northern Italian cities, has adopted a most audacious tactic — four hours on strike, four hours at work, day in, day out, without respite. On the 10th day, 97 per cent of the workers are still participating. Certain Milan engineers had recently shown the heights of their virtuosity. For nearly 3 months, they had only worked alternate hours in their factory! The advantage was that the workers had remained grouped together throughout. They had also retained a source of income.

A few minutes after the dinner break, I see them leave in a long procession. They are very young, and full of zest, with their posters and their whistles. Thirty thousand of them will soon regroup off Castle Square, in a festive atmosphere, cheering Sacchi, regional secretary of the F.I.O.M.*, when he declares, on the 10th day of the strike: 'If the bosses want a long strike they can have one.... We don't only want to negotiate on what they will give us. We also want to talk about what we will give in exchange!'

* F.I.O.M. (Federazione Italiana Operai Metallurgici) is the Italian Federation of Engineering Workers. It is affiliated to the C.G.I.L. (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro) which is the Confederation of Italian Labour. Like the C.G.I.L., the F.I.O.M. has joint socialist — communist leadership — at all levels. The present struggle is also supported by the F.I.M., the catholic equivalent of the F.I.O.M.
This is the great theme of the strike. The strike was called after a year of preparatory discussions and on the occasion of the renewal of collective contracts for engineering workers. Its original objectives were to link purely economic claims to others aiming at a transformation in working class status itself.

It is not, in the first instance, against low wages that the Italian engineers are striking. In the North of Italy wages are much the same as elsewhere in Western Europe. The key industrial sectors are even prepared to concede more than the average — provided they are spared strikes. The engineers are in revolt, as they put it, against 'the despotism of Capital' — against 'managerial oppression'. By this they mean the imposition on the worker of the tempo of his work, of its organization, of its assessment, of the nature of professional apprenticeship, of the criteria of skill and of promotion, and of the production and investment programmes of the enterprise.

'The higher the standard of living, the more important become the other aspects of the work relationship' declares Trentin, National Secretary of the F.I.O.M.

**IN A TURIN CAFE**

In a Turin cafe young Fiat workers unintentionally confirmed this to me. The famous Fiat is the colossus of European industry. With its 100,000 workers it isn't only one of the three biggest car factories in Europe. It is also the biggest private concern in Italy, a political power in itself. It is to the influence of Fiat that one must attribute the fact that motor car production in Italy has taken precedence over the production of houses or of tractors. The school, hospital and agricultural developments may lag but the building of arterial roads has always proceeded strictly to schedule.

Fiat is managed by an extremely shrewd man, the accountant Valetta. Together with the late Adriano Olivetti, he is considered one of the most 'progressive' employers in Europe.

In a recent interview, Valetta called the rest of the Italian employers 'backward troglodytes'. According to Valetta, intelligent employers should be able to 'integrate' their workers into their factories. All that was necessary was 1) to offer them high wages and the maximum social benefits, and 2) to eliminate from the factory any union or other groups that refused to 'cooperate', after having cut the grass from under their feet by a bold social policy.

* In addition to producing 650,000 cars a year, the Fiat trust produces fridges, locomotives, aeroplanes, tractors, machine tools and chemical products. The yearly business figures run to over £360 million a year.
THE FAMOUS FIAT 'SPIRIT'

For some nine years, Valetta, guided by American advisers, proved himself right. Since 1953 Fiat had known no major strikes. The F.I.O.M. militants had been concentrated into the hardest and oldest shops. Wage increases were regularly conceded through the intermediary of the 'anti-communist' unions.

In order to retain their jobs old F.I.O.M. militants broke with the union. Any attempt at union propaganda was met with warning letters, or with sackings. To get on, what mattered was not so much professional aptitude as that famous 'Fiat spirit'... and a good word from the foremen.

The Fiat worker was 'integrated' from the cradle to the grave. He received Fiat nappies at the birth of each of his children - a Fiat wreath at the time of his death. As long as he remained in the employ of the firm he lived in a reasonably good and cheap Fiat flat. The flats had Fiat caretakers, who watched the mail. The worker received a Fiat professional training, which would be of little use to him elsewhere. At work he was watched by 1600 Fiat guards, commanded by three ex-carabinieri colonels.

