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C R I T I C A L T H E O R Y
A N D
R E V O L U T I O N A R Y P R A C T I C E

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MONUMENT OR MOVEMENT?

SELF IMPROVEMENT OR SOCIAL ACTION.

E.L.F.'s (Edinburgh Liberation Front's) Campaign to abolish traffic from Princess Street has aroused a lot of interest and, I think (just from talking to blokes -- non-members -- in Glasgow), a lot of sympathetic support. If this campaign builds up (if) and succeeds, then I, for one, would be delighted. There's no reason (if we overlook the profit 'needs' of Princess Street shopkeepers) why grass, trees, beer gardens, street theatre, and lots more, couldn't replace the traffic-jammed street.

A section of Glasgow's Buchanan Street has been banned to all traffic, and the transformation, unimaginative though it is, is quite startling. So that people see it can be done. The Princess Street shopkeepers will (I think) certainly oppose the abolition of buses (at least) as the bus stops are strategically placed so that the buses empty the potential consumers right outside the stores. Consumer trucks.

I'm very loath to oppose this attempt to assert people's needs. It's true, members will probably sneer, that they're just trying to make capitalism more palatable, but the self-same members are not slow to go for as much money as possible and move from slums to cleaner and healthier areas. The Protestant ethic strikes again!

Apparently self-improvement is O.K., moving from a brutal environment to a more civilised one. But note. In both cases the environment is accepted as given. What I'm trying to get at is that both environments have been planned "from the top". The "changing of circumstances" (which members parrot) is seen simply as a self-transfer from one set of given circumstances to another, but not the changing of circumstances as such, as social action.

In the "Protestant ethic" sense, the self change from one given set of circumstances to another is the result of rewards handed down from above, which, individually, makes capitalism more palatable. Whether this succeeds depends greatly on the individual but, again, the wish for further self improvement is simply a wish to move on to further given circumstances. The totality of these circumstances, capitalism, is then, for all practical purposes, accepted as given, that is, as natural, irrespective of how absolute their "revolutionary" theory may be. Social action is then removed from the present world of real men (and women!) and reduced to an abstract isolated act somewhere over the rainbow.

The separation between individual and social action leads to (or stems from) the separation between practically supporting capitalism and theoretically opposing it.

Members (reluctantly in some cases) "support" trade unionism, i.e. generally, attempts by workers to get more money in order to acquire a greater quantity of things. Fair enough. But outside of this, members are very wary (to say the least) to encourage workers to assert themselves in the wider "non-economic" social world. Could it be that they see workers not as real men, but solely as "economic men", abstract bearers of labour power? This is how the capitalist sees them.

There are even members who don't support claimants unions, no doubt on the grounds that workers who have an unsaleable product (labour power) have no basis for any action, and therefore, should accept their lot. This, again, is exactly how the capitalist sees it.

As far as the boss is concerned it's the workers skills (labour power) he's concerned with, not the man (the worker) as such. The worker is rendered less real than his skills, of which, apparently, he is the abstract bearer. We're numbers, not men. And if unemployed workers, no matter how limited their views, ignore that they've nothing to sell, and still attempt to assert themselves collectively as men, then it's rather strange "revolutionaries" who would sneeringly dismiss their actions as futile.

To oppose collective action (unity is strength) by unemployed is to leave them helpless atomized victims of capitalism. Can Socialism (as a practical proposition) be established by isolated broken men?

But then, how many members attempt to see socialism as a practical proposition? Too many members still think of the "class struggle" in the 19th century narrow "economic" and "political" (parliamentary) terms. Although members stress "majority understanding", for the most this is simply a quantitative total (1+1+1 etc) which is verified in parliamentary elections. The simple counting of skulls. They ignore (or oppose) the social acts which culminate in political action. Once "Socialism" is posited as a "thing" (an ideal State?) then "it" is seen as an Absolute above men. Thus Harro in his article on B.F. Skinner (in the W.S.) sees men (and women!) being compelled to establish Socialism. It's almost as if the workers, after stumbling in a maze, eventually come along to us and reluctantly concede, "Oh well, we've tried everything else, lets try Socialism".

Most members don't think workers can do anything, short of abolishing capitalism -- which they see as an isolated parliamentary act sometime in the future. This is seen as an Absolute act unconnected with men's previous actions. Members (who prattle about "history") are being utterly unhistorical in that they see "History" as an evolution of abstractions, Feudalism → Capitalism → Socialism, seen as abstract categories, and dismiss the actions of real women (and men) as a series of mistakes.

PREDETERMINED MEANS AND PREDETERMINED ENDS

Some of the Glasgow members have got absolute pre-determined answers for everything. Which means they fail to understand the importance of clearly formulating the problems. What I'm trying to get at is that they never ask themselves "What (practically) can be done?" They've got the abstract answers but not the practical questions. And I mean practical. The days of abstract catechisms are over. I am not opposed to aiming for a social goal, or goals, but the blanket answer "organise for socialism" in response to all situations is, for any practical purpose, no answer at all. Or rather, an abstract answer to a concrete situation. Socialism is thus reduced to a "thing", something above, and separate from, the real relationships between men. It's almost as if men were called on to carry through the needs of "History" and not their own social needs.

This, to repeat, is why many members simply see ^{the} abstract quantitative side of "majority understanding": "Socialism" as the end, and the proles as the means to attain the end.

This "objective" (above society) way of classifying men in a strictly quantitative manner (which stems from natural science) is shown by the approach to organisation.

The Party is seen as sharply defined static classification composed of members whose "activity" is in no way a development or movement. The Party "is" as it was "in the beginning". Everything is defined, labelled, "once and for all". Therefore, as "no real change occurs", activity must (for them) be limited to "above society" activity. The outdoor platform, for example, symbolises this perfectly. The "best members" (to them) are those whose views are closest to the founder fathers of 1904. Any form of practical activity (co-operation with non-members) which goes beyond the traditional "activity" is regarded as dangerous, if not heretical. When you get right down to it they're trying to convince the workers of the need for Socialism

via moral persuasion. "Socialism" (like syrup of figs) is good for you.

The necessity, then, appears to arise not out of the strivings of men to satisfy their real social needs, but out of the "workings of history".

A divine plan?

Their inability to co-operate with others (compromise!) is, I think, based on the belief that not only is the goal (socialism) predetermined but also that there is only one (pre-determined) "true path" to this goal. It's one thing to aim for a socially possible goal; it's another to believe that "History" "works" towards this pre-determined goal. The more divorced from the mainstream of social activity do members become, the more they rationalise their failure by rigidly asserting the ultimate inevitability via the mechanical workings of the "economic factor". See the WSP, particularly Harro's absurd article on Skinner.

There is the "vulgar evolution" approach underlying their beliefs, that is, human intervention is eliminated -- until the "vital moment" when the "objective laws of history" (seen as natural laws independent of men) create the perfect pre-determined conditions for the "upward development" into Socialism. As Stalin said, "Socialism follows capitalism as surely as night follows day". It's a mechanical approach. Society isn't an "objective" machine.

