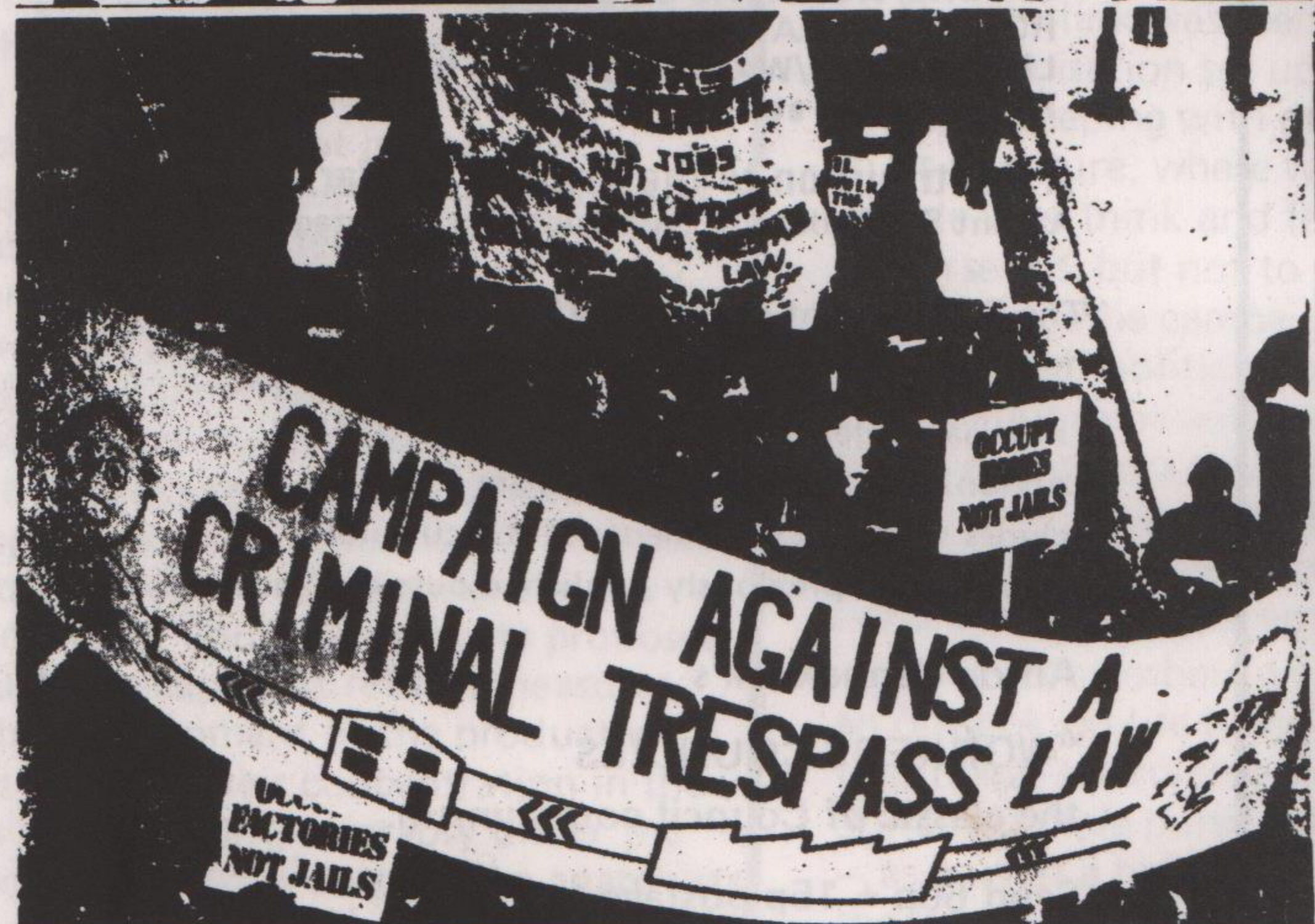


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SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Paper of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION Group No. 7

incorporating LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM



Fight To Live! Sexual Politics Punk Rock 15p

What We're About

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 attempting to change existing set-ups or build alternatives in health, childcare, education, therapy, art or science, fighting sex or race oppression, resisting the military, undermining sex-roles, and spreading socialist ideas.

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.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION is produced approximately every two months. Contributions and letters are welcomed. Editing and layout is rotated round the different SR groups — this issue was produced by Aberdeen Group. NOTE: While the contents of SR generally reflect the politics of the group, articles signed by individuals do not necessarily represent the views of all members.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL REVOLUTION

10p plus postage from any SR contact.

Includes sections on:
CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM/TRADE UNIONS/WORKERS COUNCILS/SEX ROLES/EDUCATION/NATIONAL LIBERATION/WAR/RACISM/PARLIAMENT/REFORMISM etc.

A Contribution to the Critique of Marx
 A joint SR/Solidarity pamphlet 10p + postage

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A new pamphlet from **SOCIAL REVOLUTION** (London) exposing State Capitalism in China. Includes revealing documents of the cultural revolution not previously published outside China.

Anton Pannekoek's
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 the classic of Council communism.

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also available from SOCIAL REVOLUTION

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

OIL OVER TROUBLED WATERS: A Report and Critique of Oil Developments in North-East Scotland, written and researched by Mark Hill with a lot of practical help and encouragement. 75p plus 15p post from Aberdeen People's Press, 167 King St, Aberdeen.

SILVER SERVICE STRIKES

OXFORD HOTEL STRIKES

LAST NOVEMBER, some workers at the Linton Lodge Hotel in Oxford asked to be given contracts of employment (which are legally compulsory) and for the right to be represented by the Transport and General Workers Union. Some were dismissed shortly afterwards, allegedly for 'unsatisfactory work', although no complaints had been made before. Other workers saw this as victimisation, and the majority of the staff went on strike. Shortly afterwards, some workers went on strike at the Randolph, Oxford's only 4-star hotel. The situation here was more complex, but again the central issue was victimisation. In this case there was already substantial T.&G.W.U. membership, but the management picked on a particularly strong section, the chambermaids, and tried to alter their hours. When this was rejected, they were dismissed and a strike began. However, in this case it was not backed by a majority of the staff, possible not even by a majority of union members.

Since then, both hotels have been picketed with a considerable degree of success. Both customers and deliveries have been turned away, and business is

to bosses and state. Therefore such controls are against the interests of all workers. The South African state has recently adopted this method to justify its continued oppression of black workers by calling them 'Transkeians'.

Another factor is accommodation. Many hotel workers live in, and lose their housing if they are sacked or go on strike. Just before Xmas the Linton Lodge hotel obtained a High Court writ evicting the strikers. For a time they were housed in a good house nearby, but they have now had to leave that and are staying with friends.

"Help" from the unions

A second problem is the unions. Although the strike at Linton Lodge is for

pamphlet). The workers have been kept in the dark by 'their' officials. Not surprisingly the workers have found it difficult to act independently, and have not been encouraged in so doing by the numerous local Trotskyists, whose position is "don't do anything, just denounce the officials for not doing it".

"Freedom Fighters" step in

Then there is the involvement of the National Association for Freedom (i.e. the freedom of bosses to screw us all). They have been providing financial and legal support to both hotels, particularly Linton Lodge which is not backed by a large company. It will soon be necessary for workers to deal with this unpleasant group,



Hotel strikers and supporters marching in Banbury Road, Oxford.

much reduced, particularly at the Linton Lodge. However, various problems have been encountered, and there is no sign of a settlement yet.

Low wages; casual work

One of the greatest difficulties concerns the nature of hotel work. It is frequently casual, and it was not difficult for the management at Linton Lodge to get enough workers to carry on. A high proportion of the workers are immigrants, and some have not got proper work permits. Employers find it easy to control such workers, because they can be threatened with police action and deportation. This can happen even if their position is perfectly legal, and such threats have been used elsewhere. Of course, the function of all the immigration controls is precisely to exercise control over foreign workers, and to make them more subject

recognition, the T&GWU has often seemed to be an obstacle. It does not give regular strike pay until one has been a member for a considerable period, thus not financing recognition disputes. However, it has given special 'hardship money'. Also, it has failed to spread the struggle. The Randolph is owned by Trust Houses Forte, and the T&GWU has another recognition dispute with them in Sheffield. THF are a very large concern, and the obvious way of dealing with them would be to black other places as well. In fact the canteens at the nearby BLMC car plants are owned by a THF subsidiary, but the union has opposed sympathy action there. Recently a further problem has arisen in the form of the General & Municipal Workers' Union, which has been recruiting the black-legs. Also it has members in other local THF hotels, and this has prevented contact with them. A similar conflict between these unions occurred in the Durham cleaners dispute (see Solidarity

which has interfered in the Grunswick strike and the abortive boycott of South Africa. If doing so means a direct attack on their friends in the courts as well, so much the better.

Other problems have occurred as well. The police have displayed their normal support for the bosses, arresting pickets for 'abusive language' and ignoring serious assaults by blacklegs. However, the most serious difficulty is the lack of support from the working-class. The picket lines are dominated by students (both hotels are near the university). In the Randolph, most are still working. It is all very well shouting "Scab" as they go in (I have done my share of that) but in the end we must recognise that the vast majority of 'blacklegs' are from the working-class. It is necessary to gain their support, then the manipulations of the bosses will fail. We need much more discussion of how this is to be achieved than the Oxford left has provided so far.

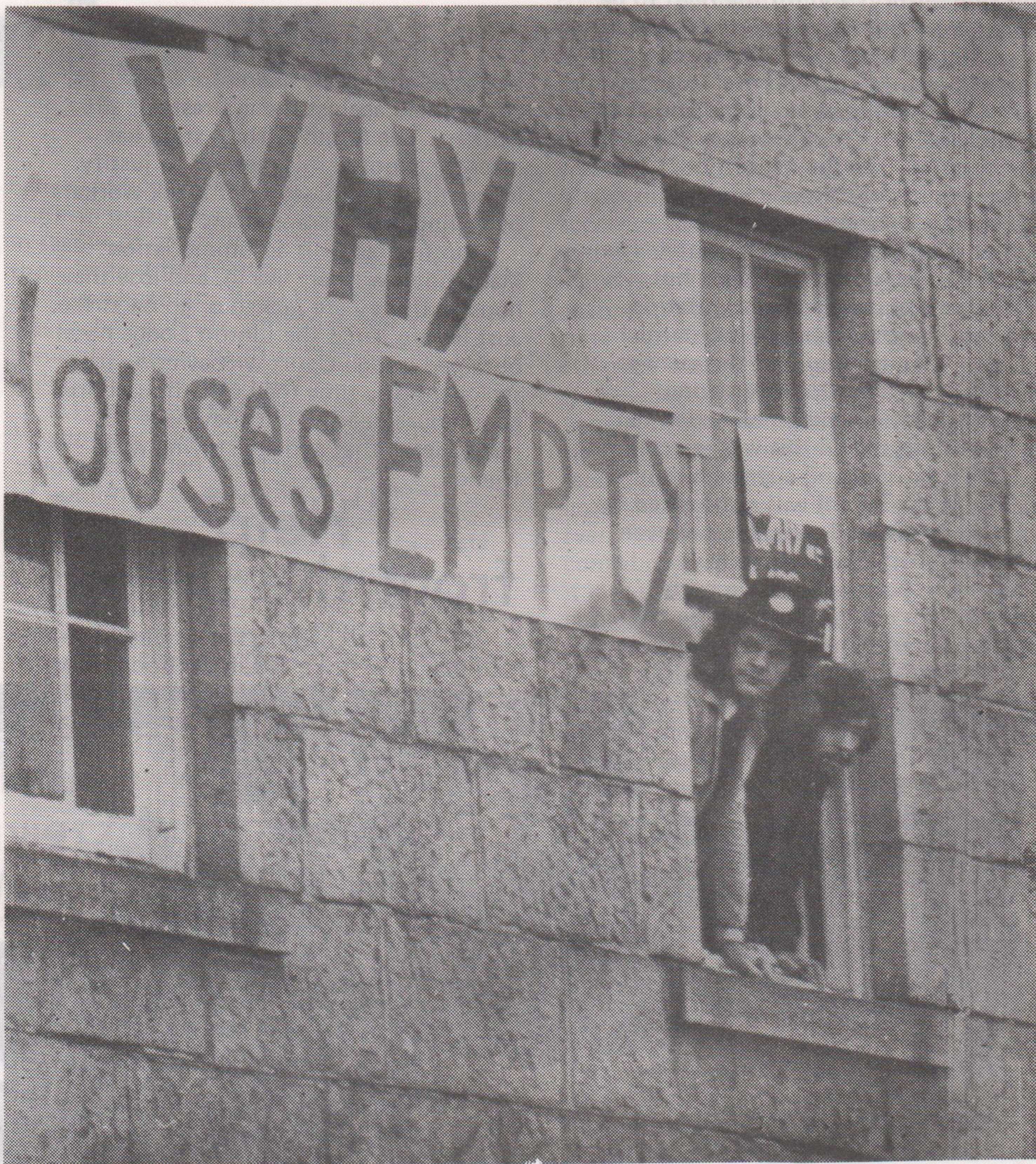
Phil McShane
5/2/77

Fight To Live!

BACK IN December a couple of members of SR attended the Fight To Live day school. Although the day itself was disappointing in many ways, we were left feeling that the idea has a lot of potential — given enough people to make it work. The expression 'Fight to Live' originated with the Claimants' Union; they were one of the groups represented at the conference, along with squatters, Fare Fight, CACTL, groups such as Anarchy Collective, SR and East London Libertarians, and individuals concerned about a range of issues. The aim was to bring together people involved in self-help/direct action/libertarian/anarchist type campaigns, so we can give each other at least moral and preferably practical support to fight the system together. To me, this is just about the most important challenge facing our 'movement'. The system is so much bigger, entrenched, and all-embracing — we have to have a means of fighting back on all fronts. Personal life, work, leisure, environment, housing — all are split up in capitalist society, making it incredibly difficult for us to gain control of our lives as a whole. Any single-issue campaign will only be at best reformist unless it is linked to other issues, and part of a general view of the kind of society we want to see. On the 'trad left' the Party serves the function of linking up struggles and providing the theoretical perspective; I believe libertarians, while rightly wanting to avoid the power-seeking and manipulative aspects of Parties, have not yet found a practical alternative to their positive role in organising and channelling energy. The Fight To Live idea for me has this potential, and is therefore extremely important.

However, it may be that the right time for the idea has not yet come. Certainly the day school didn't seem to produce much more than some new contacts and a sense of frustration that more could be achieved if only we knew how! I would like to suggest that a number of key questions need to be discussed before anything really gets off the ground. First, how do we see the Fight To Live? Is it a campaign, or a movement, or an alternative to a Party — or a bit of all these? Or something else?! Second, what concrete objectives would such a movement have? What kind of *action* would we envisage? And third, how can it be organised? On what kind of basis?