'When I joined Fiat three years ago' a young worker told me 'I was put before an assembly line and told 'you'll tighten those two nuts'. No other explanation. I tightened the nuts. Every evening you could have picked me up with a spoon. I went to classes. I asked for promotion. I was told I hadn't the "house attitude". I didn't even know what a union was. I'd never been in politics'.

'I saw some killing themselves at the job, others taking it easy. From time to time the lines were speeded up. When I used to say: Listen, lads, we can't go on like this, there were always older workers around who would tell me to belt up and keep it to myself.'

'At the beginning of the year I found myself in a shop with nothing but young workers around. This is what sparked the trouble.'

VICTORY OVER FEAR

'We, young ones, didn't know about unemployment and working class defeats. After a few months we had a stay-in strike. We refused the speed-up. We didn't want their bonus, dished out like charity, with no one knowing the why or wherefore. We told ourselves: we can't be free men if for 50 hours each week they treat us like slaves'.

In June 1962, after several abortive attempts, the revolt broke out. It happened when the general engineering strike was proclaimed. In the 'leadership' were the young non-political workers (less than 4 per cent of Fiat workers belong to a union). These young workers were to provide
the mass of the pickets. They were to defy bosses and police with their whistles and their leaflets.

At the last hoot of the siren there was a moment of indecision. A few thousand workers had already entered the plant. About 20,000 were hanging about in the street, hesitating, waiting to see what 'the others' would do. When the siren stopped and no one entered, there was a real explosion. Shouting, whistling, weeping, the strikers, soon to be joined by those who gone in, were shouting their joy at one another, celebrating their collective victory over fear.

Hundreds of cards of the 'Fiat trade union' were torn up. From five in the morning to 1 am the following day the workers, joined by their wives, their children and tens of thousands of other Turin workers celebrated the event: Fiat, the colossus, the symbol of the 'new capitalism' was not invincible. The Fiat proletariat had been reborn.

Victory also belonged to those who had been claiming for years - and despite apparent contradiction by events themselves - that the mobilisation of the workers for struggle is the easier the more radical the objectives offered them'. According to these leaders, uniform national demands centring on wage increases were no longer capable of catalysing the struggle.

Firstly because the key industries were quite often capable of conceding wage increases, even higher than those being asked for. Secondly because wage increases do not modify the relation of forces inside the factory, nor the intolerable condition of the workers at work. Finally, because uniform wage increases did not allow the workers to exert their influence on the general direction, objectives and priorities of production. Even strenuously fought strikes for general wage increases could have the sting taken out of them by means of a national income policy, promising a 'fair' distribution of the fruits of industrial expansion while at the same time forbidding the unions to challenge the nature and direction of the expansion.

This is why the leaders of the F.I.O.M. developed the conception of the 'joint struggle'. In the struggle for new collective contracts, they emphasised two aims. One: a general increase in wages. Italian engineers are today producing in 37 hours what took them 48 hours to produce three years ago. At the same time their real wages have only increased by 4.4 per cent. There was clearly a case for a general increase. Secondly, they stress that the concrete details must be negotiated in each factory, in relation to the general conditions and productivity of labour in that factory. To traditional means of payment by piece and time rates must be added a production bonus based on technological changes in productivity. These are to be periodically negotiated between management and the local trade union organization.
In this way they saw the unions acquiring the right to control the real resources of the enterprise, the production and investment programmes, the foreseeable transformations of technology and of the organization of production. What would enter the compass of negotiation would not only be the organization of work (tempo, qualifications, promotion, composition of work-gangs) but also the financial and commercial policy of the enterprise - the proportion of its resources it would devote to wages, to investment, to reserves.

A double target was aimed at. In the first place it was a question - as a Turin socialist leaflet put it - of imposing on the boss a social policy which would allow a concrete development of the personality of the worker to take place and which would allow the worker a responsible and leading role.

Freedom at work, was the first objective. The second objective, directly linked with the first, was to permit the unions to influence the policy and even the administration of the firm. Management today determines all the elements of the cost of production - and in the first place the cost of labour power. It reserves itself the right to make up for possible wage increases by speeding up the assembly line, by 'disqualifications', by modifications in working hours, etc. But from the moment the union will be able to negotiate on all aspects of the work relationship, it will find itself in a position where it will be able to contest, through the medium of the wage mechanism, the whole policy of the firm.