If there is no diffusion of approaches, if there is only one road, and only one, which "objective forces" (seen as technical development) have logically paved, then two things can be done. One, sit back and wait for the pre-determined moment. Or, reveal this only true path to the less enlightened with a vigour and dogmatic certainty that passes into the realms of religious frenzy. In the "more sophisticated" (!) speakers this inner certainty of pre-destination takes the form of a smug world-weary approach, rather like a pedantic schoolmaster lecturing wayward pupils.

There can be no "mistakes" in this approach. No activity other than "talking down" to the unenlightened. Everything is complete, schematized, wrapped up, so that all that "the poor fools down there" can do is swallow it. In its extremity this approach leads to the condemnation of any activity that does not have Socialism as its "immediate aim". Thus for some members the UCS workers opposition to redundancy was "futile" because "after all, it'd still be capitalism". You see? They eliminate the actions of real men, and simply see society as an "objective" machine.

A FAITH FOR THE WORKING CLASS

It'd be interesting some time to analyse the Party historically, and tie it up with the latter 19th century "Socialist" movement. In a curious way I think Marx was so utterly "far ahead of his time" that "Marxism" would have made absolutely no impact if it hadn't been presented as an alternative (and historically more progressive) faith than religion. A "scientific" faith, a certainty "as sure as sure as night follows day".

An anti-dogmatic method was turned into a dogmatic system. The "Marxists" stood Marx on his head. Even the word "Marxist" seems to me to have metaphysical connotations. Yet, considering the circumstances, I'm not sure what else could have been done. IF the workers needed a guarantee that their struggles were not in vain, that "their day would come" (or at least if the sympathetic intellectuals thought they needed one) then a solidified faith was needed. This was 19th century evolutionary positivism -- with a proletarian twist in the tail. It's time the Party honestly approached the problem that "Marxism" too is an historical product. But this would place the Party itself in historical perspective. A child of its times. Can it "grow up"?

The airy dismissal of "doing something now" with the cookshop recipe of "inevitable" stages of history assuring the "next step" as a cast iron certainty, just won't wash. The so-called "inevitable" stages were

generalisations formulated by Charlie and Fred in order to understand what had occurred:

"Viewed apart from real history, these abstractions have in themselves no value whatever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history"
(The German Ideology, p.15)

The (specifically) 19th century approach, derived from natural science that the abstract conception (the model) is more real than the complex phenomena from which it is abstracted, is the bugbear which haunts the Party. Thus speakers spend their time imploring workers to "understand" the abstraction rather than change the reality. "Reality" to most members is the "evolutionary unfolding" of the "economic factor", the "development of productive machinery", which reduces men's needs to narrow "bread and butter" ones. A technological revolution; the freeing of machines.

Instead of men using the communal productive forces (Which includes men) to satisfy their social needs (in the widest sense of the word) men, apparently, are to adapt themselves to the needs of machines. Socialism appears not so much a society of socialised human beings as a society of universal capitalists. Slum kids at Christmas who suddenly find themselves on the inside of the shop stores window. Plenty for all.

There's enough truth in this approach to make it plausible, but I think it's tied up with the fact that members can't comprehend men having social needs which go beyond "economic" ones. Which is why anything that doesn't immediately change the relations of production is considered worse than useless. Basically it's an elitist view, though (like Labour and Tory) they need a "majority vote" to carry it through. What members stress is "abundance for all", which is actually a promise of a hedonistic paradise. Workers are simply called upon to "understand" this, then wait for the others to "understand" it -- and voila! that's it!

Now, of course, I'm not denying that it will be possible to satisfy one's "needs" (in the simple sense) within Socialism. That's OK. But what then? It begins to sound like the Welfare State utopianised. More and more things. I don't want to sound like a bloody reverend or an old Tory (which comes down to the same thing I suppose) but "man does not live by strawberry tarts alone".

Nor do I advocate a return to "the simple life", whatever that is. No, it boils down to what can be done now. We're faced with the problem that, unlike the development of capitalism from feudalism, we have no alternative means of production which develop and grow beyond the old.

DEVELOPING SOCIAL NEEDS THROUGH STRUGGLE

Members are rightly wary of "creeping socialism" insofar as the exponents of such a theory propose that "socialist relations of production" can creep in unnoticed under capitalism. Well, unnoticed or not, it's dicey, to say the least. "Workers control" in Yugoslavia illustrates this. It's a con. Even so, I'm reluctant to condemn those who would at least hold dialogue upon this point. Of course, in an economic sense capitalism trains workers perfectly well how to run industries in a co-operative manner, although the division of labour runs across the full consciousness of this co-operation. Moreover, it's reluctant work, reluctant co-operation. Although to quite an extent technology has created the potential conditions for the withering away, if not the abolition, of forms of the division of labour, I think we've got to encourage concretely what the Party says abstractly, that is, social movements which go beyond the prejudices arising from the division of labour.

Now, Women's Lib obviously springs to mind. Now "Women's Lib" is such a vague term and covers all sorts of views -- "equal rights for charladies" (fought for by Hampstead "terribly serious" females with names like Samantha because the poor chars are too busy cleaning out the Hampstead females' homes to fight themselves). Maoists, etc, etc. Nevertheless, instead of silly blinkered opposition, we should be discussing with

women (and men for that matter) the implications of Women's Lib. What (logically) is really under seige is, of course, not only the division of labour at its root, but that central authoritarian force, its offspring, the private property family. Watch the apponents of Women's Lib (they often write "horrified" letters to the staid Scottish newspapers). It's not simply that they're opposed to women getting equal working conditions, etc...; they're opposed to women "renouncing their traditional roles in society."

Once the "old man the provider" and "woman the housekeeper" roles are attacked, then the "family itself" is in danger. Women are "forgetting their place" and trying to open their cages. Are we with them or agin them? You are no doubt aware that it's possible to be a sincere "revolutionary socialist" yet hold socially reactionary views.

Also, I always thought that "the little red book for schoolkids" was a good idea. The Party's still so much a man's domain (his hobby?) that members ignore the real struggles taking place in society wherein women and kids are involved. The family, schools, colleges, all institutions basic for the continuation of capitalism, yet never really have we encouraged assaults on these mind-bending citadels of capitalist power. What can be done, of course, may well be limited, but it's up to people to strive for emancipation from "the natural order of things" so that in their practical striving, they will be brought face to face with the limitations arising from the all-embracing dominant power of capital.

To realise their ever-developing real needs they will be forced to go beyond the stifling clutches of capitalism. The necessity will arise out of their real social needs. But if they don't strive, if they sit back and avoid the (invigorating) struggle, then the "necessity" will be only abstract and therefore not practically necessary at all. No doubt you can think of plenty of instances where we could at least try to make some impact. I'm utterly sick to the teeth with members dismissing activities outside the Party as futile and -- wait for it-- "unscientific"! Jesus H. Christ!

Don't they understand that religion's finished? (Ignore the showbiz revival -- that's showbiz). "Blessed are all thee who follow the only true path to righteousness....." Enough!

It's members (and sectarians like them) who help keep religion going. The "debates" fanatics are to be avoided. You see, basically, you can't beat sectarians by argument. As they've got everything wrapped up (in a gift pack) and have facile catechismic answers to everything, then they in return will demand absolute clear-cut answers from their opponent. Now clear-cut answers to everything can only be supplied by metaphysicians. It presupposes that everything's fixed and in its place and eliminates any degree of creativity. Society isn't really like jigsaw or crossword puzzles where the parts or words are all pre-determined and men's only part is to recognise the fixed and allotted parts.

Practical social "answers" can only be resolved and become obvious through social activity. This is why the Party concentrates on men's "economic" needs. Because it doesn't know (how could it?) what people's social needs will be "on the eve". They fail to see men (and women) creating social needs within the straitjacket of capitalism. "Needs", for members, come down "from above" but are not really made by people "from below".

Actually the 100% Party revolutionaries shake hands with the capitalists in that the latter think that the proles can be "bought off" with more "things", and the former claim that "Socialism" will provide more things than capitalism can. More sweeties for the proles. OK, the revolutionaries insist on "majority support". In his own way, so does Head Teeth. The only real difference is a "bigger majority". Because how the hell can one "understand" Socialism at the moment except abstractly?

This just won't do. What practically is going to happen after the Revolution will surely arise as a development of what has been built up within capitalism.

THE DEAD HAND OF KAUTSKY

I think over all Kautsky probably was the major influence on early Party members, and being such a tradition-bound Party the influence lingers on. Harro's article on Skinner is a good illustration of this. In Kautsky's hands the phrase "the recognition of necessity" takes a rather sinister turn. "Necessity", for Kautsky, is the "evolutionary" workings of history, the development of the "economic factor". Men are reduced to colourless puppets whose only action (in the revolutionary sense) is to recognise the higher needs of the techniques of production and dissolve the old relationships that are holding back machines.

Kautsky was a Darwinian before he became a "Marxist" and the 19th century idea of "progressive evolution", the inevitable unfolding of a rigid pre-determined order, was the basis of his outlook, from which he never wavered. The only subjectivity Kautsky allowed for was getting as many people as possible to recognise the (vulgarly) "objective" needs of "History". In Kautsky's book on the M.C.ofH. he says, roughly (I'm quoting from memory), that "there is a general law of nature that all animals, including men, must adapt or die." Words to that effect. It's the "survival of the fittest" with a "socialist" sting in the tail. This is just plausible enough to pass for Marxism, but it completely eliminates the actions of men in socially creating their needs. The needs aren't machines', there men's. See the very first thesis on Feuerbach for Marx's view. It's completely opposed to Kautsky's. It could have been written as an antidote to K.K.

Kautsky, like all the vulgar materialists, separates the thing known from the process by which knowledge is acquired. It's all in the first thesis particularly. This isn't a philosophical juggle. It strikes at the very root of the S.P.G.B. Read over Harro's article again. Skinner, too, separates circumstances from men, just like Kautsky. And note Harro's approval of Behaviourism, for he notes merely that it has "shortcomings" in a class-divided society, but not apparently in a classless one.

Now ~~what~~ basically is Skinner's view of men? Here it is, from the horse's mouth -- so to speak:

"We can neither assert nor deny discontinuity between the human and sub-human fields so long as we know so little about either. If; nevertheless, the author of a book of this sort is expected to hazard a guess publicly, I may say that the only difference I expect to see revealed between the behaviour of rat and man (aside from the enormous differences of complexity) lie in the field of verbal behaviour." (The Behaviour of Organisms, p442.)

Not the same book as Harro reviewed, true, but this standpoint "sticks out a mile". One can say "thank you"! Big deal. And this no doubt is "good dialectical thinking".

The inhuman mechanical approach can go two ways. One, it can lead to capitalism (a thing) mechanically collapsing, or, and apparently polarised, it can lead to capitalism (again seen as a thing) evolving, steadily "building up" the "contradictions of production" until the "time is ripe" and workers mechanically recognise this and do the needful.

Now, accepting that capitalism won't collapse like a decayed tenement how will workers "recognise" that the "time is ripe"? Not under-ripe or over-ripe but ripe? After all, if the bloody thing won't collapse (which is true enough) why shouldn't capitalism go on for ever? What is there in "objective conditions" that advises men that "now is the hour"?

This attitude based on the belief that "favourable conditions" are inevitably evolving anyway, and that men's actions won't determine them.

Predestination. It's a religious view. At rock bottom, both apparently polarised views stem from the 19th century intellectuals' belief that the workers are incapable of making history; that it has to be made for them, either via elites (Lenin) or "Scientific" determinism (Kautsky).

If sincere working class Socialists still propagate such nonsense it's basically more a sign of despair than anything else. Knock away their crutch of a pre-ordained natural law which floats over the

heads of real men, and all they're left with to construct a movement with are those "bloody silly workers".

It is true that capitalism, being alienated society par excellence, has its own peculiar laws, or tendencies, precisely because men's co-operative act of social production (in the widest sense) is hidden and only "realised" in the act of exchange -- which appears as "natural", and men's social production as unnatural, perverse, forced. This is "how it is" within capitalism. The social creations of men become independent of men and control their actions.

For examples, capital "hires" men. The best basis of all history, the co-operative act of social labour, far from satisfying a human need, becomes a means for satisfying other needs. This, incidentally, is why Marx attacked those who simply advocated higher wages as the solution. Social labour, appears to them (said old Charlie) "only in the form of acquisitive activity". He was not "welfare State" technocrat. Basically, he's a (sssh!) humanist, although that words become "dirty", abused.

If, in theological terms, the hand of God is everywhere, then, in capitalism, the Universal God whose hand "guides men's destiny" is, ultimately, the world market. The Labour Party Keynesians try to appease "God", it always outwits them.

THE MYTH OF "ECONOMIC MAN"

In "Brighton Line" Steele claims (in his reply to Mike Bradly) that members no longer cling to the "ballot box only" fetish. Maybe true. OK. So what? No members speculate that other means may be used. Big deal. But surely the means will only arise and become obvious on the basis of what the workers do now. Or will these means arise mechanically? Out of the hat, so to speak? Surely it will only be because workers, thru trial and error, have perfected these means. In other words, it won't be simply that the means are there all the time -- a passive outlook which accounts for the parliamentary fetish -- but instead that men's actions will have created them.

Let them speculate away, the "revisionists" and the "orthodoxy", the point, however, is to change society. The Party can easily contain all these controversies (!) without changing one iota. A battle between speculators (interpreters) is a phoney battle. A struggle of phrases.

