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SOCIAL REVOLUTION

6p

no. 3

formerly WORKERS POWER

The Right To Work?

Unemployment and the fight back

Hundreds of thousands of people have now been thrown out of work and have suffered a huge drop in their standard of living as a result. Without actually abolishing capitalism altogether it is certain that things will get even worse in the coming months.

This doesn't mean, however, that we should fatalistically accept the situation without a fight back. Some small victories have already been won through militant action against the employers, as with the social workers' strikes in London, and these point the way forward.

In key industries; occupations and other militant tactics have tipped the balance in government decision making and forced them to step in and save jobs; as for instance in the Clyde shipbuilding industry.

Public Sector alliances initiated by shop stewards or rank-and-file action groups have begun to challenge the cuts in some areas (see *Fight Back*, paper of the East London Committee Against the Cuts), and these examples if followed right across the country could certainly have a real impact.

It is important that all workers should be alerted to the enormous threat of unemployment and the possibilities of averting that threat by united class action. In particular we must work towards unity between the employed and the unemployed, so that both can reinforce the other's struggles.

Some attempts are being made in this direction through the "left" press launching a "Right To Work" campaign, but there are serious dangers, from a socialist point of view, in adopting this slogan as the centrepiece of any campaign against unemployment.

Capitalist morality

In the first place, the very idea that such a "right" could exist under capitalism is an absurdity. Unemployment great or small is a NORMAL part of the present economic set-up.

It will never disappear completely until the whole market/profit economy is destroyed. The avoidance of unemployment within capitalism depends largely on the organised strength of workers viz-a-viz the capitalist class and their agents.

Secondly and more importantly, the "Right To Work" slogan plays on an aspect of capitalist morality for its support, which socialists should be attacking head on. Namely the idea that we can only be usefully involved in



society if we are being paid a wage and exploited by some employer.

There's nothing socially useful about working in an armaments factory, or in an advertising agency — persuading people to buy Heinz rather than Batchelors soup. Whilst banking and Insurance are essential to capitalism, they would serve no useful purpose in a society where production was planned for use.

We shouldn't be trying to get support for this campaign by exploiting the false feelings of social inadequacy which capitalism fosters in the unemployed.

Furthermore, unity between employed and unemployed should be based on equality, not simply on the integration of the unemployed into a movement directed by organised labour. This means encouraging the self-organisation of the unemployed through claimants 'unions' and other similar bodies.

Self organising

It also means encouraging the organisation of "mutual aid" projects which are more positive in direction and far more personally rewarding than the usual demonstrations

where we're at

Throughout the world a small minority of bosses — private capitalists or State bureaucrats — own and control the means of life: the factories, laboratories, communications and all the other resources we depend on. They leave the rest of us with no choice but that of working for them — in boring, usually socially useless or harmful, and often dangerous jobs outside the home, and bringing up kids for the same kind of life inside the home. They let us produce goods and services only when they can make a profit by selling them, in complete disregard of human needs, so that mountains of food are destroyed while millions starve who can't afford to buy it, so that people rot in slums while building workers are laid off. And when the trade wars between the bosses of different countries hot up into the real thing, it's the rest of us, the working people, who have to make the weapons and are sent off to kill one another.

But plenty of us refuse to put up with it all without a fight. In our workplaces we organise to defend living standards and to gain some control over conditions of work. In the community we form tenants' associations, resist motorways and try to stop pollution. School and college students challenge the way they are indoctrinated. Women, gays, black people fight the discrimination they suffer. Socialists try to spread awareness of the need for a complete change to a free classless society.

These, and others, are all valid ways for working people to express their needs as human beings and resist their conditions of life. Members of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION group are all involved in one or more of these movements. We aim to encourage people to organise democratically without leaders, and to exchange experiences and understandings so that all the different struggles can merge, with one another and across national frontiers, into a united and conscious movement for world social revolution.

The liberation of the working class can only be the work of the majority of working people themselves. The manipulation of self-appointed leaders can only hold back this work. We expect that the main form of organisation for carrying out revolutionary

change will be some kind of WORKERS COUNCILS — that is, councils of delegates based on workplaces and neighbourhoods, elected by and under the direct democratic control of working people. These councils will co-operate to produce and distribute the goods and services needed by the community, which will be made freely available as the waste of capitalism is done away with. Work will be the voluntary and varied activity of people controlling their own creativity for agreed human purposes. The united world, without money, Government or war, will belong for the first time to the people of the world.

This paper is produced by the SOCIAL REVOLUTION group. The paper aims to say why the everyday existence and struggles of workers in this society, and the trend of current events, show the need for and tendency towards a free socialist society, created by the action of the vast majority, the working class.

"SOCIAL REVOLUTION" is produced because we believe that if groups of workers are to make any meaningful contribution to the struggle for socialism, then they need to communicate their ideas.

"SOCIAL REVOLUTION" is produced by different local groups taking it in turn to edit and layout each issue. We do this in order to attempt to break down the divisions of labour imposed by modern society.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION group will not be telling anyone to "follow us", or issuing calls to "build the revolutionary party" as if it were some universal panacea to the problems facing our class. But revolutionary groups do have a role to play in the struggle for socialism. These groups should attempt to clarify issues, to attempt to show the links between seemingly isolated and unconnected activities and struggles — to show that these are linked in the overall fight to overthrow this rotting corpse of a social system, capitalism, and replace it by a democratic society with people producing for use not profit. For the abolition of working for wages and salaries, and its replacement by communal work with free access to the needs of life. For the abolition of states, nations, and wars, for the establishment of a world community where all are free to develop their capabilities to the full. We call upon all those in agreement with our views to join us.

cont. from p. 1

and token occupations of employment offices, important as these are for publicity purposes.

Whilst it *isn't possible* to build the "alternative society" within the framework of capitalism so as to gradually replace it altogether, it *is possible*, on a limited scale, to build alternative centres, or bases for attacking capitalism.

For instance, a "free school" project run by unemployed teachers and others (along the lines of the 'White Lion Street' school in London, or the 'Scotland Road' school in Liverpool) cannot replace the state system, but is still useful in itself, and offers a marvelous opportunity for experimentation, which can by example be an inspiration to all radical students and teachers.

The same principle applies to self-organised playgroups, womens centres, community presses and so forth. Similarly, projects in communal living are not only of value to the people actually involved; they provide living experiences of immense value to the whole revolutionary movement.

Where these projects in the same locality become allied to each other, they can provide a useful network of information and practical support for all those struggling against capitalism, by providing — printing facilities, meeting places (with reliable creches), and emotional support.

The great potential here is only hinted at in current schemes, such as those of the Maida Hill Squatters and Tenants Association, which runs a restaurant, playgroup and other services through a system of 'labour-time vouchers'.

The unemployed could provide a real impetus to the squatting movement which has provided the material basis for so many of the projects mentioned so far.

Halting demoralisation

There is no reason why this kind of activity (largely ignored by the left) should be competitive with the struggle of organised workers in industry or council tenants etc. It is both valid in itself and complimentary to the wider struggle against the bastions of capitalism.

We won't prevent the dangerous demoralisation of our unemployed brothers and sisters simply by marching them up and down in largely futile demonstrations. This way they will soon fall prey to government and charity organised work schemes and propaganda.

Our unregulated hours away from the supervision of the boss need to be more positively used to further the struggle against capitalism.

Mike Ballard

SOCIAL REVOLUTION — Some copies of No's 1 and 2 are still available. 12p including postage.

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM is our discussion journal, open to all revolutionaries. No. 9 contains our "Draft Manifesto". Copies of No's 7 and 8 are also available. 18p including postage.

MARX'S EARLY WRITINGS — is a short duplicated pamphlet, a good introduction to Marx's early work. 10p including postage.

LIBERTARIAN WOMENS NETWORK — Newsletter now available for 50p sub from Alison Malet, 1 Lynwood Place, Dundee, Scotland.

PHILADELPHIA SOLIDARITY — libertarian socialist publication from America, available from London SR group, 18p including postage.

A BITTER BREW IN DENMARK :

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS A SYNOPSIS OF A SERIES OF ARTICLES THAT APPEARED IN THE DANISH MAGAZINE ARBEJDSPLADSEN

Background to the struggle

IN 1970 after many years of close co-operation, including profit-sharing, Tuborg and Carlsberg merged to form the Carlsberg/Tuborg Corporation (C/T), the Danish multinational brewing company.

In the following five years they have intensified expansion, building brewers in Malawi, Brazil, Turkey, Cyprus, Malaysia and lately in England, as well as swallowing up several small breweries in Denmark itself.

The brewery workers in Copenhagen have traditionally been strong, fighting for better wages and conditions. Having now a wide spread of production plants the corporation can transfer bottling if there's a dispute in one of the better organised plants.

Chronology of Struggle

In 1974 C/T began an attack on the Copenhagen brewery workers. This amounted to temporary dismissals, political sackings, blacklisting and a general stiffening of discipline at the workplace.

Between July and September (1974) approximately 800 workers were dismissed for periods of up to 2 months and re-employed when the management considered them necessary to maintain profit levels.

Discipline was stiffened by keeping a blacklist on absence days; 2 days off in a month merited a warning, 3 warnings meant the sack.

Feelings of insecurity amongst the workers were further fostered by the management by a reduction of manning levels on bottling machines; rationalising away jobs; the firing of many local committee members; the persecution of activist workers; and even a threat to close the Tuborg plant for 3 months if the workers took industrial action against the worsening conditions.