**SPAGHETTI AND SONGS**

For a long time the Italian Left had contented itself with contesting, through Parliament and through its press, the general orientation of the economy. For some years now, many of its theoreticians have found this type of propaganda too abstract. Firstly because its total objectives were insufficiently related to the lives and professional preoccupations of men. Secondly because a purely parliamentary and electoral struggle 'left intact the power of capital in the real centres of decision, in the places where capital draws its strength, elaborates its choices and imposes them on the people: that is in the factories'.

Piero Boni, General Secretary of F.I.O.M., asked me anxiously: 'What are they saying in France about our strike?'. 'Nothing' I answered. 'No one knows about it'. 'I know', said Boni. 'We produce 12 million tons of steel a year. We produce 1.2 million cars. We export more fridges than any other country. We have the highest rate of industrial expansion in Europe. Nothing in Europe can be settled without us. But people continue to think of us as the land of songs and spaghetti'.

Saturday morning, 5.00 am. The thought of going to work makes you five times more tired than you really are. Without getting out of bed, work flashes through your mind. The problems of the job, the meaninglessness of it. Time flies on. It's 5.15.

You get to work and sign on at 6.13. You have ten minutes to fix your gear, write up the times of your journeys and your way bill and find time to chat to your mates. About the birds of the night before. About that bastard inspector who booked you the other morning. At 6.23 you go to the bus and leave your incoming mates behind.

We leave a bit late. We know there's a 142 just a minute behind us. We hope we can get behind it. Who likes work - even if it's only a few passengers - that early in the morning?

We arrive at Borcham Wood. A fairly easy time of it. We belt up the road to make our two-minute stand-time at the terminus stretch to eight minutes. Enough time for a fag. When we get there we find a bus on our route is missing, just in front of us. In other words, we've got double the work to do, right in the middle of the peak.

We leave the terminus early to knock down the headway between us and the bus in front. Three stops along we have to start turning people off. 'Sorry, full up! Only five standing!'. The usual arguments: 'Why are you late? I've been waiting half-an-hour!'. If you happen to be Irish or coloured you're called a coloured bastard or an Irish cunt. You try to burn up the road as much as possible, but the distance between you and the bus in front grows wider. And all the shit is thrown at you.

On the road you seem to have more bosses than bus workers. The lowest are regulators, supposed to regulate the traffic. You hardly see them, even in the densest traffic. Next come the jumpers, one of the worst enemies of the busmen. They check you bus at regular intervals for 'free' or 'excess' riders (people travelling further than they paid for). If a jumper finds any uncollected fares he books you. He writes down all particulars of the incident: the fare due, the fare paid, where the ticket was bought, the number of passengers on the bus... and the names you call him in the course of his duty. The following day, you have to see the C.D.I. (Chief Depot Inspector), that's the garage governor. He will take disciplinary action. It could be a final warning or just a ticking off.

Above the jumpers are the inspectors. They make sure you run to time. If the road is fast-moving and not all that busy, you're bound to run early. You'll always find an inspector ready to book you, even if you're only five minutes too soon. But if you're a quarter of an hour late - or more - he is nowhere to be seen. For he alone can give you permission to make short your journey and make up time.

(continued p.27)
Those 'Solidarity' readers who also read the 'Daily Mail' may have noticed some exciting lines in the bigger paper's issue of September 13 (particularly in its early Irish editions). The Soblen affair had just reached its macabre conclusion. Scotland Yard seemed in difficulties. Suddenly the 'Mail's own sleuth reported that the Special Branch 'had been alerted to investigate the Solidarists, the Left wing organization which aims to promote control of industry by the workers'. In its next breath the 'Mail' then informed its politically-illiterate readers that the Police were 'working on the theory that Soblen was in fact a sympathetic worker with the Trotskyist organization, which has powerful secret networks etc.' etc...'.

We really must protest! This is the limit! It's bad enough to insinuate that we poisoned the unfortunate Soblen... But to call us Trots !!!

Let's be serious. As long as Scotland Yard believes it was the fruit we must keep our methods secret. Details only sent to subscribers. Extras extra. Write to E. Morse, with postal order for 9/-. You will get the next 12 issues, post free.

'Solidarity' supporters were recently selling their latest pamphlet 'The Truth About Vauxhall' outside the Vauxhall factory in Dunstable.

Sales were brisk. One of the sellers was shouting: 'What management is up to!'. Up comes a natty gent and says: 'Let's have one, I am management'.

We don't think there's been a 'Managerial Revolution' but don't blame us if there is one now...

P.S. The previous day a strike (the first for years) had broken out in one of the shops of the Luton factory. The issue? Time and motion study! If the motion of time could only be reversed, we might have reaped the blame!

' Solidarity' pamphlet No. 7, 'The Workers' Opposition', has achieved some notoriety. Bulk orders have been received from France, Japan, and the U.S.A. Several public libraries in this country have requested copies.

We recently received a card from the Librarian of the 'British Library of Political and Economic Science at L.S.E. It thanked us for a specimen copy of the pamphlet. The London School of Economics, as readers know, is politically the most learned institution in the world. The card was addressed:

A. KOLLONTAI ESQ.
C/o E. Morse, etc. etc.

The Kronstadt events of March 1921 marked a decisive turning point in the Russian Revolution. Across the ice, at Kronstadt, two different conceptions of working class power confronted one another. The whole subsequent development of Russian society can leave no doubt on this score.

There is today a conspiracy of silence or of malevolent distortion about the whole subject. In discussing Kronstadt once again we feel we are dealing simultaneously—and quite explicitly—with all the authoritarian trends in the socialist movement, with all those who see the power of the Party or of the 'workers' state' as something different from or superior to the power of the masses themselves. For today all of them (Stalinists, Khruschevites, Trotskyists, Leninists of various ilk—and even those 'marxist humanists' who have not yet shed their Leninist G-string) take their stand with the Party, their Party, or speciously seek to justify its actions. In so doing they implicitly reveal their conception of 'socialism'.

In this and the next two issues of 'Solidarity' we wish to publish a text not previously available to English readers. It is a free translation of parts of Ida Mett's 'La Commune de Cronstadt', first published in Paris in 1938 and later republished by Spartacus Publications, just after World War II.

**PEOPLE AND PARTY**

The Kronstadt insurrection broke out 3 months after the conclusion of the civil war on the European fronts.

As the Civil War drew to a victorious end the working masses of Russia were in a state of chronic famine. They were also increasingly dominated by a ruthless regime, ruled by a single party. The generation that had made October still remembered the promise of the social revolution and the hopes they had had of building a new kind of society.

This generation had comprised a very remarkable section of the working class. It had reluctantly abandoned for a while its demands for equality and for real freedom, believing them to be if not incompatible with war, at least difficult to achieve under wartime conditions. But once victory assured, the workers in the towns, the sailors, the Red Army men and the peasants, all those who had shed their blood during the Civil War, could see no further justification for their hardships and for blind submission to a ferocious discipline. Even if these might have had some reason in wartime, such reasons no longer applied.
While many had been fighting at the front, others — those enjoying
dominant positions in the State apparatus — had been consolidating their
power and detaching themselves more and more from the workers. The bu-
reaucracy was already assuming alarming proportions. The State machine
was in the hands of a single Party, itself more and more permeated by
careerist elements. A non-party worker was worth less, on the scales of
everyday life, than an ex-bourgeois or nobleman, who had belatedly rallied
the Party. Free criticism no longer existed. Any Party member could
denounce as 'counter-revolutionary' any worker simply defending his class
rights and his dignity as a worker.

Industrial and agricultural production were declining rapidly.
There were virtually no raw materials for the factories. Machinery was
worn and neglected. The main concern of the proletariat was the bitter
fight against famine. Thefts from factories had become a sort of compen-
sation for miserably paid labour. Such thefts continued despite the repea-
ted searches carried out by the Tcheka at factory gates.

Workers who still had connections with the countryside would go
there to barter old clothes, matches or salt in exchange for food. The
trains were crammed with such people (the Mechotchniki). Despite a thou-
sand difficulties, they would try to bring food to the famished cities.
Working class anger would break out repeatedly, as barrages of militia
confiscated the paltry loads of flour or potatoes workers would be carrying
on their backs to prevent their kids from starving.

