

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Paper of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION Group No. 8

incorporating LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM



R. COBB

Trade Unions. Terror - S. America & USSR.
Science. Organisation. 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.

BUT BIG DAY DIDN'T MAR DEMONSTRATION

Despite the media trying to play it down, the demo went very well - about 70 people, lots of placards and chanting. The best placard was one we did, a cut-up Union Jack tea towel (99p from Woolies) with ANARCHY FOR THE UK over it

- Letter from Social Revolution (Aberdeen)



PICKET OUTSIDE BULGARIAN EMBASSY - Photo Mark Rusher (IFL)

bulgaria protest

SOCIAL REVOLUTION members, anarchists and other libertarians took part in two days of picketing on the weekend of 10-11 September. The pickets, called by London SR, were in protest against the imprisonment, exile and

harrassment of libertarians and anarcho-syndicalists in Bulgaria. Held outside the Bulgarian tourist office, on the Saturday, and the Bulgarian Embassy on the Sunday, they were intended to show the hypocrisy of the Bulgarian ruling elite of the Communist party in celebrating "freedom day", whilst denying oppositionists even basic freedoms of speech and dissent.

DEMONSTRATION DIDN'T MAR BIG DAY

A demonstration by a group of left-wing activists yesterday failed to tarnish the rapturous welcome given to the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh on their Silver Jubilee visit to Aberdeen.

The sun shone from clear blue skies throughout, as Aberdonians flocked in their thousands to greet the Royal couple . . .

The demonstration was an unofficial one staged by members of NALGO - whose actions have been disowned by their union - Aberdeen People's Press, Social Revolution (Aberdeen) and the Socialist Workers' Party.

The demonstrators, protesting against cuts in public expenditure and the cost of the Jubilee celebrations, were effectively drowned out by the cheering voices of the thousands thronging Broad Street during the walkabout.

- Aberdeen 'Press and Journal', 21 May 1977

A KID'S VIEW

To Lizzie

She sits there on her throne each day,
Her bum gets bigger in every way.
'My husband and I' is all she'll say,
The tax she never has to pay.

Her husband's just the same you see,
He spends our money as much as she,
When he goes out on his shopping spree
In his million pound limousine.

Princess Anne on her horses rides,
She thinks she does not need a guide.
Whip in hand she makes a stride,
Misses the horse, she falls beside.

And then there's Charles, Andy and Ed,
You don't know what's going into their heads.
They're really all a bunch of twits,
First class snobs, I'm glad I'm not she,
Who cares about the Jubilee?

SB (aged 12)

STUFF THE JUBILEE!

The following leaflet was distributed by the demonstrating groups:

STUFF THE JUBILEE

1977, we were told, is to be a year of sacrifice, as was 1976, 1975, 1974 . . . Sacrifice for whom? It is now over four years since the first round of wage restraint. In that four years, not only have our real wages fallen, but our public services have been slashed, and unemployment has soared. We have been sacrificed to appease the gods who run the big companies, the finance houses and the banks.

But 1977 is different from all other years of sacrifice. This year we are blessed with the Jubilee. On May 20, Her Majesty the Queen is going to visit Aberdeen, open a few buildings, then go away again. Harmless enough you might think. Yet among the Jubilee Mugs, the Jubilee buses, and the Jubilee crowns, there is a more serious side.

What kind of insane system allows the local authorities to spend £4500 of our money on a fleeting visit by the Queen, in the same year as plans for much needed nurseries are scrapped due to a 'lack of money'? Or allows the Department of the Environment to spend £500,000 on restoring the north wing of Kensington Palace when housing waiting lists are growing every day?

Caned for Walking

This year at Maltby Comprehensive School, 200 children have been caned for walking on the same grass they have walked on for years. The

reason is that this year the Queen is visiting the school, and the authorities don't want the grass to look as if people actually walk on it.

The Jubilee junketing is not only a waste of resources. It's a deliberate propaganda exercise to push the idea of British nationalism and 'The National Interest'. Because everyone's 'British' and can wave the same scrap of red, white and blue cloth, they want us to believe that we have the same interests as the Royal Family, the major landowners, Government ministers, top bureaucrats, and shareholders and directors of companies. If we're fooled by all the nationalist propaganda, it'll be much easier for the Government and industry to get us to accept reductions in our real wages and cuts in important social services.

MARTIANS OPENING TOWN HOUSE

Lets face it. If the Town House was being opened by a Martian, we'd have as much in common with her as we have with the Queen.

We've certainly got more in common with working people in other countries than we have with 'British' royalty and industrialists.

You might think that at least this year has produced the Jubilee appeal; that surely is worthwhile! No, its not. Firstly, much of the money will be used to finance projects which should be provided as a matter of course by local or national Government, but which they claim they cannot afford in this time of crisis. The Jubilee Appeal is an inadequate crutch for our ailing social services. A reversal

of the Government's cutbacks would do far more good than any amount of charity. Secondly, big business can use donations to the appeal as a way of dodging taxes.

No amount of flag-waving will help the lot of the pensioners, the homeless, the unemployed. The Jubilee is not going to restore our living standards or save our hospitals or nurseries.

Royal Parasites

Any society that calls on workers to make sacrifices, and then flaunts around the biggest Social Security scrounger of all time, has got its priorities wrong. We must not just sit around and accept it. Lets show that sacrifice died out with the Druids. Every trade unionist, unemployed worker and student should do all they can to expose the hypocrisy of the whole jamboree.

When the Queen comes to open the new extension to the Town House she should be confronted by a sea of workers, school pupils, students and unemployed, all protesting against the cutbacks. Let's give her the welcome she deserves.

The Royal parasites are only a small part in our corrupt and decaying society, but the Jubilee celebrations do give us an excellent excellent opportunity to show that a great many people are not prepared to put up with the falling living standards and cuts in essential services.



on organisation

THE PROBLEM OF ORGANISATION (and the organisation of problems)

1. What is a 'socialist organisation', a 'revolutionary group', a 'communist tendency', when we come down to it?

Just a number of people with the same political views. A shared outlook on the world, expressed in a 'platform' of ideas, written or unwritten. A tiny number of individuals who'd like to take part with millions of others in the building of a new society to replace the glittering 'super-rational' chaos of contemporary capitalism.

2. Unlike the Social Democrats or Leninists, we have confidence in people's capacity to develop in themselves and generate in others the consciousness that will ultimately lead to our freeing ourselves by our own collective activity from the various synthetic chains which bind us, without any assistance from would-be benefactors, the 'professional revolutionaries', 'revolutionary leaders' drawn from the 'professional' intelligentsia.

CATALYSTS

3 Not being - or wishing to be - leaders, we regard ourselves as 'catalysts', our function that of spreading ideas of the free communist society, not that of attempting to seize power on our own account, whether by conspiracy, civil war or even the electoral carnival. 'The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself.' Ultimately it is our class as a whole that decides the fate of the issues we perennially discuss - not us.

4 It is our view that the working class can - and will - create all the organisations needed for the socialist transformation of society in the process of its own struggles to do so, resulting from its conditions of life and its growing consciousness as a class for - rather than in - itself. Without losing ourselves in the confusionist cul-de-sac of organisational fetishism, we suggest that well-coordinated networks of what are known historically as 'workers councils', 'soviets' or 'councils of action', councils of delegates mandated for specific tasks in workplaces, regions, industries etc - non-hierarchical, democratic, involving voluntary participation - will in the beginnings, means and ends of intensifying class struggle nationally and internationally, the basic organs of any post-revolutionary society in its development of communism.

PART OF THE PROBLEM?

5 We say this on the basis of accumulated historical evidence, having noted how on innumerable occasions large numbers of workers have fought their own battles against their exploiters. We note also how, in many 'revolutionary situations', the 'revolutionaries' seem to have been part of the problem, not part of the solution,

how the workers councils of the past have been destroyed by the bureaucratic organisational forms of Trade Unions, and political parties, even those styling themselves 'Socialist' and 'Communist'. No matter what organs exist to ensure that the continuity of the revolutionary process remains unbroken, the conscious self-management of each ultimately becomes a condition for the conscious self-management of all.

6 The triumph of socialism is ultimately dependent on the consciousness of the working class rather than any specific organisational form. It is when we forget this that we become obsessed with organisation itself, losing sight of what it is for. It is a means to an end. Just that. The only end that any 'organisation' of socialists should wish for is its dissolution into the workers councils, its own redundancy.



period, noting with dismay the more or less successful recuperation of what seemed to be quite promising - although fragmented - movements - squatting, 'sexual liberation', 'workers control', 'community politics', together with numerous other 'rank and file activities', noting the seeming apathy and the continued passivity of our class in the face of all the gyrations of 'decadent' capitalism, where are we left, if not in a kind of limbo? The current frenetic debates on 'organisation' - for what? - between assorted little groups, each denouncing the others as 'sectarian', 'monolithic' etc are the living proof of this.

MINI PARTIES

8. Looking around we can see that most organisations that libertarian communists create are, like those of the Leninists we mercilessly criticise, mini-political parties. This is so in practice, if not in theory. Impatient, we fall into the same incestuous practices of unnecessary and premature centralisation, justifying our existence in selling papers to one another, haranguing one another at meetings on the sidelines of life. Unconsciously, our pasts remain with us. We are still party-builders of a sort. The last shreds of false consciousness, the quantitative rationales that we 'council communists' have inherited from our pasts in 'party politics' lead to the re-creation of unnecessary formalism, unnecessary paperwork, and other latent bureaucratic trappings in re-created false collectives whose members come to devote most of their time to what become alienated

routine tasks - 'just keeping the organisation going'.

9 'Revolutionary organisation' at this point has nothing to do with organising a revolution. Even if it did, that's not just up to us, anyway. All that the phrase can mean just now is the ways in which we - a few individuals - get together to discuss, clarify, develop our ideas, and try to spread them around as widely as possible, given our limited time, energy, resources. We should not be ashamed of doing this because and when we want to.

COME TOGETHER

10. To me 'regroupment' - however 'principled' - just ain't on. 'Degroupment' and a coming together is. What we need is a minimally structured

social milieu in which we can experience something more than 'self-managed boredom', a network in which which groups of socialist friends swap experiences, ideas and from which specific projects emerge. (rather than with ideas or

relationships it is with projects that a need for organisation appears, in earnest, it seems to me. Organisation with an immediate purpose, consequently with no need to justify itself). The biggest problem that we face is that there are so few of us. Scattered groups here and there need to be aware of each others' existence and in contact with each other. Lack of contact and ongoing dialogue leads to inertia and isolation. The ludicrous attempts to create formal centralised organisations with enormous 'platforms' and a multitude of 'lines' on this and that lead to the same kind of failure to do what is intended - to bring libertarian communists together - by strangling the babes of initiative and individuality at birth.

11 Our movement today needs unification, but not on that basis! What libertarian socialist movement that exists should try to foreshadow that which it hopes to create. It should take the form of a 'coordinated network of councils' in miniature, a social network as much as anything else, flexible and claiming as its *raison d'être* the desire for a meaningful social life, the only real basis on which any movement becomes and remains meaningful for its participants.

CHARLIE BLOGGS

ALL OUT KIDS!

A strike by workers in a children's home is a very rare occurrence. Workers in residential institutions are hardly a section of the working class renowned for their militancy. Their history, like that of nurses and other service workers, has been and still is mainly one of acquiescence to poor pay and conditions and to industrial methods of "caring" for those in their charge: children, the elderly, the handicapped, the "mentally ill" and "subnormal" and so on.

The circumstances of the work make communication and organisation difficult. (See *Case Con - Residential Issue*). Homes and hostels are scattered and of various types. Even today many are run privately by voluntary organisations. Most are run by Local Authority Care Services, a division of the Social Services Department. Local Authority residential workers, like other Council employees, tend to belong to NALGO or NUPE, trade unionism having made some impact.

PROGRESSIVES.

Wandsworth, in inner London, is a "progressive" borough. The Council has long been in the hands of the Labour left. So far the cuts in public expenditure have to a large extent been resisted. Councillors pride themselves on "progressive" methods of "integrated management". They spend large amounts of their rate-payers' money training teams of social community and residential workers to "tackle the community's problems".

They have, it would seem, no qualms in employing "radical minded" and "progressive" staff, hell-bent on "changing the system".

Consequently the regimes in the borough's children's homes are generally fairly liberal and "permissive". Child development rules OK. Staff can and do work with groups of children doing more than simply washing, feeding and clothing them and putting them to bed. In practice management often have mixed feelings about what they are - overtly, at least - promoting, fears of "longhairs", "reds under the beds", all "playing the system" and "going too far".

There are regular staff meetings in homes, at which people can have a limited say in how things are done, how the establishment they work in is run. In homes for adult residents, such as the handicapped or elderly, "clients" as well as staff have their say in "community meetings" (at which their attendance is compulsory!). The absurdly contradictory nature of this - like schemes for workers' or community "participation" generally - is revealed when management don't get their own way!

-Workers, "Participation" and Bureaucracy in a "Left-Wing" Borough.



NF SCANDAL

What happens in residential institutions doesn't get much publicity. Council bureaucrats like things that way. Last autumn Care Services management neatly hushed up a scandal. A Wandsworth children's home in Battersea Park Road SW11 suddenly closed. An internal enquiry revealed considerable child abuse. The superintendant and her husband were known members of the National Front. They had been getting the children in their care to distribute NF literature. Management only realised what was going on when they saw that no non-white children had for some time been accepted at the home. Visiting parents and social workers had said nothing. Neither had the staff.

The strike that is now taking place is in Wandsworth's home for mentally handicapped children in Arabella Drive, Putney. It does not concern pay or conditions, but childcare methods and management methods and structure. Ultimately it is about self management. It's now been made "official" by NALGO who are responding to press queries with "no comment". It has however

continued on page 11

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6 SOCIAL REVOLUTION

REVIEWS CONTINUED

LAND FOR THE PEOPLE

£1.20 plus postage from Crescent Books,
8a Leighton Crescent, London NW5.

LAND FOR THE PEOPLE began with the publication of an article in a joint issue of *Resurgence* and *Undercurrents* magazines in March 1975. There followed a number of meetings in different places which discussed the need for a 'resettlement' of the populations of the industrially overdeveloped parts of the world and a 'return to the land' with more ecologically sound management of this most precious of resources. The book attempts to bring together some of these ideas, without going into the reverse side of the problem in any detail, namely the industrially underdeveloped parts of the world which still exist. Whilst bringing the ideas discussed together in a handy and readable form no real attempt is made to present any kind of comprehensive or integrated approach to the problems of land ownership, control and management.

There are certainly some fine, if often rather vague, sentiments underlying all the contributions to this book, for instance:

'The long term perspective [of land resettlement] is the familiar one of moving towards community self-sufficiency in food production, with the associated ideals of non-alienated communal life, with work, both industrial and agricultural, and leisure being re-integrated. . .'

and

'The lesson for frustrated town dwellers or self-sufficiency freaks in the West is *not* to find and cultivate a guru. It is rather to develop the more natural, less exploitative vision of nature which comes often with a spiritual discipline. We are lucky in that we can call upon the *science of ecology* which has given us an almost mystical appreciation of the interdependence of nature, backed by rational enquiry.'

Most of the book's contributors also reveal a healthy distrust of any state involvement in land resettlement. For instance the last quote also finishes with this statement:

'It is no use a state bureaucracy steamrolling through measures of land reform. The new approach to land must come from man himself.'

and also,

'... we must certainly seek to avoid a situation in which urban bureaucrats who know little or nothing about land become the new 'absentee landlords'.'

'We have to be constantly aware of the subtle dangers of co-option or forced integration into a tightly-controlled state scheme.'

There is even an indication that some of the contributors are aware of the need for a really fundamental, indeed revolutionary change in the whole of society if their aims are to be achieved. Referring back to Wal Hannington's review of the government land resettlement policy in the 30's (in 'The Problems of the Distressed Areas'), Dave Elliot says:

'This conclusion seems as true now as it was then: unless there is a radical restructuring of the socio-economic

system, to rely on such schemes is to risk further exploitation and disillusionment. . .'

The problem is that in opposing the existing unequal distribution of land ownership, they all fall short of challenging private/class property itself and look either to private co-operatives or greater owner-occupation of agricultural land as a solution to problems of greater self-sufficiency and social equality. Furthermore, whilst they seek to encourage a 'movement' for the re-settlement of land, they are obviously sceptical about the possibilities of such a movement growing and emancipating the land directly. Thus despite their distrust of the state they are continually forced to lean on the power of the state to reform tax laws or alter its subsidy policies and so on, and even entertain illusions in the potential of the inappropriately named Community Land Act. A pamphlet by the Land Campaign Working Party (*Lie of the Land*, 35p from LCWP c/o 31 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1) shows quite clearly that the **Community Land Act** in fact only involves local authorities taking on one of the roles of the private developers in the risky business of assembling land for private builders and developers, attempting in the process to make a quick buck. This pamphlet, however, itself falls back into the illusion that complete nationalisation will do the trick, an illusion which *Land For the People* almost fall into themselves. The other alternative to traditional nationalisation considered by them is Henry George ancient land tax scheme. This is presented as a radical proposal but is not a great deal different from the 'site-value rating' proposals seriously discussed by that pillar of the establishment, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors for the last 2 or 3 years.

This reliance on the state is closely allied to an underlying nationalism. Many of the problems of agriculture correctly identified by them are seen as operating, and capable of solution, mainly within the framework of the nation-state. They are particularly concerned with 'Britain's problems' and are continually offering the British ruling class advice in how to run their affairs! There are of course real differences in agricultural affairs and land ownership structures in Britain compared with other countries as a result of the long continuous history of the British nation-state; but such a concern with Britain's problems cuts right across their other concern for ecologically sound management of land and other natural resources, since national boundaries have very little relevance to sound natural or functional boundaries. In addition many of our more urgent problems will only be solved on a world scale. *Land For the People* should be careful that they don't unwittingly give ammunition to elements of both the Left and Right that would like to set up an autocratic siege economy to deal with the 'Crisis'. The book's authors still seem to see decentralisation and self-sufficiency as being diametrically opposed to centralisation and world co-ordination, which they needn't be once we replace present hierarchical power structures with new forms of horizontal organisation and modern two-way communication systems.

An interesting section by Tony Farmer demonstrates an advanced view of land management. He proposes *total* control of land resources and the management of 'nature' for productive ends as opposed to the rigid separation of domestic agriculture and natural fauna, with the latter rapidly becoming isolated tourist 'spectacles' in an increasingly 'man-made' world. It is at this level that the book is at its best, in the wider political field the authors seem for the most part rather naive.

This book has many very interesting, if often conflicting ideas. It needs a lot of thinking about and I may well have got the wrong impression in some cases so get it yourself and make your own minds up.

Mike Ballard



AVAILABLE AGAIN.

A modest proposal for
HOW THE BAD OLD DAYS WILL
END - by Charles Lutwidge.

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ON THE UNIONS

INTRODUCTION

This article is reprinted from the American libertarian socialist newsletter, **NOW & AFTER**. We are publishing it because we feel it is a useful contribution to the discussion on the role of modern unions. It also indicates that the trade unions in the USA are developing along much the same lines as those in this country. Copies of **NOW & AFTER** can be obtained from **A WORLD TO WIN**, P.O. Box 1587, San Francisco, CA94101, USA.

One of the most difficult questions facing radicals is what attitude to take toward trade unions. Generally speaking, the left has regarded trade unionism as a progressive activity which, given proper objective conditions leads to revolutionary activity.

LEFTIST CONFUSION

What traditional leftists have been unable to understand is that unions, far from challenging the wage system, are, and always have been, defensive organs seeking to obtain the best return for the labour power of the workers in the framework of the capitalist market. As one observer put it: "The labour leader organises and sells wage workers to the highest bidder on the best terms available. He is a jobber of labour power. He accepts the general conditions of labour under capitalism and then, as a contracting agent operating within the system, he haggles and bargains over wages, hours, and working conditions for members of his union." (1). In this sense, as suppliers of labour power, the unions are an integral component of the system, or, as "labour statesman" David Dubinsky phrased it: "Trade unionism needs capitalism like a fish needs water." (2).

The organisational form itself is ill-suited to militant struggle. Partly out of economic insecurity, partly out of adaptation to the dominant values of a capitalist society, the working class traditionally tended to organise itself as a pressure group, complete with a corps of professional leaders to whom it delegated power. Both unions and left-wing parties have followed this hierarchical pattern or organisation. Although they have sometimes brought the workers modest improvements, this has been at the cost of depriving the rank and file of direct control over their own struggles.

CHANGING ATTITUDES.

Part of the confusion about the role of unions undoubtedly results from a failure to recognise that ruling class attitudes have changed. Until comparatively recent times the capitalists firmly opposed unionisation. In a competitive capitalist system, a union contract might place an individual firm at a competitive disadvantage and was opposed accordingly. As the economy tended to become mobilised, the capitalists were able to control the market more effectively through price fixing and other such measures. In this situation, trade unionism didn't seem as subversive to the bosses, since they would be able to nullify its costs by raising prices and increasing productivity.

In addition, the advantages of unions as stabilizers of the system gradually became apparent, namely: (1) Trade

unions were a means of diverting the workers' discontent into harmless channels or, in other words, for converting the class struggle into interest activity; (2) Unions were a means of regulating the purchasing power of the workers, which would help to lessen the inherent tendency of capitalism towards overproduction; and (3) They provide a special stratum, the labour bureaucracy, for enforcing contractual periods, of labour peace.

The attitude towards unions upheld by most of the American left today was formed well before 1935, when the passage of the Wagner Act signalled a shift in approach by a decisive section of the ruling class (spurred on by the massive working class revolt of the early '30s).

"Revolutionary industrial unionism" was a slogan raised not only by the IWW and other syndicalists, who regarded the union as the revolutionary organisation per se, but by the revolutionary socialists as well. The latter attempted to capture existing unions or establish new "revolutionary" ones in unorganised industries. When confronted with the conservatism and class collaboration of the American Federation of Labor, they countered with proposals for structural changes (industrial unionism substituted for craft unionism) and for the replacement of incumbent bureaucrats with new leaders espousing a more radical line. The Communist Party continued this tradition of reliance on trade union work, now "boring from within", now forming "dual unions", according to the dictates of Soviet foreign policy. So successful were they in their union work that they eventually gained control of a sizeable segment of the newly formed CIO in the late '30s. As labor bureaucrats these "revolutionaries" acted in a similar fashion to the common garden variety piecard that when the CIO decided to expel the Communist-controlled unions, they were forced to base their case upon an examination of union convention resolutions on foreign policy matters.

UNIONS, BOSSES ALLIANCE.

The point is that the essence of unionism — periodic bargaining which contains the class struggle within a narrow institutional framework — imposes itself on the best-intentioned radicals. Either they go the way of all flesh or they remain isolated cranks uttering ritual denunciations of the "sell-out" bureaucrats. The reality is that the union bureaucracy has developed into a kind of mediating force between workers and management, pursuing interests of its own. Its power rests mainly on its ability to convince both classes that it alone can protect each one from the other. In recent years this "balancing act" has in fact meant a growing alliance



with employers and government against the workers (3). In view of the foregoing, the persistent attempts by various Leninists to "conquer" the unions can perhaps be explained by the bureaucratic nature of their own organisations, which expect to run society on "behalf of" its workers. (4).

Central to any fundamental social change, as we see it, is the self-activity of people — the struggles they wage on their own behalf. For this reason, it is important to pay attention to current attitudes of workers towards them.

WORKERS AGAINST THE UNIONS

Over the past two decades American workers have demonstrated an increasing hostility to unions. (5). This tendency has been manifested by wildcat strikes and rank and file rejections of proposed contracts. Workers have also become less enthusiastic about the kind of union reform movements that they have previously supported, probably because the reformers elected have not differed significantly from the people they replaced.

While they seldom see the unions as the product or expression of their own struggle, workers still tend to support them for providing a kind of elementary protection against the employers. This point has a particular significance for workers in backward industries, people with experience in non-union shops, and those old enough to remember the pre-union days.

ALTERNATIVES?

What then is the alternative? We have already suggested that because of their top-down structure, the spirit of negotiated compromise, their developing collaboration with bosses and government, and their unavoidable role as brokers of labour power, the unions cannot be converted into effective

instruments of struggle, much less of social revolution. We have rejected the traditional left's strategy of reforming or capturing the unions as being both unrealistic and bureaucratic. We also believe that when the self-activity of the workers reaches a high point (ie. a revolution), the unions will be swept aside along with all other institutions tied to the old order.

WORLD · WIDE

TERROR IN



In every corner of the earth where capitalism rules, repression and denial of basic human rights are the order of the day. Latin America is no exception; there, kidnapping and assassination are the methods used by the State to rid itself of its opponents. Recently mixed commando groups of Argentinian and Uruguayan police and military, operating on both sides of the River Plate, have arrested over 100 militants of the worker-student resistance (ROE). The ROE was created in 1968 by members of the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU) after the suppression the previous year of all groups on the left.

During July 1976 a commando of police and soldiers arrested inside the Venezuelan Embassy the teacher Elena Quinteros de Diaz, a member of the ROE. Several days later a number of trade union militants from the Funsu firestone plant, the Assurances bank and other workplaces were detained and tortured.

BULLET-RIDDEN BODIES

Shortly after the military coup in Argentina, which brought power to General Videla, three ROE militants were detained while trying to cross the border. At the same time Telba Juarez Eduardo Chizzola and Ari Cabrera were arrested in Buenos Aires. The bullet-ridden bodies of the first two were later found in the street. This is by no means an isolated incident. On August 14, 1975, the parents, brother and sister of Mariano Pujais (a guerilla killed in 1972) were taken from their homes and shot. Their bodies were destroyed by dynamite. In the years 1973 - 1975 the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance, an extreme right terrorist group, carried out 2000 political assassinations.

Argentina is drifting towards fascism. The *League Review*, organ of the British Fascist League of St George, enthusiastically reports: "The new Government of Argentina has had a great success in its campaign against communism. Urban Marxist guerrillas have been killed, including Mario Roberto Santucho, recognised leader of all armed organisations in Latin America . . . Marxist propaganda has all but disappeared, and patriot nationalist literature can be purchased on news-stands." Among this liter-

ature is a book entitled *The Lie of Auschwitz* and the writings of Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi crank philosopher who was hanged for war crimes. There have been rifle and bomb attacks on synagogues and other Jewish property.

REFUGEES TRAPPED

Since the coup, the Argentinian authorities have been cracking down on emigres from other Latin American countries (there are 500,000 Uruguayan and 100,000 Chilean refugees in Argentina). They are now being treated as 'immigrants in transition' and must register with the police. Those that have not done so have been served with expulsion orders. Hostels run by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees have been raided and refugees arrested. 24 refugees were taken from one hostel and threatened with return to their countries of origin. Officers of the security forces of Chile and Uruguay have participated in this and similar actions.

The UN Commissioner for Refugees has stated that he can no longer guarantee the safety of refugees in Argentina, and that 1500 of them are in desperate need of a place of safety outside Argentina, as their lives are in grave danger.

Some refugees have tried to get to Britain, but the Labour Government has done very little to aid them. The attitude of British officials in Argentina is positively hostile. A report by the World University Service quotes them as saying: "The refugees were only getting what they deserved as they were communists and left-wing agitators."

CIA FUNDS

The Chilean military Junta is not without friends in Britain. Its embassy in London distributes free copies of a book entitled *Chile's Marxist Experiment*, written by Robert Moss, a leading figure in the right-wing, union-bashing National Association for Freedom, and published with funds from the CIA.

Meanwhile, refugees rotting in prison in Argentina are being subjected to the vilest tortures. Bodies bearing the marks of severe torture, and mutilated beyond recognition, are being washed up on the shores of Uruguay.

On June 8 1976 Gerardo Gatti was arrested at his home in Buenos Aires. A former militant at the Graphic Arts of Montevideo, he was one of the founders and leading figures of the FAU during the years 1956 - 1967, when it had to operate clandestinely. He was a founder of the trade union feder-



ation CNTU, a member of its secretariat and a militant of its libertarian minority tendency. Arrested in 1970 under the special security measures

he was imprisoned and tortured. He went into exile in Argentina in 1973.

A week after his arrest, the authorities vehemently denied that he was imprisoned in Argentina.

The journalist and militant of the ROE, Enrique Rodriguez was arrested on June 20 and subsequently vanished. While searching for him, his wife and father were detained. Nothing has been heard of them since.

HOMES RAIDED

During the night of 13/14 July the police raided the homes of the Uruguayan refugees. Among those arrested were Leon Duarte, a veteran of the FAU, a member of the ROE, militant worker in the rubber industry, founder of the CNTU and member of the secretariat; Jose Felix Diaz, the husband of Elena Diaz; Margarita Michelini, the daughter of the deputy, Zelnar Michelini whose bullet-ridden body was found in Buenos Aires on May 21; and Raul Altuna.

W Perez, a veteran rubber worker, who has worked for the last 2 years as a newspaper seller, was arrested for alleged participation in an extortion racket to provide further funds for the ROE. While in prison he saw Gatti and Duarte. They were still alive, but their bodies bore the marks of having been savagely tortured.

Another group of comrades and 2 children were killed during a 12 hour siege of a house in which the army intervened with heavy arms.

Since October, further arrests have been made in Argentina. Among those known to have been arrested are the 22 militants of the ROE.

THE SAME CLASS STRUGGLE

LATIN AMERICA

books on Marxism, even the most academic, have been burnt. Books on Cubism have been destroyed because the ignorant officer in charge of the burnings thought it was something to do with Cuba.

The workers of Latin America have a long record of struggle often conducted under the banner of libertarian ideas. There will come a time when as part of the Communist movement of the world working class they will cast off the yoke of tyranny oppression and exploitation fastened onto their necks by capitalism and end the terror it uses to maintain its rule.

T. Liddle.

Together with Kandyba and Mykhalyo Horyn (who in 1966 was sentenced to 6 years for reading and lending to his friends Ukrainian books published abroad) he protested against this and the drugging of camp rations in a letter to the United Nations. The authorities retaliated by sending Kandyba and Lukyanenko to Vladimir, where Horyn had been imprisoned since 1967.

BRAIN CRAMP

They state: "The symptoms of poisoning are as follows: A slight intoxication follows 10 to 15 minutes after food has been taken, then a feeling of severe cramp in the centre of the brain, with trembling of the hands and an inability to concentrate on anything. Headaches last for days."



In 1955 a group of Anarchists in Montevideo established the Community of the South. This community maintained one of the most important printing presses in the town. The community members, having been subjected to continuous repression including repeated detention and torture realised they could no longer carry on their printing work and therefore decided to go into exile. Some went to Peru, others with the aid of Amnesty International managed to escape to Europe. Seven, less fortunate, went to Argentina. There they were arrested and have been in prison for a year.

Of the 100 militants of the ROE who have been arrested, 12 are dead,

20 are in the hands of the Uruguayan police. Of the rest there is no news.

MASS ASSASSINATIONS

In Panama since the coming to power of the Torrijos military dictatorship which closely cooperates with the United States Capitalism which has colonised the part of Panama bordering the canal, 100 people have been assassinated and 500 have gone into exile.

Last September when students demonstrated against rises in the prices of rice and milk they were attacked by armed riot police. To discredit them the regime alleged they were CIA agents, part of a plot to 'destabilise' the country.

In Guatemala between 1970 and 1975 15,000 people were assassinated.

Meanwhile, in Uruguay which holds the world record for inflation (some prices have increased 994%) the military so fears the potential power of the working class that all

UKRAINE

LUKYANENKO AND KANDYBA FREE

We are pleased to report the recent release, after 15 years in Soviet prison camps, of Lev Lukyanenko and Ivan Kandyba. They were imprisoned with five others after a secret trial in Lvov in 1961. The original sentence imposed on Lukyanenko was death, commuted on appeal to 15 years.

Their 'crime' was their drafting of a programme for a proposed union of Ukrainian workers and peasants. Its introduction states: "We are struggling for an independent Ukraine which, while providing to a high degree for the material and spiritual needs of her people on the basis of a socialist economy, would develop towards communism."

SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

In the course of time, Lukyanenko came to revise this view. In a letter from prison addressed to Rudenko, Procurator General of the USSR, he writes: "In 1960 I came to revise the earlier conclusion embodied in the draft programme, and began to think that it was not the independence of the Ukrainian SSR that was essential, for an improvement in the life of the people, but the liquidation of bureaucracy. And it seems to me that bureaucracy could be liquidated only by giving greater scope to socialist democracy."

In the camps they were subjected to tortures. Lukyanenko was transported to prison for one month's 'processing' in 1966, incarcerated in the camp's prison in late 1966, deprived of a personal visit in 1967, imprisoned in Vladimir in 1968 where harmful drugs were administered to him in his food.



Oryol Prison Hospital, south west of Moscow

That the UUWP presented very little danger to the Soviet authorities is clearly shown in a letter from Kandyba to the then First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, in which he describes it thus:

"We were a number of individuals who saw around us many different outrages - mass violations of socialist legality and the political rights of citizens, national oppression, great power Russian chauvanism on the rampage, the ill-treatment of the peasants and many, many other abnormalities." He continues: "Nobody took any oath or paid any membership fees. There was no discipline; there was no nucleus of leadership; each of us considered himself free in all respects."

Having quoted Khrushchev to the effect that as from 1959 there were no longer any political trials in the Ukraine, he describes a number of such trials which have since taken place there. One was of 20 members of the Ukrainian National Committee in 1961,

UKRAINE contd

mostly factory workers in the Lvov area. Two of them, the labourers Ivan Koval and Bohdan Hrytsyna, were sentenced to death and shot. The others got from 10 to 15 years.

He describes the brutal regime to which camp prisoners are subjected. The daily ration should be 2300 - 2400 calories, but prisoners are lucky if they get 1500 because the food is of the poorest quality, especially in the spring and summer before the new crops. The herring is rotten and stinking, and the dried potato, pasta, groats and meat alive with maggots.

SOUR BREAD

The day's ration consisted of 700 grams of sour black bread, 110 g groats, 20 g second-grade wheat flour, 10 g pasta, 50 g meat, 85 g fish, 15 g oil, 4 g margarine, 400 g potatoes, 250 g vegetables. Those on the prison regime get 1937 calories and those on severe ration only 1324 calories. Prisoners are expected to fulfill their work quota by 100% even though the type of labour performed requires an energy expenditure of 3500 - 4000 calories. The working day is 8 hours.

As a result of inadequate diet, many prisoners suffer from consumption, heart diseases and other ailments. Medical attention is poor, medicines are in short supply or unobtainable. Prisoners are not allowed to receive medicines from their relatives.

Prisoners are not permitted to wear their own clothes but only the prison uniform of cotton fabric. Prisoners cannot subscribe to such journals as *The Unesco Courier*, *Amerika*, *Angliya* or even periodicals from 'Communist' countries other than the USSR.

THE RIGHT TO SLAVERY

As Kandyba says, the only right prisoners have is the right to toil as half-starved slave labourers in

isolation from the civilised world.

Despite the long years spent in these conditions, Kandyba and Lukyanenko have continued their struggle

for human rights. At the end of 1976 they, along with eight others, signed *Declaration and Memorandum No 1 of the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords* (23p plus postage from Committee in defence of Soviet Political Prisoners, c/o 67 Grangewood St., London E6 1HB).

All of them have been imprisoned in the camps or psychiatric hospitals or have been otherwise victimised as a result of their activities. In January the group called on the Communist Parties of Canada and the USA to defend the Moscow Helsinki Group against repression. In February the KGB arrested Aleksandr Ginzburg, Mykola Rudenko, Oleh Tikhy and Yuri Orlov and confiscated documents and funds.

UNBROKEN AND HARDENED

The Declaration states: "Former political prisoners are returning unbroken, hardened and determined to continue the struggle for human rights. It is enough to examine the membership of our group to be convinced of that. This is a new, strange social phenomenon for which the authorities are not prepared. It appears that prisons, camps and psychiatric hospitals cannot serve as dams against a move-

ment in defence of justice. On the contrary, they temper cadres of unyielding fighters for liberty. And the KGB can no longer make sure that political prisoners will never return." The struggle continues.

POST-SCRIPT

On March 4th the Soviet paper *Izvestia* carried an article accusing leading Soviet Jews of working for the CIA. That afternoon the KGB broke into the homes of seven Jews who had been refused visas to emigrate to Israel, ransacking and confiscating all written material they could find.

The previous day, Yosif Begun, a mathematician and electrical engineer, was arrested. He is being kept in solitary confinement on a charge of parasitism. It is feared that he will become the subject of a show trial.

On March 15th Anatoly Sharansky, one of the seven, was arrested. His family has been informed that he is under investigation for treason. A 'trial' is being cooked up.



REVIEW

'CAPITAL AND CLASS'. Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists (c/o Economics Department, Birkbeck College, 7-15 Gresse St., London W1P1PA). Spring 1977, first issue. £1

To change the world and know what we're doing we need to make sense of it. In other words, we need theory. The ways of thinking pioneered by old Charlie Marx are still relevant, I think, provided we use them in a critical way and don't make 'Marxism' into a fetish, the be-all and end-all of revolution. So a new Marxist theoretical journal, independent of all sects, is welcome.

The first issue contains some important articles, together with others of a more obscure nature (like 'A note on the reproduction of complex labour to simple labour' by R. Tortajada). Andy Friedman analyses the two main strategies that employers use to control us at work - 'direct control' and 'responsible autonomy' - and their implications. In a nutshell the difference is that the first strategy attempts to measure, supervise and give orders about our every hiccup, while the second strategy encourages us to do what they want us to do of our own free will.

CRISES

Our friend Adam Buick introduces an article written by Anton Pannekoek (Pancake) which he has translated from the German - it was published in 1934. Pannekoek was an astronomer and active as a socialist in Holland and Germany in the period 1900 - 1930. He was a key writer about council communism, a movement towards which we in SR are sympathetic. (We distribute his pamphlet 'Workers Councils'.) Anyway the article is about the nature of economic crises in capitalism, whether and how they may cause the system to collapse. Pannekoek argues that although capitalism will generate repeated crises, they will not in themselves cause the system to collapse. An East German dissident, Mark Rakovski, writes on 'Marxism and Soviet Societies'. He argues that it is hopeless to try and understand the sort of system they have in Russia using the traditional concepts of Marxism. They just don't apply in bureaucratic societies. I had been thinking along those lines myself, and the arguments in this article have helped me to clarify my ideas.

UPSURGE?

The reviews are of some interest. One in particular: James Wickham reviews Erhard Lucas' work 'Worker radicalism: two forms of radicalism in the German workers' movement'

published (in German) in 1976 by Verlag Roter Stern, Frankfurt. This studies the struggle of the workers in two industrial towns in the Rhineland especially the turbulent period just after World War One. It is hard to get an idea of what events during the 'revolutionary' upsurge were really about at grass-roots level. (I don't know whether or not the events were revolutionary or in what way.) Hopefully this work will appear in English (some hope, but any offers?) and help us gain some insight into what happened.

All the articles I've mentioned argue from the viewpoint that the working class must free itself, as opposed to Lenin's elitist view that liberation can and must come through the domination of a vanguard Party. We see the Leninist view as representing the interests of a new bureaucratic ruling class, and it is encouraging that this journal is not controlled by the Leninist groups.

Of course the vast majority of the working people whose fate is discussed in the Bulletin will never read it, and even active people concerned about the issues dealt with are bound to be put off by the convoluted style of the contributors (who follow the example set by Dr Marx himself). Not to mention the price! I wonder to what extent this is deliberate

Postscript: The second issue has now come out. It is more disappointing: obstruce and Leninist. STEFAN

continued from page 5

been reported in "The Guardian" and in the local community paper "Pavement".

At the January staff meeting, criticisms of work rotas were made, and other grievances aired as they had been in the past. Management, without informing staff, suspended all staff and group meetings. Having repeatedly requested a full staff meeting, the staff were informed that two new senior workers had been appointed, and that once they had arrived a staff meeting would be held.

AUTHORITY PROBLEMS

In May a staff meeting was held, attended by one of the new senior workers. It was learned that he was to replace the worker who had been group leader of the Long Stay Group (who deal with children in long-term care). The next staff meeting, a fortnight or so later, was attended by the other new worker and by a supervisor from outside the home.

The Superintendent and her Deputy were present. But despite their presence and that of the HQ Supervisor, the two new workers conducted the meeting. They criticised the workers for forming relationships with the children, taking an interest in their personal development and social skills. They said children should be fed, washed and put to bed, but otherwise left to their own devices unless discipline was required. One worker who had applied for further training was told she would not be seconded as she had "authority problems" (that is, in exercising authority).

By the time of the next meeting, the HQ Supervisor was in the home full-time, and the new senior staff had revealed that they did not have "authority problems"! At this brief meeting, the two new men again took charge, again criticised the staff, announced that the "new order" would stand, and that was it.

The workers, furious, complained to senior management. An enquiry was launched by the Director of Social Services. All staff in the home were interviewed individually. A few weeks later, the head of Care Services informed them of his findings at a very short staff meeting. They were in favour of management and highly critical of the workers.

PARENTS' SUPPORT

The workers went on strike, demanding the return of the original status quo, the removal of the HQ Supervisor from the home, and the removal of the two new men. They called a meeting of the children's parents, the venue for which had to be changed at the last minute, as officials refused to allow it to be held on Council property. Nonetheless it was well attended, and in the main the parents supported the striking workers who went before a Staff Management Committee. Their report is still pending.

Another Wandsworth institution is Hartfield House, a home for

"disturbed" children in Roehampton Lane, Putney. It is highly thought of by "progressive" experimentalists in child development, and has been the subject of a TV documentary. Trouble has been brewing there for some time. A number of staff, it seems, are now on the point of leaving, as children who are in no way "disturbed" are being referred there simply to fill empty beds, the home not having been filled to capacity.

Once again it's not only the kids who are being "difficult to handle".

Charlie Bloggs.



POST MORTEM!

The strike at the home in Arabella Drive, finished on 20th July. The workers returned to their duties, having been promised that an "independent inquiry" would look into their grievances!!

They were told to "keep things cool" so as not to "alienate" the 3 wise, impartial and independent councillors who were to investigate their complaints. The advice did them little good. The councillors' report was full of criticisms of how management had handled the affair (but refused to follow its logic through!)

Various appeal procedures are left to the aggrieved workers, but morale is now low and some of the workers are thinking of leaving. Interesting how NALGO officials quashed any attempt to widen the issues or the audience. Apart from stopping any press publicity they even tried to put the brakes on a bulletin produced for NALGO members in social services. When the meeting was planned for the parents of the children concerned in the strike, NALGO's branch chairman and the Council's Chief Executive, together, banned them from the union office. Strikers and parents had to retreat to a dingy room over a pub. As one of the strikers commented "Taking on management and the union officials all at once was pretty exhausting!"

Nuff said.....

Charlie Bloggs.

ON THE UNIONS

cont'd from page 7

But both the history of anarcho-syndicalism and the experience of recent wildcat struggles make it seem unlikely that workers could establish within capitalism alternative rank and file organisations **on a permanent basis**. Due to the nature of unionism, the anarcho-syndicalists (6) found it impossible to be a revolutionary and "trade unionist" at the same time. As for the rank and file assemblies and struggle committees that have sprung up recently (notable in Italy), they usually either dissolve when the particular fight ends, or else they are progressively incorporated into the union structure. This implies that in "normal" capitalist times, struggles will be waged more and more by temporary *ad hoc* organisations.

It is in this light that we should criticise the view stated, or at least hinted at, by certain "ultra-left" groups that revolutionaries should call on workers to quit (or destroy) the unions. (7). (Let's leave aside the question whether it is the business of revolutionaries to issue such directives). This proposal suggests one of two things:

(1) Workers can and should form alternative bodies that would defend their day-to-day interests better than the unions do. (8). The examples cited above, as well as the experience of the German councilists after World War 1, make us doubt that these bodies can survive as much more than propaganda groups, except in the context of an ascending movement. (9).

(2) Workers should "start the revolution" immediately. (10). To this we respond that the workers will "start the revolution" and go beyond unionism when they are willing and able. While recognising the connection between day-to-day struggles and revolution, we suspect that abandoning the unions becomes a practical issue only in periods of intense and wide-spread confrontation.

Whether we like it or not, as long as people see little chance of a major upsurge, as long as they doubt their ability to take matters into their own hands, they will continue to rely in a limited way on the unions. In acknowledging this we don't make a virtue out of it. Our basic conviction is that only the autonomous activity of people can bring about a radical transformation of society - not merely because the capitalists and "leftist" politicians can't do it for them, but also because it is through this activity that they will be transformed into new people capable of building a new society. We believe that the unions, far from aiding this development, are increasingly an obstacle to it. This is why we would not hesitate to encourage people to struggle outside or even against them. In fact such struggles are already occurring; we intend to take part in them.



Science & Socialism

Science and technology are among the most important influences on our lives. Daily we use devices which did not exist a few years ago. We live under the threat of annihilation by weapons of ever-increasing power. 'Science' is the label used to sell everything – from the latest soap powder to the academic racism of Eysenk and Jensen, from the newest way of screwing workers to the dogmatism of some 'revolutionary' sect.

The importance of science and technology in capitalist society is not reflected in the attitude of left groups as a whole. Discussion of scientific issues is left to specialist organisations. For instance, Perry Anderson, in a verbose article on "Components of the National Culture" in the pseudo-intellectual 'New Left Review' did not mention a single scientist (unless one counts Eysenck). More recent writing suggests that this neglect continues.

This neglect is a fairly recent phenomenon. Marx wanted to dedicate CAPITAL to Darwin. Kropotkin and Reclus made important contributions to geography, and Pannekoek was a Professor in Astronomy. Lenin often spoke of science without understanding much of it.

STALIN AND MARCUSE

The change began in the 1930s, from two directions. In Russia under Stalin, science was subject to the rule of the party, like everything else. There was 'bourgeois' and 'socialist' physics and biology. Genetics and quantum physics were denounced, and scientists forced to follow the approved theories. (That the same theories were often under attack in Nazi Germany at the same time is a sign of the identity of the two systems). It is less than ten years since Lysenkoist theories of heredity were finally abandoned.

In Germany, about the same time a group of unorthodox Marxists (of whom Marcuse is the best known) tried to unite the works of Marx and Freud, and attacked the rationality of science as oppressive by nature. Whilst many important ideas were put forward, the major effect was to justify the widespread neglect of science. Together these two tendencies have hindered the development of a socialist analysis of science, and their influence is still felt today.

EFFECTS OF THE WAR

The Second World War had two consequences for science. The most spectacular was the conversion of abstruse equations about the structure of matter into atomic bombs. This put an end to illusions in the 'purity' of physics. Equally important was the greatly increased incorporation of science into industrial activity, and its subjection to planning on a large scale. The more liberal scientists in the 'Communist' Parties, who equated socialism to state planning, had anticipated this trend in theory, and many sympathisers joined state concerns after the war.

For a long time science was seen basically as good, with unfortunate mistakes in its applications. Thus all that was needed was to change the political order and leave researchers alone. Left-inclined scientists did their research, and put their names to petitions against atomic warfare. Similar attitudes applied of course in health and education (and still do to a large extent). The problem was the packaging, not the contents.

VIETNAM

This was shattered, like much else, under the impact of the Vietnam War and student revolt. The people planning the murder of millions were not only faceless men in secret buildings. They were often the professors who bored students every day.

This was especially true of the USA, but it happened to a great extent in other countries. One of the main apologists of US intervention in Vietnam was at the London School of Oriental and African Studies. This is hardly surprising as the school had representatives of the British Army and the U.S. State Dept. on its governing body.

The question was soon raised whether the involvement of the colleges was coincidental: the answer was obviously NO. Universities are as much part of capitalist society as stock exchanges. They are elitist, and even their supposed isolation has specific functions. They are controlled by businessmen and bureaucrats, with maybe a token worker. Internally they are completely undemocratic, power resting in the hands of a small group.

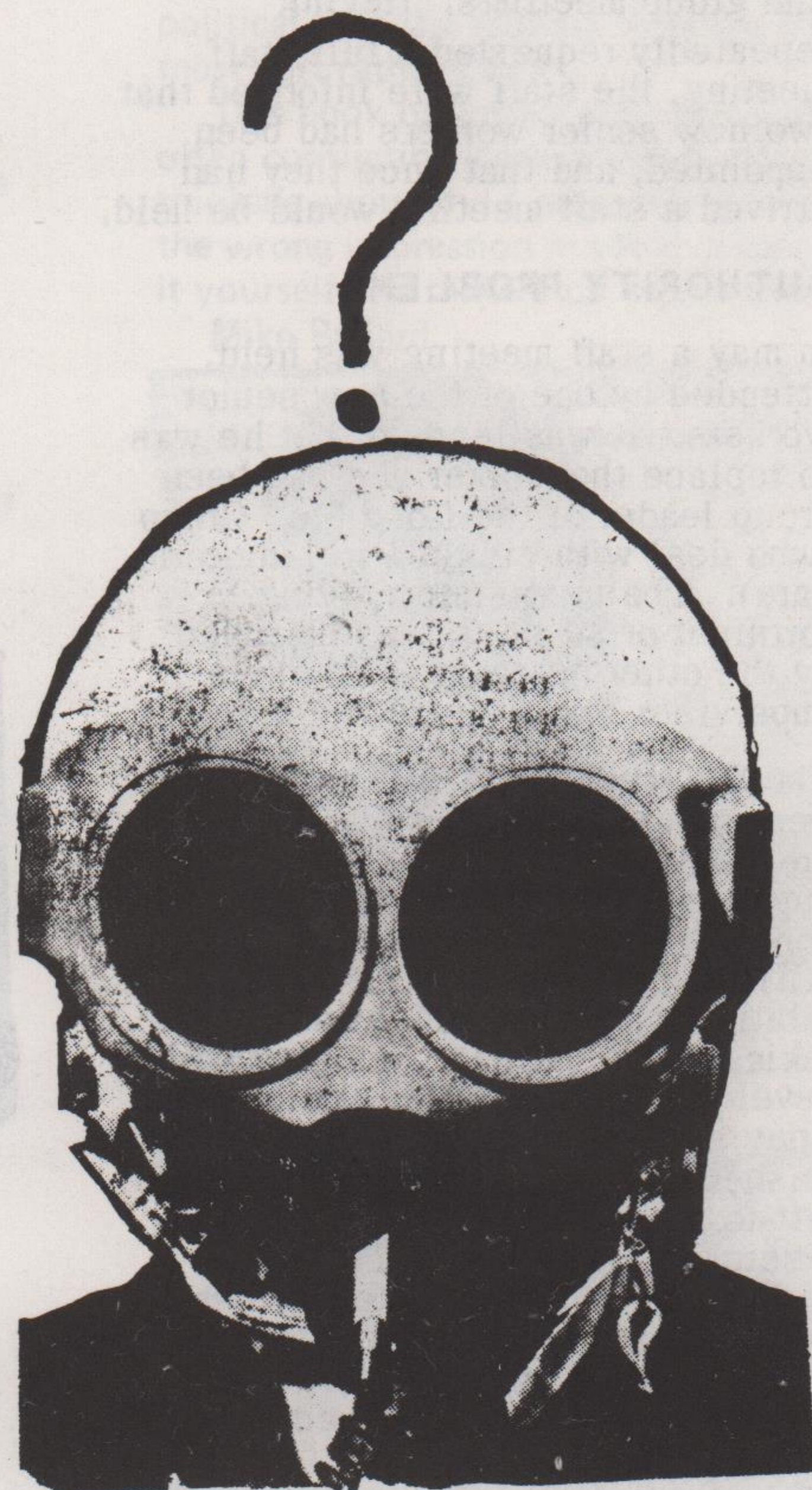
B.S.S.R.S. & the Counter Culture.

Once the Universities were attacked, the subjects were no longer immune. In 1967 the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science was formed. It started with a lot of eminent scientists and an orientation to criticising the applications of science: Neither lasted long; today only Maurice Wilkins remains of the leading scientists.

One of the responses to criticism of science was to abandon it altogether. The 'counter culture' and its self-proclaimed theorists such as Roszak or Charles Reich said that science was inherently oppressive and alienating, and sought refuge in poetry and mysticism (paradoxically often following the same ideas as those who invented the atom bomb.)

A SOCIALIST SCIENCE?

The left did not follow this line, but it was stuck for an alternative. Attempts to develop a socialist analysis of science soon came up against the experience of the USSR. Would any attempts to develop a distinct socialist practice of science reproduce the rubbish of Lysenkoism? Recently, Lewontin has tried to resolve this problem (1) but not very successfully. To deal with it would mean to discuss the nature of Stalinism, and much of



the left would find this too disturbing. If we reject Stalin's politics, there is no problem. Socialist science would not be dictatorial or monolithic, because socialist society would not be. Far from making it necessary to separate politics and science, the experience of Stalinism emphasises their unity.

Nor can we lay down blueprints for what a socialist science will be like. Some of the more obvious differences can be stated – and even more important fought for – such as the elimination of sexism in science, and the breakdown of the illusion of the isolation of science and scientists. In the course of practical struggle in these and other directions (such as combatting reactionary ideologies and techniques) a full socialist conception of science can be developed.

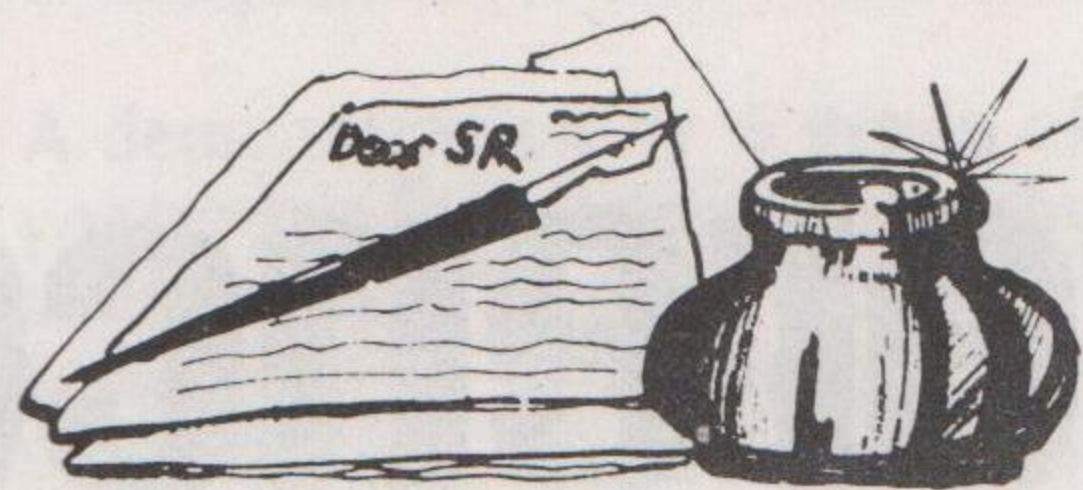
A final ironic comment on the role of professors. One of the founders of the BSSRS and co-editor of two recent books on the politics of science (1 & 2) is Steven Rose, professor of Biology at the Open University. Recently he has been in conflict with research workers who accuse him of being dictatorial. BSSRS claim that he has threatened to sue them if "Science for the People" print a statement on the matter (3).

Phil McShane.

NOTES

1. The Radicalisation of Science, ed. Rose and Rose (Macmillan).
2. The Political Economy of Science, same eds. and publisher.
3. Science for the People No. 35. BSSRS, 9.Poland St., London WC1.

LETTERS



Dear All,

Good to see an article on punk rock in *Social Revolution*, which is definitely improving with each issue. However, I'd like to add a few points of my own in response to Sophie Richmonds article. (To establish my credentials, I've been unemployed for five months, been fucked round by the Social Security innumerable times before, and have had a series of lousy jobs since I was 17.)

1 'Punk' as a genre is nothing new; The Doors, MCS, Dylan etc. were saying similar things but from a detached point of view. It's easier to sing about the State as a whole than it is to sing about specific everyday issues.

When the Clash sing, it's about NOW: unemployment, conformity, manipulation and impotence. They're shouting it out (for all those who a want to hear) about our great welfare state and the alternatives that are offered to unemployed kids:



"I hate the Army and I hate the RAF, I ain't gonna go fighting in the tropical heat. I ain't a Civil Service fool, I won't open letter bombs for you! Career opportunities, the ones that never knock, Career opportunities, to keep you outa the dock."

O.K., it doesn't offer any alternatives, and it might be politically naive, but it is acting as a focus for the discontent with the status quo.

2. A lot of bands have been criticised by libertarians as being sexist/'fascist'/'nihilist' etc: right, these attitudes exist, but they also exist in other more commercial bands who get a lot of airplay. Nothing changes unless you do something constructive to counteract it, so don't just dismiss 'punk' out of hand; get it in there and do something to change those attitudes!

Which leads neatly into:

3. I wonder how many people reading this are making the music or (like me) are just sitting back and analysing it. The trouble with libertarian journals is that they always seem to be talking to a small, basically middle class, minority who are more concerned with theory than practice.

You're always talking about working class unrest as a prerequisite for the social revolution. Well, here it is, right under our noses, and what do we do? Ignore it! Perhaps we're afraid of the energy and misplaced violence, but the potential is there and it's up to libertarians to decide whether they want to get involved.

4. I agree, it'll probably be neatly contained by the record companies and music press and made acceptable. That's what always seems to happen. However, I feel that if we just criticise it and don't try to counter some of the negative attitudes, WE'RE going to be partly responsible for its defusing.

If anyone's interested in getting libertarian ideas across to 'punk' audiences (I don't mean preaching or patronising) before it's too late, I'd be pleased to hear from you.

Solidarity,

John Weller,

16 St. Leonard's Rd., Surbiton, Surrey
KT6 4DE

Dear Comrades,

Having just read through SR7, I thought I'd write to you. On many positions I agree with you, ie the capitalist nature of all national libertarian struggles.

I agreed with most of the article about Ireland. As regards whether the soldiers have crossed class lines, this hasn't been clarified. Insofar as they are in the army, so far their attacks have been on foreign workers, and their perception is of beating up taigs, arabs etc as foreigners. In this fashion it is part of the chauvanism endemic in the working class as a whole. To pick on them especilly is a mistake, but likewise it is a mistake to ignore the way military life tends to reinforce chauvanist, militarist and to some extent fascist ideology.

Thus being a member of the armed forces in itself is no clear indicator of an individual's position - frequently they have no clear position themselves.

WORKERS IN BLUE?

Certainly 'Socialist Worker' r兔biting on about the 'workers in blue' and trying to build up socialism in the police force is typical of their general position.

To neutralise the army is not within the scope of revolutions alone. Soldiers become disaffected through the process of war, and the intervention of revolutionaries can help in their gaining clarity. But it is not something that can be imported from outside. It arises primarily from their experience.

This relates to the whole concept of class consciousness springing from sensuous activities of the workers, and not being refined by revolutionaries distinct from the class as a whole.

As regards unions, these are the tools of capitalism, in that they exist for capitalism. While they might protect workers' interests within the fabric of capitalism, they do not protect the interests of the class as a whole - that is, revolution, abolition of commodity relationships on an international basis. They protect them section by section, which is how they maintain their class base.

In many ways I agree with 'World Revolution', but my criticism of them is that they have not developed an understanding of the development of the revolution in modern society, leading to a very formalist approach. Their purism means that there is much to learn from them, particulaly as their international connections, which are very tight enable a more coherent analysis. (Yet, even so, they only have sections in half a dozen or so countries.)

IN A PICKLE

I've recently read Camatte's 'On Organisation', where he rejects any organisation, but also individual action. Certainly he's got himself in a pickle, but what I found of interest in what he says is where he talks of the destruction of the proletariat. (Whereby the comrades of WR say he has completely left Marxism - they approach the question in too rigid a fashion.)

I think the working class is destroyed as a class, shattered into a myriad of fragments. In recent years, as the post-war consumer dream turns sour, the class is beginning to assert itself as a class. But it starts not from class unity, but in small fractions of the class - within one nation (Poland), or against particular oppression (feminism, Gay Liberation, anti-racism). WR is in one sense quite right to dismiss all these, but fails to observe this as coming out of social conditions.

But SR's position (and AWA's) does not seem at all clear (report on 'AWA Day School, SR6'). But I feel that the sectional interests will gradually be eroded, as capitalism comes under greater strain, and the working class regenerates itself. This is a process that revolutionaries are part of.

But this relates to questions of organisation, which I see as one of the main questions facing us. Any organisation which presents an analysis, program etc is limited, not for purist anarchist reasons, but because the basis in society for a program does not exist. No revolutionary group has a wide enough basis to get a comprehensive view.

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GROUPS AS GANGS?

Camatte describes organisations as gangs, whereby theory becomes privatised as the property (?) of the group of the individual. Theory becomes a commodity in itself to be hawked; the groups act to reinforce isolation with them/us distinctions. Joining becomes an important question, rather than being secondary to the revolutionary project.

I think WR's insistence on regroupment (based on the ICC) comes from their isolation and clinging to views relevant 20 years ago. Also their marginal treatment of personal relations, and their heavy-handedness in rhetorical terms is alienating. They have not fully escaped from class consciousness in its reified form (which permeates the whole of the left). This relates to their relationship to 'confused groups' (eg according to them SR).

But recent discussion with militants indicates a change whereby they are no longer the guardians of pure theory. I'm waiting for more developments in this direction from them.

THE SR JIGSAW

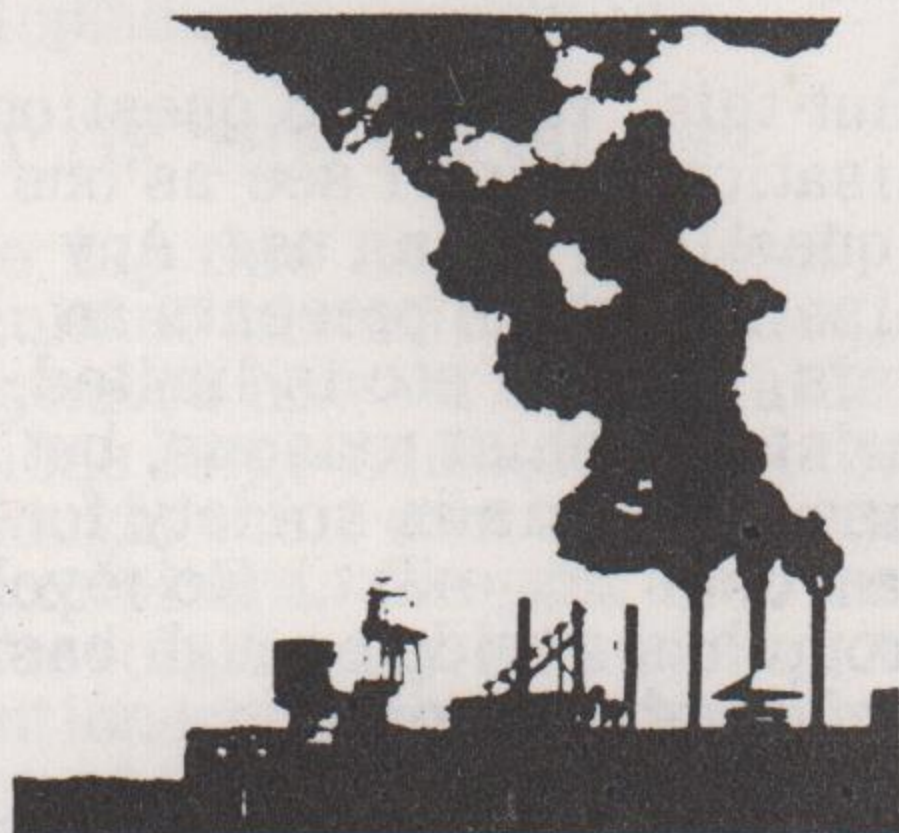
Contrariwise SR seems to avoid their alienating style, but lacks an overall perspective. Reading RS is interesting, but presents pieces of a jigsaw. There are lots of pieces still in the box and need piecing together. (I'm having second thoughts about this analogy.) Certainly I'm aware of SR's difficulties (eg size, and the work involved) and I'm not criticising, but pointing to what I see as missing from the revolutionary movement as a whole - which is my central concern.

I am perhaps wary of Solidarity. I am friends with several people in Solidarity, and certainly there are many good comrades there, but as a whole I feel it's a bit wishy-washy. I hope that SR doesn't disappear in a fusion with Solidarity - as in many ways it's a lot clearer (overall), but lacks the greater capacity of Solidarity to tackle wider problems.

As for the AWA, from my experience I have a low opinion of them. If there are any clear-thinking comrades in their ranks, I haven't met them! They seem to me to be an 'anarchist' alternative to the SWP. I've been to some of their meetings, but felt they weren't open, and present a very schematised and simplistic view with a tendency to sloganise. In terms of intervention they impart ideas, rather than take part in an interchange of ideas.

Those members of SR that I've met I've found consistently interesting to talk to, and I've found SR stimulating. I am gradually working out my own ideas, to take part in the revolutionary project in a more active way.

FT



conference

Over the last year it has become increasingly clear to Social Revolution that there exist a number of similarities between ourselves and the libertarian socialist group, SOLIDARITY. The two groups have felt it necessary to discover just how thorough-going these similarities are and just what significant differences might exist between them.



On a theoretical level these similarities express themselves in a number of ways. Most significant is the conviction that the liberation of the working class from the oppression, alienation and exploitation of capitalist society must be the task of the working class itself. From this it follows that no group of self-appointed leaders, equipped with the "correct theories", can lead the class to socialism. Both SR and Solidarity hold that the development of the understanding necessary for social revolution must flow from the experience of the workers in modern society. We therefore reject totally the Leninist concept of revolution, and insist that the revolution must be carried out in a self-managed way. The new society must be the embodiment of self-management in practice.

From this general theoretical understanding it follows that both groups reject:-

(1) PARLIAMENTARIANISM: the belief that the revolution can be effected through parliament.

(2) THIRD WORLDISM: Both groups see so-called national liberation struggles as being the product of imperialist rivalries, an integral part of the struggles between capitalist super powers.

(3) REFORMISM: the belief that society can be reformed in the interests of the workers. We don't think meaningful reforms are even possible today, let alone that they can be a "road to revolution".

(4) TRADE UNIONISM: the belief that the trade unions are still progressive. Today the unions are increasingly incorporated into the state apparatus. Increasingly they reflect the divisions of modern society and are used more then ever to control and divert workers' struggles than to advance them. In today's social conditions new unions would go the same way as the old. The existing unions cannot be 'reformed' or 'recaptured'.

(5) POLITICAL PARTIES: Both groups reject political parties, whether 'parliamentary' or 'vanguardist' as being suitable vehicles for revolution. Existing parties, such as the Labour

Party, like the unions, cannot be 'reformed' or 'recaptured'. These long denegated organisations (the very forms of which reflect the existing divisions of society anyway) can play no part in a real transformation of society. Along with the rest of capitalism's administrative machinery they must be dismantled by the revolutionary workers' councils.

In practical terms we have felt able to co-operate in the production of a pamphlet and the anti-election leaflet reproduced in this issue of SR. We have also held a number of joint meetings, including a recent series of seminars in London (which also included ex-members of the Anarchist Workers Association).

It was also apparent that there existed a number of differences that had led to our organisational independence. Chief amongst these was the strongly held conviction of SR that to establish a socialist society on a sound basis, the revolutionary workers would have to rapidly destroy all impersonal market forces which would lead to the subversion of the new society. Primarily we believe that this would involve the abolition of commodity exchange and production, ie. the production of things for sale on the market, buying and selling. This would require the development of production for use, the abolition of money and wage labour, the transcendence of all social relations based on the capitalist law of value.

However, we felt that an effort was required to understand the views of the two groups - in as far as collective views existed. More and more we began to question whether the differences might be more apparent than real - the product of different theoretical backgrounds. A joint conference was therefore called for the weekend of July 16/17 in Leeds to discuss these points and to try to decide whether organisational independence was justified or whether a fusion was possible.

The conference was preceded by the circulation of a fair number of documents relating to the discussion. The first day was spent discussing aspects of the organisation of socialist society and how socialists should organise to achieve it. It became apparent that both SR and Solidarity agreed that socialist society could not function in terms of a market economy and that blind economic forces could and would destroy such a society. The differences tended to revolve around how best to overcome these. SR comrades insisted throughout all goods produced by a socialist society must be considered as belonging to society as a whole, rather than to individuals or groups of producers. The distribution of these goods, and any rationing of those in short supply, must be the decision of society as a whole. We

report



suggested that this could best be achieved where necessary, by the issuing of various kinds of vouchers (as of right) to people. Solidarity comrades, on the other hand, seemed to be afraid that this could lead to a restriction of personal choice – which they thought could best be overcome by some kind of personal token – which they were not averse to referring to as money. However it seemed clear that a lot of differences were the product of the use of different terminology rather than the concepts being expounded. Ultimately of course it would be up to the people carrying out the revolution who would have to decide these issues.

The discussion on organisation focussed mainly on what constituted group autonomy (both groups recognised this as essential), what demands the collective group could make on its members, ie. in terms of activity and agreement, and whether a group had the right to expel members.

The only unfortunate side of these discussions was the tendency to get side-tracked about terms rather than content: particularly “money” as an abstraction, and “expulsion”, also there was some innuendo-ridden discussion as to the nature of the Eastern Bloc countries (state-capitalist or otherwise) which for a

while created unnecessary bad feeling. Nonetheless the discussions were very fruitful and a great deal of mutual suspicion was cleared up.

The second day was spent discussing the mechanics of fusion. SR had proposed that the basic statement of a new organisation could be Solidarity's AS WE SEE IT, subject to certain amendments making more apparent the content of a socialist society. However it became clear from the discussion that neither the formulations of SR or those of MB (of Solidarity) were adequate. Moreover the more we discussed the issue, the more it became apparent that a complete overhaul was required. The conference decided to set up a working group to discuss this.

There was also considerable discussion on the merger of the two groups papers, particularly with regard to the principle of rotating editorship (which SR regard as vital). Again it was decided to set up a working group to discuss the kind of paper required and the methods of editing and production.

Similarly the discussion on organisation led to the setting up of a working group to discuss and report on the subject.

Finally it was decided to hold another

conference in October to discuss these reports and how they effect the prospects of a merger. After this conference a ballot of the membership of SR and Solidarity will be taken on the conference's recommendations. If as seems probable the verdict is positive the groups will merge shortly afterwards.

It is our hope that the new organisation will not only avoid duplication of effort and allow greater effectiveness thereby, but will also lead to a much deeper and wider analysis of modern society, and by allowing involvement in new projects will give libertarians a greater influence in the struggles to change society.

EDITORIAL GROUP.

APPEAL

SOCIAL REVOLUTION is back again after an unfortunately long delay. It is also 4 pages shorter than usual. This is not due to any lack of articles, we've had to leave out a number we would have liked to include. Rather we've suffered from that perennial problem – shortage of cash. Rising costs of paper, printing, typesetting, postage, etc., have finally drained our financial resources to a level where we were unable to bring out the paper.

We want to bring out **SOCIAL REVOLUTION** as often as possible, the response we get seems to justify this aim. But to do this we need more money. So we are appealing to you, our readers, to subscribe (£1.50 brings you copies of everything we produce up to that value) or make a donation – however large or small you can manage.

We also welcome articles and letters for inclusion in **SOCIAL REVOLUTION**. These should be sent to London SR, who produced this issue.

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M. Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens,
Saffron Walden, Essex.

Sheffield: via' Hull.

Edinburgh: via' Aberdeen.

LEFT WITHOUT MARX? Part of the reason why libertarians have failed to create a coherent alternative to marxism is that they have failed to understand it. Libertarians interested in a study group on Marx contact: **LEFT WITHOUT MARX**, 15 Matcham Road, London E11 3LE.

GLC ELECTION LANDSLIDE

VOTE FOR NOBODY!

It's GLC election time. Councillors you havn't seen for years, and those who would like to replace them, will be after your votes. Most of you won't vote, many because you rightly feel that there is very little difference between the candidates. Some of you who will vote will feel the same. And we agree. All of them - Labour, Tory, Liberal, National Front - stand for the continuation of the same rotten capitalist system. Even those who wear the socialist, communist or Trotskyist labels only want the private bosses replaced by State ones.

Even though most of you will refuse to put an X - the mark of an illiterate - against the name of any candidate, a GLC will still be elected. Whoever wins - Tory, Liberal, Labour moderate or Labour 'lefties' - the life we lead here in London will go on much the same.

CONCRETE DESERTS

Large sums of money, taken from our pockets, will go to pay interest charged by capitalist money-lenders. Rents will still go up and up. And when we can't afford to pay them we will still be brutally evicted. To 'house' us there will still be tower blocks and prison-like estates. And our communities will still be smashed up to build more of them. We will still be trapped by an appalling public transport system in concrete deserts with no leisure facilities, and nowhere for the kids to play. Bosses will still be allowed to move industry out of London. And those left unemployed will still be slandered as 'scroungers'. Whenever the system gets into difficulties, public services - hospitals, schools will be scrapped. Teachers will still be thrown on the dole while our kids are stuck in overcrowded classrooms. Most workers will still have the soul-destroying repetitive work. Most women will still be trapped at home with the drudgery of housework and nappies.

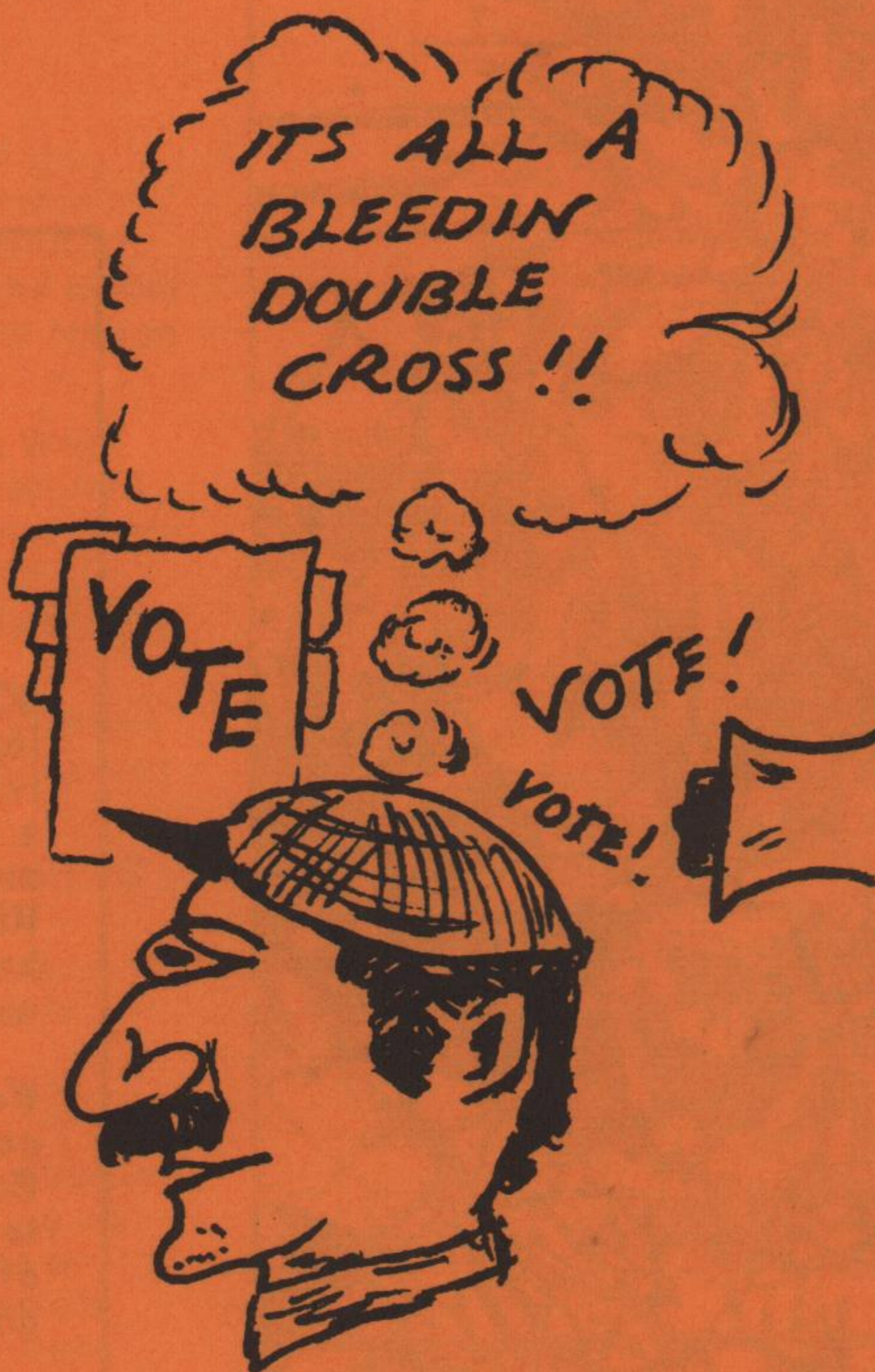
DO IT YOURSELF

Must it always be this way? Can we do something beyond not voting? We believe things could be different. There is a possibility of a totally different society - one which we can start to build right now. Instead of trooping off every few years, like sheep, to choose which gang of political con-men is going to fool us and rule us; instead of staying at home and doing nothing, we can do something for ourselves. We can go in for do-it-yourself politics. This

means by-passing the bosses and their stooges at County Hall and Westminster, and creating our own democratic organisations to run things for ourselves.

This is happening now, all round us. Whenever someone refuses to be pushed about by those with power and privilege, it could be the beginning of a struggle to create a new kind of

This leaflet was distributed in East London by East London libertarians, Social Revolution (London) and Solidarity (London). Our candidate won a majority of the votes.



society. Democratic struggles in industry, communities, schools and the home can all form the basis for new social structures which would fulfill people's real needs. If these struggles can be encouraged, helped to develop, and linked up, the day will come when we can replace the bosses altogether, and build a society with completely different values, different priorities, different relationships and different ways of doing things

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Instead of the professional bureaucrats at the Town Hall, every community could have its own neighbourhood council. It could be directly elected at mass meetings of everyone living in the area. Those elected would carry out what they were elected to do by their electors, Not what their Party tells them. They would report back constantly. They would be sacked if they didn't carry out people's wishes. These neighbourhood councils, and similar councils at workplaces, would be linked on a regional, 'national' and international level.

This is not a blueprint. We do not have all the answers. There is no magic wand which can be waved to transform this society into a new one. People will work out the kinds of organisation needed to run a society for themselves. What is wanted is the vision and the will.

The vision is of a society where human needs come first, not the need of capital or of technology. In such a society, work would be carefully planned to ensure there was no more wasteful and useless production. Communities would be planned by those who were to live in them, not by 'experts' living miles away. Housing, food, clothes, transport, health-care etc - all would be provided as of right, and no longer as commodities to those who can pay for them.

We would no longer be the subject of other people's plans. We would work and make decisions together, on an equal basis. When we're all bosses, on-one will be boss!

We are not asking you to vote for us. Our names will not be on any ballot paper. We are not asking you to give 'critical support' to anyone. Don't vote for anybody - you would only be voting away your power! Let's begin now the fight for a better world.

If the ballot paper were honest, this is what it would say:

LABOUR (CAPITALISTS)	
TORY (CAPITALISTS)	
LIBERAL (CAPITALISTS)	
NF (FASCIST CAPITALISTS)	
COMMUNIST (STATE CAPITALISTS)	
OTHER CAPITALISTS	
Why not put the ballot paper where it belongs?	