It was obvious from the day school that we are not clear on these fundamental questions. Discussions about *issues* — I was involved in one on education — were interesting, but didn't seem to lead anywhere; I for one was not clear what we were discussing *for*. Discussions based on geographical areas were more useful: probably because it is easier to identify *concrete problems* (East London's lack of community centres, for instance). On a topic such as



Empty houses and homeless people.....Squatting in Aberdeen

education we all tend to have differing experiences and points of view (pupil/student vs. teacher/lecturer vs. parent vs. detached observer...). Moreover, the *immediate problems* will vary according to geographical area. (An article in *SR* recently, advocating support for Comprehensives, grew out of the author's experiences as a parent in one of the few areas still preserving Grammar Schools...). All this bore out the need to think in terms of *action* and not just shared opinions; but we cannot agree on action until we have sorted out the other two issues — the nature of Fight To Live and how best to organise it.

I believe, as I have suggested, that it is essential to provide an alternative to the Party. (Groups like SR, or Anarchist Workers Association face this problem from the other side as it were: as soon as they get large, or well-organised, how do they avoid becoming a Party? Can we distinguish, *in practice*, between

campaigning to increase *support* for a group and trying to increase its — or its most active members' — *power*?) The concept of a *Network* of groups — some based on a political theory, some based on a particular campaign, some geographically based — seems to me to hold tremendous possibilities. It also seems to bring together the question of the nature of Fight To Live and the organisation problem — a harmony of ends and means?

Another way of looking at what I'm suggesting — and I hope it doesn't just seem like factionalism! — is to contrast this libertarian model with an existing 'leftist' campaign, such as (you've guessed it?) the Right to Work. To me the contrast is complete.

First the slogan: not much difference at first sight? OK, I agree, and it is easy to get tongue-tied and confuse them! But 'Right to Work' is a *demand*. whilst 'Fight To Live' can be seen as either a *description* of something that is

Repression:

IRELAND

happening, or maybe as an *exhortation* ('get your fingers out — fight to live!')? The one is asking someone (the bosses, the government?) to give us something (full employment I presume) — the other is a forceful description of an indecent situation: my little girl, having read the slogan, asked me 'Daddy, do people have to fight to live?' .. The amount of *revolutionary* content in the first is very little: unless it's meant to indicate that the system can't provide jobs for all, but its great danger is surely that this is not clear, and people could be attracted to it simply by the 'promise' it holds out of jobs for all. Besides, what's revolutionary about work?!

On the other hand, Fight To Live surely points immediately to the basic contradiction of capitalism — the need for some fight to survive; and it stresses a different kind of relationship between us and Them — we are not asking for favours, but fighting for our selves; not demanding our bourgeois rights, but warning that we are going to take what we need!

Another fundamental difference in the content of the two slogans is more obvious: the one is based on a demand in one part of life — work — and would presumably fall out of favour if or when the system manages to provide near-full employment again. The other, though it could be criticised for having no concrete reference, has the virtue of being flexible, a kind of umbrella slogan, adaptable to a variety of struggles — which is just what we are suggesting Fight To Live should be. In this sense, it is less like a slogan perhaps.

If Fight To Live does come to represent a variety of struggles then it will also possess another revolutionary quality: it will belong to everyone who wants to use it — provided it fits their outlook. Whereas Right to Work belongs primarily to you-know-who; in fact its main purpose as far as many are concerned is not in its intrinsic value, but as a means to an end — building the Party.

As one positive suggestion towards building a Fight To Live movement/campaign, groups could be encouraged to use the slogan in articles printed on direct-action type struggles; or in leaflets and posters; on demonstrations. The slogan should be seen in a variety of situations, associated with a variety of campaigns and actions.

Going on from this, the next step would seem to be to identify all the groups, campaigns and individuals who want to be associated with the idea — and to find a way of linking them such that the linking creates more energy and encourages us to feel a sense of solidarity. The danger is of course that we would simply come to see how few we are, and be *discouraged* — but this is where the role of *action* comes in again. Fight To Live, I believe, must be organised around actual struggles and concrete issues — housing, sexism, racism, work, health and so on. I'm sure we could build up a network of supporters of such struggles so that, say, a group whose *main* action and

thought centres on one particular field could be called on for support when needed by others involved in something else: say for an important demo, or an eviction, to help run a creche for a conference etc. etc.. This way we can gain from the efficiency which goes with 'specialisation' — a group concentrating on one field such as legal rights or housing — but counteract the dangers of isolation etc that go with it, as well as building slowly but surely, by co-ordinating the efforts of people already involved in libertarian and direct action campaigns, towards a wide and effective libertarian movement.

SR would very much welcome comments on these ideas, and would be glad to hear from anyone who would want to be associated with such a campaign.

Ian

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

Sheffield: via' Hull.

Edinburgh: via' Aberdeen.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS WORTH READING

ANARCHIST WORKER

10p plus postage from 13 Coltman St, Hull

SOLIDARITY

from 34 Cowley Rd, Oxford. Magazine and pamphlets. Send for list.

ONE YEAR FROM THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT — a rally for women's rights in Strathclyde University Union, John Street, Glasgow on Saturday 7th May 1977

For information contact:

Ad-hoc Mobilising Committee c/o Eve Oldham,
Glasgow Women's Centre, 57 Millar Street,
Glasgow.

Aberdeen Women's Group c/o Marion Keogh,
4 Hunter Place, Aberdeen.

Edinburgh Working Women's Charter Group
c/o Societies Centre, 21 Hill Place, Edinburgh.

The Scottish Libertarian Federation

*Open to membership by all libertarians living in Scotland

*Groups in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling

*'Scottish Libertarian' produced every two months

*More info from National Secretary Stuart Redfern, Mains House, Mains Road, Linlithgow, West Lothian or from Aberdeen SR.

FOR OVER a year, Marie and Noel Murray have been held in jail by Irish authorities for allegedly having killed a policeman during a bank raid in Dublin on 11th September 1975. Dince their arrest (along with a third person, Ronan Stenson, who was finally released on 28th January) they have been tried by a Special Criminal Court (no jury) and sentenced to hang. Following pressure from both Irish and overseas Defence Committees, the executions were twice postponed. Finally, their appeal to the Irish Supreme Court led to Noel Murray's sentence being commuted to life imprisonment and Marie Murray being sent for retrial — again by the Special Criminal Court.

From the start the whole case stinks. After the bank raid the police ran in circles for a month before picking up the three people mentioned above: the reason was probably because they were active anarchists. The only pieces of evidence against them were the statements which they claimed had been extracted under torture. Ronan Stenson has given a personal account of the torture and intimidation which he was subjected to.* There is medical and other evidence to back up his statements. These were not the only cases of torture — over the past four years it has been increasingly used by the Irish police to obtain 'statements' and 'confessions'.

At the moment Marie Murray is being held in Limerick and is allowed virtually no contact with the outside: it will be difficult therefore to put up a good defence at the retrial. During the original trial the Irish authorities enforced a total news blackout — help to stop this happening again. The Defence Committee is demanding for both the Murrays a retrial by jury and ask all supporters to concentrate their efforts towards the weekend before Marie's trial starts on 25th April.

*Murray Defence Committee, 155 Church Rd, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.

BRITAIN

THE STATE is clamping down on people who've been exposing the workings of its repressive apparatus. Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball are threatened with deportation, and Duncan Campbell, Crispin Aubrey and John Berry are facing charges under Section Two of the Official Secrets Act. All need support, financial and otherwise.

Contact:

Aubrey/Berry/Campbell Defence Committee, c/o Time Out,
374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1
Tel: 01-278 2377.

Agee Hosenball Defence Committee,
186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1
Tel: 01-278 4575.

Sophie Richmond works with the Sex Pistols, handling the organisation, administration and finance side of things. We asked to write an article for *Social Revolution* about punk rock, and here it is. We'd welcome readers' views on what influence you think music, punk or otherwise, can have towards revolutionary change.

LABELS ARE inescapable and punk isn't such a bad label really. Something for kids to identify with that sounds a bit vicious and tough, definitely anti the shit/ideology they try to shove down your throat at school. Punk says 'I'm a lazy sod' and 'I wanna be me'. It's the latest in the glorious line of teenage rebels . . . from James Dean and Marlon Brando in the post war American movies through the Teds, the mods, the ever present greasers, the skinheads and now the punks. Someone's going to ask me why I left out hippies. Can't you feel the difference? (The hippies and alternative culture is what I grew up with so my view is jaundiced anyway, but it seems as though it was all very middle class; it gave us the alternative society: it gave us peasant clothing and beads; but I don't think it really gave us a lot of help in solving, or even helping us think about the problems of living in and changing a distinctly urban and industrialised country.

Anyway. Punk is teenage rebellion again. So the question to ask isn't so much 'how much potential for social change is there in punk rock?' as 'how much potential for change is there in the teenage rebellion syndrome?' So we look back. No, nothing really changed much did it? The rebels either died (James Dean, Gene Vincent) or got assimilated, became successful (Rolling Stones) and had nothing left to say to their still alienated audience. There are two things here:—

1. the expression of frustration, alienation and pissed offness felt by kids growing up in USA and UK who found their futures even more unattractive than their present.
2. the eventual failure of those who voiced those feelings to escape assimilation and, equally, the failure of the kids who dug it to escape their fate.

The lesson, I suppose, is that culture can only take you so far. Be you ever so pissed off and alienated, if all you do is sit down with your stereo and play 'My Generation' a million times, you're not going to get very far. The value of the Stones, Who, Vincent, Sex Pistols is that they can create a climate, put ideas into people's heads, at their best give off enough energy and enthusiasm to make people feel like doing more than buying the next super duper album.

Because ultimately it's up to the audience to decide if they'll buy the action as well. And it's up to the activists and militants to use the energy, the honesty, to grasp it and take things further and say look, we can do this, it's not just fantasy. Because attitudes don't threaten, not in the cradle of free speech and liberalism. Attitudes are easily defused. Rock 'n roll ain't revolution.

But there's a point in time, before the media has jumped on your backs and exposed every hypocrisy and contradiction, before it's become clear that you're just another rock band, easily bought off by money and fame, when attitudes are potentially threatening to the system. And these kids and bands certainly aren't upholding it. The Sex Pistols want anarchy, (their meaning clear enough in the song 'I wanna be anarchy . . . I wanna be an anarchist, get pissed, destroy') The Clash want a riot of their own in the song 'White Riot' written in envy and admiration after the Notting Hill riots last summer. The Buzzcocks, from Manchester, sing about boredom and alienation (can't stop using that word)

.....
 'I been waiting in the supermarket standing in with the beans (ketchup)
 I been waiting at the Post Office for silly pictures of the queen (stickup)
 Now I'm waiting for you to get yourself good and ready (make
 up)
(too fast to interpret yet)
 I been standing in the standing room and I been waiting in the waiting room
 no-one told me 'bout the living room gonna forget what I came for here
 real soon'

Great. At least it's a bit real again. I'm sick of silly love songs which don't have any meaning when you know, however passionately you're in love, that your

Being a woman musician is like . . . words fail me, I was looking for some absurd comparison but just come up with . . . impossible. If you're an all woman band it's a gimmick, if one of the musicians is a woman, it's a gimmick. So it's encouraging that there are a few bands around of both sorts, trying to be taken a bit seriously. But that ain't really punk. None of the all women punk bands I know of have ever played a gig. The Derelicts who are/were two fifths women have packed up temporarily/permanently. But I get a different feel from the audiences these days. I don't know if it's something to do with my age (25). Lots of men dancing together rough and tumble, men and women using/not using make up. I feel there's very different attitudes to sex (or relationships as I used to call it). No longer so central, such a bugbear, such a neurosis (or is this my middle class background showing through?) sex less important than what you actually do. Therefore people less sexist? Certainly not Mark P and others. Don't know. I know that behind the shop SEX was the idea of just being totally open about SEX and FETISHISM.

And what do the SPs mean when they say they want anarchy. My parents were worried by this one too. What do you think? How did you feel when you were 20? Or if you're 20 with A levels/at college/university/or just with some purpose in life and you've successfully escaped from home, try and imagine life without those little privileges. Try to imagine a life with no future, with such limited possibilities that you feel like dying of boredom before you even start. You got it. You either become a footballer or a rockstar to get out.

The difference with this lot of potential stars is that some of them are talking about their own lives and when they say they want to be anarchy, I believe them.

ANARCHY

chances of getting a place you can call your own or a job with enough money to support your kids aren't too hot.

But in some ways, the punk bands are carrying on establishment myths of anti-heroes, losers, dead-enders. Romantic, but slush. To be avoided. Liberal containment myths. But there's a few encouraging things. . . . the sudden emergence of a dozen or more young bands in the steps of the Pistols, not too hot, musically or politically but at least a nice reaction against the progressive rock of the last ten years, so overloaded with technology that it can't go on the road with less than 40 articulated lorries and a cast of one million technicians. I like the whole do it yourself philosophy which shows in the clothes as well as the music.

Sexism? What do you expect? Rock is sexist, not least when sung by women.

It's negative, It's nihilist. But I can't see a song about a 5 year plan catching many kids' imaginations. Destruction, anger, frustration are always good for a few choruses. It's a first step in thinking about change anyway. And kids these days have grown up in a very different environment from even 5 years ago. Since they've been aware of politicians and the economy things have been sliding downhill at quite a rate. Is there that much worth preserving? It's been a socialist government too, so the papers say. If this is socialism who wants to know?

Which runs into swastikas quite neatly. I've seen a few around. They make me puke. They make a load of other people freak out and all. Their shock value is terrific. And it's a pretty powerful symbol. Red stars don't make it. I don't see so many around now (swastikas that is) I

Photo from the Sex Pistols magazine "Anarchy in the UK"



IN THE U.K.

know some of the bands (Damned, Vibrators) are busy cashing in along with Bowie. The bands that are strong in themselves or that have any political idea anyway don't use them (SPs, Clash, Buzzcocks). A shirt emerged out of the the SEX shop, a small edition since they were hand dyed and a bit of a hassle to make, which had on it Nazi insignia, a large pic of Marx (embroidered, available from Maoist outlets) assorted Situationist slogans (sous les pavees la plage, prenez vos idees pour la realite) and other comments like 'only anarchists are pretty'. It is interesting to note that all the press from Time Out and New Society through the muck rakers to respectables commented only on the swastikas. Pretty morbid Huh? They, along with the swastikas, make me puke.

Violence. There's a lot of it about. I feel safer at an SP gig than I do driving up the M1. That's no answer. I spend more energy restraining myself from hitting bus conductors when I've waited an hour at a bus stop than I do restraining myself from getting violent at punk gigs. That's no answer either. Yes, punk has a violent edge. It's horrible when you end up hurting the wrong people, your allies probably, but they're usually nearest. It's hard to overcome artificial media divisions (Teds/punks . . . there are still teds down this end of the country) when you're feeling excited, full of energy and identifying with something very strongly (a band, a football team, a style of looking) even if your mind is clear enough to know your real enemies, they're so distant, it requires organisation, discipline, research to get at them . . . the guys who

make sure there's never a bus when you want one, who price alcohol so high you can hardly afford even that cheapo means of oblivion, escape, the guys who don't give a shit that you're feeling useless, meaningless, hopeless at the age of 19, the guys who feed you myths to distract you if you're feeling pissed off enough to do anything. Bands like the Sex Pistols . . . the punk bands in this country . . . talk a little about reality, however little gets said before it's all neatly tied up and put in little packages by the record companies, before the dying dinosaur of the music biz jumps in in search of a fast buck, before the posers start cashing in on the image (I see them on the horizon). That's their value.

Sophie Richmond

Problems of Socialism: Women & Libertarian Groups



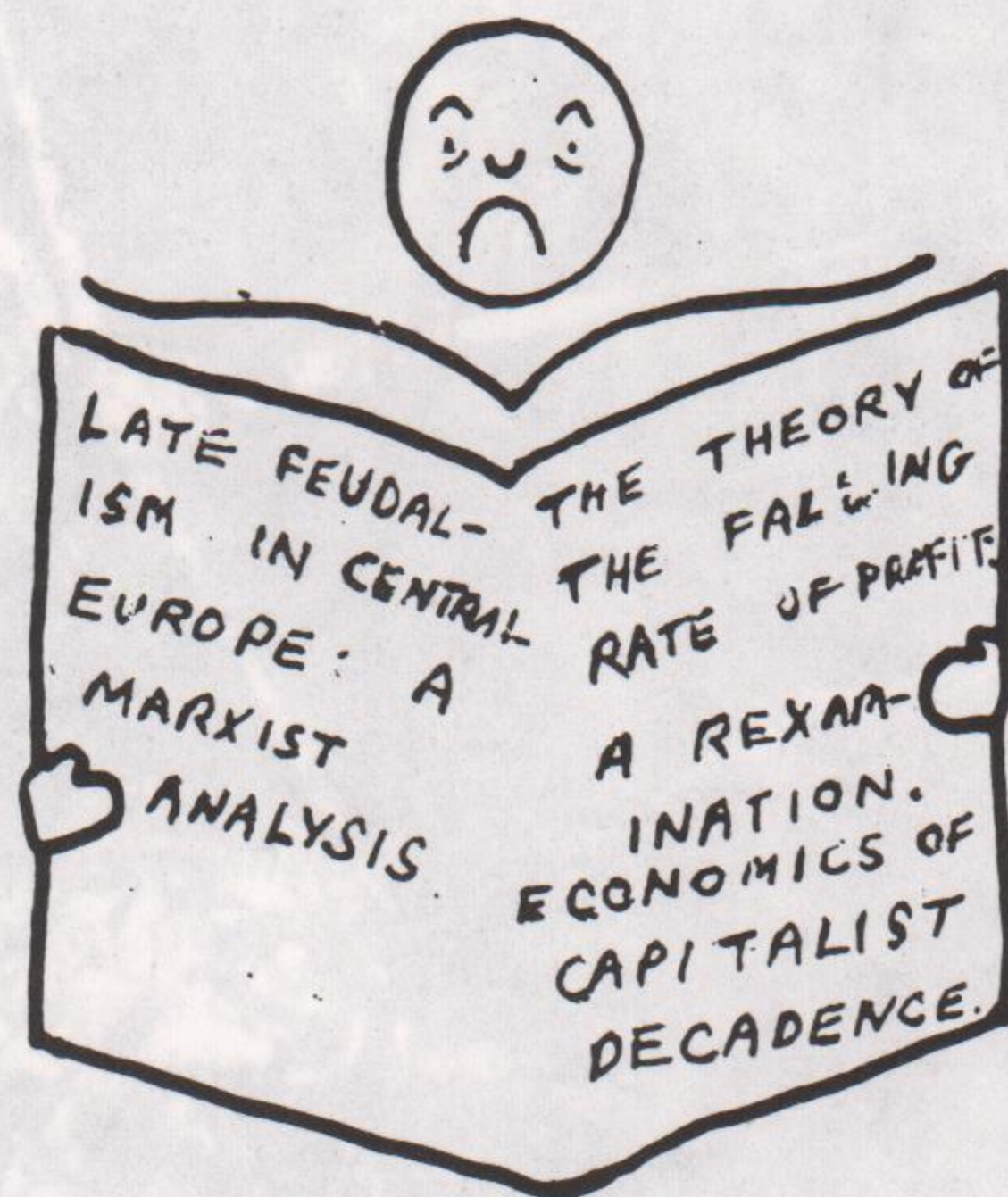
SHEILA RITCHIE'S article posed the question: "Why are there so few women in Libertarian groups?" a particularly important one for the Libertarian left. In reply I have chosen to concentrate on only one aspect of the problem. This does not mean this is the most important aspect but it is one that I feel may be passed over too easily. To forestall irate letters from comrades in Libertarian groups I do realize that some publications have been concerned with women. However, I feel that this does not alter my main point, which is, that they do not appear to devote as much of their activity or interest to the whole spectrum of problems arising from social relationships as perhaps, as Libertarian Socialists, they ought.

Sheila rightly accuses trad left groups of jumping on the 'Women's Liberation bandwagon', and of launching campaigns to recruit women to add to the party numbers. However, Libertarian groups cannot afford to be too self-righteous about their own activities (or rather lack of them) on issues that affect not only women but all who claim to be socialists.

It is hardly surprising that women who have come to the left through the Women's Liberation Movement do not feel drawn to Libertarian groups. It is inevitable that they are going to want to relate their experiences as women to their socialist viewpoint. They are going to want to know what each group feels about women and the WLM. It may be illegitimate for the trad revs to present women with glossy brochures stating their great concern for female liberation (e.g. the CPGB 'Women: Oppression and Liberation', 1976). This is clearly done to recruit more cannon-fodder to be used in selling *Morning Star*, *Socialist Worker*, et al. But is the apparent neglect of women by the Libertarian groups (to judge by their publications) any more legitimate?

I heard it said at a conference of one Libertarian group recently that it was only valid to write about things of which the author has personal experience, or, in the case of historical pamphlets, a particular interest. Does this mean that people in Libertarian groups have no experience of sexism, or of relating to women, or perhaps they have no interest in these issues? This is how it would seem to many women who are attracted to the ideas of the Libertarian left. They can find very little in the publications of the groups to indicate that they too are concerned with the problems of sexism in contemporary society. I agree that

people should write about things that they are involved in or deeply interested in. However, it is perhaps not surprising that women refuse to join groups where individuals have considered it more important to write about 'Mutinies in the 1st World War' or 'A contribution to the critique of Marx', than about sexism which concerns us all and should vitally concern Libertarians.



I am not here advocating that the predominantly male membership of Libertarian groups should rush for their pens and write articles about women's liberation. Obviously men cannot tell women how they can achieve their liberation. But sexism does not only act against women, it also brands boys and men who cry as 'sissies'. Men who want to stay at home and look after their children are regarded as 'sponging' on their women. In writing about these things male-dominated Libertarian groups might legitimately enter the debate about sexual roles and their perpetuation via social conditioning. This would, incidentally, provide a fresh, and relatively unusual, viewpoint to the problem - few articles on the problems of the 'gender trap' are written about men, by men.

It is easy to see why so few Libertarian publications are about women: there are very few Libertarian women. Men in Libertarian groups have in the past probably avoided writing directly about women's liberation for fear of being branded as 'interventionists'. This is a natural fear. But I rather wonder if this timidity has not been, probably unconsciously, used as a defence against getting down to writing about issues concerning relationships between the sexes (which could legitimately be written by men). Perhaps, it could be more realistically attributed to a lack of immediate interest on the part of individual members.

To say that members of Libertarian groups are uninterested in the problems of women (and role conditioning in general) would be unfair. But the interest is clearly not a very active one, and this should provide cause for concern. If the men in these groups feel unable to write specific articles about women's problems, as they quite legitimately may, then there is still much they can do. Their contribution is of central importance to any attack on role conditioning in our society. Clearly publications on specific women's issues cannot be produced without more women members. This is rather a chicken and egg problem, but very few women who have had experience of the WLM are so narrow that they are interested only in these specific problems. This is particularly true of those who have 'filtered through' to the left. The accusation of 'lack of interest' may not be true of the actual opinions within Libertarian groups, but for a women not familiar with these groups it would be a natural conclusion to reach from a survey of their publications. It is hardly surprising, then, if many women are discouraged by this conclusion and turn to trad left groups.

Jane Weake

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Gosh!

woof!

Male Apologism?

THE following article, 'Some Stuff to hit Male Apologists with', comes from the *Mens News* newsletter. It was sent to us by a member of London Group SR who recommended it to us for publication and who writes:

"Thanks to Peter for these extracts, which happen to match pretty closely the feelings of one member of SR . . . not necessarily representative of the group's collective view!"

Along with the article we print a comment on it written by two members of Aberdeen Group SR.

SOME STUFF TO HIT MALE APOLOGISTS WITH

***Male Apologist: a man who puts woman's liberation before his own, ie sheer sexist chivalry, and a further masculine ego trip into the bargain.**

WOMEN'S Liberation has among other things been concerned to raise the awareness of women to their manipulation, whilst men with some notion of what feminism is about have followed in the wake of this awareness, ie to become aware of their sexist roles. So we have angry women and guilty men!

This situation does *nothing* to resolve society's manipulation of the sexes, and indeed exacerbates the already polarised situation of relationships between men and women.

... No amount of individual effort will reduce the *production* of sexism; the existence of separate groups of angry women and guilty men could be seen as a further extension of sexism.

... Women are deprived of aspects of social and economic quality, and men are deprived of aspects of sensual and emotional psychology, then there is a case for men's liberation on this score alone. But add to this his role as soldier and miner etc, and his mutilating masochistic involvement in manly sports and annihilating wars, and it is clear his liberation from such devastating sexist necessities is of paramount importance to him. For man to put women's liberation before his own is as suspect as a white man championing the black man's cause, or the bourgeois the workers' — one is suspicious of their real motives.

Yet feminist men have widely held the view that sexism is man-made for the oppression of women, and even that some change of heart in men or even some legislation could alter his behaviour. But whether his behaviour is genetic or due to social factors, no amount of 'legislation' (at personal levels) or any psycho-awareness will do anything more than to make him more at odds with himself . . . alienated from his own feelings.

So while some men may struggle for aspects such as equality with women, they will be hard put to finally change their behaviour and social relationships without changing the whole social structure from birth to grave. I believe we should examine the whole spectrum with a view to restructuring society for men's liberation, without detriment to women. I

see no point in tagging along in a new 'non-sexist' chivalry that ingratiates us into women's 'good books' . . .

You cannot abolish sexism on a purely personal basis, any more than you can abolish class society on a purely personal basis.

... Male Assertion Bit: We are men and we are not going to apologise for it. If we fuck women up, and ourselves in the process, we blame capitalist society's expectations and conditioning of us, its values and its norms. We need a new society...

... Ever heard of Tokenism? There's a new one going round...

... ingratiates himself in front of women.. being in deadly earnest about men's relationship to the women's movement... embarrassingly eager even when other women are not... more radical than thou attitude... scoring points / one-upmanship / put-downs: all the competition that flourishes amongst sexist men for women's attention, continuing under a different guise...

... We hugged and kissed at the barrier,
At passport control.
I caught some people looking at us
And I thought
'I suppose they think we're gay
Well that's OK.'
And I wanted to say
'It's OK for men to hug and kiss,
Gay or not,
It's OK to love one another.
It's more than OK to show it.
And it's OK, OK, OK — great — to be
friends
Like him and me.'

from *Men's News* fourth Newsletter, published by Mile End Men's Group. No.5 out soon from 33 Tredeger Square, London E3.

WE HAVE fundamental disagreements with much of the 'Some Stuff to hit Male Apologists with' article. Nevertheless it brings up some important issues which are often ignored in the discussion of sexual politics.

More people are now aware of how sex-role stereotyping exploits and oppresses women. What's less widely realised is that today's sex roles also oppress men. Men are brought up to repress their emotions, to believe that it's 'manly' to endure arduous and unsafe working conditions, and to regard killing or being killed with 'the Professionals' as 'a real man's life'. Thus men's fight against sex roles involves not only their striving not to oppress women but also their fighting against the oppression of men by sex roles. Often the two will go together. For example, by taking an equal share in childcare men will both be playing a part in ending the unfair set-up whereby the whole burden of childcare is placed on women, and will also be gaining the opportunity of doing work which can be very rewarding if the conditions are right. The recognition by the *Men's News* article that sex roles also oppress men and that men have to fight to overcome that oppression is that article's strongest point.

However we think it's important to recognise that under capitalism's sex-roles women suffer considerably greater oppression than men. Women suffer from lower wages and less opportunities, and the burden of being expected to do almost all the domestic work and childcare. Further, women, as well as men, are oppressed emotionally through their being conditioned to depend emotionally on men. And while these aspects of oppression all derive from the capitalist system they do still involve, particularly with regard to domestic work, childcare and emotional conditioning, the oppression of women by men within the working class.*

We agree with the article that relationships between men and women can only be completely transformed when the entire structure of society is revolutionised. However, we insist that we can and must start fighting sexism in our everyday lives now. If the *Men's News* article really means, as it seems to, that nothing can be done until the revolution, we condemn that approach as completely sterile.** We believe that the means and the ends are inextricably connected. A non-sexist society can only be created by a working class which is already consciously attempting to overcome sexism in both its organisations and in everyday life.

In trying to defeat sexism, working collectively and comparing experiences with others can be a big help. Thus we believe that men's groups could potentially be very valuable. Similarly, we believe an independent Women's Liberation Movement to be vital in the fight against sexism.

We completely disagree with the article's implication that the Women's Liberation Movement has not had a positive effect in the fight against sexism. The women's movement has done much to increase consciousness among women about how they are oppressed, and has provided a means whereby they can fight that oppression. Women have every right to be 'angry' about the way they're oppressed as women; just as workers, women and men, have every right to be angry about the way they're oppressed as workers. We agree with the article that men reacting to the Women's Liberation Movement by being guilty and apologetic is not a productive response.

We believe that the women's movement, men's groups and united action by women and men have all an important part to play in the fight against sexism. Hopefully, as consciousness grows united action on a basis of equality will become more common and will be increasingly directed not only against the symptoms of sexism but also against the capitalist society which produces the disease.

Mike and Sandy

*By working class we mean all those people (and their dependents) who own no substantial part of the means of production, so are forced to sell their ability to work to an employer: ie the working class includes teachers, industrial workers, office workers, agricultural and laboratory workers, etc.

**A pamphlet which we'd recommend here is *The Irrational in Politics* by M Brinton: available from SOLIDARITY (London), c/o 123 Latham Road, E6 (40p + post).

WORLD WIDE

Workers & Bureaucrats :



THE SUMMER OF 1976 was for Polish working people a summer of discontent. On June 24 the Prime Minister announced increases in the price of food. Meat was to go up 60%, vegetables 30%, sugar 100%, cheese and butter 50%, and fish 69%. Compensatory wage rises of 200 zloties (the average wage is 3,000Z a month) were proposed to offset this. However, those on 6,000Z or more were to receive 600Z more. Thus the vast differentials in income and status between workers and bureaucrats were clearly underlined.

The workers, echoing the events of 1970 when strikes against price rises led to the downfall of Gomulka, had no other means of expression to go on strike in protest.

On June 25 Warsaw witnessed a wave of strikes. 5,000 workers at the Ursus tractor plant came out. During the night they halted traffic on the Poznan to Warsaw railway line, derailing a train and tearing up the tracks, thus backing up their demands with the most militant direct action.

Other factories followed suit — the Zeran plant which makes Polski Fiat cars, the Karol Swierczewski plant, the Tewa transistor factory, (which employs mainly women workers), all came out.

Rapidly the strike spread, affecting factories in Poznan, Wroclaw, Lodz, Gdansk and other major cities. In Lodz the Elta transformer factory stopped work to present its demands for a review of the price rises to the government. In Gdansk the shipyards and the refinery struck. In the Baltic Sea ports dockers refused to load food destined for export. Troops were sent to Nova Huta near Cracow to try to work the steel mills there.

In Radom, an industrial town 100km south of Warsaw, striking workers marched on the local Party headquarters and set fire to it. (In Poland the ruling party is called the United Workers' Party — a 100% misnomer). Fighting broke out between police and workers, the latter barricading the streets. At least two people were killed. The rioting stopped only when the rises were rescinded.

In Plock 1,500 marched with red flags, singing the *Internationale*. The bureaucracy counter-attacked by slandering the strikers as 'firebrands', 'rioters and hooligans', 'parasitic and anti-socialist elements', 'hysterical women and drunken hooligans'. Reluctant workers in Warsaw and Katowice were forced to participate in what the

official press called 'a powerful and patriotic demonstration of trust in the Party and State leadership'.

The reason for the rise in prices, frozen since 1970, was simply that Poland, which has recently been increasingly integrated into the world economy, is being adversely affected by the crisis of capitalism. Subordination to the interests of the USSR through COMECON and the Warsaw Pact, increases in the price of oil, the heavy expenditure on arms, the poor harvests of 1974/5 and the consequent import of grain, as well as the debt of seven million dollars to the West all made the situation worse. Somebody had to pay; obviously the bureaucrats wouldn't; so the burden fell on the shoulders of the working class.

Polish workers spend 40% of their income on food, so in many cases the price rises would have doubled the cost of living. They also suffer from lack of consumer goods and inflation (the money supply has doubled in four years). The housing shortage is acute — the numbers of persons per housing unit is the highest in Europe. There are 1½ million families without their own separate dwelling space. Waiting time for a home is 10 years.

For two years discontent had been growing. In 1974 there were strikes by miners in Katowice and dockers in Gdynia. Angry women demolished a grocery store in Warsaw in 1975. In 1976 discontent exploded into action.

24 hours after the rises were announced, Prime Minister Jaroszewicz went on TV to call them off. However, he still maintained that 'the present structure of prices has become a barrier to further development'. Two days later the rises were reimposed at half the former level.

Naively the workers felt this to be a victory. It was, however, short-lived. As they lit celebratory fires the police intervened, charging with batons, firing tear gas and dealing out systematic beatings-up. In Radom 400 workers were arrested.

On July 19, six of them were brought to trial accused of attacking the forces of order, taking an active part in demonstrations and destroying 'socialist' property. They received the following sentences —

Zigmund Zabrowski: 10 years
Ryszard Gnidzein: 9 years
Tadeus Mitaz: 8 years
Wojciech Mitak: 6 years
Stanislaw Gosh: 5 years
Henryk Bednarczyk: 4 years

A concentration camp for political prisoners has been built near Radom.

The next day seven Ursus workers were put on trial *in camera* in Warsaw charged with sabotage. One of them twice tried to say he had been beaten during questioning but was silenced by the court's president. Miroslav Chmielewski, Gregoroz Zielonka, Eugeniusz Dzielak, Czeslaw Milezarek, Wojciech Czarniecki, Josef Jaworski and Miroslaw Kabowiak were sentenced to 3 to 5 years each.



Workers raiding shops in Gdansk in 1970

During July 23/24 there were large-scale arrests of workers, some 600 at the Ursus plant, several hundred at Radom, 150 at the Plock refinery, 30 at the Plock agricultural machine plant. A thousand or more have been suspended from work for three months, their reinstatement being conditional on their accepting lower wages. Some 20,000 workers have been fired for taking part

THE SAME CLASS STRUGGLE

POLES APART!

in the strikes. The Ursus workers, however, fought back: 800 of them signed a petition demanding the reinstatement of their dismissed comrades.

Jacek Kuron, who was imprisoned in 1966 for his authorship of an open letter to the Party calling for socialist democracy based on workers' councils, addressed a letter to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Italy asking him to intervene on behalf of the Polish workers. As a result, Kuron was con-

methods as hooliganism. It has to be clearly underlined that the responsibility for violating laws lies with the administration which by its behaviour has undermined the essential forms of workers' democracy."

Stalinist First Secretary Gierek denounced the *Petition of the 59*, which received widespread support in the form of open letters to the Polish Parliament, as a miserable attempt to revive obsolete bourgeois concepts. His comments on the *Appeal of the 13* are unknown.

Workers found less conditional methods of expressing their solidarity: a train-load of timber bound for Radom from Szczecin was painted with the words: "People of Radom, the population of Szczecin is with you."

Meanwhile the trials continue. Five workers had their prison sentences suspended, but three others were jailed for 3 years. One of them, Marck Majewski, had his jaw broken by the police. A Defence Committee of 20 workers accused the police of extreme brutality towards the arrested, claiming that defendants, lawyers and observers were beaten up in a court-house in Radom.

In the last decade there have been three anti-stalinist upsurges in Poland — 1968, 1970, 1976, and the struggle is by no means over. Despite the repression a large amount of *samizdat* material continues to circulate. Amongst it is an open letter from Lipinski in which he asserts: "The imposition of the Soviet system has devastated our moral and social life." In another open letter veteran communist Wladyslaw Bienkowski complains of the censorship of Polish history by the Soviet authorities.

Most significant is the *Programme of the Polish Coalition for Independence*: its authors claim that the Eastern Bloc is in a state of grave crisis. They write: "We must at all times be prepared with alternative plans and goals. This is above all the duty of the intelligentsia. . . it is also the task of the most numerous social group, namely the industrial workers, who command the greatest power."

The workers of Poland have a long way to go before, as part of the world working class, they help to win the final victory and take part in the construction of libertarian communism; but the strikes of 1976, like the Hungarian uprising on 1956, point the way ahead.

Taras Malenko



scripted for army service in Soviet Asia.

The economist Edward Lipinski, author of the *Petition of the 59* which called for effective democratic liberties, and a dozen other intellectuals appealed to all those who have democratic socialism at heart. Their appeal states:

"It is our duty to oppose the definition of workers' demonstrations against social injustice and authoritarian power

Ireland

Since the publication of John Carlton's article 'The War in Ireland' in *SR6* we have received a number of reactions and comments which are reprinted here together with an Aberdeen Group editorial reply.

Dear *Social Revolution*

After reading in the last issue of *SR* a rather confused article "The War in Ireland", I would like to make some points about the article

1) The suggestion that 'away from the corner of Ireland where the butchery is going on, most workers in both Britain and Ireland could not give a damn about what is happening' is both absurd and patronising, disregarding the fact that butchery has taken place in Dublin, London, Birmingham and so on. Or did Bloody Sunday or the Birmingham bombings pass by un-noticed.

2) The author expresses (on behalf of *SR* ??) that it is of little concern to socialists if members of the army or police are killed in Ireland as "they had crossed the class barrier." Would the author be similarly unconcerned over the deaths of *any* workers who by their work further the interests of capitalism? For example the arms manufacturers, teachers who indoctrinate kids, foremen who keep the line going, social workers who keep the holes patched, journalists and print-workers on newspapers, shop assistants who sell people crap they don't need — the list is endless. Agreed, there is a question of degree over how much different groups reinforce capitalism — but don't be kidded that every teacher, printer — or policeman or soldier likes the job or what they are forced to do. How many people have a free choice?

In my experience few squaddies want to be in Ireland, many wouldn't even be in the forces if they could help it. Has John Carlton any idea of the pressure and lies which attract young folk off the dole into the forces and does he have any idea that squaddies have been known to desert, go AWOL or even disable themselves rather than go to Ireland?

3) The author welcomes the resistance by people in Ireland to the British army. He praises the "especially heroic children" — there's nought heroic about wee kids heaving rocks at soldiers (or buses, as happened when I was in Belfast!), risking a bullet in return. It's bloody stupidity.

Nor has any Belfast worker sniping at soldiers or blowing up shops brought a political solution one bloody bit closer.

Resistance to oppression should be shown not by erecting parallel armies to

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the British, nor by manipulating kids but by reaching across the barrier of the gun. By both communities resisting bad housing, low pay and discrimination. And that must include making contact with the soldiers to show regard for them as human beings and to win their support.

On the "mainland" we too have a job as well by *our* resistance — by contacting soldiers and potential soldiers with anti-militarist material, and by working to expose those 'lefts' who give support to reactionary, hierarchical and anti-working class groups like the Provos.

**Ross Bradshaw
Ellon, Aberdeenshire**

Dear *Social Revolution*,

We were surprised by the article on N. Ireland by John Carlton in *SR* 6.

You argue that the troops out slogan is absurd because "what makes the British army an obscene anti-working class force in Ireland also makes it an obscene anti-working class force in Britain too. A demand to move troops out of one country and into another makes no sense for internationalists..." You say you are against national self-determination because in the context of world economic forces only international self-determination for the working class is progressive.

We would like to reply to these arguments.

We agree that the British army would, in Britain, be an anti-working class force, but this does not alter our resolution to work for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Such a demand would be placed in the context of a struggle against the present crisis of the bosses' economy, in which they are attempting to make workers pay for their failures. Naturally we expect and work for a solution to the crisis in which jobs and services are guaranteed, leading on to a general social revolution. In this *process* the armed forces would be reduced in strength and destroyed as workers' militias are created. Like you we have no "romantic illusions" as to our potential influence, and over the possibility of such a solution — social revolution — taking place tomorrow.

We disagree with you however when your concern for internationalism (which we share) leads you to neglect the influence of British imperialism in Ireland. Your statement that the troops are anti-working class on both sides of the Irish sea neglects the uneven nature of capitalist development which allowed for British imperialism in the first place. We believe that the withdrawal of British troops would weaken the Orange state of Ulster. At the moment the troops there act to protect that state. Thus they harass and disarm the Catholics whilst leaving the Protestant groups to develop. In the 1974 Ulster workers council strike they refused to break the strike to defend the Sunningdale agreements against the force of the chauvinist section of the Protestants backed, if not dominated, by the force of the UDA. In such ways the Orange state has been protected and maintained. Economically there is little basis for any socialist movement among the Protestant workers because their

higher housing and job standards depend on the suppression of Catholics. Thus the presence of troops there guarantees this authoritarian conservative state, led by the ruling class owners and petty-bourgeois Paisleyite fascists. We do not believe that the troops' withdrawal *necessitates* a socialist solution, which is our goal, but it would facilitate such a solution. Nor do we have any illusions on the subject of the petty-bourgeois IRA. A defeat for the armed forces of British imperialism would be a *step* towards socialism. We would support any socialist initiatives by workers in Ireland, and we see the development of such a movement as the precondition for social revolution.

Because our support for Troops Out is placed in the context of a struggle against the bosses' crisis we do not think that we are confusing people, or arguing that the army should be used against the British working class, as your article might suggest.

We therefore support the slogans of "Troops Out" and "national self-determination".

revolutionary greetings,

**Yorkshire Anarchist Workers
Association**

Dear *Social Revolution*,

Comments on an article "The War in Ireland" from *Social Revolution* 6. A number of flaws mar an otherwise excellent piece of writing. The author states: "When it comes to violence, it is not all the same to socialists whoever happens to be on the receiving end. Of the 1391 people killed up to the end of 1975, for example, 246 were soldiers in the British army and 131 were police. No doubt, many of these troops and police were of working class origin but that is not sufficient to win them our sympathy. In joining the Army and the police, they had crossed a class barrier and . . . become part of the state's armoury of repression and hence enemies of their own class." He adds: ". . . soldiers in Britain on leave from N. E. Ireland can walk the streets in or out of uniform without encountering the slightest hostility from the working class." Surely all this misses an important point? The comment about socialist attitudes to violence sounds uncomfortably like Trotsky's dictum about 'morality depending on who holds the machine-gun'. Of course we would be deluding ourselves if we thought that the state would refrain from a violent upsurge *a la* 1968. Examples abound to the contrary. But we don't have to glory in the prospect, do we? Wading through blood and gore towards Socialism would inevitably affect our goal. It's the old interrelationship between means and ends. The means affect the end, and the end will condition the means used to effect it. It seems obvious, but how few 'socialists' realise it.

Undoubtedly, most of the troops in Northern Ireland are 'working class' in origin. But why are they there? In major areas of Britain, 'joining the Professionals' is the only escape from the prospect of unemployment. I'm thinking, for example, of kids in South Wales. The

induction of unemployed kids into the Armed Forces is, and always has been, a sort of *de facto* conscription: 'You're a fine upstanding lad, will you take the Queen's shilling?' No compulsion, save the prospect of months or years of soul-destroying unemployment. I would certainly not ascribe any conspiracy theory to this point, but I am equally sure that the Army knows where to pitch its 'market appeal'. I would hazard that it gets rather fewer recruits from S. E. England, than it does from South Wales, Scotland, or N. E. England? To smear these kids as 'class enemies' is to either tell them to stay unemployed and like it, or tell them to move somewhere else and look for work: options that the average 'left' would choke over, if they were applied to any other sort of worker. (e.g. an out-of-work miner). It also sounds suspiciously as though there are some jobs that can be regarded as 'ideologically pure', where others are not. If so, this is a myth. All jobs involve a cop-out when it comes to socialist content. Most pit differing groups of workers (women/men, black/white, manual/non-manual)



against each other. The Army is undoubtedly an instrument of internal control (and not just for the British ruling elite) as its current guru Kitson would confirm. But it is full of kids whose conditions are even more regimented, immature, and moronised than those of the majority. And I doubt whether the kids are too happy about it. Ten or fifteen years ago a kid with short hair and ears like taxi-cab doors didn't stand out like a sore thumb from his 'civvy' mates. There were vicarious gratifications to compensate for having NCOs etc., shit all over you, treat you as though you were a brainless little cog. You could get an easy tour abroad with little danger — or, in a police action, go and beat up an Aden Arab, a Malayan or Cypriot peasant. Now it's all changed. The Third World holiday tours have ended, and the locals now get beaten up by their own police. All that's left, apart from the NATO contingent in Germany, is Northern Ireland.

Recently a Solidarity comrade overheard two Army recruits on a train. They'd just got a posting. One was going to Ireland — to Bomb Disposal. He was about 17 and he was terrified. Can we dismiss this with a 'Well, tough luck for being a class enemy'? Legitimate targets?

The reason some kid on leave, no matter how dressed — the hair and the ears are uniform enough — can walk around the UK without hostility, is that they are *not* the embodiment of a 'brutal and biased capitalist 'law and order' ' to their friends, neighbours and even vague acquaintances. They are 'John from next door', or 'Mrs Owen's eldest'. Working people may not be totally clued up on Army repression (which of course exists on a massive scale) but they do know that it's shitty over in Northern Ireland. Perhaps they notice that 'Mrs Owen's eldest' has grown 'older'? Not through greater maturity, responsibility, or control over his own life, but because of the strain.

If we, as socialists in a revolutionary situation, faced the Armed Forces (a situation which is not happening in Ireland, despite the 'left' rhetoric of both IRAs), what would be our attitude to soldiers — other than in a situation of personal self-defence? Would we shoot as many as possible? I hope not. It would hardly be the best way of defeating the predictable descriptions of us as 'men of violence', 'animals' that the media would indulge in? Most revolutionary situations have featured disaffection in the Armed Forces. Fostering such disaffection in such a situation would be essential for the success of the working people. This is not to advocate reliance on the Army for a Revolution. Let's have no more 'MFA-Povo; Povo-MFA' illusions. We're not talking about getting more 'lefts' on the General Staff, we're talking about neutralising the Army. Army searches

may have covered 75,000 out of 400,000 households per year (and doubtless many of these were visited at least once, so that the real figure is something less than 75,000 *separate* households) but whether they could cope with a mass upsurge of socialist content, relatively free from nationalist, religious and state-capitalist illusions, would depend on their own confidence. A confident, disciplined Army could repress all or Northern Ireland — or anywhere else. A disaffected Army could not. Half your problem disappears if your actions and attitudes are such as to discredit the self-image of the Forces as a bastion against barbarism. Small wonder then, that soldiers on leave can walk unmolested in the UK. The sectarianism of Ulster have fallen right into the trap. A policy of sickening the British public with violence is hardly calculated to foster any other sort of picture. I have yet to hear any of the pro-IRA Trots explain the precise socialist content of shooting paraplegics in the back of the neck? Or perhaps Big Flame could tell me? And a big danger of the Trot-dominated Troops Out Movement is that its appeal would engender a demand based on pure racist contempt for the Irish. The likelihood is that if the Army withdraws, it will do so in a spirit that has anything but socialist

content.

Much as I agree with the sentiments expressed by Social Revolution on the subject of TOM, I feel that the point has been missed. The criticism of TOM for its lack of an internationalist perspective, rather descends — or ascends — into almost pure millenarianism: "Instead of 'Self-Determination for the Irish People as a Whole', we look to Class Determination for the Workers of the World as a Whole." It is more relevant to point out the basic contradiction in TOM: its joint stand of 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-Determination for the Irish people'. On a visit to Ireland some months ago, I found that no political grouping (Provisional IRA through Unionists) or the Unions wanted the withdrawal of troops in the immediate future. The two demands of TOM are incompatible, if we are to assume that the views of such people are representative of the wishes of the Irish people as a whole. Withdrawing troops (i.e. sending them to Germany to bring our NATO contribution up to par) is not what the Irish seem to want. So where does that leave TOM?

One suggestion that I heard was that individual communities (on village or district level) should make up their own minds about the cessation of Army activity in their area, and the return to civilian norms (but not to the RUC). If a district decided that it wanted the troops to return to barracks, then they could do so. Ideally a local non-sectarian militia could take over 'policing'. The example might be infectious, although I imagine the paramilitaries would try and wreck it — or, worse, exploit it. A decision by working people to take the organisation of their own defence would be something we could applaud if it occurred. Such a non-sectarian activity could stand against the forces of both State and Sectarians — and would be more use than all the prayers and misdirected courage of the Peace Movement. I am not claiming that anything of this sort is happening in Northern Ireland, merely passing on the view of one man I met in Derry. Too many ideal solutions have been dreamed up in London in the past. But I must emphasise that not all the people in Ulster want the troops back in the barracks, let alone back across the Irish sea. What does TOM think of them? Are they to be allowed self-determination, or are they to be consigned to the 'dustbin of history'?

Finally, it seems inappropriate to dismiss 'World Revolution' as the "Jehovah's Witnesses of Socialism" (a description I thought reserved for the WRP, in any case), when there is a significant millenarian element in the writing of the SRG itself; perhaps a part of the SPGB heritage. It too often serves to disguise a lack of concrete proposals for *now*. (see, for example, "Low Fares or No Fares in SR6.") Perhaps all that I've written here may be a bit mundane, even a bit reformist — not the stuff of the Apocalypse — but I hope it focuses on recognisable problems. Even if my answers are the 'wrong' ones.

In fraternal — and I hope, constructive — criticism,

A Solidarity Comrade
(name and address supplied)

Editorial Group Reply

Original article:

While agreeing with most of the article, we feel that to consider people to have 'crossed a class barrier' by joining the police or army is to ignore the pressures on unemployed young people to join up and the enticing lies told about army life especially: it also rules out trying to contact and speak to those trapped within the army. Similarly, we don't think they are 'legitimate targets' for the Provos or any other military grouping. We agree, however, with the original article on the point that workers should defend themselves against harassments of their communities. We don't object to British troops because they are British but because they are troops repressing working class communities.

Ross Bradshaw's letter:

While we would disagree that the SR6 article was 'confused' (in fact we reckon it was pretty clear), from what we've said above it's obvious that we agree with much of what Ross says, particularly about the value of anti-recruiting and other anti-militarist activities. We feel the original article was right in summing up the amount of apathy that exists towards the suffering in the north of Ireland and the hate and contempt people on one side of the Irish Sea have for those on the other.

Letter from Yorkshire AWA:

We don't think 'national self-determination' is possible for any country in these times when the world is chopped into 'spheres of influence' by the major powers (USSR, USA, China). Any nation achieving its 'independence' is forced to tie itself to one or other super-power or walk a perikous edge between them; and as the article argued in length, those who would do the 'determination' would be the new, native ruling class in line with the interests of their masters in Moscow, Washington or Peking.

The article also stated in general why SR do not support the 'Troops Out' slogan: more particularly, it would not be a 'defeat for the armed forces of British imperialism' if the army were withdrawn because the British government no longer thought the troops' presence in its interests, or because of campaigns on the 'mainland' without that withdrawal being brought about by a united campaign of both 'protestant' and 'catholic' workers in the north of Ireland. A withdrawal brought about by actions or decisions on the "mainland" would leave unchanged the attitudes both of soldiers in the army and of people in the north of Ireland.

One aspect that has not been given enough consideration is the alternative to the 'authoritarian conservative state' the Yorkshire AWA letter mentions — the most probable one is an authoritarian

continued on page 14

IRELAND

continued from page 13

conservative state, a 'united Ireland' dominated by the Catholic Church as the south is now, an end to all contraception and abortion facilities It's hardly surprising that many people, particularly 'protestants', are opposed to it. In real terms, these factors amount to more than the slight privileges (eg better slums) that they presently enjoy. (We're not ignoring ideological and religious factors, just mentioning others normally ignored.)

Solidarity member's letter:

Of all the views expressed this is one we sympathise with most. We would agree fully with every major point made, especially the 'class barrier' and 'legitimate targets' ones. We also agree about the importance of 'disaffection', as mentioned, 'Troops Out' seems to be a policy pursued actively only by TOM, and too many failed solutions were thought up on this side of the Irish Sea. The 'lack of romantic illusions' which the original article claimed SR had *can* lead to a situation where 'realists' sit back and condemn those trying to defend themselves against the encroachments of the system as 'reformists': they end up by doing nothing except advocating disconnected utopias.

In the immediate situation we would support moves towards unity between 'protestant' and 'catholic' workers on issues affecting all of them, such as the atrocious housing conditions, unemployment, low pay and community-based issues. We look upon these as the first steps towards the unity necessary before it is possible to work seriously for a socialist society.

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invites your suggestions as to how we can best celebrate 25 years of this parasite. A sae will bring a selection of stickers. A donation quite a lot more.

MAAM, c/o 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1

DISSENT IN RUSSIA

Terry Liddle (Social Revolution London) speaks to Lewisham Humanist Group at Unitarian Meeting Hall, 41 Bromley Road, Catford SE6, on Thursday June 30th at 7.45pm

Ripped Off!

London Group SR recently lost a lot of mail when Rising Free was broken into. If you've written and not received a reply your letter must have been stolen: please write again.

LONDON SR GROUP

MAYDAY SOCIAL

Contact if you'd like to come

Andō Shōeki

A Japanese Winstanley

GERRARD WINSTANLEY's name crops up in most books which deal with the history of socialist/anarchist/communist thought. Winstanley and his comrades might have been unsuccessful in their efforts to establish thriving Digger communities in Surrey and elsewhere but there was a kind of good fortune in the fact that they made their attempts against the backcloth of one of the great revolutionary upheavals of all times — the English Civil War. Radicalized and inspired by the revolutionary course taken by events in seventeenth century England, Winstanley argued the Diggers' case for agrarian communism in a succession of pamphlets with titles like *The New Law Of Righteousness*. Winstanley's language might since have become archaic but his message can still inspire, especially when we read:

When this universal law of equity rises up in every man and woman, then none shall lay claim to any creature and say, This is mine, and that is yours. This is my work, that is yours. But every one shall put to their hands to till the earth and bring up cattle, and the blessing of the earth shall be common to all; when a man hath need of any corn or cattle, take from the next store-house he meets with. There shall be no buying and selling, no fairs or markets, but the whole earth shall be a common treasury

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY JAPAN

Equally unsuccessful as Winstanley in terms of any practical achievement during his lifetime was a country doctor in eighteenth century Japan called Andō * Shōeki. Yet, despite the fact that one will find hardly a reference to Andō in any history of socialist thought published in the West, the agrarian communist doctrine which he stealthily spread was an even more remarkable *intellectual* achievement than Winstanley's, given the incredibly harsh conditions which Andō worked under.

Japan in the eighteenth century was a closed country which had already been cut off from the outside world for a hundred years. Closing the country to overseas trade and to influences from abroad had been the deliberate response of the Japanese government early in the seventeenth century to the threat of colonisation by the empire-building

直耕、安食、安衣、アルミニ
 自然ニハ乱モナク
 天下ヲ治ムト云フハ失リナリ

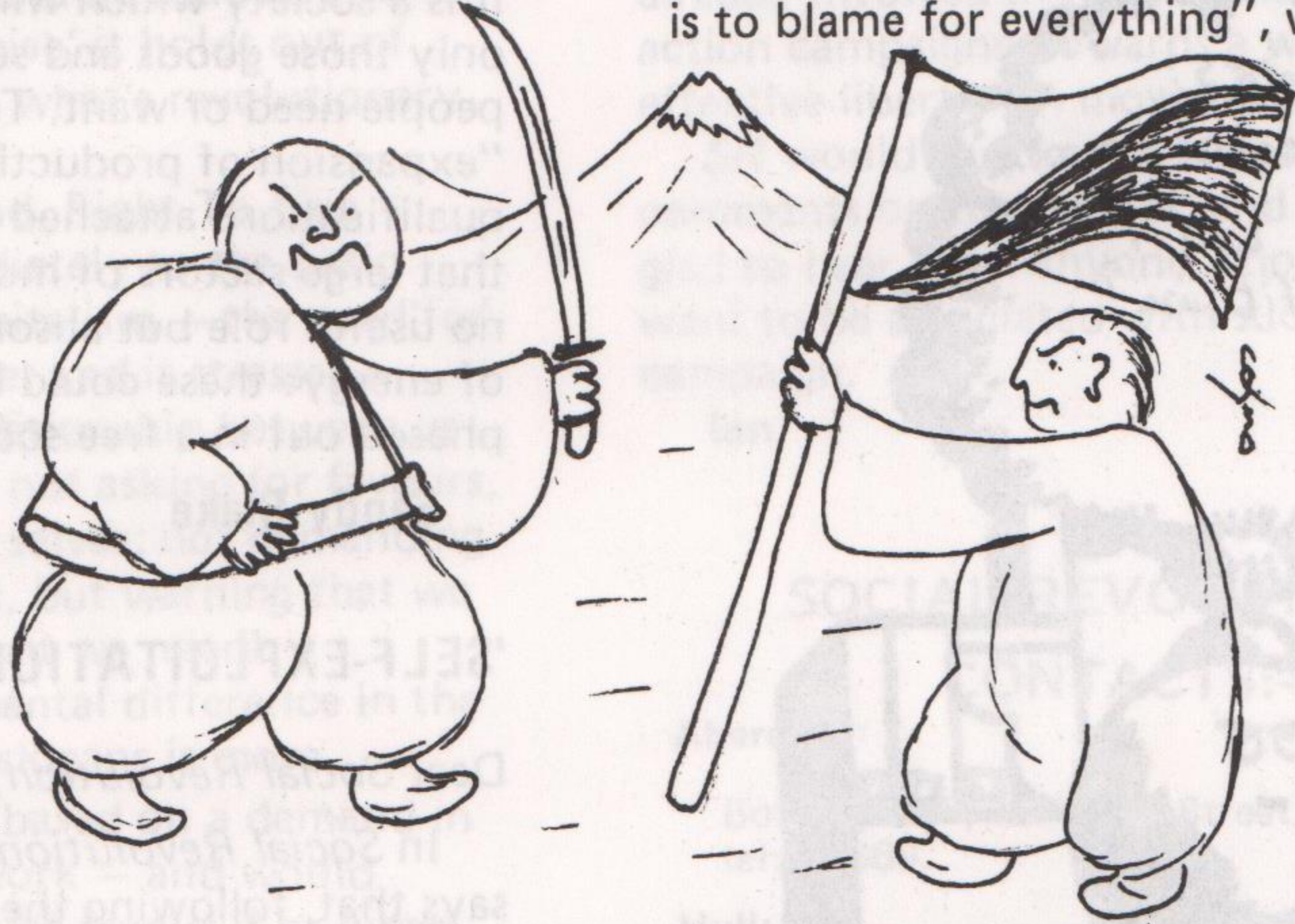
nations of Western Europe (principally Spain at that time). It was a policy which was then to remain in force right through to the middle of the nineteenth century, Japan only eventually being forced out of its isolation by the intrusion of militarily superior American naval power in the 1850s and 1860s.

Not only was Japan almost completely cut off from the outside world in Andō Shōeki's day, but the country's isolation retarded the development of capitalism. Despite the increasing economic influence of the merchant class, a social system which corresponded far more closely to European feudalism than was the case in many other Asian countries remained largely intact throughout the 250 years when Japan was a closed country. Japan was split up into more than 70 semi-autonomous fiefs which — while their ruling families owed final allegiance to the military government in Edo (now Tokyo) — dealt with each other as virtual foreign countries. Movement across the borders separating the fiefs was kept in check by armed samurai, the overall result being a parochial and narrow society throughout most of Japan. In addition, not only did the preservation of the feudal economy act as a brake on intellectual developments, but both the central government in Edo and the authorities within the fiefs were ruthless in their suppression of any sort of ideological divergence from the stipulated norms. A favourite method of

'discouraging' deviants was to crucify them!

ANDŌ SHŌEKI, THE MAN

There could have been few less favourable settings than this for conducting agitation against the existing social system and it is small wonder that our knowledge of the details of Andō Shōeki's life remain hazy. His dates are uncertain but he would seem to have been born early in the eighteenth century and we do know that some of his works were published in the 1750s. By profession he was a doctor and this is important since doctors were one of the few elements in feudal Japan which stood outside of the official class hierarchy



Andō struck at the very roots of the accepted political 'wisdom' of the oriental society in which he found himself. Not only was his denunciation of war anathema to the samurai (who were, of course, the warrior class), but he was equally scathing about the monarchy since it "did not engage in production but deprives the masses of food and amasses luxuries for itself". Andō also had nothing but scorn for the basic premise of Confucianism that it was the great man or 'sage' who would solve society's problems. Far from the 'sages' representing society's chances of salvation, it was these so-called great men who had dragged society down in the first place, claimed Andō. "The sage is to blame for everything", wrote Andō.

ANTI-FEUDALISM AND ANTI-CAPITALISM

The most striking feature of Andō Shōeki's theoretical assault on Japanese feudalism was that the last thing he wanted was for society to jump out of the feudal frying pan into the capitalist fire. "If there is no money to circulate", he explained, "you will have neither those on the one hand desiring wealth, honour and luxuries, nor those on the other falling into meanness and poverty and suffering from terrible hardships." Andō's opposition to the merchant class was therefore as implacable as his hostility towards the samurai. The society he envisaged was one where people simply would not know what it was to desire profit, so that the whole basis for the existence of a class of merchants would disappear. Like Winstanley, Andō could only give a rough sketch of how he thought the economy would function in the society which he advocated, but the same commitment to the free distribution of communally produced wealth was plainly spelt out.

The people of the plains will cultivate the ten crops*** and produce them in abundance. The people in the mountainous regions will collect timber and send it to the plains. Likewise, the fisherfolk will catch the various types of fish and send them to the plains too. Timber, the ten crops and the various types of fish will all be interchanged, so that even in the mountainous regions there will be the ten crops and fish to eat, as well as timber to build houses with. Similarly, even the fisherfolk will have timber to build with, as well as crops to eat with their fish. The same will go with the people of the plains. There will be no surpluses on the plains, nor the slightest shortage in the

mountains. The fisherfolk will have neither too much nor go without. There will be neither riches in one place nor poverty in another, just as there will be neither an upper class nor a lower.

STILL LARGELY UNKNOWN

Although Andō Shōeki collected a group of supporters around him during his lifetime, his ideas were forgotten and his writings disappeared following his death. It was left to a scholar by the name of Dr. Kanō Ryōkichi to rediscover Andō's work: only as late as 1899 and even then the general climate of opinion in Japan was so hostile to socialist/anarchist/communist thought that Dr. Kanō had to publish his researches on Andō anonymously. Nonetheless, the realisation that a thinker of Andō's stature had existed in eighteenth century Japan created something of a sensation, not least among the hard-pressed Japanese anarchist movement which was quick to recognise Andō as "an anarchist of 150 years ago". As the anarchist-inclined *Nihon Heimin* newspaper wrote on 20 January 1908, "this man's philosophy was a variety of socialism or of anarchism". Even then, however, Andō Shōeki's reputation was far from secure, since his ideas were again eclipsed from 1911 onwards when the Japanese government clamped down on the anarchists and executed many of their most prominent activists. Some of Andō's writings were also irretrievably lost in the great earthquake of 1923.

The only English-language study of Andō Shōeki is an obscure book *Andō Shōeki and the Anatomy of Japanese Feudalism* by E. Herbert Norman issued as *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (Third Series, Volume VII) in Tokyo in 1949. Norman's study has to be treated with caution, however, and the above account of Andō's thought has relied on Japanese-language sources.

It is a measure of the lack of internationalism among many of those who like to style themselves 'socialists' that Andō Shōeki remains virtually unknown in the West even today. In *News From Nowhere* William Morris suggested that in a socialist society people might sometimes stop and think about — perhaps even drink a toast to — those who had struggled in the bad old days before socialism was achieved for what people were now enjoying and taking for granted. When that time does come and people are living in a world of democratically controlled, communal production and free distribution, it seems fair to think that people might indeed occasionally give a thought to those who (in however inadequate a fashion, given the drawbacks of the periods they lived in) anticipated such a society. Undoubtedly there will be those who will drink to William Morris himself, and to Gerrard Winstanley too — and some of us will not be forgetting Andō Shōeki either.

John Carlton

* Andō's name is given in the customary East Asian fashion — *Andō* (family name) first, and *Shōeki* (personal name) following.

** This is the short passage which we have also produced here in Japanese.

*** i.e. rice, barley, millet etc.

of samurai-peasants-artisans-merchants. To be a doctor meant to have a certain amount of independence, to occupy a niche from which one had a better chance than most of taking an objective look at the society around one. The fact that he lived in the little northern town of Hachi no He, far away from the capital and at a considerable distance from even the castle town of the Tsugaru fief under whose jurisdiction Hachi no He fell, probably also enabled Andō to avoid the authorities' grip.

CLASSLESS SOCIETY

All ruling classes defend their power and privileges with an ideology and the samurai class in feudal Japan was no exception. "Among blossoms, it is the cherry which takes pride of place; among people, the samurai" was a common saying of the times which expressed the samurai view of themselves as the flower of society. Even the proto-capitalist merchant class failed to challenge the samurai and produce a rival bourgeois ideology of their own, which underscores just how remarkable was Andō Shōeki's lonely call for the construction of a classless society. Andō wanted a society where there would be no division into rulers and ruled, where all would be equal and all would take part in production. "To talk about ruling society is a terrible mistake", he wrote. "If society is left to itself, there will be no disorder. People will be happy to engage directly in agricultural production. There will be food to go round and clothes to go round."** Implicit in Andō's statement that everyone would take part in production was a criticism of the parasitic samurai class and he literally risked his life when he asserted that "Setting up rulers marked the emergence of luxury in society. It was the root of all other evils . . ."

LETTERS



LUDDISM OR SOCIALISM?

Dear *Social Revolution*,

While Sandy Blake is correct to point out the dangers of fast breeder nuclear reactors (SR6) he is, I feel, over-pessimistic about the potentialities of nuclear fusion. The heat generated by the fusion process can be put to many uses, including the desalination of sea water and the ionisation of waste products and pollutants, breaking them down into their basic atomic elements which can then be separately retrieved and used as new raw materials. Likewise the helium gas which is the product of fusion can be used in the development of airships as a viable alternative means of passenger and cargo transport to aircraft which use massive amounts of fossil fuel.

Deuterium, which comprises one-ten thousandth of the bulk of the world's oceans is easily obtainable. The deuterium in one gallon of sea water is equivalent in energy value to 100 gallons of high-grade petrol. One pound of deuterium can produce the same amount of energy as 1,000 tons of coal. Even if consumption of energy was increased ten thousand-fold, there is enough deuterium to last 4,000,000 years.

Fusion power would mean a massive saving in manpower (sic) as three fusion plants can produce the energy currently produced by 3,500 conventional plants. It would also mean an end to dirty dangerous jobs such as coal-mining and drilling for oil.

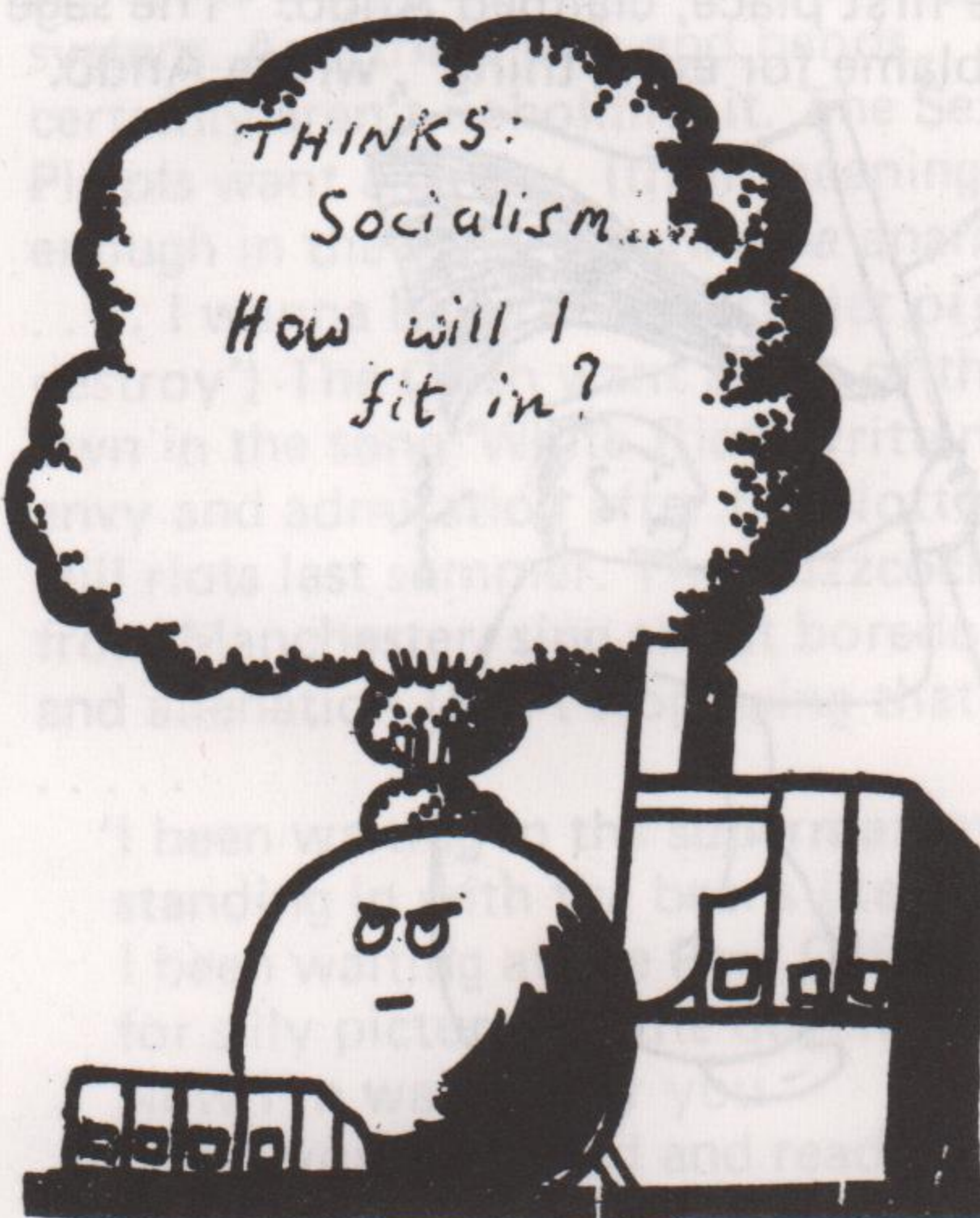
The problems of nuclear fusion are not those of the theory of physics but of engineering, problems which even under capitalism could be solved within a decade if funds for research were available. However, because governments through massive handouts to private industry have already invested heavily in nuclear fission, they are not. Under socialism, with the reorganisation of production for use, research could advance at full speed.

As far back as 1897, the Russian socialist Bogdanov was discussing the role atomic energy would play in a socialist society ("A Short Course of Economic Science", p.460). However, since then some socialists have developed an anti-technological bias and a reactionary romantic yearning for a mythological agricultural primitive communism. Thus they repeat the mistake of the Luddite craft-workers of the early 19th century who saw the new machinery, instead of capitalism which misused machinery to displace labour rather than liberate it, as their enemy. Furthermore, they lend substance to the dubious theories of the "zero-growth" cranks and "people pollute" quacks who act as an ideological

cover for capitalism's plans to reduce supply to increase prices on the world markets and to impose austerity programmes on the working class in order to pay for its economic mismanagement.

If humanity is to free itself from the burdens of economic poverty and alienated labour, the expansion of production to meet human needs and the creation of an energy supply to maintain that production must be an essential part of the world's socialist programme of reconstruction. There can be no room for utopian illusions.

T.Liddle



NUCLEAR POWER

Author's reply:

Apart from the points in the original article in SR6, including the basic ecological objection to all heat releasing energy sources (i.e. coal and oil burning as well), the helium produced would not amount to much since so little material generates much energy; also what was produced would be partly radioactive. The fact that heat is "used" does not alter the fact that sooner or later it will enter the environment as heat. The SR6 article's arguments about energy input/output apply here: e.g. to get your one part of deuterium in 10,00 you need to electrolyse away or otherwise remove 9,999 parts of ordinary hydrogen — which requires a lot of energy. What the above letter says about fusion is virtually what was being said about fission 20 years ago, before the problems and minor disasters began to mount up.

Traditionally, socialists have argued that science and technology are politically neutral, merely abused under capitalism and will realise their full potential to aid human happiness only in a free socialist society. This has been increasingly questioned in recent years: how do scientific theories, models and methods derive from the way society is organised? Why is science not necessarily "objective" in any sense — especially in such fields as genetics, sociobiology, psychology, etc.? As well, many applications and research activities would be irrelevant outside a profiteering economy: obvious examples include nuclear weapons technology, psychology 'research' into torture techniques such as sensory deprivation, riot control methods and so on.

At the present state of knowledge in fusion technology it is not possible for us (or anyone) to say what the advantages and drawbacks really are, apart from the obvious ecological aspects of massive heat release. But to turn the last paragraph of the letter above around; I reckon it would be utopian to rely on a single high-powered source of energy.

The article was not written with any "anti-technological bias", but with a definite bias against possibly dangerous and certainly high cost technologies which involve definite environmental drawbacks. The socialist society we envisage is neither a "zero growth" or "growth" economy — it is a society which will aim to produce only those goods and services which people need or want. To say it will involve "expansion of production" with no qualifications attached ignores the fact that large sectors of modern industry play no useful role but absorb vast quantities of energy: these could be abandoned or phased out in a free socialist society.

Sandy Blake

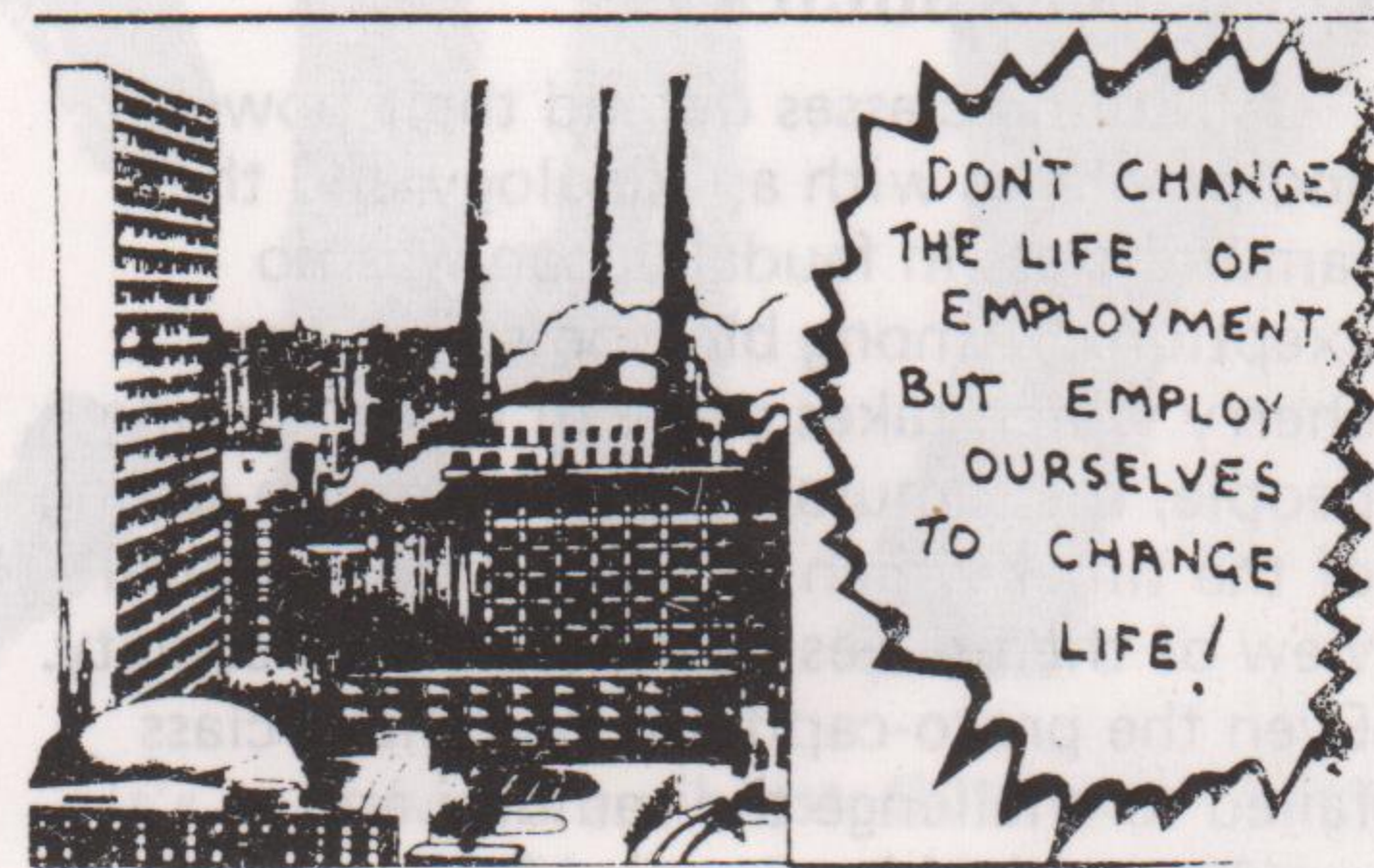
'SELF-EXPLOITATION'

Dear *Social Revolution*,

In *Social Revolution* No.6 Terry Liddle says that, following the events in Hungary in 1956, 'Never again would serious revolutionaries . . . believe that the rule of managers be a substitute for workers' self-management . . .'

What has 'workers' self-management' got to do with the social revolution that we are striving for? Doesn't Social Revolution stand for the self-liberation (= self-abolition) of the working class? — not the perpetuation of the workers as a class of self-managers.

Fraternally,
John Carlton
29.xii.1976



Editorial Group reply:

By the term 'workers' self-management' we don't, of course, mean 'self-management' of the present economic system of wages, production for profit etc. Indeed we recognise that capitalism is a social system in which productive enterprises employ wage and salary workers in order to realise a profit by selling goods and services on the market.

This basic exploitative relationship (i.e. the subordination of the workers to the market system) remains the same regardless of who (Communist Party bureaucrats, private entrepreneurs or the workers as in a workers' co-operative) owns or controls the particular enterprise. In a workers' self-management society (as

Where is SR going?

"Social Revolution" group tries to contribute to the movement for social revolution in a number of ways — by encouraging, reporting and taking part in the democratic self-activity of working people in all areas of life; by drawing out the connections between such activity and socialism, and otherwise spreading socialist ideas; by making a distinctive contribution to the theory of libertarian socialism; and by building links with other similar groups.

In contrast to these far-reaching hopes, our resources are very small. Money, literature outlets, meeting places — all these present their problems, but somehow we get by. The main resource we are short of is our own time and energy.

Assuming neither drop-outs nor new people, we shall in the near future have only one strong group — if 6-8 active members and a few more passive ones can be called "strong" — in London, a small group in Aberdeen, and a handful of scattered members and sympathisers. Nor are we people who live only for politics, and the amount of work we are able or inclined to put in is limited even in our most enthusiastic and responsible moods.

With these factors restricting the energies available, most of our energy is spent on keeping the organisation going — bringing out and selling the paper and pamphlets, dealing with literature requests, arranging meetings and conferences and so on. We do not have the spare capacity to use the *forms* which we keep going for the *content* which is the purpose of those forms.

For example, we do not have time for developing and discussing our ideas among ourselves or preparing the necessary discussion papers to do so. Although we meet in conference four times a year, the discussion each time seems less fruitful than the last, more and more to run in the same ruts. Partly this is due to the absence of the outside involvement, thought and preparation which would help generate discussion. Partly it is the stagnation of the same old faces of people who are not even trying very hard to learn from one another or get to know one another better.

When we produce pamphlets, we are so busy typing, doing layout, stapling, collating, selling, that we do not even write them ourselves, but instead publish or handle the (more or less relevant) texts of other people. Of course, we can blame one another or ourselves for not writing, but creative work cannot be forced and is more likely to be done by people reasonably free from routine tasks.

Not to advance is to go backwards. If we do not break out of our stagnation, eventually some of us will become sufficiently pissed off to drop out, with suitable excuses no doubt. We shall fall below the membership at which we can keep going.



The comrades writing this statement suggest that the routine tasks of our group be reduced to a bare minimum now, to give us breathing space in which we can do the things needed for our long-term health and survival — developing our ideas, working on our literature (without for the time being publishing it in pamphlets), contacting and bringing in more sympathisers. A strategic retreat now is preferable to a gradual retreat forced on us little by little.

In concrete terms, we suggest conferences only every six months (but properly prepared and possibly 3 days instead of 2 to allow more time for socialising, and with more contacts invited); the paper to come out every 3 months instead of 2 (in

a slightly increased number of copies perhaps); a moratorium on pamphlets, printed or duplicated; less effort into building formal links with other groups.

Our emphasis on recruitment does not stem from any obsession with building up the organisation for its own sake, but comes from our belief that we are not large enough as a group to fulfill our functions properly, and that we need the invigoration of new people and ideas. If we were five times larger (say) it might be better to concentrate on encouraging self-activity generally, and the formation of new independent groups, rather than continued growth.

This statement is appearing in the paper rather than being circulated internally because we are addressing the readers of our literature, and not only other members of SR — not only as principled openness, but also to ask for your response. Although the demand for our material seems to be greater than the quantity we manage to supply, we do not hear from many of you what you think of it, what you are up to, that you want to meet us. There are surely enough unattached libertarian socialists floating around who would be prepared to join and work with us. The passive consumption of literature about self-activity as a commodity is the supreme irony.

In inviting new people to discuss with us with a view to joining, we are also inviting you not to accept the group as it is, but to try to change it in accordance with your insights, and it is that change (within the broad political area of libertarian socialism) that we are seeking. Perhaps you think that our views are incoherent or irrelevant to the real problems, that we are isolated, that some of our psychological motivations may be suspect, or whatever; if so, you may well be right. But at least we have not (yet??) congealed into dogmatism, and are still open to change.

Specific problems for bringing in new members include — the vicious-circle effect of being an overwhelmingly male, young-adult group; the possible barrier to outsiders raised by our interaction as a clique; potential personality clashes; how to decide when a political disagreement is too great for becoming a member; the esoteric nature of some of our concerns (such as economic and historical matters) to people without past involvement in left or ultra-left politics. But with an effort at adjustment by both existing members and new people, we see no reason why Social Revolution should not be able to grow in all ways and become an effective influence for a new society.

Stefan C. Bloggs

we understand the term) productive activity would be under the democratic control of, and rely on the co-operation of freely-associated producers. Classes as such would be abolished and the sole aim of production in such a society would be the satisfaction of human needs in order to create a secure and creative future. This would involve the development of a completely different kind of technology. Useless industries like car production would be dismantled.

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anarchism & marxism

THIS ARTICLE is an attempt to refute certain myths which have been given an airing in *Social Revolution* (specifically SR6) and in the SR group's "Introduction". Individually the points are, perhaps, of small importance, but the cumulative effect that they create is inaccurate — all of the points revolve around the nature of anarchism.

My first objection is to the statement in "Introduction to Social Revolution", (section headed "Other Groups"; page 12), in which the claim is made that:

"The anti-organisational and anti-theoretical tendencies of traditional anarchism not only render it incapable of serious intervention, but encourage the elitism to which it claims to be opposed."

That anarchists are against organisation, or have anti-organisational tendencies is untrue. Simply because people reject orthodox and sociological concepts of organisation does not mean that they have rejected all forms. What anarchists do favour are types of organisation which meet specific needs and requirements, they are against institutionalised organisation and pre-conceived organisational blue-prints. What is asked of organisation is that it responds to a particular situation, and that it doesn't become a new mechanism of enslavement.

In other countries, where anarchism has become a large-scale social movement, a number of different organisational forms have been developed. In this country there have never been enough anarchists to go beyond the basic idea of the affinity group and simple federations.

I find it strange that you claim to reject anarchist ideas on organisation (by claiming they do not exist) and yet adopt for *Social Revolution* a structure based on anarchist principles.

As an anarchist I see nothing wrong in participating "in the day-to-day struggles, both in such organisations as trade unions, tenants', squatters' and women's groups and . . . where we work." Many anarchists are doing the same. That, however, is not intervention unless those struggles are unrelated to your lives as individuals. Intervention, (which you claim anarchists to be incapable of) is participating in the struggle of others with the intention of directing those struggles. It's not that anarchists are incapable of intervention, but they reject it as being implicitly elitist.

I will return to the claim that anarchists are anti-theoretical in a moment, but first I would like briefly to query the remark (also on page 12 of the "Introduction") that anarchists are opposed to "political organisation". That is true, but I fail to see why that is to be criticised, as I

believed *Social Revolution* was against political organisation but (like anarchists) in favour of social organisation. In fact I thought that the reason why the section on "Parliamentary Road to Socialism" was included in the "Introduction". It is somewhat unfair to criticise anarchists for doing what you claim to do.

It is little short of absurd to talk of "traditional" anarchists as being anti-theoretical when there is a long history of publishing to testify to the opposite. I only need mention the names of Proudhon, Kropotkin, Bakunin, Malatesta, Goldman, Rocker and present-day theorists: Colin Ward, Murray Bookchin, Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, Rudi Dutschke, Daniel & Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, to demonstrate both the continuity and evolution of anarchist theory (and this list ignores the richness and diversity, and is only intended to demonstrate the validity of what I say).



Unlike Marxism it is not a dead ideology (the function of which is to reduce everything to *its* terms so that it may be better co-opted and adapted for use within the existing system): it is a living, growing thing taking new concepts to add to its armoury. It is like a rainbow, full of separate colours, all related to each other — each existing in its own right and yet a part of the whole. The ideas of the Situationists are in the process of being absorbed into anarchism — their central concepts of the commodity and the society of the spectacle are working their way into the weft and warp of anarchism. Your contribution to libertarianism in this country will also make its impact, just as SOLIDARITY's has and is doing — you may claim to be part of a marxist

tradition, but you are contributing to an anarchist one.

The criticism of anarchism as being anti-theoretical is also implicit in Mike Ballard's "Report on AWA Day School" (SR6) in which he writes of "the traditional idealist views of most past anarchists, who saw the state as some kind of disembodied power — the 'main enemy' from which all other evils flowed" Nothing wrong with being idealist — all revolutionaries are, but the rest of his criticism is unfair, and appears to be based upon the half-conceived notions of many of the detractors of anarchism who wrote around the period 1890-1925. What is true is that anarchists have always accorded the state a different position within their ideas from that of most marxists — that is one of the reasons why anarchists do not want to 'capture' the state — they see that it functions in a different way.

Now Marx had one or two good ideas — most people have them, although for want of time and money, they're never recorded for posterity — but that does not mean that he was always correct, or even right in a majority of cases. His contribution should be regarded for what it is — the manure of the future — smelly, unpleasant, but treated correctly it can assist growth, (although too much is liable to burn the roots). The main problem is that Marxism has passed into the realm of religion, and as it was once necessary to destroy God (if 'he' existed) it has now become necessary to do the same, not only to Leninism, but to Marxism as well.

One thing Marx got wrong was his concept of state and class. Class is not related solely to the economic structure, but to power, and power is not strictly economic — it can be ideological, it can be mythical (religion): it can take on diverse and frightening forms. Always its last refuge is coercion, and for this it relies on the armed might of the state. That the State now exists in a monolithic form is the result of the kind of mass society and mass-oriented technology which require mass coercion and mass bureaucracy if the powerful are to keep their power. The State may exist without capitalism, as China shows, but capitalism cannot exist without the State (unless each multi-national takes on the role of the nation-state). Of course capitalism may have come first and created the state because it cannot function without it, but that does not mean that it is now capitalism that is the life-blood of the State. In fact the reverse is true, the State is the motor of repression and without it all unjust economic orders must end.

Historically anarchist theory owes something to marxism, but it differs from marxist theory in form and content. While the latter often takes place as a kind of abstract mental exercise, the fabric of anarchist theory is entwined with its practice — because of this it has been built up brick by brick, but is far from disembodied.

I hope I've refuted the charges, and if you remain unconvinced I can try a more painstaking step-by-step analysis, but surely I have at least demonstrated that anarchism cannot be dismissed with a few inaccurate criticisms?

Martyn Everett (London SR)

ANARCHISM & MARXISM **REPLY**

I SHOULD like to make some brief comments on Martyn Everett's articles. He seems to perceive an 'attack' on anarchism in the columns of *SR* and is jumping to its defence. *SR* has stated all along that its membership was drawn from the ranks of both anarchists and marxists, and that it was our intention to try and combine the best compatible elements of both these traditions, in the development of a new theory and practice relevant to the modern world. This is a difficult process in which the sensibilities of those who have identified with one or other of these doctrines is often put under strain. The string of abuse directed at 'marxism' in Martyn's article is, however, unlikely to help in our task.

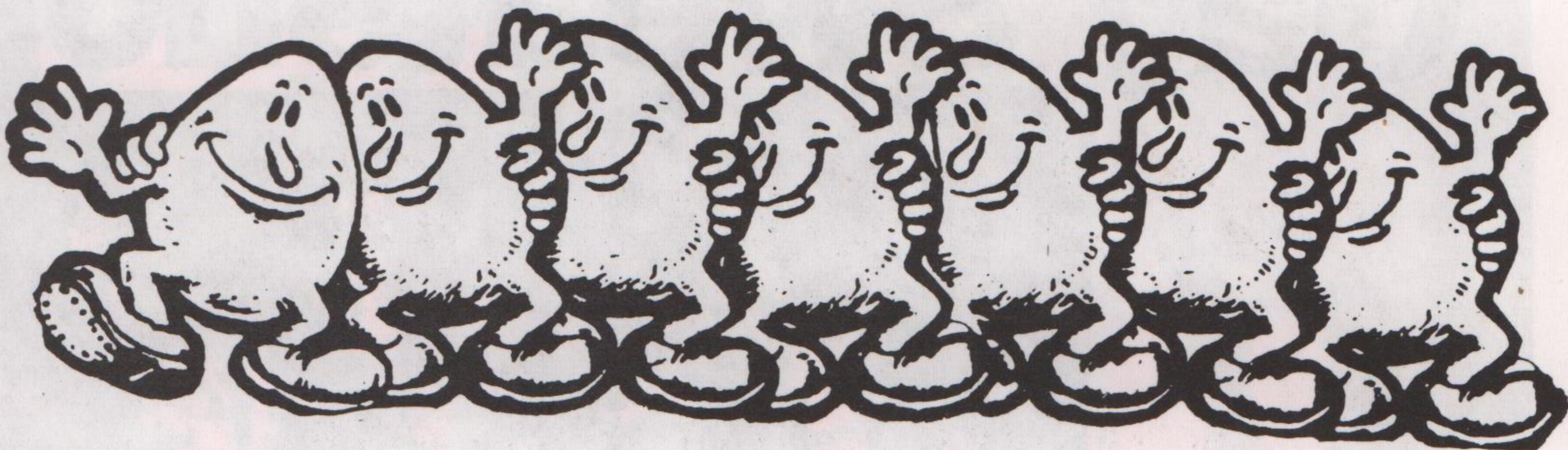
Martyn objects to the reference in our *Introduction to SR* to 'the anti-organisational and anti-theoretical tendencies of traditional anarchism'. I think on reflection that I would accept that this is an incorrect generalisation. But in the context of the British political scene from which we emerged I still think it has some validity.

Again my reference to the anarchist view of the state in the 'Report on AWA Day School' in *SR6* was something of a generalisation. Still I think it is true that many anarchists have separated the state out from society and conceived of it as the main force preventing the masses from spontaneously rising against their rulers. It is a view, from whatever source it may come, which we must reject.

As a 'marxist', some of my past criticism of anarchism has certainly been ill-founded, but I have attempted during my membership of *SR* to expand my knowledge and understanding of the anarchist tradition. This has resulted in a much increased respect on my part for the *communist* current in anarchism, perhaps best presented by such writers as Kropotkin and Malatesta.

Something which has become clear to me over this time, is that much of what anarchists criticise Marx and marxism for and what marxists criticise anarchists for, is part of the programme of both which attempted to come to terms with the low level of productive development in the 19th century. Thus the marxists proposed various state-capitalist reform measures and the development of the productive forces through their concentration in the hands of the state (preferably under the control of a workers' party). The anarchists proposed the setting up of agricultural and industrial collectives operating through the normal market mechanisms. Neither perceived of a very rapid move towards a free communist society. Subsequently of course both co-operatives and state enterprises have become commonplace ingredients of capitalism. In that time also many so-called marxists forgot about communism and reduced their aim to expanding the role of the state. Also many anarchists became simple mutualists or advocates of workers control and forgot about the need to abolish the wage-system, money and so forth.

It is interesting for instance to note the way in which many trotskysts and anarchists, though from different perspectives, both see the next revolution



Counterlink!

The following is a slightly adapted version of a leaflet distributed by East London Counterlink:

Counterlink was the brainchild of a couple of members of Social Revolution. They felt that there were probably a lot of people, involved in radical political activity, or in self-help and direct action campaigns, or simply believing that society needs changing, and the best way is to change it ourselves, but who while meeting each other in these campaigns etc. weren't able to relate to each other on a personal level. Working to bring changes in society and in our lives takes up a lot of time and energy, leaving not much for developing satisfying relationships with the 'comrades' — the others working on similar lines. (The fact that we talk about 'political *work*' rather than political *play* shows what I mean!) Others, not actively involved, suffer from the isolation from like-minded people that our mobile, fragmented uncontrolled society creates.

Counterlink was seen as the answer — an organisation set up by us and run by us, so in keeping with our political outlook in its structure, where we could meet people who think and feel on similar lines to ourselves, but not to be spending our energy on some campaign or some discussion of politics, rather to develop full relationships with each other — above all, to counteract the kind of superficial, exploitative relationships this society would like us to develop and has conditioned us to accept.

Thus its members will have in common an outlook on life based on opposition to traditional sex-roles — where the dominant male pursues the passive female — as part of a belief that these roles serve the interests of those who want to maintain a society based on hierarchies, and control by the few over the lives of the majority. Hopefully, the knowledge that we have this outlook in common will

in Russia as being largely a question of democracy rather than a change in the whole mode of production and social organisation. The trotskysts want to democratise the state, the anarchists to abolish it and replace it with direct workers democracy. The latter is undoubtedly the more advanced proposal, but both see the entire problem revolving around the 'state' and propose institutional rather than social solutions. (See the discussion on 'Socialism, Workers Councils and the Market' in *SR6*).

enable us to get over the difficulties we meet when encountering new people, or not knowing where they stand, or how they will react to our ideas.

That's the 'Counter' side — what about the 'link'? Because the main aim of the organisation is to serve the needs of people who want to meet others, obviously we will welcome anyone who feels we could help them in this way, that is anyone who doesn't feel hostile to the ideas expressed above. It is up to individuals to decide whether they would fit in with us, not for us to select individuals. Once you have made this decision though, we hope that you will be able to 'put something in' to the group in return (hopefully) for getting something out. That is, no-one will try to control the group's direction or development, but we hope that everyone will contribute ideas. Each of us will probably have slightly — maybe widely — different needs and interests; we have to try to build up a structure or a way of organising ourselves that will meet and in fact welcome these differences.

In East London (groups also exist in North and West London) we have been arranging the following kinds of activities: meeting in each other's houses for informal discussions — to get to know each other and talk about the problem of making friends; parties; going to see films; and we have a bulletin which acts as a way of informing each other of things we are involved in that others might like to know about, and which enables those who prefer to write down their thoughts, rather than talk about them, to do so. We have planned for the future: talks by visiting speakers on such topics as homosexuality, race etc; visits to theatre; music making more parties!

Contact: Ian Pirie, 174 Chester Rd,
Seven Kings, Ilford.
Tel: 597 0472

The original communist objective was preserved only through the efforts of small groups of revolutionaries; anarcho-communists, council communists and others. It is from these traditions that we have now to develop a new theory and practice. Already writers like Murray Bookchin and groups like the Situationists have contributed to this task, there is little to be gained in claiming either of these for the camps of marxism or anarchism.

Mike Ballard [Hull SR]

Gay Sweatshop

REVIEW



GAY SWEATSHOP'S visit to Aberdeen last December caused a major storm in the area. The local bigots came out in force to denounce the first visit by a gay theatre group to Aberdeen.

"Something like this visit is completely against my beliefs and, I am sure, those of the majority of people in Aberdeen" thundered the Reverend W Gordon Haggarty from the front pages of the local Thomson-owned press. The Church of Scotland minister even attempted (unsuccessfully) to persuade the Chief Constable to take action against the theatre group. *Gay Sweatshop* were due to give a workshop in St Katherine's, an independent community centre, and a performance of *Any Woman Can* in the Northern Hotel. St Katherine's stood firm against pressure to cancel the workshop. However the Northern Hotel, after stating that they were 'rethinking' the let of the hotel as they had not realised the play had a 'homosexual content', announced the following day that the booking was cancelled.

Fortunately the organisers of *Gay Sweatshop's* visit, the local radical theatre group *Playtime*, overcame the attempts to stop the play going ahead. They succeeded in arranging, through the University Gay Society, for the play to be performed at an alternative venue in the university. Earlier on the same evening as the play went ahead at the university a picket was mounted at the Northern Hotel. Demonstrators carried placards and distributed leaflets charging the hotel management with discrimination against gays. Around 25 people participated in the picket, including members of the Scottish Minorities Group, *Aberdeen Peoples Press*, Aberdeen Women's Group, Social Revolution and the University Gay Society. An amusing incident occurred when a visitor to the hotel pushed his way past a long-haired male demonstrator and (obviously not seeing his beard in the dark) shouted: "Get yersel' a man, dear!"

The performance of the play was extremely successful, being very well received by the capacity audience of 120. *Any Woman Can* is based on the actual experiences of its author, Jill Posener.

Published by Social Revolution (addresses on p.5), typeset by Bread'n Roses (tel. 01 582 8248), and printed by Aberdeen Peoples Press (tel. Aberdeen 29669).

The play portrays the relationships Ginny, the main character, becomes involved in and recounts her feelings about them. Ginny gradually becomes aware that she is a lesbian. She realises that there is no good reason to hide that fact that she's gay — her sexual orientation is nothing to be ashamed of. One of her early relationships is with a married woman who pretends to everyone that she's a completely 'normal', exclusively heterosexual wife, but who has Ginny as a secret lover while her husband is away. Ginny rejects this kind of furtive and dishonest relationship.

But entering the gay community does not mean everything is automatically sweetness and light. The gay clubs are too often just a variation on the heterosexual cattle-markets. When Ginny goes home with a woman she meets at a club her companion hurls herself upon her without any regard for what Ginny wants or feels. What's the point in having lesbian relationships if they only duplicate the hunter/hunted, dominating/dominated roles of most heterosexual relationships, asks Ginny. But Ginny does meet women she can relate to in an equal and loving way. She gains the self-confidence to be openly gay and to work with other women to fight their oppression. Though there are still problems sometimes. Ginny's lover complains to her that it's always Ginny who decides when they're to be together — and that Ginny just fits her in when she's not got one of her many political activities to go to. You treat my flat like a hotel, you dash in, have your tea that I've cooked, then dash off to a meeting, Ginny's partner accused. There's more to it than that, of course, but it's still a situation that will strike a familiar chord for many political activists, whether gay or not.

While I seem to have dwelled mainly on the problems Ginny has in her relationships, the impression and feeling given out by the play are undoubtedly overwhelmingly positive. Simply by describing in some detail a gay woman's relationships and how she feels about them *Any Woman Can* would deal an immense challenge to any anti-gay

prejudices held by heterosexuals who saw the play. When confronted by gay relationships openly described as they actually are, rather than by the media's usual image of homosexuality as some vague shadowy indescribable evil, the total absurdity of anti-gay prejudice is obvious.

Hopefully too the play will encourage people to think about *why* there is so much prejudice against gays. The play rejects stereotyped role-playing in relationships. This brings into question the whole sexual division of labour within capitalist society, whereby in the nuclear family women do an unpaid job for industry by 'servicing' its workers and bringing up its future workers. The way in which the oppression suffered by gays and women is so linked to the needs and demands of industry leads us in Social Revolution to believe that it's impossible to separate the struggles for gay liberation, for women's liberation and for the liberation of *all* working people from this society where industry's drive for profit predominates and runs counter to people's needs and happiness.

One of the most encouraging aspects of *Gay Sweatshop's* visit was the boost it gave to the local gay community, particularly to gay women. As a result of the performance the University Gay Society themselves arranged for *Gay Sweatshop* to perform *Age of Consent*. On this occasion there was no hysterical campaign of opposition, the Reverend Haggarty and "the majority of citizens" he claims to represent remaining remarkably quiet. *Age of Consent*, which deals with the direct oppression of gays by the state through the police, the prison hospitals and the medical profession, got a good reception from another large audience. Mike (with help from Alison & Sandra)

If they're not already due to come your way it would be well worth arranging for *Gay Sweatshop* to perform in your area. Contact: Kate Crutchley, Flat 2, Buckhurst Hill House, Queens Rd, Buckhurst Hill, Essex. Tel: 01-505 4599.

For Aberdeen readers, the local contact for Scottish Minorities Group is Dennis Wilson, (Tele: Aberdeen 20576).