The trade unions answer to the managements' onslaught was to plead for law and order on the part of their members. They told them to "remember that they are the small ones"! and instead of organising for the defence of their members they called instead for a **SOCIAL CONTRACT!** Their answer was simply the old, old story "there is a crisis, we must wait for better times

before we press for improvements".

In October-November (1974) a new wave of dismissals began. The workers responded to this by laying claim at local general meetings to:-

- 1 a written guarantee against further dismissals; and
- 2 the re-employment of all those already dismissed.

The unions strongly resisted this, but under pressure they finally agreed to hold a referendum of the membership. However, against the appropriate rules, unemployed members were to be excluded from the vote with the result to be decided on a qualified majority.

Matters were further complicated by the fact that men and women workers are represented by different unions and whereas the men at their union general meeting rejected the unions attempt to rig the referendum, the women's meeting only agreed to demand a common majority. It is clear that until the nonsensical split between the two unions is ended united action is made much more difficult.

Despite a women's majority of 100 and a 1,000 majority amongst the men, the unions have suspended the claim as the management have hinted that re-employment of the dismissed workers may be in breach of the Danish labour laws.

In February 1975 the unions began to negotiate the new agreement with C/T. During these negotiations the management made a series of claims of their own. They wanted to reduce the piece rate paid to workers, freedom to hire and fire as they pleased regardless of seniority and sizeable redundancies in the region of 400-500 workers.

Despite the fact that all 3 sections of women workers refused to accept these redundancies at their meetings, their union board decided they would indeed accept some reduction in manning (*sic, typist*) levels, in order to bargain.

On the 24th February (1975) it was announced that the womens union had accepted in one section alone a reduction of 44-52 women workers out of a total of 100. There is a strong feeling amongst many of the women workers that they have been sold out by their union.

Meanwhile . . .

Meanwhile the mens union refused categorically to accept any reduction of the present manning levels. The management answered that without redundancies they would not meet their demands for a

wage increase.

The resulting deadlock was taken to arbitration. On the 11th July the men struck demanding that the arbitration decision be published. It was . . . and came out in favour of the management.

The men struck again, for the week and it was then decided to hold one 24 hour stoppage each week. However, the management overcame the effectiveness of this tactic by sending out more beer on the 4 working days.

In response to this, the fork-lift drivers began to control the number of crates leaving the factory. The management then attempted to create disunity by attacking the delivery drivers. These drivers were not directly involved in the negotiations but during the 24 hour strikes they were sent home without pay.. They were also paid on a piece rate basis which meant that their wages were adversely affected by the fork-lift drivers action.

However on the 23rd July at a meeting at the Carlsberg plant, the delivery drivers decided to respect the action of their comrades.

The management then immediately threatened to suspend without pay all delivery drivers who did not carry a full load.

The drivers responded in turn by blockading all the brewery gates with their lorries and halting production in the bottling plant. After 4 hours the management capitulated, paying the drivers for the day and accepting the fork-lift drivers limit.

This display of unity amongst different sections of workers has been mirrored by the actions of other brewery workers in various parts of Denmark who have sent money, as well as refused to work overtime during the dispute.

On Monday 4th August 1975 the workers in number 4 belt-gang on G.I. tap Carlsberg, refused to do the work of a redundant comrade. This action brought the bottling belt to a standstill. The workers were then sent home without pay.

The following shift also refused to do the work of the redundant worker and they too were sent home without pay. The other belt-gangs then downed tools in sympathy with the number 4 gang.

The management rather than re-employ the redundant worker instead changed operations to manual packing thus bypassing, but not solving the problem.

Objects of the struggle

The men's demand is to get the same wage increases as the women workers, but without redundancies. It is important that this stands fast no matter what the

cont. p.4

management offers, for it is a question of more than current rationalisations.

It is a question of the destruction of the idea that a management can by offering higher wages to the remaining workers unleash wholesale redundancies.

It is also important that trade unions must not be allowed to play the role of "Judas goat", gaining increased wages for some of its members at the expense of their comrades livelihoods. It is a question of resisting all attacks, from whatever source, on the unity of all workers.

The workers of C/T cannot limit their demands to the present level. The development of their struggle has shown that the demands must be extended; They must:-

- extend the fight to the principle that no worker is laid off without pay when another group takes action,
- fight for the re-instatement of the redundant workers,
- fight against wage differentials between various groups and demand equal wages for all.

Postscript

Since the article appeared in Denmark there have been further developments. It has been revealed that the trade union bosses have accepted that 128 men will be made redundant in a years time.

It is now also known that the Danish version of the now defunct British National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) has made a verdict against the Carlsberg workers and their union, fining the union Kr 150,000 (the largest sum any Danish union has been fined) and the workers Kr 70 per strike day.

The shop floor reaction to this double onslaught was for 250 workers to immediately down tools in the brewing section.

The struggle continues.

M.R.K. Turner

REAL ALE PEOPLE!

Some members of Social Revolution and the Anarchist Workers Association in south London got together and produced a leaflet which was handed out at the four day CAMRA beer festival held in Covent Garden from September 9th to 13th. Copies of this leaflet can be had from London SR. Enclose a sae.



is there ... LIFE on earth?

HIGH HOPES

I PASSED my GCE's and decided I'd like to be a newspaper reporter. The little careers guidance I received was devoted to explaining that getting such a job was impossible, that advice and help (?) was so routine that it made no impression.

I worked in the local plastics factory while looking for a job as trainee reporter. Forty hours a week for just over £9. Still, in the months I was there I saved enough to buy myself a suit so that I didn't have to go to my new job in school uniform.

The work in the plastics factory was clean, but there was a smell from the hot plastic which got into hair, clothes and onto the skin so that even at home we were never free of it.

Worse than the smell was the boredom, taking the moulded items from the machine, breaking off the spigot left by the mould and boxing them.

On each side towered a large machine, so that I couldn't see anyone except the woman who came to inspect the work, and she was "one of them" on the management side.

The noise was so loud that people always had to shout to make themselves heard. One day my machine developed a fault and so I had a mechanic to chat (shout) to for half an hour while he repaired it — I learned from him what causes it (and how to cause the same fault to happen again).

After that my machine had a regular spate of faults.

IN PRINT

Eventually I got a job with a newspaper in the Fens, left home and went into the digs found by my employers. They cost £3-10-0 a week, but as a trainee my wages were £5. National Insurance stamp accounted for 16/8 — the other 13/4 covered soap, toothpaste, and my train fare home occasionally.

My digs was a small terraced house, and my landlady was well over 70, her daughter must have been 55-60.

There was no running water upstairs, and only cold downstairs. The lavatory was in the back yard. The room was simply furnished, bed, dressing table, chair, wardrobe, washstand and basin. The

The landlady's daughter brought me hot water in a bucket, so that I could wash and shave in the morning.

Fen winds are cold, as I soon found out, because my window wouldn't shut properly.

The newspaper was widely read in the

area, and very profitable. Most of the staff were, like myself, trainees.

The editor, news-editor, sub-editor, sports editor and the chief reporter were the only qualified, "fully trained" staff. The newspaper was actually written by seven trainees, receiving less than £11 a week.



Studying for exams took place in the evening, provided that we weren't working (unpaid) overtime, and we paid our own course fees.

After a few weeks I had a blazing row with my landladies, when I discovered they'd been reading my letters, so I changed lodgings, moving into a classy area where I got bed and breakfast for £4-4-0 a week. That didn't leave me much out of £5 less 16/8!

Luckily I'd saved a little from the plastics factory, so I could afford to have beans on toast or sausage fritter and ships in the dockyard chipshop.

HARD TIMES

Things could have been better. If news stories we wrote appeared in the national press, or the local stop press column of the evening daily papers, we should have received commission.

The *Daily Mirror* did an almost word for word reprint of a story of mine (only a short one) and I'm still waiting.

National daily papers just buy copies of all the local papers, and if something catches their eye and they think they can get away with it, they will.

The news-editor was correspondent for the evening papers, and this meant that only he could sell them stories — which he did, getting about 18/- to 20/- each for them, and he'd pass on 2/- or 2/6 to the person who wrote it.

Lack of money forced me to develop a strict routine, especially as winter had arrived and I couldn't afford money for the meter in my room, so I always volunteered for the evening jobs — at least they were in the warm, and sometimes there was a free meal.

Some nights I was last to leave the warm office, walking home quickly to get my circulation going.

Once back in my room, I'd read until cold again, then go out for another walk, and, if I could afford it, a bag of chips.

Sometimes (by good fortune) I might have a shilling. Should I put it in the meter, and have a warm room for an hour, or go down to the local pub, buy half a

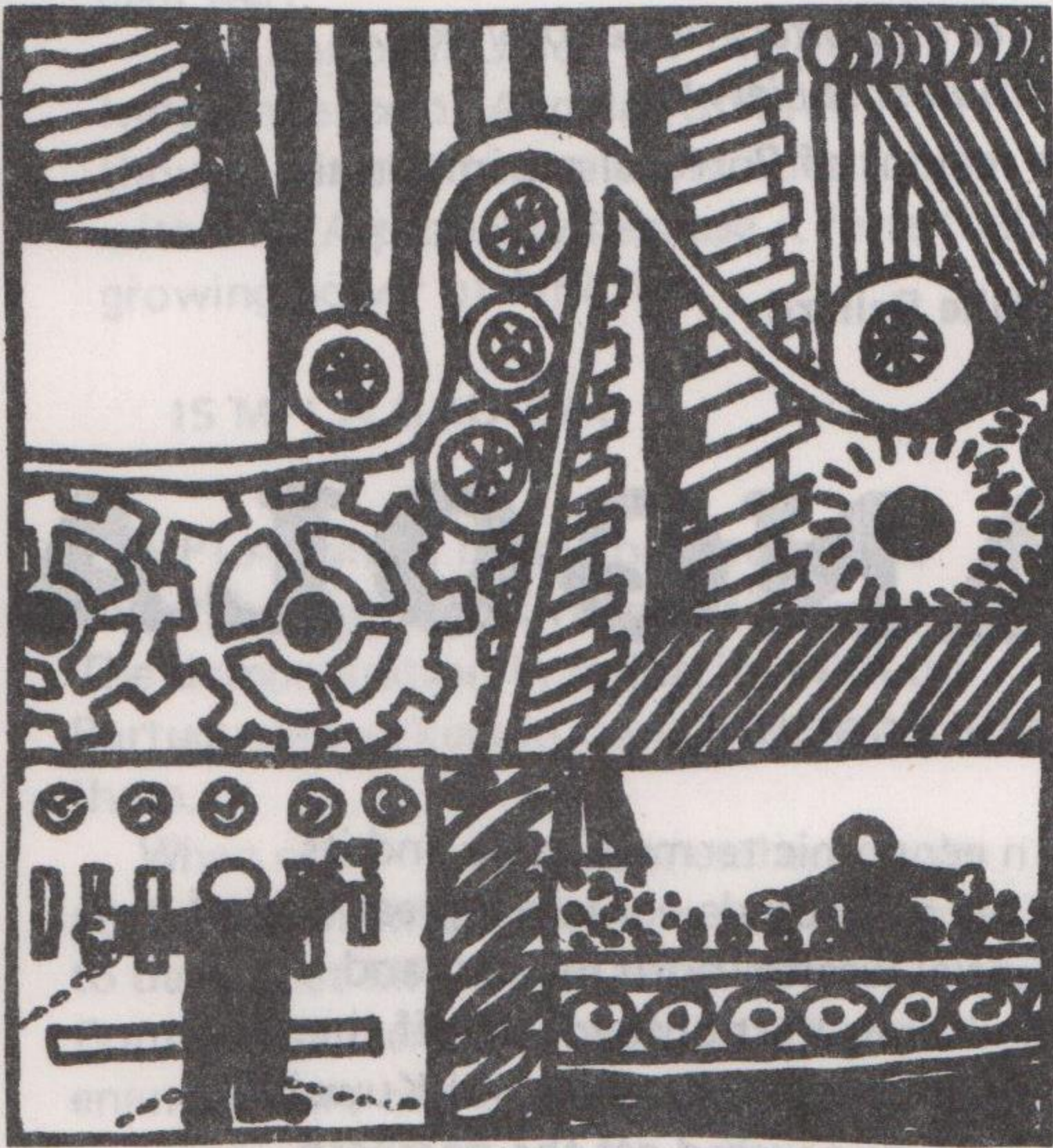
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cider and sit in a warm smoke-filled room over an empty glass all evening?

Not having any money is strange in the things you are forced to do. When sitting over my empty cider glass I would reject all friendly gestures. "They might buy me a drink, and I can't afford to buy them one back," I thought. Once I had bought someone a drink and had gone without my evening bag of chips the next day.

Back in my digs I'd lay fully clothed in bed attempting to read before my fingers got too cold to turn the pages.

It was a sordid but eventful period of my life: going round the undertakers and to the old people's home every day to see who was dead so we could put it in the paper.



LIVING ON LOVE

Money ran out and I got bronchitis from the lack of food and warmth, so I gave up that "good" job and went in search of another.

For a year I worked as a clerk in a factory office, before going to work for a large firm of insurance brokers in London.

Men had to wear suits, ties and regulation length hair. We all had to sign in a book giving time of arrival, with a black pen which was provided. At 9.30 am promptly a man was deputised to change that black pen for a red one, so that anyone who arrived late signed the book in red.

Permission had to be given before anything could be done — even taking my jacket off had to be approved by my departmental head.

There was, apart from the tea break, a separate period of twenty minutes set aside each morning and each afternoon for going to the lavatory. If you went once, you had to use your whole 20 minutes or forfeit it.

I left after two months, before I got diaohrrea.

More work in a factory office followed, of a very routine nature, 18 months was as much as I could bear.

Then I met Zosia, an au pair (£2 a week and all found) for a company director. We fell in love.

Two pounds a week, even when all found, doesn't give people the right to interfere in someone else's private life, so when the people complained that I shouldn't go to Zosia's room with her, she left and went to London to work for a Jewish family (£4 a week and all found) who were far more sensible.

For six months I worked in a factory as an assistant machine operator. My job was to scoop out pieces of waste metal from under the machine where it was left by the cutting tool.

Again — isolated by large machines and noise, working to someone else's speed, and covered all over with machine oil.

Still, the extra money (I got £25 before deductions for working a 12 hour day, five days a week) paid my train fare to London at weekends.

Promised that after I'd been there for six weeks I'd have a rise in my basic pay, I tackled the form. Yes, I could have a rise in basic, but if I insisted I'd be put on a machine where the piece rate was lower.

I stayed where I was.

DOWN AND OUT

Some weeks there was no overtime, and then I was nearly broke. On these occasions I'd sleep on benches in Hyde Park or St. James's Park (never a good place, as the police came round) or walk around all night, when I went to see Zosia at weekends.

It was during this period that my liberal conscience began to harden, although it didn't develop into a revolutionary perspective for some time.

Police harrassment by night and day would have been unbelievable in the small market town where I live.

People sleeping in shop doorways, not just occasionally like I did, but every night. One very cold night I went to Liverpool Street Station to keep warm, and there were several regulars there, huddled in corners, recognisable in their shapeless grey overcoats. One man lay asleep in the corner, using his boots as a pillow, two policemen came in, one kicked and woke him away — why I didn't know.

Washing and shaving in an underground washroom, next to someone who is unwrapping a layer of newspaper which has been under their vest all night to help keep out the cold, or catching a fleeting glimpse of someone furtively injecting themselves in a public lavatory, gave me a different view of life.

Why do we all tolerate a society which wastes and destroys human life and dignity?

A succession of jobs in factories, offices, as a bank clerk — with over a quarter of a million pounds a day passing through my hands.

Watching people, a helpless observer, as they came to ask for £5 or £10 overdrafts to "see them through to the end of

the month", and growing more bitter as they were turned down — "No security".

Others borrowed thousands, and already had money locked away in stocks, shares and property.

I could find no human face to Peter Walker's brand of "responsible capitalism". Only a mask which hid reality.

Lately I've been working in a library.

Over 40 hours a week and three hours a day travelling — I might change, but I don't relish the prospect of being one of Dennis Healey's 1¼million.

THE FRUITS OF LABOUR?

Ten years since I left school, during which time I've never been out of work except for a short period when I went to the tech in the next town — even then I worked evenings, weekends and holidays as my "grant" was only £200 a year.

What do I have to show for it?

I live in a rented house, sleep in a rented bed, watch a rented TV, and wrote this on a rented table.

Our lives are stunted by a system which forces people to work, isolates them from their workmates, places them in lousy conditions, both at home and at work.

Such is the nature of this society, whether at work in factory or office, as student, or as housewife, we are all as much victims of this society as are the people who sleep in shop doorways, and it is only by working together, making positive attempts to overcome the divisions implied by such terms as "factory hand", "office clerk", "student" or "housewife" that we will create the anarchist-communist society that will allow us to develop fully as people.

Martyn Everett

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WORLD WIDE PORTUGAL



DESPITE THE official opposition of all major parties in Portugal, from the Christian Democrats (tories) to the so-called Socialist and Communist Parties, as well as the Armed Forces Movement that overthrew the old Caetano regime, workers have been occupying factories, offices, shops and farms throughout the country, and organising their administration through delegate committees and general assemblies.

There has also been the beginnings of co-ordination industrially and geographically with joint committees and assemblies of workers, soldiers, students and residents in many towns; and with organisations such as the *Interimpresa*, a joint industrial council for the whole area around Lisbon.

These organisations involving workers who supported the different parties in the elections and those who supported no parties, have by-passed the largely Communist Party controlled trade unions and the TU federation — the *Intersindical*.

The first issue of the *Interimpresa* information bulletin announced:

"The development of struggles after April 25th verified the separation of the trade unions and the parties claiming to represent the working class from the class and their sabotage of this struggle. The necessity for exchanges and contacts between workers in struggle is obvious."

The Army and the State

There is still however little recognition of the need to take complete control of all the resources of production and distribution through workers councils and to destroy the capitalist state machine, which still maintains an uneasy co-existence alongside the councils.

The Government cannot rely on the bulk of the armed forces to attack the councils' activities — many units have openly sided with workers in struggle and handed over arms to them. Some soldiers are beginning to realise the need to disband the army altogether as a separate force from the rest of the working class.

Still, there are some units loyal to their reactionary officers. The Government is rapidly reorganising them and recruiting new soldiers from amongst dissatisfied refugees from Angola. Its commando unit was confident enough to attack and blow up the radical *Radio Renascença* and is no doubt

preparing new attacks on other radical news media.

Only a beginning

The democratic re-organisation of production and distribution and the equalisation of wages is proceeding rapidly in some areas, but the limited resources available and the deadweight of decades of authoritarian conditioning are still holding workers back from a full attack on the whole market economy, (there is still much prejudice against equal pay for women).

Most workers both inside and outside Portugal still see the 'revolution' as a largely national affair, something which can spread only after Portugal is won over. But unless the revolution is spread immediately, beyond the frontiers of Portugal into the heartlands of Europe, Portugal will be isolated and crushed by external political and economic forces.

The workers of the Portuguese airlines (TAP) have perhaps gone furthest in their understanding of the present situation:-

"The TAP workers are not going to let themselves be fooled by anyone, and we are quite aware that capitalism still continues and that our struggle cannot be limited to the TAP or even to our own country. We also know that a real revolution is only possible where society is totally controlled by the workers themselves, and which the power of the state can never be used



Soldiers and workers in Lisbon on 17 July:

against us. That is why we are going to continue to organise in our workplaces and to struggle for a society with neither exploiters nor exploited. A communist society!"

The lessons of Portugal are important to us all.

Mike Ballard

ANGOLA

BACKGROUND

In economic terms Angola and its enclave of Cabinda contain a great deal of potential wealth, both mineral and agricultural. Vast oilfields lie off the Cabindan coast and a "second Kuwait" has been discovered off the northern province of Santo Antonio do Zaire.

There is the Cassinga iron mining complex in southern Angola and there are many other minerals as yet unexploited. Angola exports sisal and is the 2nd most important coffee grower in Africa.

Strategically Angola is also important. The Cunene Dam, essential to electric and water supplies in S.W. Africa has already been siezed by the South African state.

The Benguela railway carries 40% of Zaire's major export — copper — to the sea and most of Zambia's copper exports. Angola straddles an important sea route for all the world's major powers.

It is in line with these interests that different countries give their support for the different nationalist movements in Angola.

Zaire has consistently supported secessionist movements in Cabinda. South Africa is giving military aid to UNITA in southern Angola. The Russians, eager for port facilities for their navy, has given military and diplomatic aid to the leftist MPLA who presently control Luanda and its hinterland. Cuban military advisors are also present.

In opposition to them the USA and China sit in an unhappy alliance with the forces of the FNLA in the north and UNITA in the south of the country.

The British and Belgian interests already established in Angola have to rely on South Africa and more importantly the

THE SAME CLASS STRUGGLE

USA to protect them.

The following article describes developments in the Inter-Imperialist struggle in Angola up to 'Independence'.

THE COMPETITORS

Since mid July the armed clashes between the Popula Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) has become an all out civil war.

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) though initially neutral now sides totally with FNLA probably because it fears the growing power of MPLA.

IS MPLA RADICAL

MPLA; which is now backed by the USSR; has gained a strong leftist image. The demonstration in solidarity with the Portuguese workers in London supported them.

When one of their members spoke at the demonstration he was at great pains to deny that MPLA was Marxist or Communist merely nationalist. Their enemies were not capitalism, but imperialism, tribalism and as if to prove the low level of debate in Angola, cannibalism.

This is no less than Neto (their leader) has said himself:

"I dislike these classifications. I am not a communist. I am not a socialist. I am first of all a patriot."

The democracy of MPLA is little more than talk. The beginning of 1974 found MPLA divided with Chipenda leading the main opposition to Neto. Neto first appeared to placate his opponents, agreeing to a portion of the seats on MPLA's ruling committee going to the opposition groups for the next year.

This never took effect. Before the new year Chipenda was expelled amidst dubious accusations. MPLA supporters point out that Chipenda has now joined the FNLA as proof of his treachery.

The truth is that Chipenda first attempted to set up his 'Eastern Revolt' group independently. In February this year MPLA attacked the Eastern Front offices in Luanda killing several members.

This was justified on the grounds that according to the agreement between Portugal and the 3 major liberation movements, which was then operating, the Angolan people could only be represented by those 3 movements, which didn't include Chipenda's group.

Within a few days FNLA, UNITA and MPLA together occupied Eastern Revolt offices. It is not surprising that Chipenda

took the first opportunity to join FNLA before his group was totally crushed.

STRIKE WAVE

The response of the working class to the fall of Caetano in Portugal was a strike wave which swept Angola, particularly Luanda and Lubito. The shanty towns around Luanda are strongly MPLA, but the MPLA were incapable of dampening their supporters actions.

The leadership of the MPLA could merely look on while those who claimed to be their followers not only agitated for strikes, but also conducted small scale insurrections.

The transitional government, which included FNLA, MPLA and UNITA with the portuguese tried to keep control with an anti-strike law. The Lei Mobilacau gave the government the right to put workers in key industries under martial law.

Opposition was organised by the *Commissions Populares* who called a demonstration which thousands attended. The MPLA representative on the presidential council (set up as part of the transitional government) spoke vigorously for the law, but it was to prove totally inoperable.



GOVERNMENT TRIES TO DISARM WORKERS

Many of those living in the shanty towns have arms. They first organised self-defence groups against whites, who fearing black rule, had attacked the townships round Luanda. In addition during the first clashes between the liberation movements, arms were distributed indiscriminately.

The government attempted to disarm these civilians. Though these were mainly their supporters, the MPLA was as strongly in favour of this as the rest of the government.

They had little success, as Lucio Lara (a member of MPLA's central committee) complained *"though under MPLA banner MPLA does not control them"*.

GOVERNMENT DIVIDED: WORKERS UNITED

The most militant section of the workers are the dockers. On the 28th May they struck, in opposition to their trade union leaders, demanding the abolition of differentials. They went back 2 weeks later completely victorious. Increases were from 33% to 52% back dated to the first of February.

The *Johannesburg Star* blaming the militancy of the workers for Angolan economic troubles made a pointed remark about why the transitional government was so ineffective:

"unlike Mozambique [now ruled by the 'marxist' FRELIMO] no one group is sufficiently in control to be able to tell the workers to work".

The MPLA is constantly in fact telling the workers to work! but it has so far not tried anything much more convincing than words.

CIVIL WAR

Initially FNLA, with the backing of the CIA, was the strongest group. MPLA had no major backers and had been ostracised by the USSR. This changed as soon as MPLA looked as though it might take power. Russia poured in arms and this tipped the balance in their favour in Luanda.

But the defeat of the FNLA and UNITA was only temporary and they are now returning from their strongholds with much more force.

MPLA and the WORKERS

In MPLA territory the 'Popular Commissions' have gained in power and the MPLA has not risked trying to disarm civilians.

The 'militia' is reported by MPLA sources to be about 50,000 strong in Luanda alone, compared with a total of 15,000 MPLA regulars in April last year.

Neither has MPLA felt strong enough to discipline workers. Its tactics have been to argue that at this stage, to strike is against the workers interests. If UNITA and FNLA are defeated, they hint that the workers will then have their opportunity.

The truth is exactly the reverse. It is because FNLA and UNITA are undefeated that the MPLA is unable to defeat the workers.

Many workers who still support MPLA think their anti-working class policies previously were a result of compromise with the other two liberation groups, but MPLA's links with the majority of workers are quite weak. Hopefully therefore,

cont. p.8

they will not follow the advice of UNTA (the MPLA backed trade union confederation) that the 'battle for production' must come before their interests.

The radical peasantry are more closely tied to the liberation movements because when they have fought against their oppression they have become part of 'liberated areas'. This may now change as it is no longer a clear cut fight against the Portuguese.

CONCLUSIONS

Whichever of the liberation movements wins out, Angola can only hope to maintain a purely nominal independence in hock to one or other of the Super Powers.

The workers of Luanda and other industrial and commercial centres must now prepare to defend themselves against the inevitable crack down by any new government, seeking to stabilise the strife torn economy.

For the future, workers must organise independently of all nationalist groups and link up with workers throughout Africa and the Imperialist nations.

DAVID BARNSDALE

WORTH READING: *Inter-imperialist struggle in Africa World Revolution* pamphlet No 3. 30p including p&p from "Rising Free" 197 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.

cont. from p. 11

Although some of the book only has relevance to the Italian situation, the main arguments are valid for other countries, to a slightly lesser or greater degree.

Because of the limited subject tackled, the book does not give a clear idea of how the system of sex roles works, its value to our employers and how to fight against it. For this we have to look into the oppressive roles for which the children are being prepared by their dolls and toy tanks — soldiers, housewives and so on.

The author advocates introducing men as nursery teachers as a crucial way of breaking down the sex stereotyping of children. She does not make it clear that this is only likely to be effective to the extent that the teachers have freed themselves of the stereotypes. After all, educators who support sex roles also advocate more men teachers — to provide 'masculine' models for the boys to identify with.

The problem faced by adults who are consciously working on bringing up children in a new way are discussed in an interesting pamphlet by Phyllis Greenleaf — **Liberating Young Children from Sex Roles — Experiences in Day Care Centers, Play Groups and Free Schools**, published in 1972 by *New England Free Press*, 60 Union Square, Somerville, Mass. 02143, USA.

STEFAN

BRAIN POLICE

THE POLITICS OF PSYCHIATRY

Britain has on her statute books one of the most repressive pieces of legislation in the world. It allows for indefinite detention without trial, seizure of all the detainee's property and the legalisation of torture on the detainee. The detainee has no right of legal representation, no right of appeal except to an allegedly "independent" administrative tribunal at long intervals. The detainee has no access to the courts for redress; the Act prohibits the prosecution of anyone enforcing the legislation (eg. for assault) without the Home Secretary's permission. In fact the courts do not administer the legislation at all — all that is required to detain a person indefinitely is the opinion of two state-appointed persons.

The Act was passed quietly in 1959. It has — and is — been used upon hundreds of thousands of people yet there are no outcries in the press about its routine use, no public protests, yet its use is perfectly open for all to see. When it was passed in 1959 it was called "One of the most enlightened pieces of legislation of the age". Why?

Because it does not purport to be used against those who deserve human rights of freedom from incarceration and torture. It is only to be used on the less than human, the mentally "ill". The rest of us need feel no qualms. If they are compulsorily detained for years in a locked hospital ward, it is all for their "own good". If they are tortured with E.C.T. (electrically induced epileptic convulsions) they are being medically "treated"; its all for their "own good".

The above is taken from a leaflet published by the Hull Mental Patients Union. Few people are aware of the inherently class biased nature of institutional psychiatry. For some time psychiatric epidemiologists have been puzzled by the seemingly greater incidence of schizophrenia amongst the lower social groups. This puzzles them because schizophrenia is supposed to be a mental "disease" or "illness", and like physical disease to strike its victim without regard to his social status or lack of it. The problem raises the question as to whether the "medical model" is applicable to mental "illness" at all, and if it is not, whether psychiatry is in effect oppressive politics masquerading as medicine.

Incidence of schizophrenia here means incidence of *diagnosed* schizophrenia. Hence the problem may be stated another way; why do psychiatrists diagnose schizophrenia more commonly in the lower social groups?

The criteria which psychiatrists use in the diagnosis of severe mental "illness" at first sight looks impressively medical in character. Lists of "syndromes", "symptoms" and "prognosis" interspersed with currently fashionable psychiatric

nosology fill the psychiatric textbooks. But these "symptoms" do not exist in isolation in the "patient"; the only way they can be elicited is when the "patient" takes part in some sort of social interaction (often only with a psychiatrist). Szasz has made the point that "surely one illness a corpse cannot have is mental illness"; it experiences no social relations, (T. Szasz. *The Second Sin*).

These "symptoms" are not medical entities but rather are indices of social disruption; the "patient" is treated not for the trouble he is to himself but for the trouble he is to others. Bearing this in mind, the situation clarifies; the lower social groups, lacking power and authority to effectively manipulate their social environment and thus ease an acute situational strain are far more likely than the 'middle' and 'upper' classes to be labelled "socially disruptive". The rates of mental "illness" amongst the various social classes are a reflection of the distribution of power, authority and privilege amongst those classes.

Psychiatry at the moment in this country is thus covertly politically repressive; this is not to say that it will not develop an overtly political purpose (as in the Soviet Union) if the class war hots up. Psychiatrists themselves are middle and upper class, and there is no reason to believe that they will not follow what appears to them to be their class interest if power and authority is seriously challenged by an emerging revolutionary dissident force in society. The legalistic face of psychiatry, the Mental Health Act of 1959, is a formidable weapon in the armoury of reaction and there is no doubt it would be used as part of the generalised repression of the revolution.

Anyone interested in the Mental Patients Union contact Mike Smith via Hull S.R. group address.



Due to increased costs the next issue of SR will be priced at 8p.

tenants harassed

"GLC owed £2.5 million in back rent"
 "Put owers out after 4 weeks",
 "Crackdown on Artful Dodgers"

These are the kind of headlines that have been appearing over the last few months in our local paper the *Chiswick and Brentford Gazette*. They herald the start of a new "get tough" policy by the local council - Hounslow - and the Greater London Council on council tenants.

COUNCIL BULLY BOYS

What does all this mean to the tenants on the estates. In our case we fell in arrears of rent. A pleasant enough man (Mr W) from the arrears department of the London Borough of Hounslow came round to see us when the arrears total reached about £30. He was very sympathetic and suggested that we make an arrangement to pay off the £30 by a weekly payment of £1. Also, why didn't we apply for a rent rebate as our income was so low? Mr W left the forms with us to fill in, we assumed everything was okay and we wouldn't get hassled anymore.

Two days later we received a threatening letter from the council — apparently we owed £60! If this wasn't payed within one week we would receive notice to quit. We phoned Mr W and explained what had happened. He explained it as a balls up in the bureaucracy. But everything would be okay. On the 20th September we received notice to quit.

HARASSING TACTICS

We knew from friends who'd received similar treatment that these eviction notices were only semi-serious. The council use them as a deliberate tactic to harass their tenants into paying up arrears. We were lucky in two ways. Firstly we knew why the council use these tactics, and secondly that being a student I could expect to receive a grant cheque for £150 at the beginning of October — so we could pay off the arrears. As I say, we were lucky, but people have killed themselves over smaller issues — it might be valid to ask, what would have happened if a single OAP or mother had received such threats?

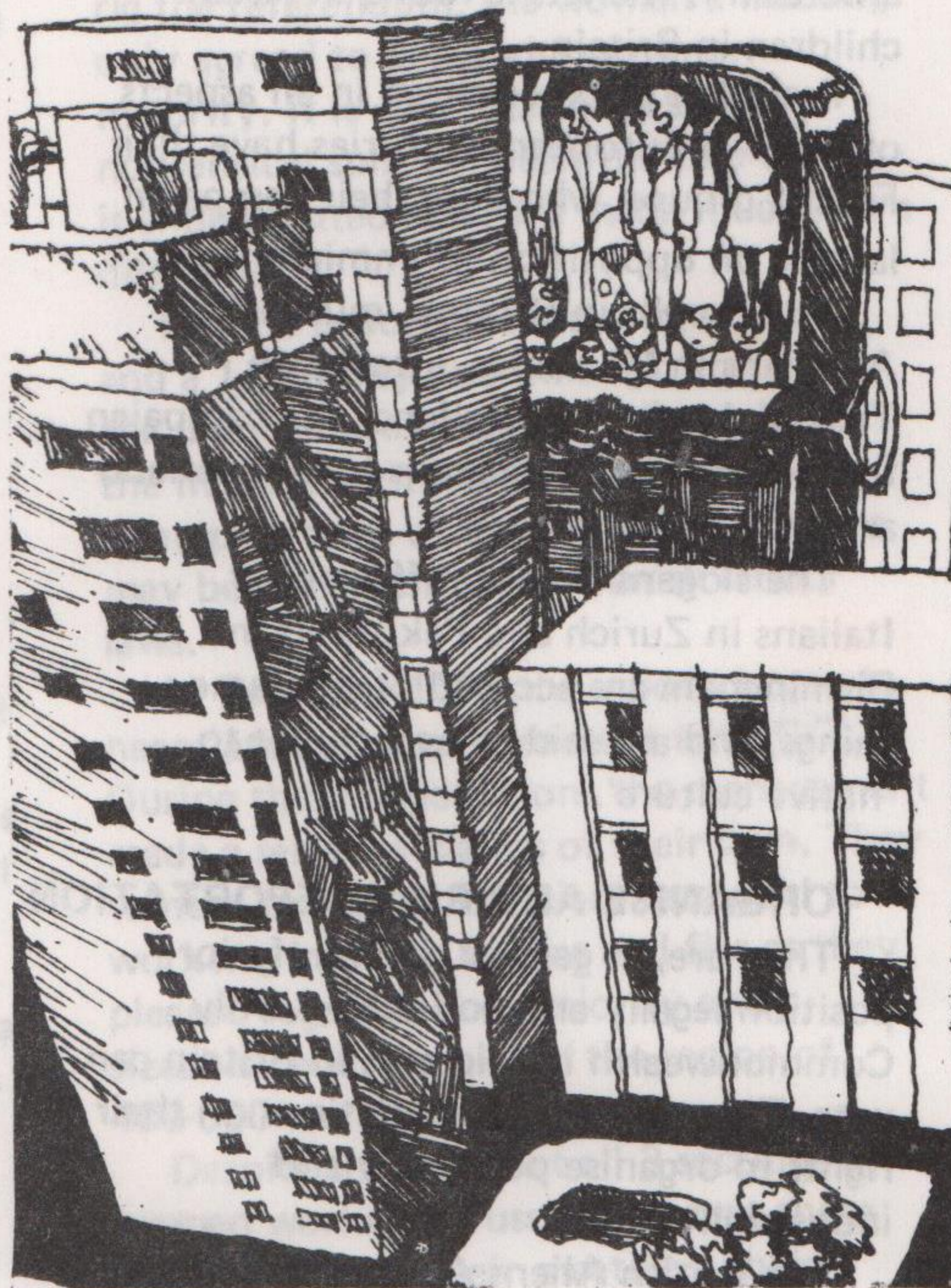
QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

But why do tenants get into arrears? For many the reason is simple — they cannot under any circumstances afford to pay. For others it is a question of fore-going something else or get into arrears. As the GLC admit "... there are also a substantial proportion (of tenants) whose incomes are sufficient to meet the rent but who give low priority to the payment of rent as compared with other demands."

(Report of Housing Management Committee, GLC 4/9/75.) It is a question of priorities. They spell this out even more clearly — "The level of rent arrears is affected by bank holidays, particularly at Christmas and Easter when the closing of post offices and *extra domestic expenditure* cause rent payments to be missed (my emphasis). Put bluntly this means — do you buy Christmas presents for your kids or pay the rent.

In our case we fell behind for two reasons. Firstly because we didn't really know we were doing so — this is easy to do with the giro payment system (we have no rent book as such), and secondly because we preferred to take the children on holiday. Living on the 19th floor of a tower block makes you question which is more important, giving yourself and the kids a break to save your mental health or paying an exorbitant rent.

Anyway we paid up when I got my grant and no more was heard from them.



WHY SUCH TACTICS?

The council is playing god because it's in deep financial trouble — hardly surprising when it spends over £3 million on a new civic centre and offices which will be used mostly by the bureaucrats. Indeed to pay for this centre it was felt necessary to cut off the grants to our local playgroups. Also it's doing all in it's power to limit and control Chiswick Womens Aid Centre and other community projects. Basically though, it's due to the continuing crisis and cutbacks in government spending and high loan repayment. Once again we're being asked to pay for the crisis caused by a social system which doesn't benefit us.

The council is using these evictions notices because they reach tenants when

they're isolated. It's embarrassing to receive one, so most folk don't talk about it — they just frantically try to find some way to pay. Nice and easy for the council, guaranteed results, what does it matter the anguish they cause tenants? They get us when we're on our own and beat us as individuals.

TENANTS ASSOCIATION

The tenants association seems the obvious place to fight back, but it's worse than useless. It's main interest seems to be complaining about other tenants. Those that keep pets (against the rules), children playing on the estate, rent arrears — these are all subject to attack at tenants association meetings on our estate. The association is run by the local Labour Party. This in part explains the situation. Their futile dreams of "bits of socialism now" lead them to expect a self-managed estate if they act as the *councils' police force* amongst the tenants. Also bribes like the new community centre (which will be useful though) help them toe-the-line.

As long as the association remains this way, nobody is going to bother to go along apart from the faithful — meetings of 30-50 are held on an estate of 3000!!

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

We must demand that housing be seen as a *fundamental social right* not a privilege that can be removed for non-payment of rent.

We must agitate around the estates on this basis, to build genuine tenants groups to defend victimised tenants and prevent evictions.

Attempts must be made to agitate within the tenants associations, where this fails alternative groups must be established.

Any council tenants in the London Borough of Hounslow wishing to discuss this, please write to BM c/o London Group.

DISCUSSION MEETING — London

"Housing Struggle"

3.30pm Saturday 24th January

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immigrant workers

CAPITALISM has always been organised on a world basis. Problems in Europe have been solved at the expense of the workers of the rest of the world. The most recent example is the use of immigrant labour.

After World War II there was a strong movement of the working class for change. This did not seek to destroy capitalism, but the workers were unwilling to accept the unemployment of the Thirties.

Capitalist economies, however, require what Marx called a 'reserve army of labour' ie unemployment. So, faced with the political impossibility of such an army at home, capitalism developed one abroad.

At first these were displaced people from Central Europe, known in Britain as 'voluntary workers'. Later they came from further afield. This development was not confined to Britain — in fact we have relatively fewer than many other countries. Today about 14% of manual workers in Western Europe are immigrants. In Switzerland about half are.

These workers come from different areas. In Britain there are many Irish, and of course those from the Commonwealth, such as India and the West Indies, but also many from Spain, Greece, etc.

France obtains many from the former North African colonies, such as Algeria, and also from Spain. People go to Germany from Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece. A large proportion of those in Switzerland are from the south of Italy.

Wherever they come from, they face similar situations when they arrive (and they left similar conditions of backwardness and poverty behind, also).

WHO DOES THE DIRTY WORK?

They have the worst jobs. In Britain they run the buses and do the dirty work in the hospitals. This applies to the doctors as well as the cleaners — immigrant doctors get the worst jobs in the worst hospitals.

In other countries they man the production lines. Everywhere they do the jobs that natives won't do. And everywhere they concentrate in certain sectors.

If they try to advance, they face discrimination, both institutional and conscious. A recent PEP survey showed that immigrant school-leavers were at a disadvantage compared to native children with the same qualifications, and that the better-educated they were the worse they were treated.

They live in worse housing. This arises partly from their low pay, partly from prejudice, and partly from the requirements of councils, etc. Again, a recent report showed how the rules on



allocation of council houses acted against immigrants in England.

The slums of Brixton are much better, however, than some of the shanty-towns (bidonvilles) of France and other countries.

Not surprisingly, this leads to ill-health. Tuberculosis is widespread amongst immigrants, and most cases are acquired after arrival. (Germany, for example, sets strict medical tests for would-be 'Gastarbeitern'). Rickets is found in Asian children in Britain.

Prejudice is experienced in all aspects of life. All European countries have their Fascist groups, who base their campaign largely on opposition to immigrants.

Fire-bombs in Brixton, murder of Algerians in Marseilles, attacks on Turkish workers in Holland, the campaign for exclusion of foreigners in Switzerland are part of one process.

The slogans do not differ either. Italians in Zurich and Pakistanis in Birmingham are accused of the same things, and are said to be a threat to 'native culture'.

ORGANISE AND RISK DEPORTATION

They are, in general, in an inferior position legally and politically. Only Commonwealth immigrants in Britain can vote. There are often restrictions on their rights to organise politically and industrially.

The British Aliens Act for instance, restricts the right of foreigners to organise except in their own factory. The possibility of using it against a left-wing lecturer at Warwick University was discussed (see the Penguin book *Warwick University Ltd*).

Even where there is not a specific limitation, the general power of police and employers can be used to discourage political activity. In the Nurses' dispute last year many foreign nurses were threatened with dismissal and deportation.

Some employers deliberately employ illegal immigrants, who have no rights at all. At the same time, many come from countries such as Iran and Spain, and the European authorities work with the agents of the dictator to stop political activity amongst migrants.

The position of Commonwealth immigrants in Britain has been better than that of other migrants. The political rights are greater, although they can still be deported. At one time they could come freely. One consequence is that there are many more families.

Amongst other migrants there are few women. This situation is changing. Successive Immigration Acts bring the laws closer to this for aliens.

Immigrant workers are treated even worse by trade unions than the natives. Many unions simply ignore them, but others actively discriminate.

In the past few years there have been several strikes by Asian workers in Britain, particularly in the textile industry, which were almost all attacked by the unions, and often by native workers.

RACE AND CLASS STRUGGLE

Liberals of all parties try to solve these problems by legislation. This means asking the capitalist state to attack the system on which it depends. Not surprisingly, such attempts have failed.

The Race Relations Acts have not prevented discrimination (and nor will the proposed laws against sex discrimination), nor have they stopped Powell and the National Front from spreading racist ideas; but they have given the police and courts weapons to use against political activists of all races.

The same happened with the Public Order Act, which was supposed to be aimed at Fascists.

Socialists not only recognise that the position of immigrants is an integral part of capitalism which can only be altered by its abolition, but also that migrant workers themselves have an important role to play in the class struggle.

Because they are the first to suffer from the crisis of capitalism they will be forced to oppose it sooner and more rapidly than the native workers.

Because they are not part of the nation politically they are less likely to accept the appeals to the 'national interest' or demands for national state-capitalism.

Because they have so often been attacked by unions, they are less inclined to trust them or their hangers-on of the white left.

Already there have been militant actions by sections of foreign workers. For instance, Turkish workers in London cafes struck in support of the Shrewsbury pickets, whilst the TUC and unions waffled on.

The future will doubtless see many more actions by migrant workers against all aspects of their oppression.

Phil McShane

RS RADICAL STATISTICS

ON 26-27 September about 25 statistical workers from technical schools, universities, research units and Government met in the Ladbroke Grove Urban Studies Centre, London. The word "radical" is an umbrella term covering a variety of political views and attitudes to statistics.

The discussion took much longer than the organising group had expected, most people taking an active part, and after one and a half mentally exhausting days we had scarcely got through half the program. We didn't reach the planned discussion on the role of statistics in a future socialist society, which I was going to open. This was just as well, because I haven't worked out my ideas on it yet.

These are my first impressions of what happened as I remember things a month later. First, there was an extremely difficult and abstract (at least for those without knowledge of philosophical thought) discussion of whether the basic assumptions of statistics were so influenced by the interests of the ruling class that it is impossible to be radical *and* a statistician — we have to be radical anti-statisticians.

Most of us couldn't quite swallow this, and though that statistics *could* be used to work for a new society, though a lot of work would be needed to develop new concepts, get rid of biased assumptions, find the information we are interested in. Radical Statistics study groups are trying to do this in various fields — health, prices and incomes, education, teaching statistics.

We discussed whether to try to set up a network to give statistical support to community and other radical groups who request it. Some thought that it would undermine people's confidence in their own abilities if we came along as 'the experts'. Others thought we could avoid taking over, and demystify statistics, if we worked with groups in the right way.

There was also the problem of which groups we would help. Is demystifying statistics in itself radical, even on behalf of the National Front, say? As we mean different things by 'radical', how do we decide what groups are radical? One sister mentioned the case of a Northamptonshire village whose land the local council wanted to obtain to build houses on, with the council using population projections which were probably faulty. We disagreed on which was the radical side here; perhaps it was a fight between property speculators on one side and wealthy farmers on the other!

We decided that those who wanted to could get together to set up this advice network. I'm a bit out of touch at the moment, so I don't know if it has been.

One subject we could unite on was the threat of redundancies which many statistical workers face as the economic

crisis becomes more severe. When our employers have to cut costs, frills like research units are the first to go.

Statisticians on the whole may not think of themselves as "workers" (nor of course would many manual workers think of them as part of the working class), but when they get the chop they find out what their real social position is.

Twelve people stand to lose their jobs when the Social Science Research Council Survey Unit is abolished next year, their contracts being cut off in the middle. The cut is being contested by the staff of all SSRC units, with the backing of the AUT. How much of a fight will be put up, in view of the low level of solidarity, is another question. Further information from John Utting or Cathy Marsh, Survey Unit, Regent House, 89 Kingsway, London WC2B 6RH (tel. 831 6951).

None of this is very dramatic or revolutionary, of course, but it is still a significant step forward for a group of workers so deeply integrated into the capitalist system as statisticians. Statisticians have not usually seen themselves as separate from, let alone opposed to, their masters in industry and Government. The very word "statistics" comes from the word "State".

When we meet in official conferences, seminars and whatnot, we do not speak as individuals, but as representatives of our employers, discussing how to solve their problems. If now for the first time some of us are meeting to question, in however hesitant a way, who we are and what we are doing, then perhaps water has begun to flow beneath the ice of capitalist power.

Stefan

cont. from p.12

children. If women choose to go out to work they must push for the other demands of the W.L.M., free nursery facilities, equal pay and job opportunities, if they are to gain the same level of independence as men.

But a word of warning, instead of dependence on men we could then be dependent on the state and under its control. Laws introduced giving the state power to remove mistreated children from their parents could be used against any parent to whom the state objected. It is not too far fetched to imagine the situation of a woman who having rejected the wife/mother role is sacked by the state, which removes its children to what it sees as a more suitable employee.

EQUALITY IN OPPRESSION!

Wages for housework or child-rearing would not be an advance for the working class as a whole even though it may be for some working class women. It would not redistribute wealth from the capitalist class to the working class, but merely redistribute poverty amongst the working

REVIEW

Little Girls by Elena Gianini Belotti, translated from the Italian and published by the *Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative* (14 Talacre Rd., London NW5 3PE), 85p.

Giogetto watches the little girls play shop. . . he approaches the teacher and asks in a voice so strangled that he must repeat himself, if he can play with the girls.

"With the girls!" the teacher repeats, scandalised. She takes the child by the shoulders — as if she had suddenly been struck with shame and pity for him — and embraces him. The child blushes, visibly embarrassed, and tries to extricate himself with dignity by stating in an uncertain voice, "But I wanted to be the supplier?"

This passage stirred vague memories in me of a similar reaction when I wanted to try some needlework at primary school. The book, published in Italy two years ago, is about how children are forced into rigid models of 'feminine' and 'masculine' behaviour attitudes, concentrating on the first few years of life in home and nursery school.

The author directs the Montessori Pre-Natal Centre in Rome and teaches at the Montessori teacher-training state school. She shows in great detail how parents, other children, children's books, toys and her fellow nursery teachers separate children into opposed groups of boys and girls, suppressing the vigour and independence of the girls and the sensitivity of the boys.

Ironically it is mainly women — mothers and nursery teachers — who, brought up themselves on traditional ideas of what it means to be a man or a woman, teach children to accept discrimination against women.

cont. p.8

class.

Nor is there any chance of this demand bringing down capitalism, on the contrary it may well strengthen the state's control over our lives which can only be to our detriment. It is important that women and men continue to reject the roles capitalism has processed them for. Though working class women can make some gains by demanding equality with men from the state, it is liable only to be granted at the expense of working class men. It is as well to bear in mind that equality for working class men and women means equality in oppression. If we want freedom and the right to self-determination it is futile to demand that the capitalist state should oblige us by handing over.

If you fell into shark infested waters you would hardly expect the sharks not to eat you, though there's no reason why you shouldn't ask.

Sheila D. Ritchie

WOMENS REPORT

contains regular reports on the Womens Liberation Movement.

Available from all radical bookshops.

Wages for housework ?

A SECTION of the Womens Liberation Movement in Britain, U.S. and Italy are demanding 'Wages for Housework' from the state. In Britain they have managed to gain some publicity from the straight press, even to 15 minutes serious discussion on BBC's 'Womans Hour' (Radio 4).

However the written response from women listeners was overwhelmingly opposed to the idea and those in favour mainly tongue-in-cheek. What then is this demand all about, what do these women want, why and what do they hope to gain from this demand?

ALL WOMEN ARE HOUSEWIVES?

Firstly they say that all women are housewives, married or single. By this they mean that from birth girls are socialised for the role they are to play later in life — that of wives and mothers. This is done through encouraging girls to play with dolls — substitute babies — dressing and feeding them etc., as well as sewing, cleaning and cooking with toy substitutes. As the girl grows older she gives up her toys for the real thing, helping mummy with cooking, cleaning, shopping and washing.

The male child is also socialised but for a different role, that of worker, soldier and head of the household. His toys and games are designed to encourage his independence, initiative and creativity. Men sell their labour power to the capitalist boss — private or state — while women service them i.e. sexually, internally by feeding them and externally by cleaning, nursing and caring for them. By servicing the workforce she is also giving a service to the bosses which they do not pay for, as well as another service to boss and state, that of reproducing the future workforce and servicing them. All this she does for free to the benefit of capitalism. Now some women say that capitalism through the state should be made to pay all women for their services.

WORKING FOR PIN-MONEY!

Because both married and single men are paid the same rate for the job (though married men get tax relief) a family must live off the same income as a single person. To make-ends-meet many women are forced to take a second job. This second job predominantly tends to be in line with her role as service worker; secretary, nurse, cook, cleaner, teacher, social worker etc.. Though she is paid for this work, the rate is low. Women, like immigrant workers, tend to be the least organised, least militant and form a pool of excess labour that can be drawn on in time of boom and in slump used as a

threat to keep wages down and profits up.

Besides she is encouraged by her role training to think of waged work as a second job, she believes it is better for her to be unemployed as she's only working for 'pin-money', than for the 'bread-winner' to be unemployed.

It is that attitude that reinforces her role and disinterest in organising and his role of a lifetime condemned to wage slavery, and strengthens the bosses' ability to keep her wages low.

THE REJECTION OF ROLES

From these observations the conclusion is drawn that the state should pay women for their first job so that they need not take on a second one. That all women should receive a wage because they are women. This, they say would separate the woman from the job.

But would it? Many women are rejecting the role of houseworker and childbearer (though as yet in small ways it is still a start in the right direction). Few young women are content with a day's waged work followed by an evening of unpaid work, while their husbands read the newspaper or watch TV. A glance at the local papers weekly list of decrees nisi granted, reveals that divorces are predominantly instigated by women. Women no longer need to put up with all that their mothers did. The whole womens liberation movement is a rejection of role training.

Yet these women are demanding that we should be paid for that role, this, they say is the most revolutionary demand for the whole working class. NO, on the contrary it is the most reactionary, for far from destroying women's role it only serves to reinforce it. What we don't want is to be compensated for being socialised into the role of service worker, for that would give justification to the process being continued.

The demanding of higher wages for any form of labour is only a defense against capitalist exploitation, not an attack on it. The economic line taken by trade unions for instance, doesn't question how useful the work of its members is to society. Far from encouraging workers to reject that role, along with the political left, they encourage the mistaken belief in "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay". There is nothing 'fair' in love, war or capitalism.

CAPITALIST RETALIATION

The demand that women should be paid for being women, is obviously not going to succeed. As the service of women to the workforce produces nothing tangible that the capitalist can sell. The

service is only indirect to the capitalist anyway. If capitalist profits were squeezed by further taxation in order for the state to pay women a wage, if they didn't actually take their capital elsewhere, they would certainly retaliate. They could do this either by increasing prices and therefore decreasing all wages, or forcing down men's wages, or employ women instead of men using their state paid wages as a subsidy for low wage-rates.

A MAJOR ADVANCE?

Why then make this demand at all? Many left-wing groups believe that by demanding the impossible from the capitalist state, it will somehow be weakened and eventually disintegrate. This is wishful thinking. Time and time again capitalism has shown its resilience to impossibilist demands. The state is more likely to take the wind out of this campaign, if it thought a groundswell of support existed (which doesn't at present) by its partial cooption. All men could be taxed as single and what previously took the form of tax relief for fathers could be substituted for a new form of family allowance. The state could make the payment to any woman or man who stayed at home to rear children.

Capitalism in times of boom could afford this. It would be a major advance for mothers giving them the economic independence from men and avoid the splitting of one parent families. Although mothers and fathers would thus be enabled to swop roles, the division of labour could remain untouched. So that the wage in itself does not break down the oppression of roles but only makes the role more palatable.

Never the less women should campaign to be treated as whole people and not as an appendage to men. We should be able to choose between independence through waged work outside the home or inside it if we have



VICTORY!

When the jury at the Old Bailey trial of 14 people facing possible life imprisonment for leafletting soldiers brought in a verdict of not guilty on all 31 charges, this marked a great victory for the campaign to defend those charged under the 1934 Incitement to Disaffection Act. Following the Old Bailey verdict, similar charges against 4 people from Aberdeen, 6 from Manchester, and one from Preston have been dropped.

What exactly was the crime the 14 on trial were supposed to have committed? They were charged in Autumn 1974 under the Incitement to Disaffection Act and also with conspiracy because they had distributed to soldiers leaflets entitled *Some Information for Discontented Soldiers*. These leaflets informed soldiers of how they could leave the Army — the various grounds on which they could receive a discharge, advice on what to do if they went absent without leave, etc. The 14 were all members of the *British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign (BWNIC)*, an organisation which opposes the violence of all armies — the British, the IRA, and the protestant paramilitary groups — in Northern Ireland, and aims for the withdrawal of British troops and an end to the Union between Britain and Northern Ireland.

Those who became involved in the *BWNIC Defence Campaign* to defend the 14 did not necessarily agree with BWNIC's policies on Ireland. However, they did believe that the BWNIC people had every right to express their views and that the attempt to imprison them for doing so was in effect an attack on all working peoples' rights. The Defence Campaign spread across the country; tactics included distributing *Some Information for Discontented Soldiers (SIDS)* in solidarity with the 14; organising complicity statements where people declared they were ready to give *SIDS* to soldiers; leafletting

civilians to tell them about the charges — newspapers and TV almost completely ignored the case; trying to get support from trades councils and trades unions; as well as the more usual (and less useful) tactics of writing to MPs, the Home Secretary, etc.

The authorities' reaction was to charge 12 more people in connection with *SIDS*. Rather than having any dampening effect, this further repression increased the momentum of the campaign, which developed into one of the most effective and energetic political campaigns in recent years. All over the country people continued to distribute *SIDS* publicly and openly to soldiers. Around 1000 people signed complicity statements, thereby laying themselves open to charges. And what could have been an obscure hatchet-job by the authorities became a focus for national and international protest.

The campaign to defend the 14+ raised certain basic questions. Should the government be able to prevent communication between soldiers and civilians? Was this not an attack on free speech? Were soldiers, as the judge in the Old Bailey trial said, merely "*instruments of government policy*", or should they have information on their rights and be able to make up their own minds about any political material they read? And, connected with this, why have soldiers none of the "rights" other workers have — they are forbidden to organise to obtain better condition or to strike and can't leave if they don't like the job.

The relevance of these charges to all working people is clear when you consider that if troops were used to break strikes (as has happened in the past) anyone who leafletted them asking them not to scab would be liable to prosecution for Incitement to Disaffection.

The use of conspiracy laws against the 14 was another significant feature of the trial. These laws are used to obtain a longer sentence than could be passed for the actual offence committed or where there isn't enough evidence to convict someone of actually breaking any specific law. For example, while "intimidation" carries a maximum sentence of 3 months, Des Warren, one of the Shrewsbury pickets, has been in jail for 3 years after being convicted of "conspiracy to intimidate".

Why were the Government and legal authorities prepared to go as far as imprisoning people for leafletting to prevent soldiers knowing how they could leave the Army? And why, as the evidence given by soldiers at the trial revealed, are the vast majority of troops not told by the Army authorities of even the very limited rights that soldiers do have? The reason lies in the fact that the Army is perhaps the most important part of the coercive forces of the state, forces that are there to protect the power and wealth of the top people in industry and the government. If soldiers were to become politically aware, to demand to have the right to organise to press their interests, to start considering just what their role was in society, the privileged position of our rulers would indeed be much less secure.

This is shown by the situation in Portugal; there, many soldiers have realised they have a common interest with other working people, and are fighting with them to try to take the power away from the few and create a more equal society. That the British authorities are aware of this is shown by the frequent references to the Portuguese situation by the prosecution at the Old Bailey.



Some of the 14 outside the Old Bailey just after they were found not guilty on all 31 charges

BWNIC DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

(CONTINUED)

Making the authorities even more uneasy about the leafletting of soldiers is the continuing war in Northern Ireland. There is some evidence of increasing discontent among rank and file soldiers about their role in Ireland. For example, there was a demonstration by "crack" British troops in Germany against their being sent to Northern Ireland, and increasing numbers of soldiers are going absent without leave (AWOL). Of all soldiers, 41% do not sign up for a second time when their period of service ends: many have found that Army life is not all the recruiting ads say it is.

Given that the state had these pressing reasons for stopping the leafletting, the thwarting of the attempts to imprison the London 14 and others is a major achievement. This outcome shows that if people organise together to fight for what they believe in, they can win victories. Without the active Defence Campaign, it is doubtful if the jury would have brought in a unanimous verdict of not guilty on all charges.

What can be learnt from the tactics the campaign adopted and the organisational forms it took?

As far as the campaign's tactics are concerned, the open, public distribution of *SIDS* was very good in that it involved people in taking action themselves under their own control, in contrast to such activities as appeals to MPs in which people hand over the initiative to others. However, the reasoning behind the tactics — that the authorities would either have to put hundreds on trial, which it's unlikely they would do because of the massive protest that would cause, or be obviously unjustly selective in their arrests — almost came unstuck. For the authorities did in fact make selective arrests of political activists who had no connections with the seats of power, while politely ignoring leafletting by clergymen, prominent citizens, Liberals and other such "respectable" people. The outcome has been favourable, but if the Old Bailey verdict had gone the other way many of those deeply involved in the campaign would most likely now be facing a lengthy spell of enforced mail-bag sewing. The state's actions in this case give warning that serious consideration should be given before adopting tactics which could result in many militants being imprisoned for long spells.

Generally, the campaign was very active and was effective in its use of picketing and non-violent direct action, and there was a welcome touch of originality in such ventures as the *Conspiracy Songbook* !!

From the experiences of involvement in one Defence Group, in Aberdeen, several points stand out concerning the way the campaign was organised and run. The campaign's structure of autonomous but co-operating



local groups had wide-ranging beneficial results. The groups co-ordinating the activities while retaining control over their own actions, results in people in each area gaining support and encouragement from other areas, while not being restricted by having to follow the instructions of some "central committee".

In the Aberdeen group at least, the autonomous group form of organisation was well complimented by a democratic internal structure, there were no executive committees or permanent chairpeople who held positions of power. Decisions were taken by a majority vote at open meetings — which were held regularly and recognised as the decision-making body, thus also diminishing the danger of informal elites ("the tyranny of structurelessness" is as great an enemy as the more blatant bureaucratic tyranny.) Further, the group was not plagued by that type of political group which sees campaigns largely as recruiting grounds or as organisations to be taken over.

The BWNIC Defence Campaign was of course far from perfect. Its major weakness was one common to most struggles at the present stage of class consciousness — it did not involve really large numbers or a wide cross-section of the working class. And there were other shortcomings: for example there was sometimes a lack of national co-ordination, the London Group suffered from some internal dissensions about which we have not the information to comment and despite the democratic structure of the Aberdeen group, there was still unequal participation and involvement (though less so than in most political organisations) the organisational trends were, however, definitely in the right direction.

There is no doubt that organising democratically in autonomous groups leads to greater activity since people are, quite rightly, much keener to participate in activity which they can create, control and make relevant to their particular area. As well as being more effective, such a form of organising has an intrinsic value, because the people involved are living a part of their lives differently from the normal hierarchical set-ups and power-relationships of capitalism. And, if the final aim of our struggles is to be the creation of a free socialist society, we must organise now in a way consistent with our aim.

The charges under the Incitement to Disaffection Act must not be thought of as an isolated incident.

The attempt to restrict industrial organisation through the Industrial Relations Act and the attempted jailing of five dockers for defying it, the actual imprisonment of the Shrewsbury pickets, the mushrooming use of conspiracy laws, and the incitement charges are all part of the general attack on working people's rights which the system has mounted over the past few years.

The acquittal of the 14 is an important victory, but the state still has plenty of weapons in its armoury. The conspiracy laws and the Incitement to Disaffection Act remain on the statute book, along with the *Army Act* (under which two people are still facing charges for helping AWOLs); the so-called *Prevention of Terrorism Act*, which greatly increases police powers of detention and interrogation has been used against trade unionists, Irish people, activists and even known pacifists (!!) Against everyone except 'terrorists', it seems: of well over 1000 people detained under the Act, fewer than 50 have been charged, and most with "wasting police time" — very few people have been convicted of "terrorist" offences after being held under the Act.

As long as all the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state — the government, police, armed forces, and judicial system — exists, civil liberties are restricted, and in danger of further restriction, particularly when the system's in an economic crisis as it is today. In workplaces, in the community, in the education system, we need to grow in strength and organisation so that we can not only defend ourselves under attack but develop the ability to take over, transform and run society without the repression, political and economic, that exists today.

An important part of this process is the winning over of rank and file members of the armed forces to the side of revolutionary change. In addition to the notable case of Portugal, there is evidence in several Western European countries, particularly in France, of increasing discontent in the armed forces. The BWNIC Defence victories will be most valuable if the opportunity for increased communication between civilians and the armed forces which they have opened up are used to encourage the growth of a similar political and social consciousness in the British armed forces.

Sandy and Mike

POSTSCRIPT: The Aberdeen BWNIC Defence Group are continuing their anti-militarist activities under the name THE OTHER ARMY INFORMATION CENTRE: the aim is to give the other side of Army life to that shown by Army Recruiting Centres. It is also hoped to set up in the near future a counselling service similar to AT EASE in London.

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