The peasants were submitted to compulsory requisitions. They were
sowing less, despite the danger of famine that now resulted from poor crops.
Bad crops had been common. Under ordinary conditions such crops had not
automatically had these disastrous effects. The cultivated areas were larger
and the peasants would usually set something aside for more difficult
times.

The situation preceding the Kronstadt uprising can be summed up as
a fantastic discrepancy between promise and achievement. There were harsh
economic difficulties. But as important was the fact that the generation
in question had not forgotten the meaning of the rights it had struggled
for during the Revolution. This was to provide the real psychological
background to the uprising.

The Red Navy had problems of its own. Since the Brest-Litovsk
peace the Government had undertaken a complete reorganization of the Armed
Forces, on the basis of a rigid discipline, a discipline quite incompatible
with the erstwhile principle of election of officers by the men. A whole
hierarchical structure had been introduced. This had gradually stifled
the democratic tendencies which had prevailed at the onset of the Revolu-
tion. For purely technical reasons such a reorganization had not been
possible in the Navy, where revolutionary traditions had strong roots. Most
of the naval officers had gone over to the Whites and the sailors still
retained many of the democratic rights they had won in 1917. It had not
been possible completely to dismantle their organizations.
This state of affairs in the Navy was in striking contrast with what pertained in the rest of the Armed Forces. It couldn't last. Differences between the rank-and-file sailors and the higher command of the Armed Forces steadily increased. With the end of the Civil War in European Russia these differences became explosive.

Discontent was not only rampant among the non-Party sailors. It also affected communist sailors. Attempts to 'discipline' the fleet, by introducing 'Army customs' met with stiff resistance from 1920 on. Zof, a leading Party member and a member of the Revolutionary War Committee for the Baltic Fleet, was officially denounced by the communist sailors for his 'dictatorial attitudes'. The enormous gap developing between the rank and file and the leadership was shown up during the elections to the 8th Congress of Soviets, held in December 1920. At the naval base of Petrograd large numbers of sailors had noisily left the electoral meeting, openly protesting against the despatch there as official delegates of people from Politotdiel and from Comflot (i.e. from the very organizations monopolising political control of the Navy).

On February 15, 1921, the Second Conference of Communist Sailors of the Baltic Fleet had met. It had assembled 300 delegates who had voted for the following resolution:

'This Second Conference of Communist Sailors condemns the work of Poubalt (Political Section of the Baltic Fleet).

1. Poubalt has not only separated itself from the masses but also from the active functionaries. It has become transformed into a bureaucratic organ, enjoying no authority among the sailors.

2. There is a total absence of plan or method in the work of Poubalt. There is also a lack of agreement between its actions and the resolutions adopted at the 9th Party Congress.

3. Poubalt, having totally detached itself from the Party masses, has destroyed all local initiative. It has transformed all political work into paper work. This has had harmful repercussions on the organization of the masses in the fleet. Between June and November last year 20 per cent of (sailor) Party members have left the Party. This can be explained by the wrong methods of work of Poubalt.

4. The cause is to be found in the very principles of Poubalt's organization. These principles must be changed in the direction of greater democracy.'

Several delegates demanded, in their speeches, the total abolition of the 'political sections' in the Navy, a demand we will find voiced again in the sailors' resolutions during the Kronstadt uprising. This was the frame of mind in which the famous discussion on the trade union question preceding the 10th Party Congress took place.
In the documents of the period one can clearly perceive the will of certain Bolshevik leaders (amongst whom Trotsky) not only to ignore the great discontent affecting the workers and all those who had fought in the previous period but also to apply military methods to the problems of everyday life, particularly to industry and to the trade unions.

In these heated discussions the sailors of the Baltic Fleet adopted a viewpoint very different from Trotsky's. At the elections to the 10th Party Congress, the Baltic Fleet voted solidly against its leaders: Trotsky, Peoples Commissar for War (under whose authority the Navy came) and Raskolnikov, Chief of the Baltic Fleet. Trotsky and Raskolnikov were in agreement on the Trade Union question.

The sailors sought to protest against the developing situation by abandoning the Party en masse. According to information released by Sopine, Commissar for Petrograd, 5,000 sailors left the Party in January 1921 alone.

There is no doubt that the discussion taking place within the Party at this time had profound effects on the masses. It overflowed the narrow limits the Party sought to impose on it. It spread to the working class as a whole, to the soldiers and to the sailors. Heated local criticism acted as a general catalyst. The proletariat had reasoned quite logically: if discussion and criticism were permitted to Party members, why should they not be permitted to the masses themselves who had endured all the hardships of the Civil War?

In his speech to the 10th Congress—published in the Congress proceedings—Lenin voiced his regret at having 'permitted' such a discussion. 'We have certainly committed an error' he said, 'in having authorised this debate'. 'Such a discussion was harmful just before the Spring months that would be loaded with such difficulties!'.

PETROGRAD, ON THE EVE OF KRONSTADT

Despite the fact that the population of Petrograd had diminished by two-thirds, the winter of 1920-21 proved to be a particularly hard one.

Food in the City had been scarce since February 1917 and the situation had deteriorated from month to month. The town had always relied on foodstuffs brought in from other parts of the country. During the Revolution the rural economy was in crisis in many of these regions. The countryside could only feed the capital to a very small extent. The catastrophic condition of the railways made things even worse. The ever increasing antagonisms between town and country created further difficulties everywhere.
To these partly unavoidable factors must be added the bureaucratic
degeneration of the administration and the rapacity of the State organs
for Food Supply. Their role in 'feeding' the population was actually a
negative one. If the population of Petrograd did not die of hunger during
this period it was above all thanks to its own adaptability and initiative.
It got food wherever it could!

Barter was practised on a large scale. There was still some food
to be had in the countryside, despite the smaller area under cultivation.
The peasant would exchange this produce for the goods he lacked: boots,
petrol, salt, matches. The population of the towns would try and get hold
of these commodities in any way it could. They alone had real value. It
would take them to the countryside. In exchange people would carry back
a few pounds of flour or potatoes. As we have mentioned before the few
trains, heated, would be packed with men carrying bags on their shoulders.
En route, the trains would often have to stop because they had run out of
fuel. Passengers would get off and cut logs for the boilers.

Market places had officially been abolished. But in nearly all
towns there were semi-tolerated illegal markets, where barter was carried
out. Such markets existed in Petrograd. Suddenly, in the Summer of 1920,
Zinoviev issued a decree forbidding any kind of commercial transaction.
The few small shops still open were closed and their doors sealed.

But the State apparatus was in no position to supply the towns.
From this moment on, famine could no longer be attenuated by the initia-
tive of the population. It became extreme. In January 1921, according
to information published by Petrokommouna (the State Supplies Service
of the town of Petrograd) workers in metal smelting factories were allocated
rations of 800 grams of black bread a day; shock workers in other facto-
rries: 600 grams; workers with A.V. cards: 400 grams; other workers:
200 grams. Black bread was the staple diet of the Russian people at this
period.

But even these official rations were distributed irregularly and
in even smaller amounts than those stipulated. Transport workers would
receive, at irregular intervals, the equivalent of 700-1000 calories a
day. Lodgings were unheated. There was a very great shortage of both
clothing and footwear. According to official statistics, working class
wages in 1920 in Petrograd were only 9 per cent of those of 1913.

The population was drifting away from the capital. All who had
relatives in the country had rejoined them. The authentic proletariat
remained till the end, having the most slender connections with the coun-
tryside.

This fact must be emphasised, in order to nail the official lies
seeking to attribute the Petrograd strikes that were soon to break out
to peasant elements, 'insufficiently steeld in proletarian ideas'. The
real situation was the very opposite. A few workers were seeking refuge
in the countryside. The bulk remained. There was certainly no exodus of peasants into the starving towns! A few thousand 'Troudarmei tzys' (soldiers of the labour armies) then in Petrograd did not modify the picture. It was the famous Petrograd proletariat, the proletariat which had played such a leading role in both previous revolutions, that was finally to resort to the classical weapon of the class struggle: the strike.

The first strike broke out at the Troubotchny factory, on February 23, 1921. On the 24th, the strikers organized a mass demonstration in the street. Zinoviev sent detachments of 'koursanty' (student officers) against them. The strikers tried to contact the Finnish barracks. Meanwhile the strikes were spreading. The Baltisky factory stopped work. Then the Laferma factory and a number of others: the Skorokhod shoe factory, the Admiralteiski factory, the Bormann and Metalisheski plants, and finally, on February 28, the great Putilov works themselves.

The strikers were demanding measures to assist food supplies. Some factories were demanding the re-establishment of the local markets, freedom to travel within a radius of thirty miles of the city and the withdrawal of the militia detachments holding the road around the town. But side by side with these economic demands several factories were putting forward more political demands: freedom of speech and of the press, the freeing of working class political prisoners. In several big factories Party spokesmen were refused a hearing.

Confronted with the misery of the Russian workers who were seeking an outlet to their intolerable conditions, the servile local Party Committee and Zinoviev (who according to numerous accounts was behaving in Petrograd like a real tyrant) could find no better methods of persuasion than brute force.

Poukhov* 'official' historian of the Kronstadt revolt, wrote that 'decisive class measures were needed to overcome the enemies of the revolution who were using a non-class conscious section of the proletariat in order to wrench power from the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party'.

On February 24, the Party leaders set up a special General Staff, called the Committee of Defence. It was composed of 3 people: Lachevitch, Anzelovitch and Avrov. They were to be supported by a number of technical assistants. In each district of the town a similar Committee of Three ('troika') was to be set up, composed of the local Party organizer, the commander of the Party battalion of the local territorial brigade and of a Commissar from the Officers Training Corps. Similar Committees were organized in the outlying districts. These were composed of the local Party organizer, the President of the Executive of the local Soviet and the military Commissar for the District.

On February 24 the Committee of Defence proclaimed a state of siege in Petrograd. All circulation on the streets was forbidden after 23.00 hours as were all meetings and gatherings, both out of doors and indoors, that had not been specifically permitted by the Defence Committee. 'All infringements would be dealt with according to military law'. The decree was signed by Avrov (later shot by the Stalinists), commander of the Petrograd military region, by Lachevitch (who later committed suicide) a member of the War Council, and by Bouline (later shot by the Stalinists) Commander of the fortified Petrograd district.

A general mobilisation of Party members was decreed. Special detachments were created, to be sent to 'special destinations'. At the same time the militia detachments guarding the roads in and out of the town were withdrawn. Then the strike leaders were arrested.

On February 26 the Kronstadt sailors, naturally interested in all that was going on in Petrograd, sent delegates to find out about the strikes. The delegation visited a number of factories. It returned to Kronstadt on the 28th.

(to be continued in our next issue)

BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY (continued from p.19)

But the bastards won't make us work for nothing. When very busy and coming from our other terminus I sometimes don't bother to collect fares. I stand on the platform and take fares from there. If they're given. I concentrate on keeping the bus going to the relief point where the next crew will take over. This helps the driver. It helps the passengers. It helps me. And I'm glad to say it doesn't help the governors. Fares collected are from half those who get on our bus.

We come to our relief: the next crew is waiting to take us over. It's 11.00 am. We start again at 11.45. No time to go home for our break, so we stay in the canteen. I sleep right through it.

We can take it fairly easy during our second half. We then get the shoppers, the housewives, the old-age pensioners. We get to know them. A six-penny fare is a lot for them, out of their tight budget. We do what we can to help. In this our main enemy is not the inspector. We can recognise him. Our main enemy are what we call 'spots'. Plain clothes L.T.E. officials, who spy on you. You only know about them when you're caught 'fiddling the transport'. It usually means dismissal.

A Timbuctoo Busman.

Published by E. Morse, 68 Hill Farm, Whipsnade Nr. Dunstable (Beds) 23.10.62

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(Back page cartoon is from 'The Bosses Songbook - Songs to Stifle the Flames of Discontent', published by R. Ellington, New York, and dedicated to... 'our constant companion - J. Edgar Hoover'.

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solidarity programme?

UP PEACE.

UP LABOR.

UP A LAZY RIVER.

up yours.

FOR FULLER STATEMENTS SEE 'SOLIDARITY' PAMPHLETS No. 6 (THE MEANING OF SOCIALISM) AND No. 11 (SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM).