

# SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Paper of the Social Revolution Group No.6

incorporating LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM



## The War in Ireland

## Hungary '56

## Nuclear Energy 15p

# WHERE WE STAND

## HOW WE EXIST

London, Tokyo, Leningrad, Detroit. From bedsit and semi, we pack into tube and bus, bound for factory, office, hospital, lab, school — rats shunted from little boxes to bigger boxes. We make — deodorants, invoices, missiles, regulations. We take orders from those above, pass orders to those beneath. And back to our ration of muzak, drugs, washing, bills. Tomorrow we must sell them another day of our lives. Boredom, competition, obedience.

Or — imprisoned in the same box all day, kids driving you mad. Slowly forgetting your hopes of fulfilment. Isolation, futility, waste.

## AND FOR WHAT?

At the peaks of the pyramids of manager rats, sit the Boards of Directors, the Governments, the "Communist" Party Central Committees. They control the workshops, fields, ships, transmitters by which we survive. The media and brainwashers of each business empire, of each Nation State, blare out the same endless message —

"Sacrifice yourselves for your firm, your nation. Work harder, make less fuss. We have to cut our expenses and your living standards to renew and expand our machinery and weapons, to sell goods more cheaply on world markets. If our enemies abroad are not to destroy us, we must grow stronger to compete with them."

And when the competition gets too tough, the Directors are ready to fight it out, from the safety of their guarded shelters, by nuclear war.

The Directors order production only to make profit, to expand their empires. The earth, air and water are poisoned. Food is destroyed while those who can't afford it starve. Flats are smashed to prevent people living in them rent-free.

## HOW WE COULD LIVE

Genuine Socialism has nothing to do with nationalisation, "workers control" of our own exploitation, setting up new nations, or the dictatorships in Russia, China or Cuba. Socialism is a completely new society in which people would be free, in equal cooperation with their fellows, to create their own environment and control their own lives.

The local and wider community would decide its way of life, and how to produce the energy, goods and services it needs. Work would be the voluntary and varied activity of people developing their creativity for agreed human purposes. As the waste of capitalism is done away with, free access according to need would become possible. The united world, without money, Government or war, would belong to all.

## TRYING TO CHANGE OUR LIVES

There are many ways in which groups of working people try to gain some control over their lives. Not only at work, but also in the neighbourhood — resisting motorways or pollution, squatting. Other examples are attempts to change existing setups or build alternatives in health, childcare, education, therapy, art or science, or to fight sex or race oppression, or resist the military. Undermining sex roles and spreading socialist ideas are also important.

All such activities, provided they are not directed mainly against other workers, can contribute to the movement for a new society, as they can all be absorbed by the system — for example, through political Parties and Trade Unions. Socialists have their own contributions to make, to promote democratic organisations and to show the connections among different struggles.

## SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Many organisations claim to be revolutionary, but aim at taking power for themselves, as leaders of the workers, whether by Parliamentary elections or uprisings. If successful, they could only continue exploitation in a new form, as the Russian experience warns us. A free society can be established only by the majority of working people, at least in the main industrial parts of

the world, organising themselves democratically to take conscious control of their lives. Workers' councils in workplaces and neighbourhoods would probably play a key part.

For us in the "Social Revolution" group, the purpose of a revolutionary group should be to assist this self-liberation by encouraging self-activity in all areas of life, by working out and spreading socialist ideas. We know that the divisions of sex, nationality or occupation, which divide working people, and the fears and confusions which keep them powerless, must be overcome. But we do not claim to know exactly how it can be done.

So we want to clarify problems in an open way, without hanging on uncritically to any dogma or tradition. If your approach is similar to ours, we hope to cooperate with you. We welcome new members.

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- Sheffield:** via' Hull.
- Edinburgh:** via' Aberdeen.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL REVOLUTION

10p plus postage from any SR contact.

Includes sections on:  
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the classic of Council communism.

Send 60p + 15p postage to Box 217,  
 142 Drummond St, London NW1.

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## READERS' MEETINGS

If you are interested in what we say and would like to meet us for discussion, please contact London group, who will be arranging readers' meetings for this purpose.

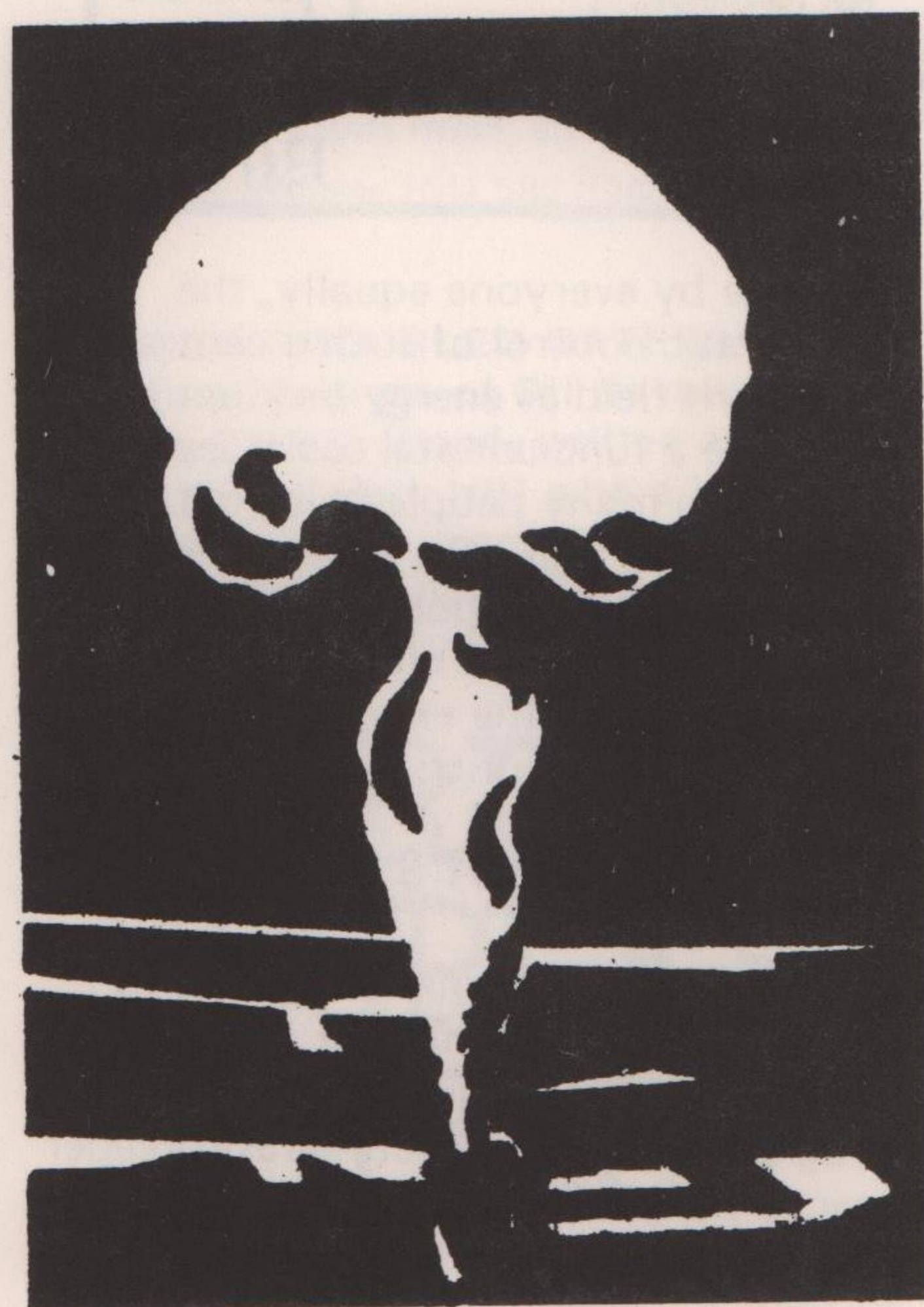
# NUCLEAR ENERGY —FRIEND OR FOE ?

ADVANCED capitalist countries such as the USA, USSR and those of northern Europe require enormous amounts of energy for powering industry; in industrial processes like steelmaking, aluminium smelting, welding, etc., as well as for domestic uses. Electricity has unique advantages over gas, oil and coal as heating fuels, it is its versatility which leads to its massive consumption, not only for heating and lighting, but also in electronics, electric motors, electromagnets, etc.

At the moment electricity is produced by 3 kinds of power station: they either burn hydro-carbon fuels (coal and oil), are part of hydro-electric schemes, or use nuclear energy. Soon the government will announce its decision on whether to embark on a massive programme of building fast breeder reactors — one kind of nuclear reactor.

All these methods of producing electricity have drawbacks. Burning coal or oil releases pollutants (especially carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide) into the air; oil is becoming scarcer and coal more difficult to extract; these are *finite resources* — if used in large quantities as at present, they will become increasingly difficult to find and extract — finally no viable deposits will remain.

Hydro-electric power (HEP) has many advantages — no pollution, no fuel required (except water) and no finite resources are used up. Drawbacks are high initial building costs and the loss of land as dams are built; also such schemes are only viable where there is high rainfall and the geography is suitable (Eg. the Scottish Highlands).



## THE FISSION METHOD

Nuclear power at first appears very attractive — it does not use up large amounts of fuel or release pollutants. Large amounts of energy can be generated by the nuclear fission<sup>1</sup> reaction. It has been proposed as THE solution to world energy problems for a long time. Unfortunately it has become obvious in the last 5 years that fission reactors have associated dangers which outstrip those of any other means of generating electricity.

Nuclear reactors have not been shown to be safe from human or technical failure: possible accidents include explosion, the reactor core melting from overheating, and fire. Accidents occur in other situations but the consequences can be incredibly worse where nuclear reactors are involved. Nuclear reactors depend on a controlled release of nuclear heat: if the controls were to break down completely, the reactor, especially if of a fast breeder type, could become a nuclear bomb. Although this is unlikely, the consequences if it occurred would be disastrous.

More likely is one of the other kinds of accident mentioned above. Fires have occurred and radio-active material has been released in several incidents in North America, and at the Windscale installation in Cumbria, where spent nuclear fuel is processed, there have been 2 fires which have released radio-activity over the neighbouring area. Also possible is an accident where the core of the reactor overheats, collapses and is destroyed, as with an experimental fast breeder reactor in Idaho, in 1955. In the course of an experiment a scientist pushed the wrong button! Radio-active material can also be released from such an accident.

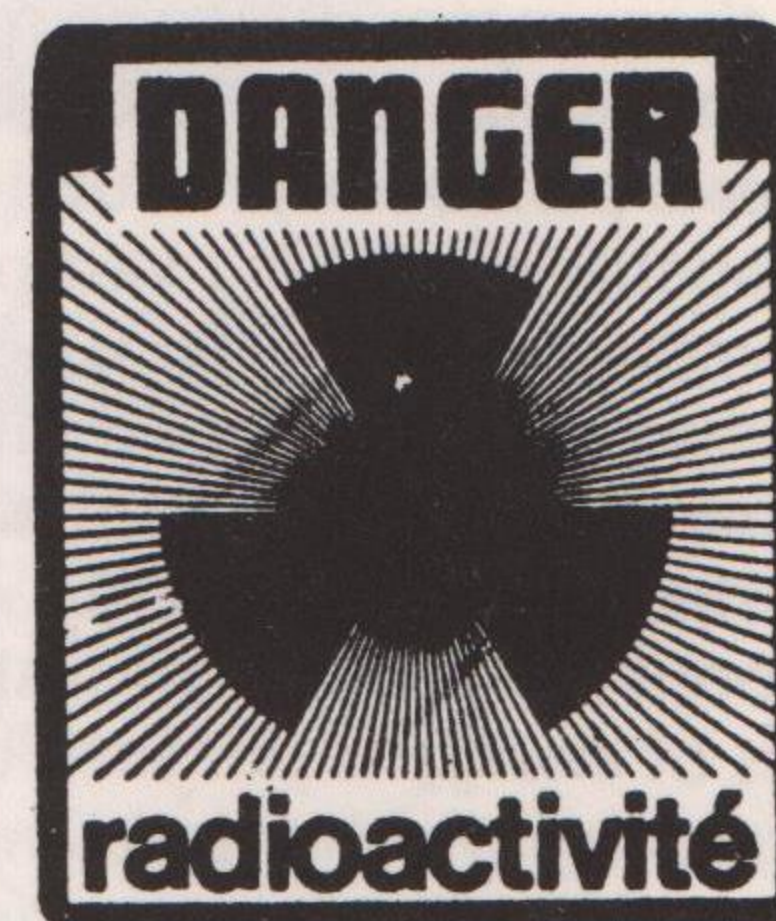
## THE CANCER CONNECTION

Plutonium, the main fuel of fast breeder reactors, has other dangers; because of its chemistry and radio-activity it is deadly — the fatal dose is so small that there is no way of detecting it. The most recent research in the USA has proved that incidents of death from cancer among nuclear power station workers has been far higher than for any other group of workers, despite rigorous safeguards, eg. lapel badges that change colour at the slightest exposure, protective clothes, and strict time regulations. Accidental release apart, theft of nuclear fuel for blackmail or sabotage could have terrible results, and need not be confined to the movies — indeed it may have happened already!

Another draw back of fission is that it produces radio-active wastes, which must be isolated for long periods until they

“cool” — up to a million years for some wastes. No-one can guarantee that any containers it is put in will last that long and the deadly stuff won't escape. The US Navy is presently engaged in trying to retrieve 85 gallon drums of nuclear goo dumped at the bottom of the Pacific in the 1950's — although encased in concrete they have started to leak.

Finally, when the energy required to construct nuclear reactors and the power stations to hold them is added up — including building materials, labour, access roads, transportation, fuel, safety, security and service costs, and the energy required to store dangerous wastes — it may be that during its working life time of about 40 years (an estimate) a fast breeder reactor may absorb more energy than it will produce. It would then be better not to have built it in the first place!



## THE FUSION METHOD

There are 2 types of nuclear power — fission and fusion<sup>2</sup>. At the moment efforts are being made to overcome the technical difficulties which prevent fusion power being practical — the materials for the process need to be heated to 100 million degrees centigrade before reaction occurs and can only be contained in a special “magnetic” bottle. It is claimed that if fusion power was made practical, the materials required (isotopes<sup>3</sup> of hydrogen) are available in gigantic quantities from water. The process produces little radio-active waste compared with fission and has no dangerous fuels like plutonium. However problems remain; as with fast breeder reactors, fusion reactors may require so much effort to build and start up (starting temperature is 100 million degrees centigrade remember) that the energy input may be greater than the reactor produces. Reactor safety for fusion is unknown, since none have been built or tested.

Except HEP, all the power sources mentioned above release *heat* into the environment. Heat is not commonly regarded as a source of pollution, but think what happens when boiling water (from a power station or factory) is released at a high temperature into a

# nuclear energy

river. As the river water becomes warmer the amount of air dissolved in it decreases and the fish may die. On a larger scale heat released by burning fuels is thought to be melting polar ice caps. Another suggested power source, geothermal energy, which would use heat from the earth's core, also falls down because it releases heat.

## ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY

The alternatives left are HEP, discussed above, and wind-, solar-, and sea-power. These do not pollute in any of the ways described above since they merely harness naturally occurring energy and release it, eg., the wind drives a windmill generator to produce electricity; the energy is released when the electricity is used; *there is no net release of heat*. Similar arguments apply for sea- and solar-power.

However these methods would not suit modern industrial capitalism. By using large scale plants for production, industry is capable of making vast profits from mass produced goods. To run these plants they need enormous centralised sources of energy. Yet much of this energy is wasted in the system of producing goods for profit. For instance vast amounts of energy is put into the making of articles which are *deliberately* designed not to last. The worst example is probably car production, millions of cars are produced every year, consuming massive inputs of energy — yet are built to be obsolete within a few years. Enormous amounts of energy are wasted in producing armaments, most of which are never used, those that are create more waste and destruction. Centralisation and built-in obsolescence are necessary to capitalism's continued existence, but its continued existence is threatening to destroy our environment, our lives, and eventually our world; can we afford to pay such a price?

## A DECENTRALISED ENERGY GRID

The implications of using completely "clean" power sources, is that there need be no centralised power stations as we know them today. There are only about 7 places in Britain where large stations using the power of tides are feasible, but another way to get electricity from the restless sea is to use the power of the waves to drive generators. Solar power would be the most effective the nearer the equator you go, while pretty feeble in Northern Europe.

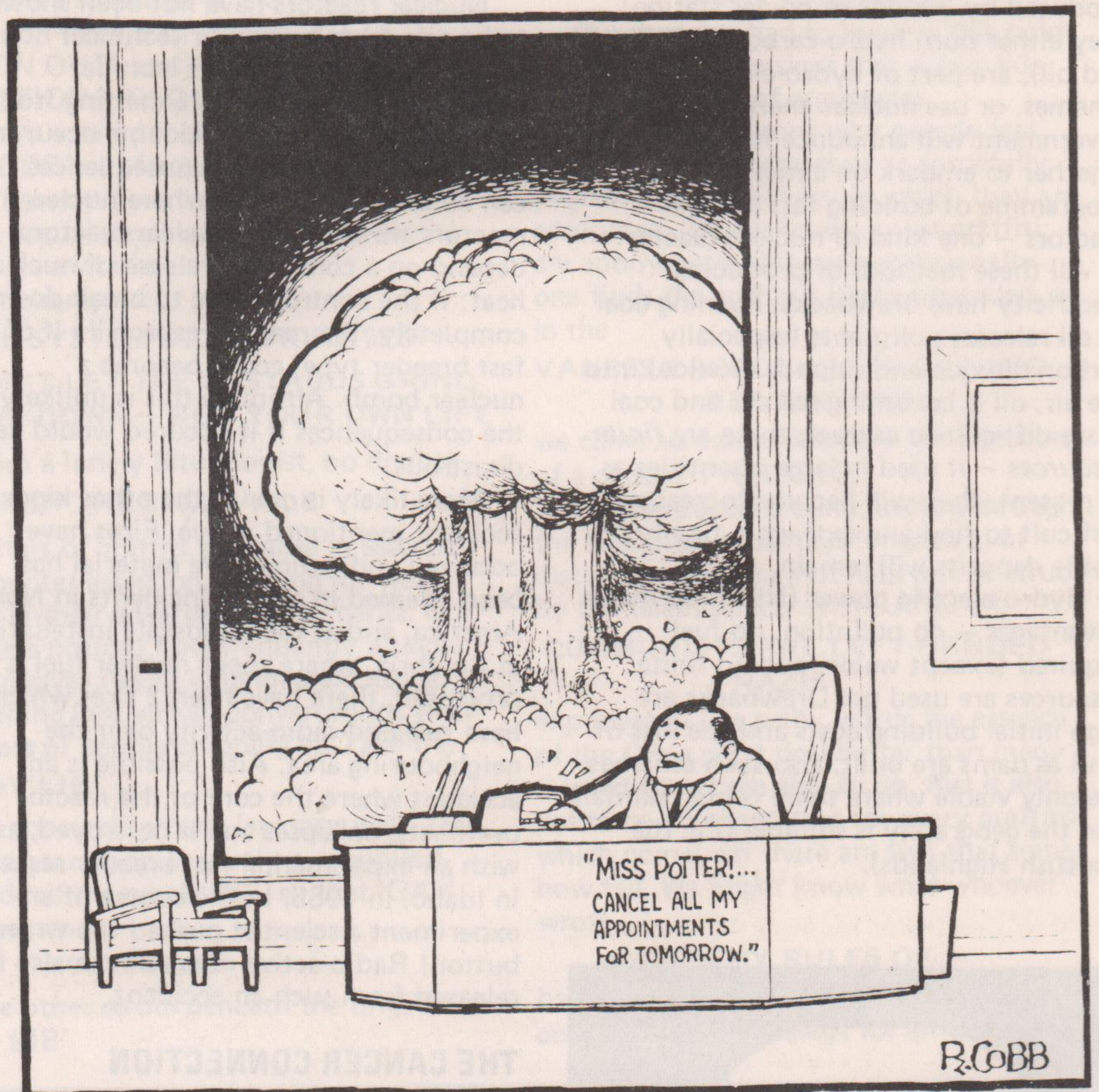
Alone, none of these alternative power sources could supply enough electricity — combined they could form a grid, each location on the grid would have the type of power station best suited to it. But such a grid could not serve the monstrous conglomerations called cities which most

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of us have to live in nowadays; a more even distribution of populations in smaller concentrations would be more compatible with the network described. To obtain the full benefits of such a grid; planned on the basis of being non-destructive; would require a complete reorganisation of existing society into smaller and more independent communities — such a reorganisation can only follow a complete social revolution.

In a society where the profit motive is no longer paramount and instead producing for people's needs is the only aim of industry and agriculture, goods could be built to last a working lifetime, this alone would bring a huge reduction in the demand for energy. Arms production, which has no social utility at all would be discontinued. It is also likely that petrol burning cars could be replaced by electric ones, but anyway most of them could be replaced by improved public transport networks.

advantages; if communities are built around "clean" energy sources they do not depend on transmitted power so that losses incurred by sending power over long distances (transmission losses as they are now called) are avoided. In some cases complete decentralisation may not be possible, eg., an HEP station is "clean" but massive, capable of serving a large area with the station at its centre. To avoid any centralisation, it may be necessary to abandon certain installations if conversion isn't possible. Alternatively it may be possible for example to paid a tidal power station with an installation, or number of installations which would consume much of its energy production. In such a case decentralisation may not be felt necessary.. The HEP station may cause minimum environmental disturbance and decisions on how it should be used could effectively be made by all those served by it. In a society where decisions affecting everyone would



## END OF THE ANT HEAP EXISTENCE

Although enterprising individuals and small communities can make use of "clean" power sources today, the technology is readily available for small scale wind- and solar-power, such sources cannot serve very large concentrations of population or industry. Thus we would be able to decentralise; people and industry could spread more evenly across the face of the earth. So we could live more comfortably and less like ants in a heap, at the same time cause the minimum damage to the environment — a motive which comes far behind the profit motive in capitalist production, but which is of paramount importance if any kind of worthwhile life is to exist on earth now or in the future.

Decentralisation has positive

be made by everyone equally, the democratic control of such a centrally important field as energy production would be a fundamental social issue. Today too many people believe it when they are told that such things as power sources and energy policy are too difficult for them to understand and must be left to "the experts" — whether politicians or scientists.

## THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION?

The British government intend to make a decision in the near future on whether to set out on a massive programme of constructing fast breeder reactors depending on plutonium. Objections to such a programme has been confined largely to between "experts" and details in papers like *The Observer*, *Guardian* or *Times*. If a fast

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breeder programme is implemented, it will mean significant and undesirable changes in everyone's lives. We therefore think that as many people as possible should be in possession of the relevant information and be able to decide something that will deeply affect their future; otherwise the vested interests of private companies, governments and the nuclear industry will decide for us all without most of us knowing about it.

Sandy Blake

**NOTES**

1 — **NUCLEAR FISSION:** Energy is released when the nucleus (central part) of a heavy atom like uranium-235 (see isotopes) or plutonium is caused to split into smaller fragments.

2 — **NUCLEAR FUSION:** In this case energy is released when small nuclei are made to combine to form larger nuclei. Proposed fusion reactors would have different isotopes of hydrogen combining to form helium and thereby releasing energy.

3 — **ISOTOPES:** Elements (from which all matter is built up) consist of atoms all with the same atomic number (eg. 1 for hydrogen, 94 for plutonium, etc). For each atomic number there is a range of atomic weights (eg. hydrogen atomic number 1 can have atomic weights 1, 2, or 3; 1 is "ordinary" hydrogen, 2 is "heavy" hydrogen or deuterium as found in "heavy water" and 3 is called tritium). Thus, "ordinary" hydrogen, deuterium, and tritium are the 3 isotopes of hydrogen.

**INFORMATION/READING**

*Nuclear Power — Technical Bases for Ethical Concern* from Friends of the Earth, 9 Poland Street, London W1v 3DG.

*Peace News* No 2018 (16th April 1976) from 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham.

*Aberdeen Peoples Press* No 59 (August 1976) from 167 King Street, Aberdeen.

*Nuclear Power* by Walter C. Patterson. Pelican Original.

*Undercurrents* No. 16 from 11 Shadwell, Uley, Dursley, Glos.

*Observer* for 25th July 1976.

*Post-Scarcity Anarchism* by Murray Bookchin. Publishers' Wildwood House Ltd.

back issues of  
**SOCIAL REVOLUTION**

- SR1 — Imperials occupation, Portugal, Russian resistance, Sex Roles, Oil, Common Market.
- SR2 — Uniprint occupation, Vietnam, Nalgo Action Group, Chile.
- SR3 — The Right to Work? Strike in Denmark, Portugal and Angola, Tenant organisation, Brain Police, Wages for Housework?
- SR4 — Housing cuts—what are we defending? Spain, Grapes of Wrath, NUS—what now?
- SR5 — Women and socialism, School Report, Russian Journey, India, China, Criminal Trespass.

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**OTHER PUBLICATIONS WORTH READING**

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# LOW FARES OR NO FARES

**SHEFFIELD'S bus fares are very likely the cheapest in the country. At least that's what Sir Ron Ironmonger, leader of the Labour-controlled South Yorkshire County Council, said recently and it seems that for once one of capitalism's crafty politicians might actually be telling the truth.**

It really does seem that Sheffield's bus fares are only one half or even one third of those charged in Newcastle, Leeds, Glasgow and Manchester — not to mention London. And the odd thing is that, whereas almost everywhere else in Britain rising bus fares have meant fewer passengers, falling revenue, cuts in service — followed by rising fares again to set the whole cycle off once more, South Yorkshire is the only authority in the country to show an increase in transport revenue this year.

For several years now arguments for and against a free transport system have been smouldering in Sheffield but this latest development — the fact that low bus fares have, against even the Council's expectations, brought in increased revenue — has tended to have some unfortunate repercussions.

People in Sheffield are well aware that the Council's policy of subsidising bus fares to keep them down is under attack not only from Conservative opposition locally but from the Labour government too. This has had the effect of bringing some who would otherwise be roundly condemning the Labour Council rushing to defend the local authority ("... the council deserve every support for their low fares policy" as the *Sheffield Free Press*, for one, puts it).

People have also started to justify Sheffield's low bus fares by the argument that "it works economically" or that it "makes good economic sense".

Now, it is true that up till now low fares have made what in this society is judged to be "good economic sense", by bringing in increased bus fare revenue. But obviously, with the continuing inflation, increases in the number of passengers carried by Sheffield buses can't forever go on compensating for frozen fares.

The danger of using a "good economic sense" argument for cheap fares is that it can be turned against us whenever a time comes when such a policy ceases to pay off in capitalism's profit and loss sense.

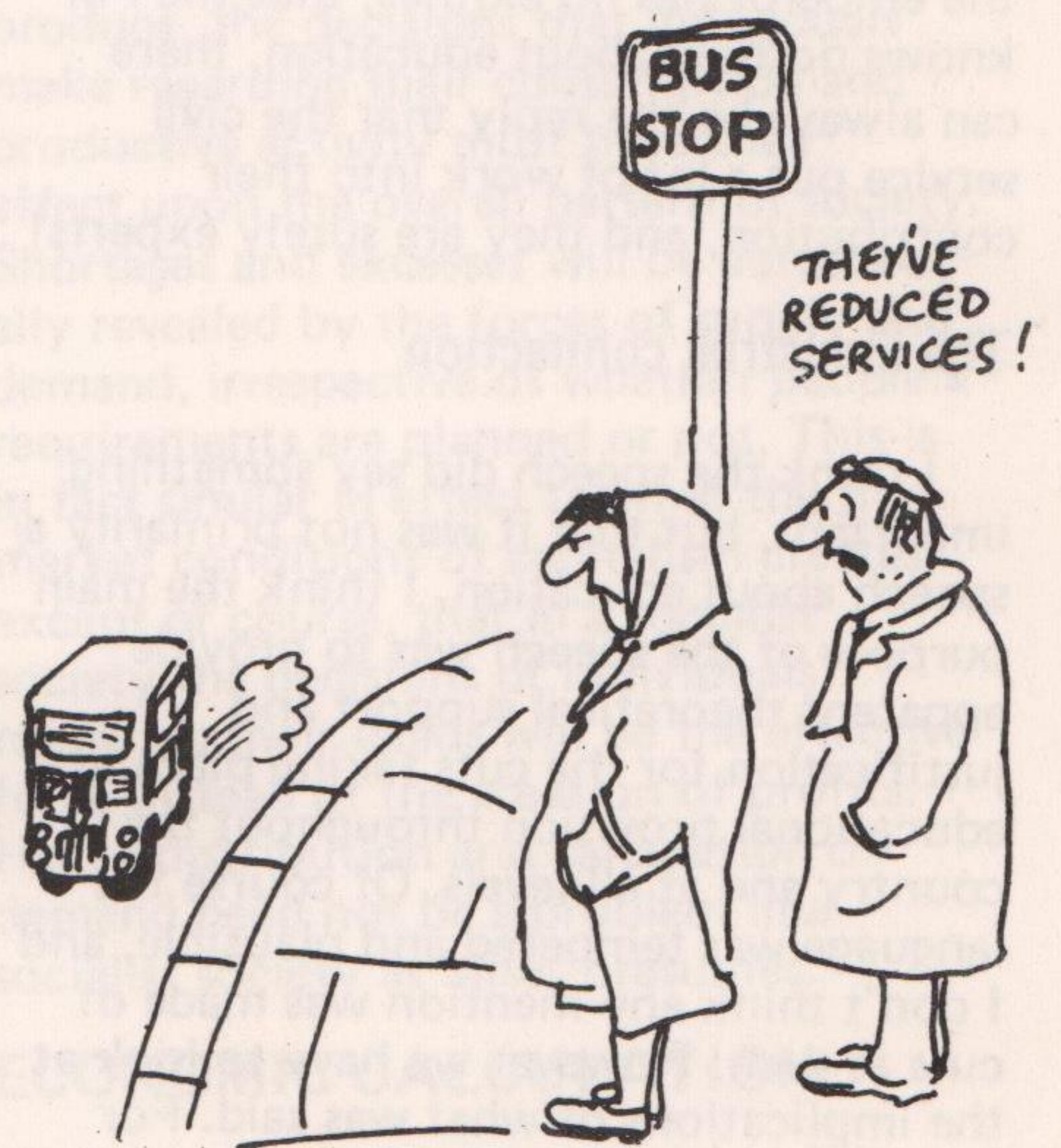
Similarly, it is dangerous to urge that "the council deserve every support for their low fares policy" when many other aspects of the Labour South Yorkshire County Council's policy are both anti-socialist and anti-working class. Cheap fares on the buses don't offset Labour's capitalist policies in other spheres.

A front page article in a recent issue of the *Sheffield Free Press* asked: 'Do You Want Cheap Fares?' and the answer is — from some of us in Sheffield, at any rate — 'No!'. *We don't want any fares at all* to be charged on the buses. Buses should be free for everyone to use.

And not only buses either. We want free shops, supplying free food, free clothes and so on. We want free houses. We will only be satisfied when everything is free.

When you get right down to it, a free society (where money's only remaining function will be to put on display as relics of the past in the museums) is what socialism is all about. But it will never work in one city such as Sheffield alone, nor even in Britain or the whole of Europe. A free, moneyless society where every child, woman and man can take according to their various skills and talents, will only be possible on a world-wide scale.

The world today has the potential in terms of knowhow and techniques of production to turn out a flood of the



foods, clothes, houses and all the other things men, women and children need for a full and satisfying life. It is technically possible to produce enough to satisfy everybody's wants throughout the world, without putting prices on things in order to restrict people's consumption.

So next time we get on a bus, some of us in Sheffield will be reminding ourselves that cheap fares are a paltry nothing compared to the free world that is now possible. And not only is it possible — it is ours for the taking. So why don't we take it?

Sheffield Bus Passenger

# EDUCATION CUTS

The cuts: Callaghan joins in

AT FIRST sight the Prime Minister's recent speech on education may have seemed something of a bolt from the blue; and if you couldn't immediately identify any machiavellian reasons for his statements — such as an imminent general election — you were probably tempted, like me, to believe that he was simply expressing concern over 'purely educational' issues. But after a bit of thought, and particularly on seeing the kind of reaction that followed, it has become obvious, as it should have been all along, that there is more to it than that.

The speech, delivered at Ruskin College Oxford (with its reputation for education for the working class...) was anticipated excitedly in the press. It was even 'disclosed' shortly beforehand that the PM had been sent a 'secret' memo from the civil servants of the Department of Education and Science — 63 pages long — which undoubtedly influenced the contents of the speech. All this gave rival educationalists — that is, those public figures the press would have us believe are experts — such as Rhodes Boyson and St. John Stevas time to prepare their replies, and all it contributed, before and after the speech, to creating the impression that Mr Callaghan had something important to say. And if anyone on the sidelines tries to say that the emperor has no clothes, that the PM knows nothing about education, there can always be the reply that the civil service put a lot of work into their contribution, and they are surely experts!

## The industrial connection

I think the speech did say something important, but that it was not primarily a speech about education. I think the main purpose of the speech was to provide apparent theoretical support and justification for the cuts taking place in educational provision throughout the country and at all levels. Of course the language was tempered and plausible, and I don't think any mention was made of cuts as such. However we have to look at the implications of what was said. For instance, the PM repeated, apparently without questioning it, the claim made by industry that 'new recruits from the schools sometimes do not have the basic tools to do the job that is required.' These 'tools' are later described as 'basic literary and basic numeracy' — and the Prime Minister is thus adding his voice to those who are 'concerned' about the 'standards' of education, particularly in primary schools which are using informal methods of teaching. There is a similarity, of course, to the views of the 'Black Paperites', though the PM is anxious to be seen as not one of them, and I think we can accept this, in so far as at least Callaghan is clear about what he sees as the fundamental purpose of education. For one thing is clearly implied by his comments, and that is that *at the*

*moment* the most important function of education is to cater for the needs of industry. In fact the *Guardian's* report on the speech was very appropriately headed: 'Schools action demanded to save industry'.

Oh yes, industry is in a mess, but it's not the fault of management, nor of the investors who won't put their money in, it's no part of a wider crisis of capital — it's the fault of the schools; they are simply not improving fast enough to keep up with the necessary growth of industry. And 'progressive' teaching methods are only making it worse!

## The state of the nation

More could obviously be said at this point about 'growth' and capitalism, but I shall resist the temptation and return to Callaghan's speech. And what I am saying is that this was not so much a speech about education as one about industry and the economy. The PM, like most national figures is concerned about the 'state of the nation' — we are not doing well enough, not producing enough, not working hard enough: 'With the increasing complexity of modern life' (who makes it more complicated?) 'we cannot be satisfied with maintaining existing standards, let alone observe any decline. We must aim for something better.' The IMF and others, who are holding the purse-strings at present, have to be assured of two things: first that we are going to cut down on public expenditure; and second that our industry is going to be made more 'productive'. And this means trimming off all the 'frills', all the 'non-essentials', in education expenditure, and tightening control over what's left,

to provide a 'better' output — that is, *better for industry*.

Everything Callaghan said, and all the ways in which education is being talked about, and expenditure controlled, point the same way. Evidence of the desire to tighten up control is afforded by the PM's comment on the need to strengthen the school inspectorate, so that it becomes not just an advisory body as it is at the moment, but a monitoring one. Also, 'relations between' industry and education must be improved, and more students attracted to practical technical subjects, rather than to pure science, the social sciences, or anything that would tempt them into pursuing an academic career, or one in the civil service (!), rather than a life of service to industry.

Callaghan's suggestion of a 'core curriculum' — the same things being taught to every child in the country as an essential part of his/her education — is either an abstraction that is meaningless, because we are not told what should go into it, or, more likely, simply a device for ensuring that students learn what someone else, in this case industry, wants them to learn.

## The effect of cuts

Of course we would all agree that we must avoid the two extremes of producing either 'socially well-adjusted members of the society who are unemployed because they do not have the skills... and at the other extreme... technically efficient robots' — but this is not a novel view of education, and to my mind it's a bit of a sick point to make in the context of a million and a half unemployed. Is it simply that none of them have the skills?

The situation becomes even more clear when we look away from speeches to what is happening in education with the cuts. Most institutions faced with making cuts are likely to proceed in the same way, by drawing a distinction between 'essential' and 'non-essential' activities, and then chopping the latter and trimming the former. Thus anything which is essential to a course which will turn out employable graduates has to be kept going — though in worsening conditions; anything on the fringe — such as research, or cultural facilities — has to go. Provision for pre-school and post-school age groups (under five and over sixteen) is hit harder than provision within the compulsory school age range.

There is a good article in *Radical Education* 5, by Liz McGovern, detailing the way in which the cuts demanded by the government of the local authorities will do this, and how, for instance, working class children — already the least well provided for at any level of education — are the worst hit by the policy of 'no improvement to existing facilities'.

## The case of overseas students

A similar point can be made with regard to overseas students. There seems to be an all-out campaign going on, of



Student teachers joined the massive lobby outside Central Hall, Westminster on May 26, when the TUC met to decide on Healey's pay deal. Despite protests, the TUC accepted wage restraint and continued cuts.

# DE-SCHOOLING

which the fees increases are only a part, to try and reduce the numbers of these students. This only makes sense when seen as part of an attempt to save money in such a way as to ensure that 'our' education system contributes to 'our' industry. The proposal that college staff should act as immigration officials and 'police' the movements of overseas students is horrifying, and justifiably met with immediate opposition from the teaching unions and others. But I am doubtful as to whether college staff have any power in the situation any longer. Local government committees, Governors and senior administrators are capable of being extremely devious and ruthless if enough pressure is put on them from above — and their jobs would not be at stake if the number of overseas students did go down.

I remember an intensive press campaign not so long ago, aimed at the unions and the Labour Party's supposedly soft attitude to their demands, which was based on the question: who governs Britain? Now that the IMF and the CBI are asserting control I don't see that question being raised in those quarters any more!

Ian Pirie

Recommended Reading — on the cuts and education: (obtainable from *Social Revolution* — London)

**Radical Education** — No. 5. (20p)

**Teachers' Action** — No. 5. (25p)

'Education cuts and teacher unemployment' — published by Teachers' Action (5p).

**Freedom** — vol. 37 no. 21: State curriculum — trainee wage slaves reply! (12p).

Other publications on education available through us:

'Antistudent' (15p) — best piece of educational subversion I've ever seen!

**Libertarian Education** (15p per issue) — written and produced by libertarians in education so deals with practical issues and not just theories.

— Prices no NOT include postage —



**THE ARTICLE 'School Report' in the last issue of SR dealt mainly with the immediate problem facing libertarian socialist students and teachers, and concluded that we should support the pro-comprehensive lobby. Well we certainly could not support the the reactionary groups fighting for the retention of the grammar schools, but we need to be much more critical of the government's comprehensive school policy, which is based as much on economic calculations — 'economies of scale' — as on any ideals of social equality.**

Further more we should be questioning the continued existence of institutionalised education in the sort of society we are seeking to create. Our aim in fact, should not be simply the reform of the existing school system, though reforms are welcome, but its complete transformation along with the rest of society. Not preserving a reformed welfare state but creating a new welfare society.

## 'De-schooling'

Discussion of the need to break down institutionalised education and the way to do it has gone on now for some time under the title of 'de-schooling'. Simply stated this refers to a process whereby schools as a separate institution within society, catering for a specific age group of the population, are gradually dissolved into the wider community.

Advocates of such a process vary in their estimates of how far and how rapid such a process should be, but all see schools at present as an alienating force incapable of providing people with the abilities needed to get along in the modern world.

## Teaching ourselves?

The development of more and more re-training courses for people in industry and for teachers themselves is a partial recognition that it is no longer possible (if it ever was) to learn a 'body' of knowledge in early life that will be sufficient to cope with problems throughout life. The increasing pace of technological change has suggested to some that we need to learn from the start, not a set volume of knowledge in various compartmentalised subjects, but rather the techniques and methods of seeking out information, and teaching

ourselves. This also needs to be a much more co-operative activity than the individual competitive climate promoted in most schools today.

At first sight this might seem to imply a new, even more elevated status for schools and teachers as the providers of such techniques, and this might initially be the case. But once people have started to teach themselves in a co-operative fashion the distinctive role of teachers must eventually disappear. You no longer have a situation where what is learnt is strictly defined and controlled by teachers and educational administrators, who then appear as 'authorities' to be respected.

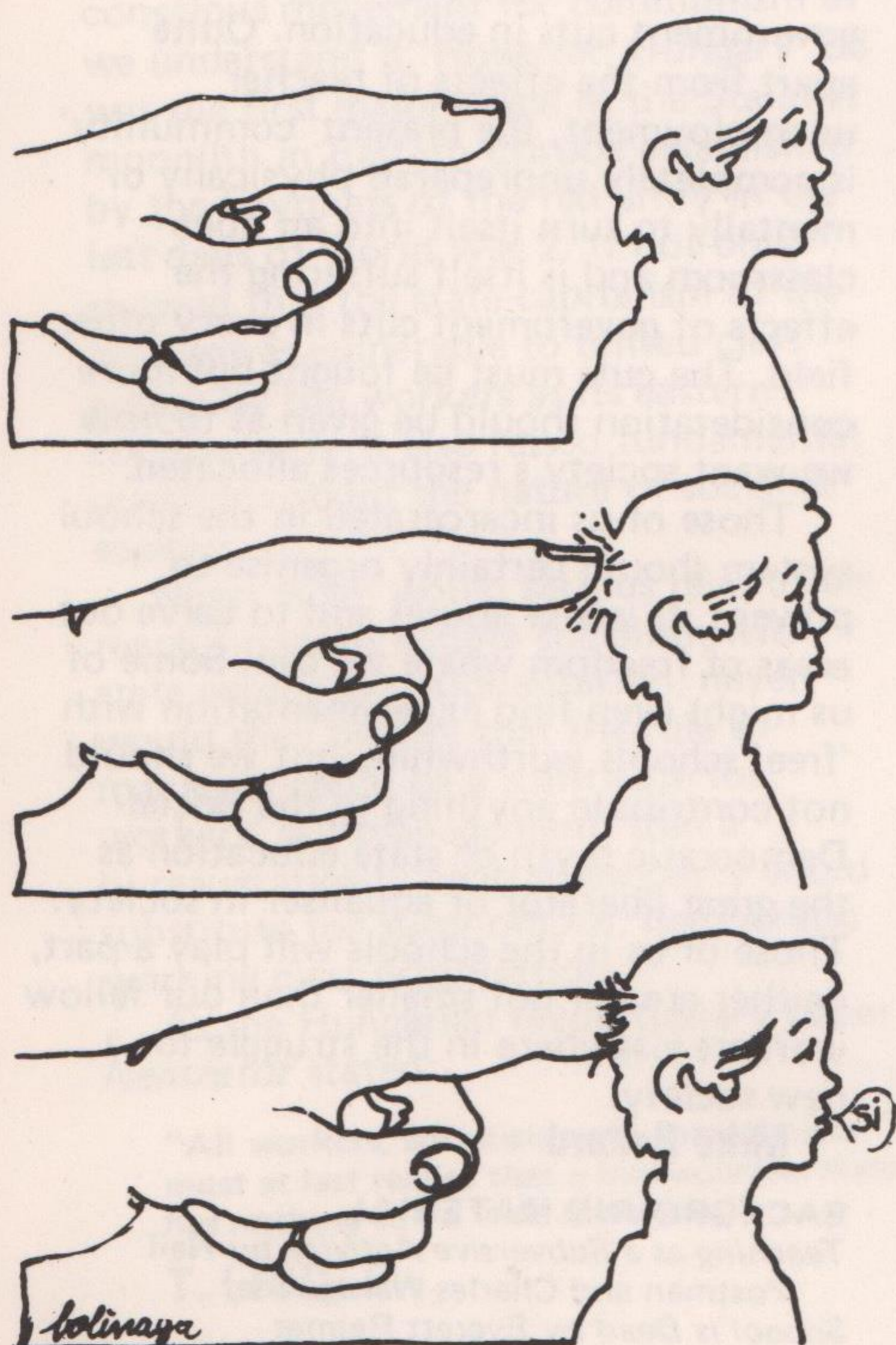
Self-seeking of information cannot of course be carried on adequately within the confines of the class room, so immediately the compulsory nature of school attendance is called into question, and here problems begin to arise, for the school is not merely a neutral institution providing education, it is in its very form, a means of social discipline and social grading. Some loosening of school attendance rules parallel to "flexi-time" arrangements for workers might be possible, but complete de-schooling demands vast changes in many other aspects of society.

## Opening up the community

For the functions of the school to be absorbed into the wider community, that 'community' must itself be opened up. This would involve not just the occasional 'works visit' with a lecture from the managing director to follow, but a continual to and fro of people and information at all levels of activity in factories, offices, hospitals — everywhere! It would require people with time to spare and an interest in their work for its own sake, something existing commercial society continually prevents. Such time could only be found in a society that progressively eliminates all real waste and socially useless work. Not only would work situations have to be opened up, but also the restrictive monogamous personal relationships, in their present institutionalised form, that are still the educational environment of most young children..

## Opponents

The de-schooling idea if not taken to  
*continued on page 8*



# Whiteway: the Beauty of Failure

The earthly paradise

THE BEST WAY to get to Whiteway is to walk the six miles from the old Gloucestershire market town of Stroud. This was what a couple of us did one glorious, sunny day at the height of last summer. The way took us along lanes and across fields, climbing steadily until we reached Whiteway at a level of about 700 feet above the sea (the Severn Estuary lay beneath us in the distance to confirm it). 700 feet is high by Cotswolds' standards and the soil on top of the hills is not particularly good but - especially in the drought conditions of last summer - Whiteway was like a green oasis among the surrounding parched countryside.

Whiteway as it exists today is what remains of a utopian community that

because it is of poor quality. The soil is shallow on top of the hills, suitable for grazing animals perhaps but not yielding sufficiently good crops to easily support a group of vegetarian-inclined Tolstoyans. The first Whitewayans thus condemned themselves from the very start to a life of relentless toil as they tried to win a living from an anything but bountiful earth. Still, they would not have gone to Whiteway in the first place if they had been the types to be easily discouraged and most of them put their backs into their work in an effort to achieve the impossible. As one of them wrote later: "If our feet were down in the potato trenches, our heads were up in the stars. We felt we were gods."

All kinds of harassment suffered

opportunities were missed by those in positions of power to make the Whitewayans' lives miserable. The community was also at the mercy of the authorities over the question of taxes. The early settlers neither wished to pay the taxes for which they were liable, nor had they the money to do so anyway, and one of their gestures to a hostile world was to burn the deeds to

*continued from page 7*

its logical conclusion will inevitably be defeated by the arguments of liberal educationalists - the so-called "practical" people of this world. For instance an article in the *Guardian* demonstrated theoretically that any success for de-schooling within the present social framework would only increase the educational advantages of better off workers. Although it accepted the myth of school as the only provider of opportunities for the poor, neglecting the "failures" that are created, there is still some validity in this argument. It is the same argument used to defend the large comprehensive schools and the "busing" of children from one district to another, against the proponents of open 'neighbourhood' schools. They can only be answered by making de-schooling, both theoretically and practically, *one part* of a programme for the complete transformation of existing society towards social equality.

The cuts - fighting back

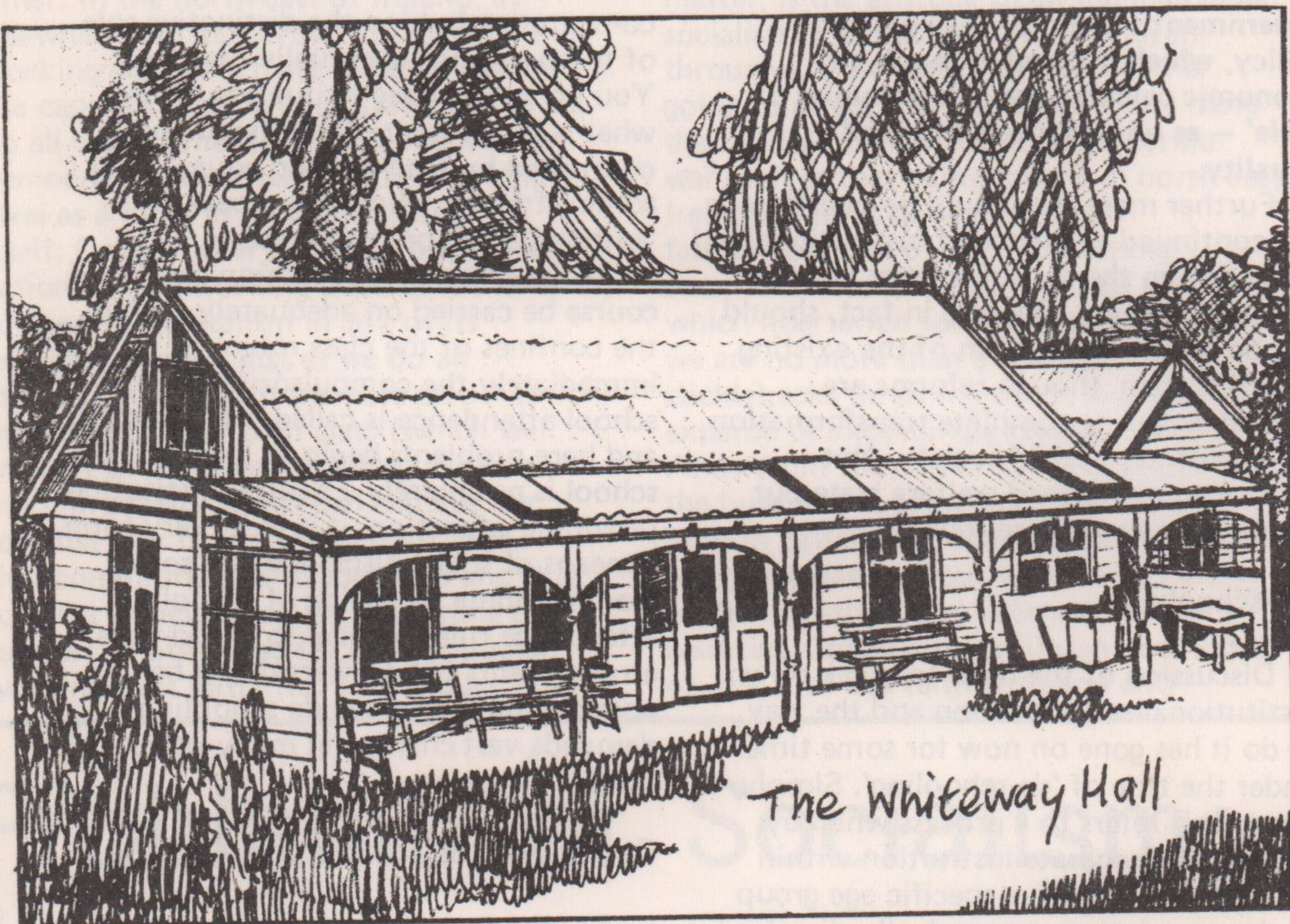
Being in favour of de-schooling does not mean that we should support government cuts in education. Quite apart from the effects of teacher unemployment, the present 'community' is completely unprepared physically or mentally to turn itself into an open classroom and is itself suffering the effects of government cuts in every other field. The cuts must be fought but more consideration should be given as to *how we* want society's resources allocated.

Those of us incarcerated in the school system should certainly organise to prevent its worse abuses and to carve out areas of freedom where we can. Some of us might even find experimentation with 'free' schools worthwhile, but we should not contribute anything to the Social-Democratic myth of state education as the great liberator or equaliser in society. Those of us in the schools will play a part, neither greater nor smaller than our fellow workers elsewhere in the struggle for a new society.

**Mike Ballard**

#### BACKGROUND MATERIAL

*Teaching as a Subversive Activity* by Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner.  
*School is Dead* by Everett Reimer.  
*The Great Brain Robbery* by Keith Paton.



was started by a group of women and men, inspired by the ideas of Leo Tolstoy, in 1898. Mostly young, well-educated and town-bred, they bought 42 acres of bare, hillside farmland and attempted to create there "a little paradise on earth" (as one of the founding settlers put it). Needless to say, it failed. But at the same time as explaining why they failed - and why all such utopian experiments are bound to fail - it is worth mentioning their achievement too. For, however limited that achievement might be in the case of isolated communities such as Whiteway, it gives us an idea of what we could make of the world if working men and women everywhere resolved to create a "paradise" not just of a few backwoods acres but of the entire Earth itself.

No-one except a bunch of townies would even have tried to start a self-supporting, agricultural community in a place such as Whiteway. The original settlers bought land there because it was cheap - but the land was cheap precisely

In fact, adverse natural conditions were the least of the settlers' worries. As well as being vegetarians, those who set up Whiteway were pacifists too. They did not recognise private property (least of all their own) and refused to use any type of force to defend their own possessions. The results were predictable. Unsympathetic local farmers regarded them as fair game, driving their cattle onto Whiteway land to graze on the community's vegetables and helping themselves to the settlers' agricultural implements, which the Whitewayans could not bring themselves to regard as theft.

Worse than the vandalism of the farmers was interference by the state. In its early years, those who lived at Whiteway were subject to all kinds of spiteful harassment by the police and local magistrates. The settlers' unorthodox clothing and their disregard for the conventions of marriage were anathema to the local authorities and few



WHITEWAYS *continued from page 8*

their land to show that it was not private property. The state was unimpressed, however, and periodically the police would descend on Whiteway. Sometimes 2 or 3 of the men would be taken away for a few weeks of imprisonment in order to atone for the community's debts or else vital stocks of arduously grown vegetables, laid by as food for the winter, would be forcibly seized.

At least in the case of the police though, the community was being harassed by those who were recognisably its enemies. Unfortunately for Whiteway, those who were supposed to be its friends often turned out to be just as much of a problem. As with so many of the communes of more recent times, a stream of visitors and supposed well-wishers was continually passing through — literally eating up the community's resources but rarely joining in with the work.

The impossible dream cracked

The original settlers were communists, opposed to the market and to the use of money. Their ideal, like our own, was for children, women and men to take freely from society whatever they desired and to contribute whatever their talents and inclinations spurred them to produce. Yet while it would be one thing for humankind as a whole to run the world on this basis (since the immense span of world-wide production could then be reasonably expected — and consciously adjusted — to cover the wide range of individual tastes and preferences in consumption) it is quite another for a mere handful of people to attempt to

put such a system into practice. A stage was soon reached at Whiteway where some of the settlers lacked even such essentials as footwear (they had no leather) and their position became more and more hopeless in the face of a thousand and one other hardships.

Take the case of Francis Sedlak. Sedlak heard about Whiteway from Tolstoy himself, who recommended him to go and live there. When he was working in the fields, Sedlak used to write (presumably he must have taken a large supply of paper and writing materials with him when he went to Whiteway) and the time came when he had a manuscript ready to send to a publisher in London. The problem was the stamp, for stamps have to be bought with money, which Sedlak did not have — or, if he did have any coins left in his pockets from his pre-Whiteway days, he was not prepared to use them (the Tolstoyans' objection to money being fundamentally a moral one). Despite the fact that it was mid-winter, if the manuscript was to get to London the only way it could be done was for Sedlak to take it there himself. Thus one bitterly cold morning, with snow literally knee deep on the ground, a thinly clad Francis Sedlak set out from Whiteway to walk barefoot the 100 and more miles to London! It is hardly necessary to add that he never made it. A little beyond Cirencester, having walked perhaps ten miles at the most, he collapsed in the snow and was lucky not to die from exposure. Laugh though we might, it was incidents such as this, which were painful enough for the individuals involved, which marked the end of the experiment in communism at Whiteway.

Whiteway today — inspiring failure

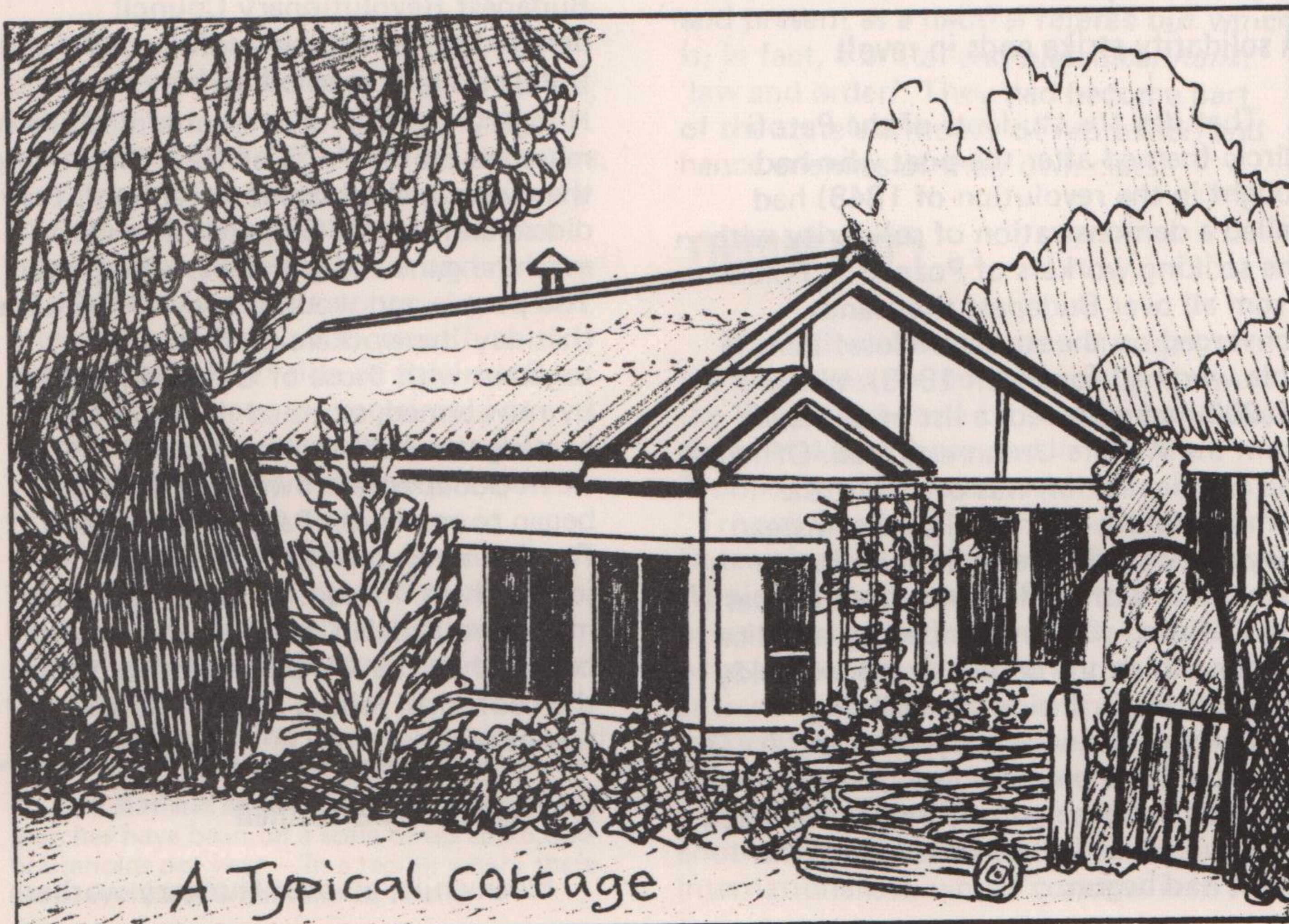
Whiteway as it is today is different altogether. There are perhaps 100 households on the 42 acre site now, some partially supporting themselves with produce from their vegetable plots but many of the women and men commuting to Cheltenham and Gloucester to work in the towns. Private property and the nuclear family have reasserted themselves at Whiteway but what does at least remain from the old, heroic days is the physical lay-out of the community.

When those who founded Whiteway first went to Gloucestershire, there was hardly a tree to be seen on the bare Cotswold hills where they settled and they started from scratch, even building their own houses. Today many of the early houses are still in use. Simply constructed in a rather distinctive architectural style, they look something like a cross between the log cabins of the pioneers in the American West and old-fashioned, country railway stations. The hall, built by the settlers communally, is also in a similar style. People's houses are connected by a network of footpaths which wind this way and that, since they were established naturally over the years as the settlers took the routes which suited them best to move about the community. Throughout the whole settlement there are now trees and grass, shrubs and flowers on every side. Vegetables grow in the plots, trees provide plenty of fruit and beehives are well in evidence.

Whiteway might have failed as a communist community but the idealists and dreamers who set it up have their monument in what remains. Those who live at Whiteway today are as subject to the pressures of the monetary economy as the rest of us. For most of them there will be no escape from wage labour this side of the social revolution. But at least the landscape which the present generation of Whitewayans have inherited comes close to the "little paradise on earth" which the early settlers sought to create. Visiting Whiteway, I for one was inspired to struggle on towards the day when we shall have made the whole world as pleasant a place to live and work and play in as this little corner of the Cotswolds.

John Carlton

*Thanks to Mrs Ryall of Whiteway for talking to us, answering our questions and being such a fine person.*



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# WORLD WIDE



## HUNGARY '56



Insurrectionary workers.

Photo: 'Liberation'

**IN THE** history of workers struggle for freedom, Hungary 1956 like Russia in 1905 and 1917 and Spain in 1936 marks one of the high points. Yet unlike these previous events, the revolt of the Hungarian workers was not against free enterprise capitalism but against a system which called itself socialist, wherein the means of production were state owned, where a party which claimed to be a workers party held a monopoly of power.

That the Hungarian revolutionaries did not want a return to 'liberal' capitalism was obvious to all except the Stalinists who branded them 'fascists' and 'counter revolutionaries'. What then were the demands of the workers in Hungary in 1956, for what did they fight and die?

### The workers' demands

At a meeting on October 23rd, 1956 delegates representing 24 major factories resolved the following:-

- 1 The factory belongs to the workers. The latter should pay the state a levy calculated on the basis of the output and a portion of the profits.
- 2 The supreme controlling body in the place of work is the workers council elected democratically by the workers.
- 3 Workers councils elect their own leading committees composed of 3-9 members, which carry out the decisions of the council and which will carry out other jobs which these decide on.
- 4 The director is employed by the factory. The workers council elects the director and the highest employees. This election takes place after a public meeting called by the executive committee.

- 5 The director is answerable to the workers council in every matter which concerns the factory.
- 6 The workers council itself reserves all rights to:
  - a) Decide on the plans of the factory;
  - b) Decide the rates of pay in the enterprise;
  - c) Decide about all foreign contracts;
  - d) Decide all matters involving credit.
- 7 In the same way, the workers council resolves any conflicts about the employment of any worker.
- 8 The workers council has the right to examine the balance sheets and to decide the use to which profits are to be put.
- 9 The workers council handles social questions in the enterprise.

### A solidarity strike ends in revolt

That day the students of the Petofi Circle (named after the poet who had fought in the revolution of 1848) had called a demonstration of solidarity with the striking workers of Poznan in Poland. From all over Budapest thousands converged on the statue of Josef Bem (a Pole who had fought in 1848). When 50,000 had gathered, a list of demands from the Writers Union was read. Officially the demonstration was over, but the demonstrators did not disperse. Instead they marched to the radio building to demand that their demands be broadcast. The building was surrounded by a police cordon which the demonstrators quickly broke through. Inside the building members of the security police, the AVO, reacted all too predictably — they opened fire with machine guns. Fire was returned with guns seized from the cordon, the revolt had begun.

Meanwhile a crowd of 6,000 had gone to the city park to demolish the 26ft tall statue of Stalin. When it had been torn down all that remained was the jackboots of the dictator, in one of which was planted the national flag with the 'communist' symbol torn out of the centre. In the streets thousands of workers and students formed groups which spread out over the city, setting up road blocks and occupying the main squares. Workers from the Czepeel factory brought lorry loads of small arms, which were added to those given by police and soldiers who had gone over to the people.

### Russian tanks open fire

The government, trying to head off the revolt, declared martial law and made Imre Nagy, a 'communist' who had been imprisoned for "deviationism" and who enjoyed considerable popular support, prime minister. Nagy, however, soon showed himself in his true colours: it was he who invoked the Warsaw Pact, calling in the Russian troops to "restore order". On the morning of October 24th, 1956, Russian tanks entered Budapest. In some areas, bitter fighting broke out the Hungarian workers attacking with grenades, molotovs and at the Killain barracks, a field gun. A resolution of the Budapest Revolutionary Council demanded that Russian soldiers who were fraternising be granted asylum in Hungary. In Magyovar an unarmed crowd marched on the AVO offices. On arriving they were invited to move forward, they did so and the AVO opened fire with machine guns and grenades, killing over 100 people and wounding over 150. Later that day the workers of Magyovar together with those of Gyor and Moson by now armed, stormed the building, beating the AVO men to death.

In Budapest a crowd, also unarmed, began to march on Parliament square. Russian tanks sent to fire on them joined them instead. In the square they met more Russian tanks, Fraternization began, then the AVO opened fire from the roof tops, killing 30 including a Soviet officer.

### Workers councils formed

Meanwhile, all over Hungary workers

# THE SAME CLASS STRUGGLE

## THE WAR IN IRELAND



THE WAR goes on in the north-east of Ireland. In the 7 years 1969-1975 1,391 people died and there were something like 15,000 recorded injuries. The killing and maiming has continued unabated this year and there are no signs whatever of any let up in the future. As socialists we cannot but be appalled by the misery which these figures signify for the men, women and children of the working class families involved — a degree of misery which the statistics themselves can never adequately convey.

### CLASS SOLIDARITY

It does not matter for us that the place where this violence is taking place lies close to the areas of Britain where members of Social Revolution are active. We do not need geographical proximity to trigger of the sympathy we feel for other workers like ourselves and neither do we have to make a conscious, internationalist effort to identify with those on the other side of the Irish Sea. Ireland is our country too simply as a matter of course, because as socialists 'our country' takes in the whole world, whether we happen to be living in Britain or anywhere else. Likewise, those workers being shot, bombed and harassed\* in north-east Ireland are 'our people', because their class and ours are one and the same.

It is this working class solidarity which

\* One statistic of harassment: household searches have been on a scale of up to 75,000 households per year — in a region where there are only 400,000 households in all!

marks socialists off from those who wring their hands about *all* the deaths and *all* the injuries taking place day by day in north-east Ireland. When it comes to violence, it is not all the same to socialists whoever happens to be on the receiving end. Of the 1,391 people killed up to the end of 1975, for example, 246 were soldiers in the British army and 131 were police. No doubt, many of these troops and police were of working class origin themselves but that is not sufficient to win them our sympathy. In joining the army and the police, they had crossed a class barrier and put themselves at the disposal of that force in society which the lying media do their best to mystify and present as a neutral referee but which is, in fact, a brutal and biased *capitalist* 'law and order'. They had become part of the state's armoury of repression and hence enemies of their own class.

### 'TROOPS OUT?'

We in Social Revolution are against the army and the police because they are the fists of the state but we do not make the mistake of those people like the Troops Out Movement with its call of "Troops Out Now", let alone "Self Determination for the Irish People as a Whole". Troops out of Ireland means, of necessity, troops back into Britain. But what makes the British army an obscene, anti-working class force in Ireland also makes it an obscene, anti-working class force in Britain too. A demand to move troops out of one country and into another makes no sense for internationalists, whose concern is to

smash armies everywhere. Similarly, the call for "Self Determination for the Irish People as a Whole" is not only a nonsense in a world where it is the pressures exerted by the market rather than 'the people' which determine nations' fates; it is reactionary too. What happens in Ireland is the concern of workers everywhere — in China, Uruguay and Canada just as much as those who happen to live in the Emerald Isle itself. Instead of "Self Determination for the Irish People as a Whole", we look to Class Determination for the Workers of the World as a Whole.

### THE ARMIES

The confrontation between the forces of the capitalist (which happens to be British) state and sizeable sections of the working class in north-east Ireland is, however, only one component to the overall war being fought there. There is also the murderous intra-working class feud between 'protestant' workers and 'catholic' workers, as well as a number of actual or potential 'liberation struggles' which seek to establish alternative capitalist states (32-county 'Irish' or 'Ulster/Loyalist', as the case may be) to replace British capital's rule in the north-east of Ireland. Just as one would expect at a time when the working class (not just in Ireland and Britain) but the world over) is not socialist, the over-all situation is extremely complex and confused as these various components to the war and these various struggles interact and overlap. When the British army

councils were forming, thrashing out their demands and programmes, arming themselves and organising a general strike. From place to place the ideas, the programmes, varied, but all of them were a call by the workers for a "genuine democratic socialism". Perhaps the most concrete expression of the aims and aspirations of the Hungarian revolt was contained in the resolution of the trade unions which made the following demands:-

#### POLITICAL

- 1 That the fighting ceases, an amnesty be declared, and negotiations begun with the youth delegates.
- 2 That a broad government, comprising representatives of the trade unions and the youth, be formed with Nagy as president.
- 3 That the country's economic position be put to the people in all honesty.
- 4 That help be given to people wounded in the fighting and to the families of the victims.
- 5 That to maintain order the police and army be reinforced by a national guard made up of workers and youth.
- 6 That with the support of the trade unions a young workers organisation be formed.
- 7 That the new government start immediate negotiations for the withdrawal of Russian forces from Hungary.

#### ECONOMIC

- 1 Constitution of workers councils in all factories to establish a) workers management and b) a radical transformation of the system of central planning and direction of the economy by the state.
- 2 An immediate 15% rise in wages for less than 800 florints a month, and 10% in wages less than 1,500 florints. The maximum wage to be 3,500 f.
- 3 Abolition of production norms except where workers councils elect to retain them.
- 4 Abolition of the 4% tax paid by the unmarried and childless families.
- 5 The lowest pension to be increased.
- 6 Family allowances to be increased.
- 7 Speed up of state house building.
- 8 That Nagy's promise to negotiate with the USSR and other countries with a view to establishing equitable mutually advantageous trading relations to be kept. Likewise the appeal of the Revolutionary Committee of Hungarian Intellectuals called for general elections by secret ballot, freedom of the press and free speech, and for the land, factories and mines to become the property of the workers.

#### Support from other east european workers

The effects of the Hungarian uprising began to be felt elsewhere in Eastern Europe. In Poland, itself in the throes of a major upheaval, the student paper *Po Prostu* carried regular reports telling the truth about the events in Hungary and expressing solidarity with the radical students and workers. In Czechoslovakia there were demonstrations of support in Bratislava, Levice and other cities. In the German Democratic Republic there were riots, strikes and demonstrations.

As Russian tanks shelled Budapest, Bulgarian anarchists and syndicalists were arrested, peasants refused to deliver their quotas, the army was purged and troops patrolled the streets of Sofia. In Romania on order from Khrushchev the army was disarmed as students held meetings and railwaymen and miners passed resolutions of solidarity with Hungary. The Belgrade (Yugoslavian) paper *Politika* of October 26th reported "This has not been a



## AN ANSWER TO "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"

*Destruction of  
Leninist texts,  
Hungary 1956.*

counter-revolution. Rather this has been a protest against attitudes which had blocked the efforts of the working class towards socialist democracy."

In the USSR itself, railwaymen refused to run military supply trains to Hungary. In Kaunas there was a mass protest and in Leningrad students marched to the Winter Palace under the slogan "Hands Off Hungary". In Stalingrad workers struck for "freedom of spirit". In Kiev and Tiflis students clashed with the army. In Moscow a meeting of the Young Communist League was transformed into a meeting of solidarity with Hungary. Many such meetings took place, including one in the YCL of the Moscow army garrison. The young writer Alexi Dobrovalski was sentenced to 3 years for distributing uncensored reports of the Hungarian uprising.

#### Fraternisation effective

By October 30th, although fighting continued in Eastern Hungary, Russian troops, demoralised and short of supplies, were being withdrawn from Budapest. The fraternisation propaganda conducted by the radicals was having an obvious effect. A leaflet in Russian issued by the workers and students council of Miskolc stated:

**"Officers and soldiers we appeal to you not to fight your brothers, the Hungarian workers, students and youth. Our people do not revolt against you, but for the achievement of legal demands. Our interests are identical. We and you are all fighting together for a better socialist life. Don't be simple tools in the crushing of the Hungarian peoples justified fight."**

On October 31st, railwaymen struck to hasten the Russian withdrawal. The respite, however, was short lived, on November 1st fresh Russian troops entered Hungary, occupying airfields and other strategic points.

On November 3rd fighting broke out again, even as the negotiations for Russian withdrawal continued. The next day a Stalinist puppet government headed by Janos Kadar was set up at Szolnok. It called for Russian help to "liquidate counter-revolutionaries".

At dawn on November 4th thousands of tanks, nicknamed "Kadar Taxis" and 250,000 infantry backed up by aircraft and MVD shock troops (a Russian Waffen SS) attacked, pounding the working class areas of Budapest and other cities to rubble. For over a week, despite appeals

to surrender, the working class resisted heroically. By November 14th, when resistance had ceased 7,000 Russians were dead, as were 50,000 Hungarians. Thousands more were wounded, 100,000 more became refugees, fleeing to the west.

Nagy sought refuge in the Yugoslav embassy. Having accepted an offer of safe passage from Kadar, he was abducted by Russian security officers to the USSR. Denounced by Kadar for "Treason" he was executed in 1958 together with Pal Maleter, a Hungarian army general, who had been arrested while negotiating with the Russians.

#### The workers fought on

Although bloodied, the working class was not yet defeated. As the fighting continued intermittently into 1957 died down the strikes began. Against a background of mobile courts martial which sentenced thousands to death without a trial, the workers councils called a general strike.

On November 14th, after talks with Kadar, the Budapest workers council called for a return to work. Other workers councils did not follow their example. The following day the Budapest council sacked its president for trying to make the return to work a sign of confidence in Kadar. By November 19th, an illegal National Council was set up; the strike was at an end, but the struggle was not yet over.

On December 4th, 30,000 women in Budapest gathered at the tomb of the unknown warrior in Heros' Square. Russian troops fired over their heads. The next day thousands marched towards the Petofi statue shouting "Russians go home". They did not reach the statue being dispersed by Russian tanks and infantry.

#### Workers councils abolished

As the chairmen of the councils of the Ganz and Mavag factories were arrested, the Budapest Central Workers Council issued a proclamation denouncing the repression. During the next 2 days demonstrating women and men workers, and students were fired on.

On December 9th, the Central Workers Council amidst growing demonstrations called a 48 hour general strike. The government replied by declaring martial law and dissolving all regional and central

councils. Two leading members of the Central Council were invited for talks with Kadar. On arrival at the government building they were arrested. Their comrades at the factory where they worked immediately staged a sit down strike demanding their release. The factory where they worked immediately staged a sit down strike demanding their release. The factory was occupied by armed police who after 3 days forced the strikers to go back to work. Meanwhile in Eger where the workers had forced the release of jailed members of the workers council, fighting broke out, demonstrators answering police fire with hand grenades.

**Death penalty for strikers**

December 14th saw the government raise wages. On the next day it re-introduced the death penalty for striking. 2 days later the first death sentences were announced. Christmas 1956 saw many executions as the government minister Marosan announced that if necessary the government would execute 10,000 to show that it and not the workers councils ruled Hungary.

The new year began with a strike of miners. On January 8th 1957, the workers council of Czepeel dissolved itself rather than become a tool of the government. The next two days saw more strikes and demonstrations. At Czepeel, workers demonstrating against installation of a government commissioner and a director in the engineering plant were dispersed by Russian troops only after 3 hours of fighting.

By the autumn of that year the last of the workers councils was abolished. The Hungarian uprising was at an end.

**A crack in the stalinist monolith**

The revolt of the Hungarian workers was inspired by mixed sentiments — patriotism, class solidarity, and a desire for more political and economic freedom. It never attained the proportions of a conscious movement for communism as we understand it. However, Hungary '56 was the first major crack in the Stalinist monolith in Eastern Europe established by the bayonets of the red army in the last days of World War 2. It not only showed that the state-capitalism of the east was as vulnerable to united class action by the workers as its eastern counterparts, it also raised fundamental questions about the nature of socialist society.

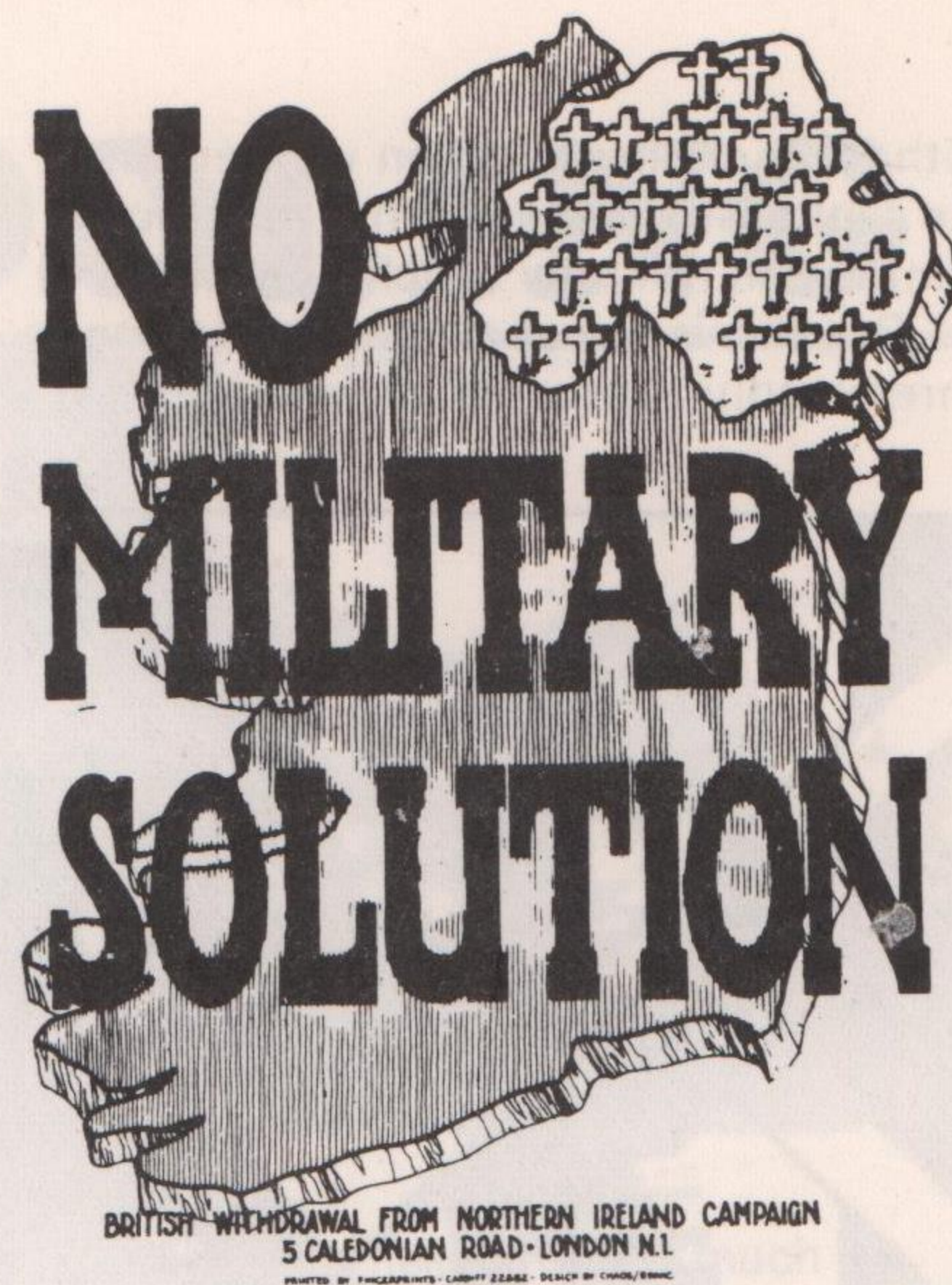
Never again would serious revolutionaries equate socialism with state capitalist nationalisation, never would they believe that the rule of managers could be a substitute for workers' self-management, that a bureaucratically centralised party could substitute for autonomous, democratic working class organisation.

As the Hungarian revolutionary paper *Nemzetor* stated:-

**"All workers, socialists even communists must at last realise that a bureaucratic state has nothing to do with socialism."**

**T. LIDDLE**

invades and brutalises working class districts, we see resistance by working men, women and (especially heroically) children to the forces of the capitalist state. Yet very often those best equipped to fight the invading troops are the local underground armies, such as the Provos in some of the 'catholic' districts. Just as with the British army's soldiers, most Provo soldiers are workers and in many cases their first motivation as individuals may be the self-defence of the areas where they live against the intolerable oppression mounted by the British army. Yet the Provisional IRA is not a working class defence force. On the contrary, it is a national liberation army as emphatically pro-capitalist as the other national liberation armies we have seen in operation in Vietnam and elsewhere. Behind the standard socialist rhetoric which any self-respecting capitalist national liberation campaign has to resort to these days, lies an aspiration to put the whole of the 32 counties under the unified control of a single state representing the interests of Irish capital. Not only this, but the methods the Provos use reflect their aim just as surely as capitalist ends dictated the capitalist means of struggle employed by the NLF in Vietnam. The Provos have killed and maimed British (not just the ones in uniform, whom we accept are legitimate targets), 'protestant' and 'catholic' (those who got in their way) workers to achieve their capitalist aims and no doubt will continue to do so.



**OVERLAPS**

All sorts of overlaps are possible, then, given the kaleidoscopic array of forces locked in battle in the north-east of Ireland. At different times and places a member of a 'protestant' para-military formation can be involved in working class struggle against the (British) capitalist state, can be part of the machinery of the state itself deployed against other, 'catholic' workers or — independently of the state — can engage in the vicious intra-working class feuding between 'catholic' and 'protestant' workers. In real life the situation is even more complicated than this, since these various activities need not always be separate in time and space. There is, for example, a considerable duplication of membership in the 'protestant' para-military groups and the British army's adjunct, the Ulster Defence Regiment (7,700 strong; 97 per cent 'protestant'). Over 80 ex-UDR men have been convicted of, among other things, illegal possession of weapons and sectarian killings.

In much the same way, a Provo soldier may join with other workers in the locality where he lives to defend it against the British army and the police. Yet he fights as part of an underground army dedicated to achieving an alternative capitalist state in Ireland's north-east — and this state will oppress the working class, if and when it is established, just as surely as night follows day. There is also plenty of evidence of Republican groups like the Provos giving 'catholic' tit for 'protestant' tat in the sectarian, intra-working class killings (it is not all the work of British army *agents provocateur*).

**SOCIALISTS AND THE WORKING CLASS**

These overlappings of roles occur precisely because the working class ('catholic' or 'protestant', 'Irish' or 'British') is not yet within a thousand miles of socialism. Now, the working class does not have to be socialist for us in Social Revolution to align ourselves

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with it. In clashes between workers and the capitalist state we do not need to think twice to know which side we stand on. But this is not at all the same thing as unreservedly approving all working class



actions — an impossibility, anyway, when different sections of the working class spend part of their time murdering each other. In the north-east of Ireland, as elsewhere, we support all struggles of the working class which are directed against the capitalist class and its state, just as we do all developments which enhance the democratic self-activity of the working class as a force in society fighting for itself. On the other hand, we oppose all actions of the working class which serve to prop up capitalism in any of its numerous guises, just as we do all attacks by groups of workers on other members of their own class (which we are part of ourselves) as being the only force in society which can achieve the socialist way of life we long for, our first commitment is to socialism and it is socialist principles which determine our support or otherwise for any particular working class initiative. This is our

touchstone and it is this basic attitude which saves us from the mistakes made by groups such as Big Flame, who present the 'catholic' section of the working class in north-east Ireland as the working class as a whole and see the Provisional IRA as a power for socialism. It also saves us from criticising the British army for *not* taking down "the UWC [Ulster Workers' Council] barricades which were openly intimidating workers from going to work"! (*Ireland: Rising in the North*. Big Flame, p. 22).

### NO ILLUSIONS

One of the things which distinguishes Social Revolution from many of the other myriad groups announcing themselves as revolutionary socialists is its lack of romantic illusions. In the end, the attitude which the handful of us in our little group take towards the war in the north-east of Ireland is not going to affect the outcome of the terror there one way or the other. Nor, for that matter, is the attitude of all the libertarian socialists in Britain and Ireland (even throughout the world) taken together going to affect that outcome — any more than it did in Vietnam. In any guerilla war such as that being fought in north-east Ireland there is nowadays much fashionable talk of 'fish' swimming about in 'water', but in the class war which libertarian socialists are engaged in we are no more than a few tiny sticklebacks thrashing about in a mighty expanse of exceedingly choppy water. Away from the corner of Ireland where the butchery is going on, most workers in both Britain and the Republic could not give a damn about what is happening to their brothers and sisters in the six counties. Chauvinism is rife on both sides of the Irish Sea (anti-Irish and anti-

British, depending on the side) and soldiers in Britain on leave from north-east Ireland can walk the streets in or out of uniform without encountering the slightest hostility from the working class in general.

These are extremely unfavourable circumstances for libertarian socialists to work in, and we in Social Revolution do not even have the apocalyptic faith of those like the World Revolution group (the Jehovah's Witnesses of socialism) who believe that one day soon the final trumpet will be blown and the workers of the six continents will rise.

Yet just because libertarian socialist forces are so pitifully weak, and just because the times are so unrelievedly bleak, it is essential that a few of us within the working class say loudly and fearlessly the things which we socialists — and we socialists alone — can say:

**DOWN with the capitalist state — with its army and its police**

**DOWN with the IRA and the 'protestant' para-military organisations**

**DOWN with all forms of capitalism, actual or potential**

**FOR a socialist working class and the new society it can build both in north-east Ireland and throughout the world**

**FOR a social revolution**

John Carlton

NOTE: For further discussion of our views on Ireland, Republicanism and the 'Troops Out Movement' see the article in *Libertarian Communism 10*.

also available from  
**SOCIAL REVOLUTION**

"The Irish Question—A Socialist Analysis" by Adam Buick. A Wereldsocialisme pamphlet. 50p (inc. p&p).

# Problems of Socialism: 'Socialism, Workers Councils and the Market'

## WORKERS COUNCILS?

I find myself in agreement with G. David McDonagh (*Libertarian Communism No.9*) that many socialists seem to be concerned with theories which are largely irrelevant to their aim of establishing a socialist society. The attitude taken in your 'Draft Manifesto' \* regarding workers councils is a classic example of this. By detaching certain forms of working class organisation from the environment in which they emerged, you present these councils as some outline form of what you expect to "offer the greatest possibilities for revolutionary

change". This unhistorical approach disregards the fact that nearly all these workers councils rose to prominence because of the breakdown of existing systems of government. Far from being any basis for a socialist revolution they reflected situations where existing organisations for ruling society had lost control and where others had yet to become effective.

This emphasis upon certain forms of working class organisation, rather than their aims, which has gained romantic appeal during the 20th century reflects the development of capitalism in this period. With regard to Germany and Russia

it was Lenin in his work 'What is to be Done' who placed the question of organisational structures at the centre of debate. Until then the question of organisation was not seen as being of primary importance. Policy and ideology were the central concern. Theoreticians, including Marx, looked upon organisational structures as very much reflecting developments within capitalism. Democracy was seen as having its foundations in the revolutionary potential of the working class, not in the various organisations which emerged at that time.

But the publication of Lenin's 'What is to be Done' has to be seen in relation

PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM

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to the development of reformism and revisionism at the turn of the century. It is no coincidence that Lenin's work was based to some extent upon the Webb's book 'Industrial Unionism'. Bernstein, the Fabians and Lenin had a great deal in common as regards their emphasis upon organisational structures. The development of ideas concerning organisation and the development of reformism are closely linked and reflect the decline of the place of socialist theory. By the time of the 1905 revolution in Russia the debate over organisational structures had spread throughout the 'left' movements in Germany and Russia. Consequently the emergence of workers councils during the revolution was seen as being of fundamental significance. The organisational structure of workers councils replaced the ideology of socialism as the aim of the revolutionary movement thus providing a means by which the whole question of socialism could be relegated to insignificance.

What has to be grasped is what Marx well recognised: organisational structures reflect the society in which they emerge. Capitalism is able to absorb all forms of organisation as long as the people in them do not express their revolutionary intentions. Workers councils and bureaucratic organisations are only expressions of certain societal conditions, and without a socialist foundation in their members, are quickly absorbed into the system, leaving theoreticians to deliberate upon the ethics of one form or another.

Workers councils have usually gained prominence when sections of the population have been alienated from the state. Russia and Germany in the First World War period are examples of this. The shallow experience of participation in elections; the devastation of war and the consequent demands for peace; the continued support, in Russia, by the 'leftist' parties in the parliament for the war and the consequent alienation of the workers and soldiers from the political parties, these were some of the reasons why workers councils gained prominence in this period. But the absence of any socialist aims meant that the reformists both in Germany and Russia could use these organisations to enhance their own political authority.



The continued emphasis and glorification of certain forms of organisation at the expense of socialist consciousness, which still pervades the 'left' today only assists in maintaining the Leninist and reformist tendencies in modern movements. Arguments over democracy and bureaucracy which do not relate to the conditions of society or socialist theory only serve to perpetuate capitalism, they do nothing to move beyond it.

LEFT AND RIGHT

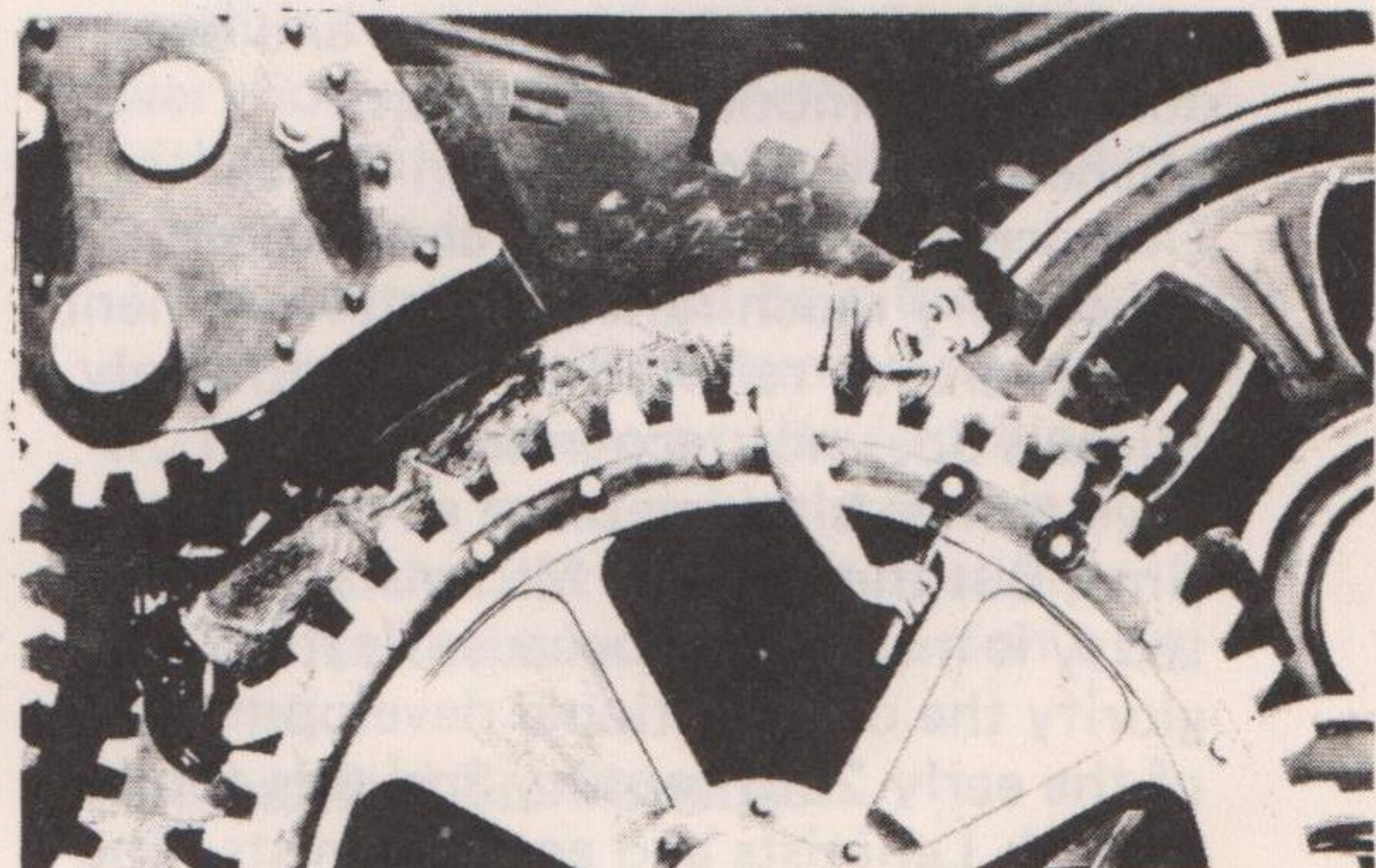
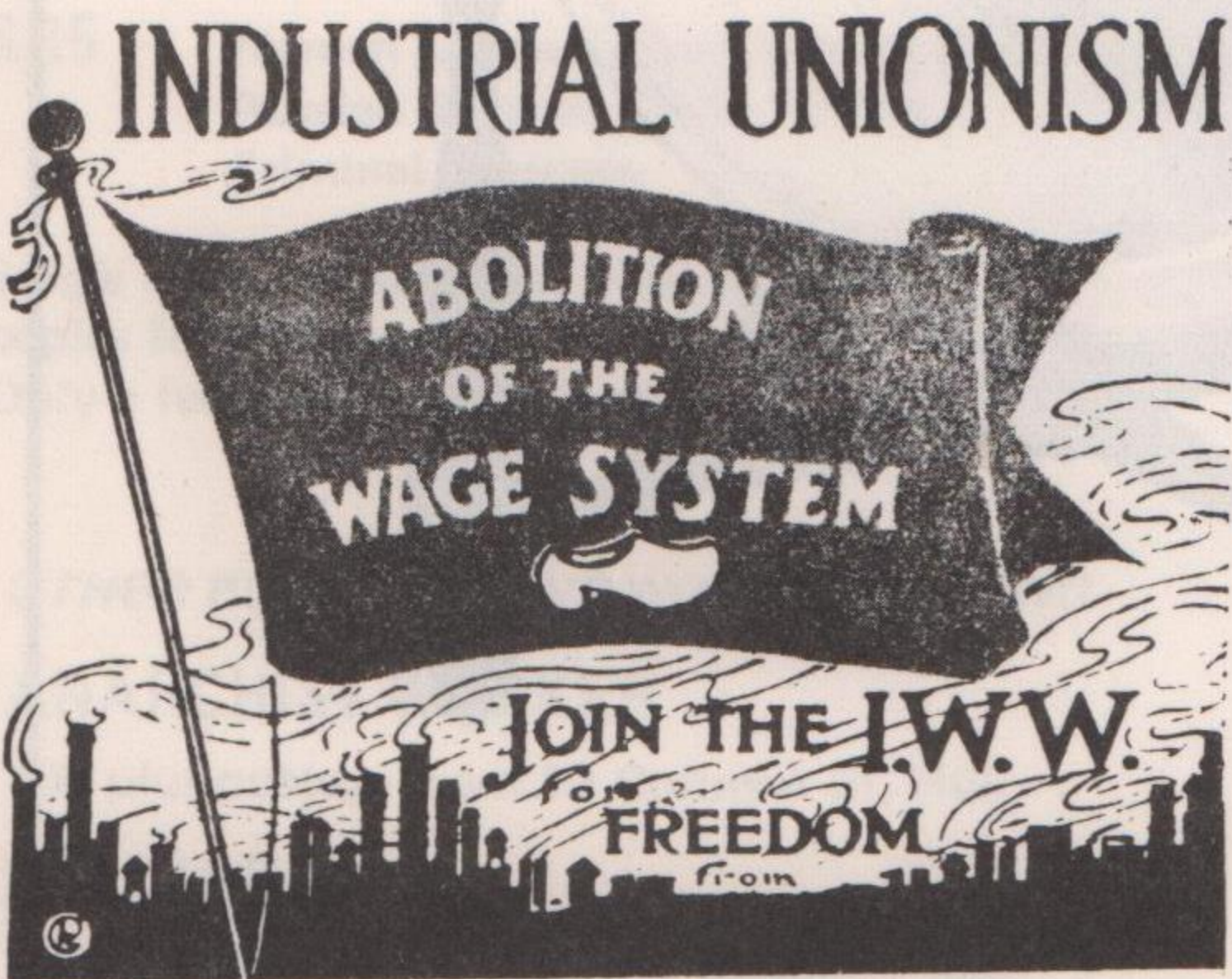
This concern with organisation is also noticeable in the works of Mises and Michels, who McDonagh believes pose major problems for a socialist society. Here I disagree with McDonagh. In fact Mises and Michels both fall into the same trap which the 'left' has done. They both see organisations which have emerged within capitalism as having significance for a socialist society. The works of Mises concerning this tend to be dominated by his conception of Russian state capitalism. Although he does apply his analysis to a theoretical moneyless society, he still sees it confronting organisational problems similar to those of state capitalism. One of Mises points regarding this is that the only alternative to the free play of the market in the capitalist economy is a system of organisational planning of the economy. The latter, Mises believes, must inevitably create problems because the absence of a price mechanism based upon free market conditions means that there is no effective means of calculating the relative value of products. But in a similar fashion to those on the 'left' who have glorified working class organisation Mises does not seem to associate the types of organisation which have emerged in Russia from the general world conditions of capitalism as it has developed in the 20th century, and notably in the conflict between East and West. What Mises expresses in his attacks upon Russian capitalism and its organisation is his proximity to those that conventional political theorists now call "knights of the Cold War". His work is very much linked with the development of an ideological conflict between the ruling classes of Eastern and Western

capitalism. This has taken the form of a struggle between theories of 'laissez faire' and theories of the planned economy. Of course, the realities of modern society have little relation to this ideological conflict. Just as the state operates in the west so also do market forces operate in the east. But what is important about this conflict is that it presents visions of the economics of society — that is any society — as being restricted to only two forms, either the 'laissez faire' market economy or the planned economy. Both the advocates of laissez faire capitalism, like Mises, and their critics fail to see beyond these two concepts, both of which are intricately linked with modern developments within capitalism. Consequently they cannot see the laws of supply and demand in any other form than that involving money, markets and exchange. Planning and 'laissez faire' are seen as being two separate halves of the totality of society. This means that the opposing sides have visions of either the complete independence of the individual in the market of capitalism, or else a vast conglomeration of planning organisations, democratic committees and computerised hell, with people fearing to take a step without first taking a vote or referring to an almighty plan.

All this shows is that Mises, as a representative of the 'right' is, like the 'left', locked up ideologically in the straight jacket of capitalism. In fact the laws of supply and demand do not require money or exchange for their operation and they must play a significant part in any society based upon free access. Because people will be free to choose what they consume and what they produce, the decisions that individuals make regarding their consumption and productive activity must have their effect upon the overall pattern of society. Shortages and excesses will be automatically revealed by the forces of supply and demand, irrespective of whether people's requirements are planned or not. This is in fact similar in effect to what the free market conditions of capitalism creates, except of course, that in a socialist society the decisions of individuals regarding their needs will be the effective force instead of the creation of profits. Hence distribution and calculation of demand need not be a problem in a socialist society as Mises presumes.

ECONOMIC CALCULATION

What remains that is central to Mises criticism of socialism is the question of economic calculation in regard to production. In 'laissez faire' capitalism the best use of resources is seen as being revealed by the market system which



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establishes an economic relationship between competitive goods. Mises considers that without this market mechanism no means of relating the relative values of goods is possible. Some socialists may regard this as unimportant. But even without the necessity for such a means of economic calculation in a socialist society, the need would still be important in order that democracy could operate in the interests of all. For the relative values of products would need to be part of the information which people would need to have in order to make decisions.

The labour theory of value is, of course, the most obvious basis for relating the values of different products as every 'Marxist' knows. It is an adequate means of calculating the economic relationships between goods, and actions. Mises disputes that the labour theory of value is applicable to capitalism but this has no relation to its relevance under socialism. Mises confuses the function of the price mechanism with the calculations that the organisation of production requires.

Even in capitalism the entrepreneur has to make decisions about future production on the basis of theoretical calculation. The price mechanism, at most, only informs him of the immediate condition of the market, it tells him nothing about its future condition. The price mechanism provides the entrepreneur with information regarding the success or failure of his estimate of what was seen as profitable action. In a society based upon free access the laws of supply and demand can inform individuals whether people are producing what is needed, the labour theory of value can only be used by individuals in their decisions regarding their future actions in production. The fundamental difference is that the wants of human beings are far more easily predictable than the future condition of the capitalist market.

I must make it clear that any idea of the use of the labour theory of value is purely to ascertain the relative economic values of different goods, and this information is only *part* of that which people may require in order to make decisions in a socialist society. I am not talking about utopian socialist ideas about labour-time estimates for distribution.

I must touch upon the work of Michels. I think that there also are seen in relation to the polarised theories of laissez faire versus state planning which have developed within capitalism and reflect its present form. The consequence has been that concepts of democracy and economic calculation outside of laissez faire capitalism have been interlinked with concepts of the various organisational structures which have emerged and become dominant in modern capitalism. Michels study of the German Social Democratic Party reaches conclusions which very much reflect the development I have already referred to. Unfortunately Michels does not recognise the wider developments taking place at the same time. But the force of Michels arguments today is maintained because 'leftists' still glorify the organisational developments of the early 20th century and this applies to both Leninists and anti-Leninists. The development of sophisticated academic

subjects like sociology has also assisted in re-inforcing arguments which circle around organisational and institutional analysis and which either ignore historical factors or view them superficially.

I really fail to see what relevance organisations like political parties, trade unions, and workers councils have for a socialist society. They reflect certain conditions within capitalism. Organisations of local communes, historical societies, bird watchers associations etc, may or may not exist in a socialist society, but they are not necessary for a socialist economy.

**Mick Double, Birmingham.**

\* Now incorporated in our new pamphlet "*Introduction to Social Revolution*"

### Editorial Comment

Mick Double makes some valid points about the way in which various radical groups make a fetish of certain organisational forms. This is true for instance with the Socialist Party of GB and parliament; the syndicalists and industrial unions and of course the Leninists and the vanguard party. Mick thinks we too have done much the same thing with 'workers councils', but in fact we have always insisted that 'workers councils' of some sort, are only a possible vehicle by which our class could transform society from capitalism to socialism. 'Workers councils' have no intrinsic value although they have had definite advantages over parties and trade unions in pursuing our class interests at crucial times. However, they like trade unions and co-operatives, could be co-opted into the administration of capitalism, if their members did not consciously strive to use them in the destruction of capitalism's fundamental social relationships — wage

labour, capital, commodity production etc.. It is also true that a direct parallel cannot be drawn between past situations, in which workers were virtually forced to take over control of industry and towns by the collapse of capitalist authority; and the situation in which a majority of the world's workers are *consciously* seeking to destroy capitalism and create new socialist relationships. Still these are the only examples we have of vast numbers of our fellow workers actively participating in the control of their everyday lives. Questions of democracy and bureaucracy are far from being irrelevant to socialists. After all socialist consciousness requires not simply a recognition of the need to abolish capitalism but also a positive desire to create a new more democratic and co-operative way of life. Since means and ends condition each other this means that democratic organisation of the class struggle is vitally important to us. We see socialist ideas and the potential for socialist revolution arising from the class struggle in its broadest sense. If socialism is to be a practical alternative to present day society then the question of how we organise to achieve the changes we want, cannot be ignored. Any organisation workers establish to make these changes will bear the mark of capitalism's divisions and these will only be overcome and more advanced organisational forms appear when socialist society becomes firmly established.

We find some of Mick's views on 'economic calculation' a bit confusing. Marx's 'labour theory of value' applies, and can only apply, to the economics of the market economy and applies in particular to the developed market economy of world capitalism. It is only capitalism which has the problem of



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trying to reduce all social relationships to quantifiable terms using a single abstract unit of measure. The numerous qualitative human factors in production cannot be balanced in economic calculation. What rather is practical are regulatory mechanisms ensuring a constant surplus of production. This openly acknowledges that socialist society is wasteful; but to the extent only that production cannot be designed to meet needs exactly — not that goods or energy is actually wasted, but that there is a constant time gap between production and utilisation, a constant surplus utilised and renewed.

In socialist society, decisions about how and what to produce will be made democratically after informed public debate, taking into account all factors, including — health risks, ecological effects, labour time needed etc.,. Production will be directly for use, 'value', in the economic sense, will have been abolished. This may require a large measure of de-centralisation and the rapid development of advanced means of communication for its efficient operation, but these are not insurmountable problems.

(For further discussion of some of these issues see the article on statistics and planning in Libertarian Communism No 10. 25p including p&p. From your nearest contact.)

WE WELCOME ARTICLES AND LETTERS UNDER THE GENERAL HEADING 'PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM' BUT PLEASE KEEP THESE SHORT AND TO THE POINT.

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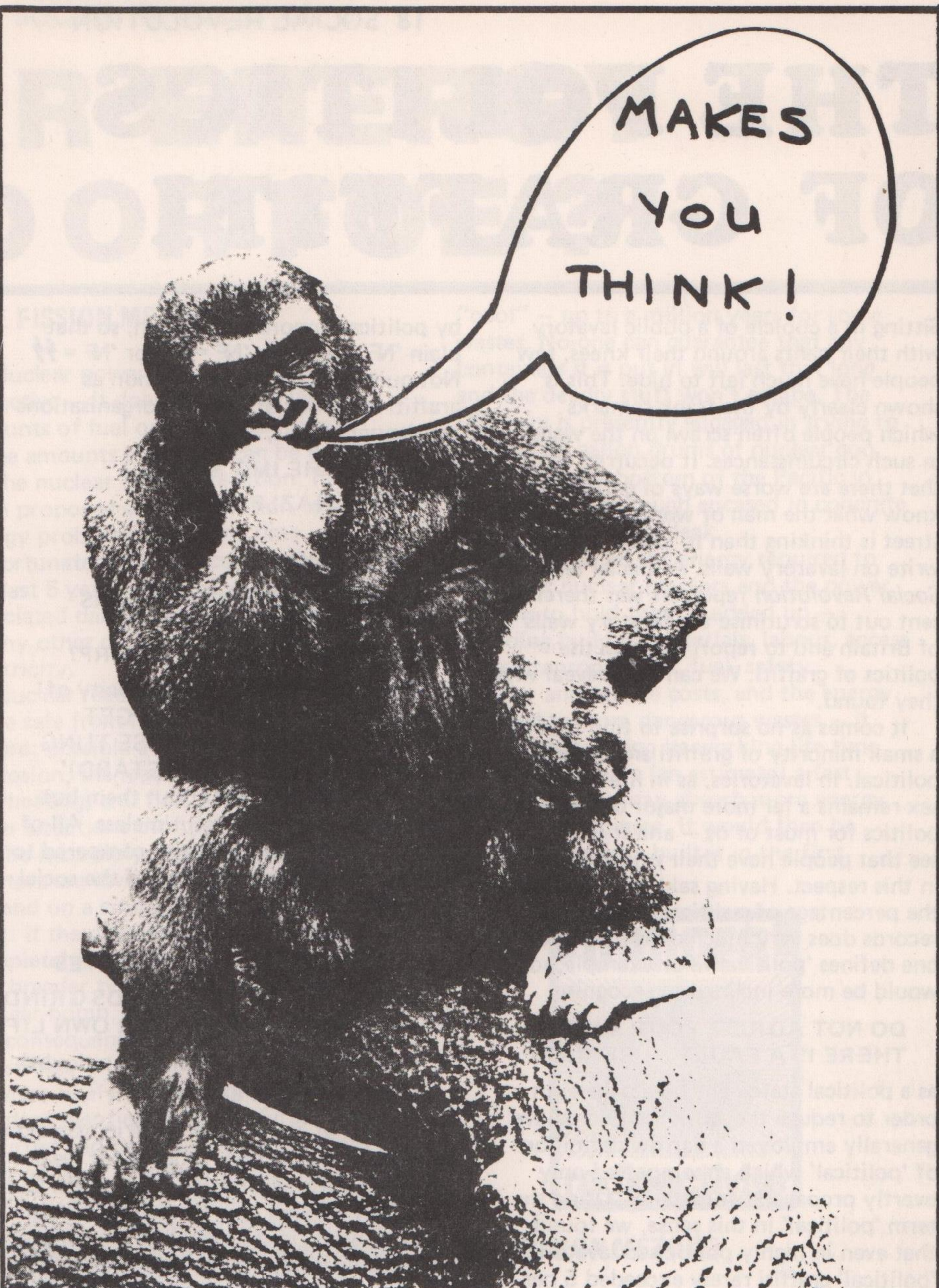
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# THE POLITICS OF GRAFFITI

Sitting in a cubicle of a public lavatory with their pants around their knees, few people have much left to hide. This is shown clearly by the frank remarks which people often scrawl on the walls in such circumstances. It occurred to us that there are worse ways of getting to know what the man or woman in the street is thinking than to study what they write on lavatory walls. A special team of *Social Revolution* reporters was therefore sent out to scrutinise the lavatory walls of Britain and to report back on the politics of graffiti. We can now reveal what they found.

It comes as no surprise to find that only a small minority of graffiti are (directly) political. In lavatories, as in life in general, sex remains a far more major concern than politics for most of us — and it is good to see that people have their priorities right in this respect. Having said this, however, the percentage of political graffiti one records does very much depend on how one defines 'political'. For example, some would be more inclined to recognise

**DO NOT ADJUST YOUR MIND  
THERE IS A FAULT IN REALITY**

as a political statement than others. In order to reduce the work load on us, we generally employed a narrow definition of 'political' which encompassed only overtly propagandist material. Using the term 'political' in this sense, we found that even in highly politicised lavatories, 'political' graffiti rarely exceeded 5 per cent of the total. In most cases it was far less.

The simplest political graffiti (the singular of graffiti, our Italian grammar tells us) is just the name or initials of an organisation. 'IRA', shall we say, or 'UVF', or 'NF', and often this will be linked to an expression of enthusiasm, as in 'NF FOREVER (sic)'. Such graffiti as these invite uncomplimentary additions

by political opponents, though, so that plain 'NF' becomes 'NF = ~~NF~~' or 'NF = ~~NF~~'. Not quite but almost as common as graffiti in favour of political organisations are denunciations, as in:

**SMASH THE IMG AND IS  
~~NF~~ NAZI FRONT**

or, more eloquently:

**HAVENT (sic) THE WORKERS  
ENOUGH TO PUT UP WITH  
WITHOUT THE HELP OF WRP?**

We were surprised at the paucity of attacks on individual leaders. 'GET WILSON OUT' and 'MAO TSE TUNG (REACTIONARY OLD BASTARD)' now have a dated look about them but 'SOD GOD' is, of course, timeless. All of these, however, were rarities compared to (albeit vague) denunciations of the social system as a whole.

Some samples:

**THE SYSTEM INDOCTRINATES  
DON'T LET THE BASTARDS GRIND  
YOU DOWN — RUN YOUR OWN LIFE**

or (from a lonely Situationist, no doubt)  
**SMASH THE SPECTACLE**

Writers of graffiti specialise in assertion and counter-assertion, probing for weaknesses in their adversaries' arguments. Our reporters noticed how frequently a single graffiti gives rise to extended exchanges, developing into virtual conversations with numbers of people chipping in. Take the  
**GAY LIB**

which appeared on one lavatory wall. Two opponents of homosexuality countered. One added the word 'NO', so that 'GAY LIB' became

**NO GAY LIB**

The other wrote beneath the original 'GAY LIB'

**FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T MANAGE  
ANYTHING ELSE.**

This remark prompted the rejoinder:  
**YOU THINK IT'S EASY, MAN?**

and somebody supplemented this with  
**GAY IS GOOD  
WE DON'T GET PREGNANT  
FOR INSTANCE.**

There were then two separate replies to this. One was  
**AT LEAST YOU CANT (sic) BREED  
and the other  
BENT BASTARD.**

Our reporter had to leave at this point but there were no signs that either side was running out of arguments.

One of the reasons why people feel free to express themselves so forcefully in graffiti is the privacy in which they are composed. That is to say, most graffiti are anonymous, although occasionally one finds the author's name appended, as in the

**VANESSA REDGRAVE IS A STUPID  
RED FUCKPIG**

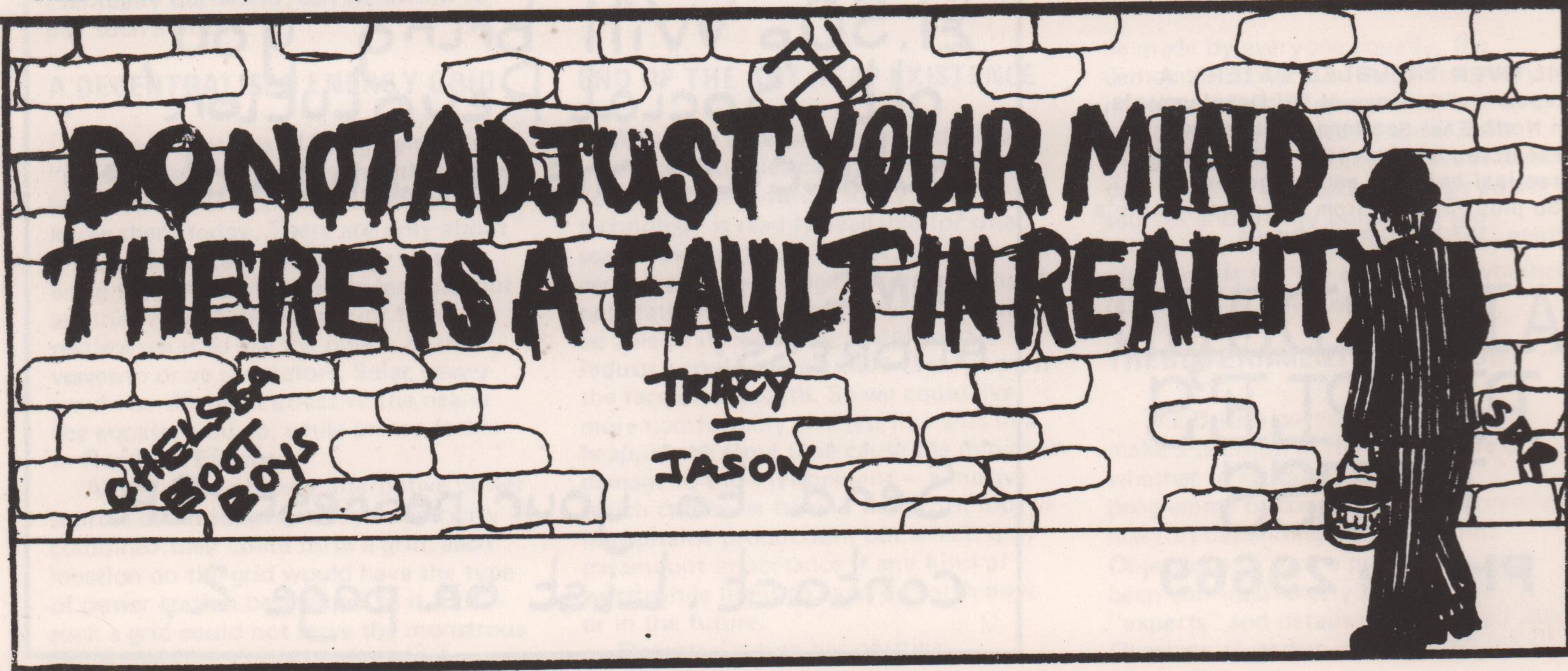
we came across, which bore the signature of a certain 'F.ENGELS'.

As one travels around, leafing through the lavatories of Britain for graffiti of distinction, one cannot help but be struck by the talent which exists. After all,  
**COMMUNISTS ARE LEFT-HANDED  
NAZIS**

expresses in five pithy words the essence of the CPs a great deal better than many learned tomes are able to do. But it also has to be admitted that for every graffiti which comes off there are two that somehow fail. We might know what whoever wrote

**ANARCHY RULES OK**

had it in his heart to say, but it remains an incongruous message for all that.



# REPORT ON AWA DAY SCHOOL

THE Anarchist Workers Association held an open day school in Leeds on October 23rd, to discuss "The State and Workers Power — covering the marxist and anarchist theories of the state and their application in the revolutions of this century".

The meeting got off to a good start with a very capable introduction to the development of Marx's theory of the state and its various adaptations by Engels and later Lenin. It became clear during this session of the meeting and later, that probably most members of AWA present were firmly committed to a marxist (though not a leninist) view of the state; positioning it in the historical development of classes and property relations, as an instrument of ruling class oppression, and rejecting the traditional idealist views of most past anarchists, who saw the state as some kind of disembodied power — the 'main enemy' from which all other evils flowed. It was surprising, in fact, how much agreement there was on this subject, between ourselves, the AWA members and members of the 'left' communist group 'World Revolution' who also attended.

Some discussion took place on the early development of Russia under the Bolsheviks. It was pointed out, that whilst Lenin's theories contributed to the direction of the Russian revolution towards bureaucracy and had to be rejected, that his theories (and aspects of Marx's views of the state from which they derived) were largely a reflection of the underdevelopment of capitalism in Russia specifically, but also in the world as a whole in Marx's day.

A lot more disagreement arose when the discussion digressed onto how we should build "working class unity". The WR group took a very fundamentalist and purist approach, rejecting any self-organisation of *sections* of the working class (ie. women, blacks, gays) as being reactionary and divisive. Both ourselves, the AWA members and others present, rejected this approach and thought that lasting unity could only develop from people working out their differences and coming together from positions of self-confidence. However, we all agreed that there were no separatist solutions to our problems.

It wasn't surprising that the school should fail to live up to the immensity of the task set in its introduction. The rest of the meeting in the afternoon was still a bit disappointing.

A session intended to cover the illusions of "the parliamentary road to socialism" was narrowed down to a rather rambling historical account of the British

Labour Party. The speaker herself illustrated fairly well how the Labour Party had never been committed to socialism as we understand it. But when this was put forward in more black and white terms by ourselves, suggesting that in fact, the talk hadn't really been about the parliamentary road to SOCIALISM at all, this brought a defence of the Labour Party, and the quoting of the infamous 'clause 4' as evidence that there was something of socialism in the Labour Party. Of course 'clause 4' with its talk of common ownership of the MEANS OF EXCHANGE has never committed the Labour Party to anything more than the large scale nationalisation, which both we and the AWA reject as a solution to workers problems. In fact the AWA in its introductory leaflet *What is the AWA* carefully excludes any reference to "exchange" when talking about common ownership, and correctly states that socialism involves the abolition of the monetary system.

As an aside on this, one member of the AWA I talked to still thought in terms of workers in socialism, getting different amounts of "social credit" according to the number of hours worked, and obviously didn't see the end of the monetary system as involving the introduction of "from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs".

The third talk was a very brief run down of anarchist theories of the state and largely complemented the first discussion.

There were no specific arrangements to discuss 'state capitalism' but we did open up a discussion of this subject towards the end of the meeting. Whilst the AWA introductory leaflet talks about the 'communist' countries really being corporate state capitalist, it became clear that many AWA members are none too clear on this and some actually prefer to see Russia, China as some new kind of "bureaucratic collectivist" society. The importance of recognising these countries as *part* of the world capitalist system, subject to the same basic contradictions and antagonisms still eludes the AWA it seems. (For those interested in this subject I would recommend, besides our own material, an article in *Revolutionary Perspectives* No 1, from the Communist Workers Organisation.)

Hopefully we might have further schools of this kind to help the movement develop a more coherent approach to the class struggle. In the meantime the columns of *Social Revolution* are open to discussion of these issues.

Mike Ballard

A COMMENT ON JOHN CRUMP'S  
"A CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
CRITIQUE OF MARX"

Joint Social Revolution/Solidarity  
pamphlet 10p.

JOHN CRUMP states that "for Europe and other truly industrialised parts of the world the era of bourgeois revolutions is well and truly finished". Indeed I would go further and say that today capitalism is the dominant world system (east and west) and the working class a truly *international class*. The state capitalist reforms of Marx's 'Communist Manifesto' that provided the link with Lenin's bolshevist policies are all but complete, with the traditional left arguing over the remaining details. And yet John maintains that socialists today face the same dilemma as they did in Marx's day! — that of choosing between sectarian socialist politics and involvement in bourgeois reform politics. This just doesn't square.

Socialists pursue their own individual and class interests (in a slightly more conscious manner than most workers). To the extent that socialism was not immediately realisable in Marx's day, socialists HAD to pursue those interests as best they could within the framework of the emerging capitalist society. This meant helping in the organisation of their fellow workers as an independent class and pursuing reforms aimed at strengthening the class. It inevitably also meant fighting alongside the bourgeois against feudal and aristocratic institutions.

Is the situation the same today? YES, in so far as socialists are still pursuing the same interests. But today the pursuit of those interests leads much more closely to socialism. The old institutions of the working class (social-democratic parties, trade unions and co-operatives) most useful in the struggle for basic reforms, are now integrated into capitalist administration. Workers are obliged to go beyond, and even *outside and against* these institutions. The basic reforms of the past are now taken for granted, workers aspirations increasingly become more difficult for capitalism to satisfy. In addition the technical capacity of the world and the potential for abundance and elimination of toil become more clearly contrasted to capitalism's restrictions and waste.

There is no automatic link between the every day class struggle, which is marked by numerous periods of reaction, and the socialist objective, but a link *can be made* with the most advanced elements of struggle, something which Marx despite the advanced level of his *theory* could not do. Creating this 'link' is undoubtedly a problem but we are not *forced* into making the pessimistic choices offered us by John Crump.

Socialists who are 'guided' by some 'historical mission' rather than their own individual and class interests in the present situation, have fallen prey to the very mystification they have been aiming to overcome, they have turned socialism into a religion (although they may have exorcised Marx!).

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