You see what I mean about them separating men from their circumstances? How they (unwittingly) denigrate workers? They've posited means here and workers there. But they don't realise that the very effort to create and develop (transcend) these means is the only practical guarantee that workers are capable of self-emancipation. Marx attacked the S.P.G.B. in his third thesis on old Feuerbach. Have a look as well at thesis No.8.

Socialism can only be rendered practical as a result of men's activity. This activity is socially determined, not in the sense that we have no choice, but simply that we must be aware of what is possible and what is impossible. But although social conditions determine our possibilities, it is only through activity (backed by theory) that we can transcend these conditions, making Socialism a practical necessity rather than an abstract possibility.

The Party, in a weird Hegelian sense, appeals to workers who are, in a way, aware of their alienated state yet basically accept it. The belief that "Socialism" is something above men, that the struggle is for a "thing" called Socialism and not for the socially possible realisation of men's needs, is essentially religious. If "philosophy is religion translated into thought" (Marx) then "mechanical Socialism is religion translated into politics" (Donaldson). The fear that men's needs can be satisfied within capitalism is based upon the belief that men's needs are limited to their stomachs.

I think this view marked a phase, a stepping stone in the history of Socialism. The view that "History" is working for us independent of our present activities, that "Socialism" is something above men in a master-servant relationship, with men the bearers of "History's" needs, reflects the immaturity of the working class. That this view is now being increasingly

challenged by an increasing number of workers is a pleasant sign indeed.. The "act of faith" is now being challenged by critical activity. This could be the enclosing of the historical gap between theory and practice. Historically the theory was formulated by intellectuals from outside the working class, the proles' priests. Now the very development of capitalism has, to an increasing extent, proletarianised the intellectuals and intellectuallised the proles. Irrespective of the wishes of the capitalist class and independent of their wills the "needs" of capital have increasingly democratised the working class.

If this sounds mechanical and in contradiction to my previous statements, it isn't. That's the point. It's the capitalist class who, typically, see everybody in their own image -- economic men. The expansion of their capital determines their social position. Capitalists themselves are utterley alienated -- and wallow in it. What is peripheral to them, to be picked up and discarded as cheap trinkets, culture, art, should be central to the working class. Not in the sense that they are ready-made things, isolated from men, simply to be gazed at, but instead that they should be creative productions of the working class themselves.

I liked the idea of street theatre because it was at least intended to be created by people, not packaged and sold to them. How to involve people, that's the point. Christ, I'm beginning to sound like one of those Bloomsbury pooves who ran around in the thirties looking like caricatures of Michael Foot in flannels and bare feet and chewing raw carrots! "Art for the People!" No, No! Art by the people. Never, never have the proles even set up their own alternative newspaper. The Unity Theatre and suchlike were well meaning attempts to hold up mirrors to the proles. But people only stare at mirrors. Seats are for spectators. The Party is a universal bench. I say universal for the other companion parties are simply extensions (outer branches) of the S.P.G.B.

THE UNIVERSAL PANACEA

It was a dreadful (and mechanical) mistake to foist the D.ofP. on other countries' socialists. Instead of realising that capitalism, although universal, has tendencies peculiar to a particular country, the Party started from the abstract model of capitalism and straitjacketed it on the international movement (which doesn't move). This dangerous absurdity was highlighted about 20 years ago when the Continental Spartacists, which included Pannekoek, invited the Party to send a delegate to their conference, which was, I think, in Amsterdam or perhaps in Brussels. Anyway the E.C. sent them a letter containing an "Introducing the S.P.G.B." leaflet!

Naturally the blokes never replied. How many chances have we missed over the years? We couldn't even co-operate and encourage blokes to develop their own movement; we had to present them with the Universal Panacea package scheme to be swallowed on delivery. Just when the capitalists were losing the remnants of the British Empire the Revolutionaries filled the breach with their own brand of chauvinism. The Party is really Hyndman collectivised. British to the core, By Jove!

It's an elitist view to regard the working class as an amorphous mass of stomachs. This way to the promised trough. Incidentally, did you read that snippety little article on Materialism by Gilmac a couple of months back? I think Chemical Materialism is the only name one can give that view. It's old hat. Misses the point completely. The irony is that to write a decent article on the subject would chop the legs off the Party. It may have been rhetorical flourish on old Engel's part when he said that the proles (German or otherwise) were the inheritors of Classical German Philosophy, but he was right on the ball.

I'm not indulging in any appeals to "higher" ideals, but poverty of life includes, but doesn't end at, "basic needs". The more brutalised the conditions, the greater the stress laid (in propaganda) on the listeners' obvious poverty and the glaring affluence of the capitalists. This is the usual Glasgow stuff, and it's very understandable. But it's difficult for blokes to understand what is meant by "needs". Secretly he may hope for a Rolls Royce and a top hat, but really he thinks his hopes wouldn't be realised under Socialism and it'd be "equal shares for all!" which

might end up in him getting less than he does now.

Man as a social animal is something members parrot but don't really understand. Members well meaning attempts to explain "each according to his needs" only adds to the confusion. It's almost like a Sermon on the Mount (or, in Edinburgh, on the Mound) in that speakers stress individual needs. "Some men need a lot to eat, others less. Some may prefer fish suppers, others grilled steak, etc." It's well meant, but it's so abstract that workers nod their heads and think "that's OK. Some silly bastard's going to eat fish and chips while I eat steak".

Speakers fail to point out that men will have to strive to create, or construct, these social needs. They put society in one corner and men in the other, failing to realise that men are social individuals. Because they're so abstract members are really moralists, for they're hoping that men (as isolated individuals) will play the game and recognise within themselves the "sensible" limitations of their "needs". This is actually a proletarian reflection of the moral idealism of the philosophers of the free-trading capitalists,

The earlier capitalists' Utopia, their moral dream, a society where each man recognised the rights of the other, was of course only an abstract morality. Which is why in comparing what "should be" (the morality) and what actually occurred men became cynical of "human nature". This "revolutionary" stuff that is peddled is a mixture of working class immaturity and petty capitalists' utopian yearnings. The Party truly is a child of its times (1904).

When old Charlie said that the Dominant ideas were the ideas of the ruling class he sure said a mouthful. Amusing how speakers quote this without realising the depths the man was getting at. They see it only in an obvious crude way, newspapers, T.V. and so on, but they fail to comprehend it from the other side in their own approach. The shedding of bourgeois ideas (and practice) is a constant struggle. What is vital, I think, is greater discussion (dialogue) with others outside the Party.

Anyway, I hear that Glasgow Branch will be raising an item for discussion at the ADM on the Party's attitude to organisations such as Women's Lib groups, etc. They want to be told their attitude. It's an attempt, I suppose, but "attitude" has a rather passive ring.

A POLITICAL MUSEUM PIECE

Unfortunately the Party's become an end in itself. "Discussion" is blinkered and goes round in circles. As an example, at an outdoor meeting recently a worker pointed out he'd listened to the Party "for 40 years" and they were still pretty much in the same position. Now, granted some questioners are at it, seeking a weak spot in "the case" to bolster up their own prejudices, nevertheless this is a valid point. The speaker understandably rationalised it in some way, basing his views on "the fact" that "conditions are turning favourably in our direction" and it's simply a case of "plugging on". Of course I heard the same answer from other speakers over the last 15 years or more, and no doubt it's a stock question and answer. Now it's practically impossible to get any internal discussion on this point (discussion with "outsiders" is simply a competition) as the Party is never subjected to any scrutiny in depth. Superficialities abound -- "we should sell more SS", "put colour on the cover", and so on -- but it's all circular self-deception. Nothing is resolved, for nothing is touched upon basically.

The Party is not looked upon historically, except that certain dates are dragged out (1904) to "illustrate" that "out of the darkness came the dawn". And after that presumably it's Amen. It's interesting to note that Marx's opposition to Bakunin was not solely over the controversy about the state, altho it's related to it, but mainly because M. Bakunin denigrated any activity short of the abolition of capitalism.

So, on the one hand, we find the advocacy of the necessary historical development of capitalism (including of course the forces leading to its negation) and on the other the non-working class idea of abolishing

the system irrespective of the conditions. In the Party we find the first view in a completely vulgarised version ("forces" above men, that is, men reduced to recognisers of "objective" forces, but are not seen as a force themselves) amalgamated with the second view, the cry on every occasion for the "Abolition of the Wages System".

I think us critics of this are part of a general "movement" or turbulence which has arisen over the last few years. A revulsion towards unquestioned authority in any form. It would be easy, but misleading, to call it anarchism. It's the breakdown of the rigidly held barrier between "political society" and "civil society", between politics and social life. It's been on the cards here since the rise in America of the S.D.S. and the breakdown in the American S.L.P. Lots more of course, but it's the latter which highlighted it for me in 1969.

There's got to be a lot more honesty. Smugly arguing from a defence position is out. Perhaps if the Party can spread its wings and encourage activities in all fields, push them on, then there's hope for the old S.P. yet. If not, if it retreats into its dogmatic shell, then it can simply be regarded as a political museum. A period piece. Perhaps the ADM will point the way.

If the Party, instead of simply commenting on what has happened (looking backwards), projects itself and practically strives for the development of working class unity, then this will unleash a need for quickly produced pamphlets on various subjects. So much time has been wasted over the merits and demerits of a printing press, of branch publications, and so on, but these will arise as a result of basic changes overall, not vice versa. Grant that the Party remains an "above society" commentator and there's no real need for further publications. Of course we should be looking beyond the Party as far as publications (atleast) are concerned.

I've just glanced through a recent book called "Radical Man" by Charles Hampden-Turner. It looks pretty interesting. The author points out something we knew anyway, but an interesting point, that conservatives and dogmatic leftists have a great deal in common, at least as far as their personal relationships (social life) are concerned although their political attitudes may apparently differ

An attitude of course is often a pose, passive. There is a good quote in the book by William James:

"No matter how full a reservoir of maxims one may possess, and no matter how good one's sentiments may be, if one has not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to act, one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better."

How about this quote from "Radical Man":

"Both Right and Left can be singularly uncreative, while compulsively repeating the same arguments and ideas. Both can be blind to the flaws and discrepancies within their own beliefs while rejecting the subtleties of the other's arguments. Both, by defining all non-believers as enemies, dupes, or apathetics can cut themselves off from the receipt of novel ideas" (p.263)

Nuff said!

THE CHANGING WORKING CLASS

The trouble with a lot of these "left" splinter groups is that they only see the industrial proles thru a sociological telescope. They either romanticise them or contemptuously dismiss them, which actually comes to the same thing.

The working class now is quantitatively different from its 19th century predecessors in that the term encompasses a lot more than just factory hands, I don't just mean that in the crude Glasgow Branch way, that is "objectively" in a quantitative manner, but subjectively in that "higher" social groups are now becoming more radicalised. Lecturers, teachers, for example. This, incidentally, was my grouse with the branch's definition of a class "as being determined by ownership". This is one-sided in that it's "objectively empirical" and fails to take into consideration the fact that although empirically a group may be defined as being part of the working class, this

means little practically until the group itself begins to identify itself as part of the working class. Teachers' wage demands have taken a much more militant turn over the last few years, causing dismay even among older teachers insofar as they are losing their "respectable middle class" image. Although they take the increases anyway.

When you see teachers and university trained men generally protesting about what is being taught and also at "big Business" motivated base of "education", then we're witnessing the radicalisation of sections of the working class.

All this may have been obvious to us, but it was of little importance until it became obvious to the people involved in the education industry. When you see architects protesting that their projects are being cast aside for the benefit of "jerry built" profits, then it's only a step away from seeing that their projects are unrealised because of the "needs of capital" render them unrealisable. What I suppose I'm getting at is that the Party has, in an ideal sense, reached the end of the road (abstract Socialism) without practically walking up the road. In some way or other we've got to turn back, without losing sight of the goal, and lend a hand to those who, by trial and error, are beginning to radicalise themselves. If we don't, then I'm certain that the S.P.G.B. will disintegrate, becoming a faint voice -- from the past.

The division of labour sectional struggles must, in some way, be tied up into an increasingly total class movement. I can't forecast how the struggles will develop -- but then nobody can, including the Party. We've got to recognise that the struggle is basically not a mechanical one in the vulgar sense in which the "economic contradictions" are usually seen, but really a clash between class "needs". The working class's needs are more human than the capitalists' (the needs of capital), therefore it will become the whole of society versus the "needs" of capital.

At the moment it isn't clear-cut but we've got to encourage dialogue with others who are understandably just as vague and hesitant as we are. That's if they're honest. Only sectarians have everything cut and dried, which simple enough if one erases the real striving of men and substitutes inevitable "natural laws" independent of men. Such people have more in common with Martin Luther than Charlie Marx.

If everything was simple and clear-cut we'd have had Socialism long ago. Forgive me for repeating myself, but "Socialism" (like Capitalism) isn't a thing. If one keeps on holding up the "Object" as an abstract ideal one ignores the difficulties facing men in concrete situations. Really, I don't expect men to line up either for "Socialism" or "capitalism" seen as things. Some may do so but not generally. "Socialism" will simply express in a crystallised form the very real needs of humanity. In different conditions "socialism" presents itself in (in a sense) a different form. Although Socialism has never been realised various stages in the movement have seen different organisational forms. The early Marx's idea of a Jacobin-style dictatorship, the later Social Democratic parliamentary parties, workers' councils, all reflected conditions at various times. Within the context of the particular periods all these forms are understandable and (perhaps arguably) justifiable. Yet all the left-wing sects (including the Party) are still attempting to fight today's battles using slogans and organizational forms of yesterday. In an unfortunate sense the would-be revolutionaries are blinkered traditionalists. It is futile to "go back to Marx" to find out what can be done now, for of course all these groups can pick and chose selected phrases from old Charlie in order to justify their "position" (something static?). Dogmatism run riot.

FRUSTRATED SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

Both Charlie and Fred happened to snuff it at a time when Social Democracy was "sweeping the board". Actually, in Germany anyway, the S.P.D. was at its electoral height when it was least dangerous as far as the old autocratic State was concerned. The wave of horror following the 1871 Paris Commune and the ban on the German "Socialist" movement made it a near cert that "respectability" and pacifism would permeate the German Labour movement. And thus twas to be. Just as the reality of the French Revolution was transformed in Germany into the "revolution in the mind", that is, the philosophy of the early Hegel, and the anguished disillusionment in France

following the "Glorious Revolution" was paralled by the philosophy (not action) of the later Hegel, so too was revolutionary activity reduced to a bare statement of "revolutionary principles" in the Erfurt Programme. Critical activity was reduced to a static dogma which stood aloof from practice, almost as if the words themselves possessed a magical quality.

The Party lies firmly in the abstract Social Democratic tradition, taking the principles (the magic words) but not the practice. Yet can a political party be anything other than a reforms movement if it is to survive? True the Party survives, but more as a political curio than a movement. Part of the Party's dismissal of Syndicalism and the "General Strike" panacea stems from the SPD, particularly (perhaps) from Bebel. The condescending attitude towards trade union activity which is rife in the Party comes directly from Hyndman. In a very real sense the Party has always stood above the real struggles in society, clinging to its set of magic words, reflecting the 19th century "theorists above the working class" parentage.

I think that the 1904 Party viewed "politics" in a very narrow sense. This is very understandable as extra-parliamentary activity was practically nil. The lack of any real movements in social life meant that the Party couldn't develop beyond a "frustrated parliamentary" sect. It recognised the importance of the State and the dangers inherent in orthodox Social Democracy (reformism as an end) but failed to "go out" into social life (activity outside Parliament) in order to encourage a truly radical political (in the widest sense) movement. It actually "dropped out" of society, concentrating on "educational propaganda". Yet without making any social impact it hopes "some day" to make a parliamentary impact. But by dwelling upon parliamentary elections it relinquishes its right to be the "militant class party". The sum total of votes cast by isolated individuals in no way compensates for the lack of a solid class base. In this (very real) sense the Party is "above classes".

A massive amount of thinking has still to be done by those who genuinely desire Socialism. Honesty on the Left. So long as all the sects simply indulge in scholastic in-fighting then those workers who have vague hopes of "social justice" and are "anti-boss" will generally support the Labour Party. I'm not suggesting that we should pander to the prejudices of the lowest common denominator but I think, for example, we could have held an open discussion meeting on the implications of the sit-ins. No more open and shut answers. Encourage those who are interested (and perhaps involved) to have their say. A so-called "good-meeting" in Glasgow Branch is one where some pedant from the IS swallows the bait and swaps quotes from "the Civil War in France" with the speaker. Meanwhile the proles just spectate. Which Party has all the answers? !

One of the good points about the 1968 uprising in Paris was the mass forums held in theatres and cinemas wherein those who simply mouthed abstract dogmas were jeered at. The blokes were concerned with practical implications not mind-reducing doggerel. Creation, not repetition.

Davie Donaldson (Glasgow)
September 1972

Marx's Theses on Feuerbach

- I. The chief defect of all previous materialism (including that of Feuerbach) is that the things, reality, the sensible world, are conceived only in the form of objects of observation, but not as human sense activity, not as practical activity, not subjectively. Hence, in opposition to materialism, the active side was developed abstractly by idealism, which of course does not know any real sense activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensible objects really distinguished from the objects of thought, but he does not understand human activity itself as objective activity. Consequently, in "The Essence of Christianity", he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuine human attitude, while practical activity is apprehended only in its dirty Jewish manifestation. He therefore does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary", "practical-critical" activity.

- II The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator himself must be educated. This doctrine has therefore to divide society into two parts, one which is superior to society.

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be grasped and rationally understood as revolutionary practice

- VIII All social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which lead theory towards mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.

- XI The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways; the point is to change it.
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Harmo's article on B.F. Skinner was in The Western Socialist, No.1, 1972

Gilmac's article on materialism was in the April 1972 Socialist Standard.

CRITICISM OF "NATIONALISATION OR SOCIALISM?" PAMPHLET

The basic argument of this pamphlet is that, whereas the Labour Party and other reformists have been concerned merely with the control of industry, Socialists are concerned with the ownership of industry (his contrast between ownership and control is repeatedly made, with both the words frequently in italics).

Ownership, however, is identified with the legal right to draw a property income without having to work, a capitalist being defined as a person with sufficient income from personal investments not to have to work for wages.

It is quite true that the Labour Party was concerned with getting the power to make decisions about investments, sales, wages, etc., taken out of the hands of the capitalist investors, while leaving their right to a property income undisturbed. This could be, and was even by them, described as a policy of taking control of industry out of the hands of the private capitalists. And it was of course a legitimate criticism that the Labour Party was prepared to allow private capitalists to continue living off the backs of the working class. As a pamphlet on this point, Nationalisation or Socialism? is good.

But the theoretical framework within which it argues is faulty because it fails to take into account that the primary feature of ownership of the means of production is control of access to the means of production rather than (as the pamphlet suggests) the legal right to a property income. Preferential treatment in the distribution of products certainly is a feature of ownership but a secondary and subordinate one and one that doesn't necessarily have to be legally recognised in law either.

In theory state control of industry, through nationalisation, could be a first step towards a change in the character of the capitalist class, i.e. the replacement of the private capitalists as the dominant section by State Capitalist bureaucrats. In fact this hasn't happened in Britain -- and wasn't likely to happen under a Labour government -- for two main reasons. The value of state owned industry in Britain is about the same as the National Debt; in other words, state industries are in effect mortgaged to the private capitalists who own the National Debt. And, secondly, the State bureaucrats -- top civil servants heads of nationalised industries, leading politicians -- have not been able to establish much preferential treatment in the distribution of the products at the expense of the private capitalists since the latter have been able to closely supervise their activities through parliamentary control.

But this isn't (and wasn't) the case in Russia. There the private capitalists were expropriated without compensation and eventually replaced by a State Capitalist bureaucracy. The pamphlet does not face up to this or analyse what would happen in the event of nationalisation without compensation, i.e. State control of industry plus the abolition of the legal right of the private capitalists to a property income. Indeed, the pamphlet (p.50) suggests that in State Capitalist Russia the ruling class are the individual bondholders with their legal property income -- a position that the Party has subsequently rejected as inadequate. The Russian ruling class, says our pamphlet Russia 1917-67 (pp.27-8) are the top party, government, and military officials who exercise a de facto control of access to the State-owned means of production through their control of the State, without having formal, legal property deeds in their names.

Nationalisation or Socialism? is in fact a prime example of the tendency, fortunately declining, in the Party to see ownership in legalistic rather than sociological terms -- which has a corollary the view the most

important move in abolishing capitalist class ownership is the gaining of control of the law-making body, Parliament, with a view to declaring private property rights illegal. But that's another criticism.....(not that the socialist movement shouldn't aim to capture Parliament and the State, mind you!).

Adam Buick (Haringey)
May 1972

THE RIGHT TO BE LAZY

(OR WHAT A REVOLUTIONARY CLAIMANTS UNION MIGHT ARGUE !)

DE MANDEVILLE, an 18th century philosopher, once wrote that there were three ways to get a living ; working, stealing and begging. There still are: working, stealing and Social Security. This is the case for doing the third -- under the present system.

The basis of the present economic system is the ownership and control of the means of production by a privileged few. The rest of us are forced by the poverty position that this puts us in -- that is, lack of sufficient resources to live on -- to work for wages for those who as a class monopolise the means of production.

THE MODERN POOR LAW

Not all of us can find jobs and, in these cases, the State steps in to provide a minimum subsistence income. When this was first started in 1601 it was called "the Poor Law" and this basically is what the Department of Health and Social Security still is. The method of calculating what income a particular person should have is more complicated now -- there are contribution records, means tests, medical boards and the like -- but the aim is still basically the same: to provide or supplement the income of the non-employed poor. Naturally the state takes steps to ensure that the income it provides is less than the person should be able to get working for wages for an employer. Otherwise, the whole wages system would be undermined; who'd work for an employer in a boring job if he could get the same money for nothing from the State?

THE CLAIMANTS UNION

Unfortunately for them some of us are prepared to make the sacrifice involved in getting a state dole instead of a wage packet or a salary cheque. We have deliberately chosen not to work for wages for an employer. We prefer the free time and not having to do a boring job in an authoritarian office or factory to the extra money. And we have organised ourselves into Claimants Unions in order to extract for ourselves, and our friends, the maximum amount of money we can from the State. We also help other victims of the social system to get their full money's worth from the State; we are aware that in doing this we run the risk of becoming just another organisation of do-gooders, providing a service for people instead of being a union of people. In fact, to be honest, this is probably how we will end up in the absence of a mass movement for social change.

We have no illusions about all this. We know the employing class set up the Poor Law system in order to help those they claimed were 'the deserving poor' -- the old, the disabled, the chronic sick, the regular worker out of a job through no fault of his own -- rather than the likes of us. We are aware that they can, and do, exert what pressure they can to force us to work for an employer. In the end, unfortunately, they'll probably beat most of us but we are determined to hold out for as long as we can -- and, like the once-independent workers of Chartist times we'll go down fighting before being driven to work for wages in an employers office or factory.

THE RIGHT TO BE LAZY

We don't apologise for not being employed. Nor do we criticise those who, for understandable reasons, are unable to make the choice we have done. In return, we would ask them to refrain from echoing the lies the employing class spread about us.

'Lazy layabouts!' Maybe, but why not? This criticism might have some point if there were any real need for everybody to work week-in, week-out just to provide enough wealth for society to survive. But there isn't. In the past two hundred years the forces of production have eloped tremendously, to the point where the bulk of hard grind involved in producing wealth could be done by automated machinery.

This isn't done now precisely because the means of production are controlled by a privileged few and used to produce wealth for sale with a view to profit; they don't want abundance because their whole system of producing for profit would collapse if it came. And they find it cheaper to employ poor people to do the hard grind than install expensive machinery to do it. So they have the cheek not only to hold back abundance but to use its absence as an argument for forcing people to engage in boring toil.

Yes we reply, technology does now grant the right to be lazy, the right to do nothing rather than do a boring job. And we're going to exercise it under the present system for as long as we can.

WORK AS PLAY

Not that we object to all work on principle. We don't mind working that is, exercising our mental and physical faculties, but we do insist that the work we do should be enjoyable or at least socially. And why not? As we said, boring toil can now be eliminated by automation. The machines can do the boring, repetitive jobs, freeing human beings to do the interesting, creative and enjoyable work of their choice. In fact the whole rigid distinction between "work" (something done because you've got to) and "play" (something done because you enjoy doing it) can be broken down. Work could become play and working time become leisure time.

WORK AS A FOUR-LETTER WORD

It is only because the work they can offer can never be enjoyable that the employing class teach "work" as a duty. After all, quite apart from what's actually involved in most jobs, people are never going to enjoy working under conditions they don't control, nor producing some article for sale for someone else's profit, nor doing some job that is patently a waste of time and energy. In fact the whole school system is geared to breaking kids into the habit of hard sustained work under somebody else's authority.

One historian called this attitude of working hard and postponing pleasure the "Protestant ethic". Well we've rejected (or, rather, like to think we've rejected) the Protestant ethic. We don't see why we can't enjoy ourselves most of the time, even -- no especially -- in our work. And we certainly refuse to accept that now, given modern technology, we should so exhaust ourselves in boring work for an employer that we can't even enjoy ourselves in our so-called leisure time. As far as we are concerned "work" of this sort is very much a four-letter word and we're not going to do it if we can help it.

LET'S BE UTOPIAN

We realise that to achieve an automated society of abundance in which boring work is eliminated requires a social revolution, a complete change in social relationships and institutions the end of minority ownership and control of the means of production and its replacement by the democratic control of all the people. This done the wages system is abolished and the barriers to using technology to provide abundance for all removed. Enough could then be produced for everybody to freely take, without money or any rationing of any kind, from the common store of wealth whatever he or she needs to live and enjoy life. At the same

time -- with the implementation of the full and free satisfaction of peoples needs -- there would go other far-reaching changes in people's relationships in sex, work and education.

Come on lets be Utopian and demand as a minimum:

- *The Right To Be Lazy.
- * The Abolition of Money.
- * The Abolition of the Wages System.
- * The Earth, and all its Natural and Man-Made Resources, as the Common Heritage of All Mankind.
- * Free Access for Everybody to the Goods and Services they need to Live and Enjoy Life.

WHY NOT? COME AND JOIN US!

Adam Buick (Haringey)
July 1972

Thanks are due to Bob Miller(Ealing) for typing out (most of) this journal.

BOOK REVIEWS

WORKERS COUNCILS AND THE ECONOMICS OF SELF-MANAGED SOCIETY from
Solidarity c/o 27 Sandringham Road, London, N.W.11. 25p + postage.

NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCILS AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY by Stephen Bodington from
'The Spokesman', Bertrand Russell House, 45 Gamble Street, Forest Road
West, Nottingham N67 4ET. 12p + postage

THE RIGHT TO WORK or THE FIGHT TO LIVE a Claimants Union pamphlet from
Keith Paton, 102 Newcastle Street, Silverdale, N. Staffs.

One of the items for discussion at the forthcoming delegate meeting is Frank Simpkins' letter arguing in favour of an open discussion on the practical problems Socialism will face when it is first established - in particular the problem of democratic administration.

All three of these pamphlets taken together provide a valuable source of background material for such a discussion.

The first of these three is an honest and generally well thought out attempt at dealing with the problems of transition from capitalist to communist society (a phrase which is here misleadingly described as 'socialism'). Its main objective is to disprove the arguments against communism which state that people cannot freely and democratically run their own social affairs, and that it is impossible to carry on production without a specially trained section of workers whose main task is to organise the rest along authoritarian lines.

Whilst dealing with the technical and organisational tasks in a realistic fashion avoiding the faults of both anarchism and bolshevism (if not of the S.L.P.!) they show an amazing ignorance of capitalist economics. They warn that a certain group of readers will react emotionally to their use of terms such as money and wages in relation to 'socialism' and we must surely be amongst that group. But our response isn't just emotional - at first sight it appears that these terms are used to describe something similar to Marx's non-circulating labour vouchers, one method Marx suggested might be used to deal with shortages at the beginning of communism. Their discussion of 'value' however shows that this is not just a terminological dispute. Solidarity seem to have taken Marx's model of 'pure' capitalism in Volume I of CAPITAL and wish to apply it in practice. For instance Marx states that the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour time embodied in it. Price on the other hand fluctuates about this point and with monopoly conditions (and the averaging of the rate of profit) may stay permanently above or below its value. Solidarity seem to want to rationalise this system so that prices always equal value rather than abolish commodity production altogether.

Despite these major shortcomings the pamphlet is well worth reading especially where it deals with the democratic and technical aspects of planning in 'socialism'. The ideas put forward lean heavily on the experience of workers during the crisis conditions of Russia 1917 and Hungary 1956 substantiated for Solidarity by the events of May 1968 in France. This is one reason for the over-emphasis on the workplace as the only unit of organisation and control, a shortcoming recognised but not dealt with in the introduction.

A useful supplement to the Solidarity pamphlet written in an easily understandable style is Steve Bodington's 'Neighbourhood Councils and Modern Technology' which deals specifically with the question of decentralisation.

The Claimants Union pamphlet deals with organisation outside of the workplace. It sees in tenants associations, claimants unions, educational groups and others the potential basis for a developing mutual aid network that can challenge and eventually replace the existing capitalist set-up. the pamphlet proclaims:-

'Now an offensive struggle is possible and necessary to separate work from employment under the banner "Abolition of the Wages System"'. .

This would be excellent did they not see it as being done via the medium of "equal living income for everyone". Again it is ignorance of capitalist economics that is the downfall of an otherwise superb pamphlet. On this occasion the false theories are those of Keynes as interpreted by Robert Theobald.

Discussion initiated by these pamphlets could be very encouraging to Socialists.

August 1972.

Mike Ballard(Ealing).

THE UNMARXIST MARX

KARL MARX. by Werner Blumenberg. New Left Books.

This new book on Marx is very interesting and a healthy change from the usual starry-eyed hagiographies. Some quibbling points but basically, for us, a very timely and useful book. The author's conclusions are that Marxism as a metaphysical system was the creation mainly of Kautsky and not Marx.

Specially interesting, but unfortunately merely mentioned briefly by the author are the internal letters of the Marx family in which Engels is mentioned in a "most disparaging manner". The daughter Laura destroyed most of these letters but some remain. However they are not quoted so speculation bubbles over. It's been a theory of mine for some time that Marx acquiesced in Engels' interpretation of his theories as a metaphysical system partly because of financial dependence. I guess he realised that his daughters would still need Fred's money (with son-in-laws like Aveling and Lafargue it was a cert). Also of course, they'd been together for so long that public criticism would have been unkind, if not unwise.

I may be well off the mark as the money given to Marx from Fred is given in DMs and not £s, but a wee guess is that the known cash given was over £7,500. Frau Marx seems to have spurred Charlie on continuously to put the screws on Engels for cash. The Marx family appears to have gone through money with some abandon. While some of the children died in vile poverty, it was also true that only a few months earlier the family were likely to have had several hundred quid at their disposal.

Incidentally, Marx took narcotics, apparently for insomnia. Being the 19th century, I suppose the narcotic would be laudanum or some derivative of opium.

This isn't a hack job such as Robert Payne's biography. It's honest, warts and all. The author points out that "if his (Marx's) theories were interpreted either in a vulgarly materialist sense or with an exaggerated economic determinism and automatism, he could always say humourously, 'As for me, I am no Marxist'".

Timely indeed.

Davie Donaldson(Glasgow).

BOOKS WORTH READING

Marx

- Karl Marx. Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy.
ed. by T.B. Bottomore and M. Rubel (Penguin).
The German Ideology. by Marx and Engels.
The Thought of Karl Marx. by D. McLellan.
An Interpretation of the Political Ideas of Marx and Engels.
by J.B. Sanderson.
Karl Marx. A biography by W. Blumenberg (New Left Books).
Marxist Economic Theory, Volume 1. by E. Mandel.

Women's Liberation and Sexual Freedom

- The Female Eunuch. by Germaine Greer (Paladin Paperback).
Women's Estate. by Juliet Mitchell (Penguin).
The Sexual Revolution. by Wilhelm Reich.
Eros and Civilization. by H. Marcuse (Sphere paperback).
The Mass Psychology of Fascism. by Wilhelm Reich.

Trade Unionism

- Militant Trade Unionism. by V.L. Allen (Merlin Press).
Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism. by R. Hyman (Pluto Press).
Strike at Pilkingtons. by Tony Lane and Kenneth Roberts
(Fontana Paperback).
The Incompatibles. Trade Union Militancy and the Consensus.
ed. by R. Blackburn and A. Cockburn (especially the articles
by Blackburn and P. Foot) (Penguin).
Strikes. by R. Hyman (Fontana).

Sociology, History, Social Psychology

- What is History? by E.H. Carr (Penguin).
Elites and Society. by T.B. Bottomore.
Classes in Modern Society. by T.B. Bottomore.
Ideology in Social Science. ed. by R. Blackburn (Fontana).
Beliefs in Society. by N. Harris (Penguin).
The Fear of Freedom. by E. Fromm.
The Social Psychology of Industry. by J.A.C. Brown (especially
chapters 1 and 2) (Penguin).

Other Various

- The Making of the English Working Class. by E.P. Thompson.
A Short History of the Russian Revolution. by Joel Carmichael
(Sphere paperback).
Urban Guerilla. by M. Oppenheimer (Penguin).
Playpower. by Richard Neville.
Seize the Time. by Bobby Seale.
Soul on Ice. by Eldridge Cleaver.

Note on Davie Donaldson's article: The view of Marx's ideas presented in this article -- as a critical theory and revolutionary practice -- is advocated by such writers as Labriola, Lukacs, Gramsci, Korsch, Marcuse and Lichtheim. The opposite view -- 'Marxism' as a doctrine of economic determinism and mechanical materialism -- can be found in such writers as Engels, Kautsky, Lafargue, Plekhanov, Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky.