

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Paper of the Social Revolution group. No.4 8 pence

HOUSING CUTS

Council Housing
in Birmingham.



What are we defending?

SUBSTANTIAL cuts have already been made in this year's housing budgets by local authorities throughout the country, and even bigger cuts are planned for the next two financial years. All this in a situation where there are 100,000 people homeless, 170,000 construction workers on the dole and huge stockpiles of bricks.

Initially the cuts will mean lowered maintenance standards and increased council house rents, as well as a general slowing down in the pace of redevelopment, and improvements to property. In the longer term it will inevitably involve a reduction in the standards and/or levels of house building. In short the government's plans mean a

steadily deteriorating environment for us all on top of high unemployment, short time working, inflation and wage cuts.

Clearly these attacks on our standard of life must be resisted, but precisely because the effects of these cuts won't all be felt immediately by most workers, it is extremely difficult to organise such resistance. A massive propaganda campaign is a first essential. Some of the groundwork has already been done by people like Counter Information Services with their publication "*Cutting the Welfare State*" (45p + post from 9 Poland St., London SW1X 8DZ.), but most of the information must be sought out directly from

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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.

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.

"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.

We have decided to increase the size and frequency of "Social Revolution", and to discontinue production of "Libertarian Communism", our discussion journal. We are investigating the possibility of producing a libertarian discussion journal jointly with the Anarchist Workers Association and Solidarity. We are aiming to bring out the new "Social Revolution" once every two months, with 16 or 20 pages. We have not yet decided on the price but the larger size will inevitably mean an increase on the present 8p. Our aims in making this change are to use our limited resources more effectively and to use the space in the bigger SR to go into more issues in more depth.

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HOUSING CUTS *cont. from p.1*

workers in the different services in each locality. This is already being done by some local 'committees against the cuts' uniting rank and file activists in the different services, as well as tenants and womens groups. These campaigns have also temporarily united the various radical political groups, and we are ourselves involved in some of these local committees.

A CRITICAL CAMPAIGN

Our activity, both independently and within the local and national campaigns has not, however, meant suppressing our criticisms of the services (in this case housing) which we have been making all along. Criticism of the existing services, both their internal organisation and relationship to the rest of society, and the exploration of alternatives is vital for at least one of two reasons. Firstly, a successful widespread campaign against the cuts — which the government and employers dearly need to try and make British capitalism more competitive (by cutting the rate of inflation and taxes on profits) — would make the crisis still worse. A campaign based simply on a gut reaction against the cuts, without understanding the reasons for them and an alternative way out, would inevitably falter and eventually become demoralised, with reaction setting in, the cuts merely having been postponed. More likely however, is that the realistic British workers will not get involved in

housing

such campaigns at all unless they see the possibility of an alternative way of running the services.

Most of the left wing have been playing down the criticisms they were previously making to try and avoid alienating the left in the Labour Party and trade unions. Of course this has been fairly easy for them precisely because their criticisms are anyway far less fundamental than our own. They have all agreed that progress in housing has meant extending and reforming the *existing* state provision of housing and control of the environment. None have challenged this assumption although they have fought bitterly over differences about the extent, pace and form of that state control.

The more 'extreme' left wing groups would agree with our proposal that housing should be a 'right' available according to need, without payment of rent. But again they see this as a programme to be achieved through extension and reform of the existing set-up, with working class action limited to putting 'pressure' on the authorities, rather than *part* of a programme to be *directly instituted* by the self-organisation and action of ordinary working people. Hence the luke-warm support given by most of the traditional left press to 'squatting' and the attempts to divert tenant self-activity during rent strikes towards electing Labour councillors and MPs "on a genuine socialist programme". Our approach has been exactly the opposite of this, because from the beginning we have opposed the bureaucratic and paternalistic organisation and attitudes of the state's housing provision, which has been totally inefficient even on its own terms, yet alone in solving our housing problems *as we see them*.

COUNCIL REDEVELOPMENT

The post-war slum clearance programmes, the pride and joy of local (particularly Labour) councils are a prime example of their bureaucratic approach to the housing problem and imprisonment within the market economy. Of course there were and still are hundreds of thousands of houses fit for nothing except demolition, but no-one who has seen the vast expanses of derelict and cleared sites in the inner city areas, unmatched even by the war-time blitz, can really believe it's been a sound and humane policy.

Whole areas of working class housing, genuine communities, have been razed to the ground and their

machines, of a type abandoned in Holland because they break down so often. Well — what to do? The dairy plant in Bangalore, for example, could only sell one tenth of its milk, collected from the villages.

After all, we can hardly give the milk away for free! But it can be converted into curd, ice-cream mix and other luxury

even if some milk powder does get through to badly under-nourished people, is it not of great benefit to them?

Because protein foods eaten by starving people are not kept by the body as protein, but burned up straight away for energy. Milk powder is just an inefficient way of supplying that amount

make the seed fertile and big can find no way to let the hungry people eat their produce. Men who have created new fruits in the world cannot create a system whereby their fruits may be eaten. And the failure hangs over the State like a great sorrow.

The works of the roots of the vines, of the trees must be destroyed to keep

In response to this and in an effort to stifle any real action against the cutbacks, councils have been developing several strategies. One of the main strategies is the sponsoring of tenants associations (especially on new estates) which local councillors and the local Labour Party power elite are able to dominate, thus ensuring a safety valve for tenants frustrations.

The general approach of the Labour Party was well illustrated by an earlier unsuccessful parliamentary bill pioneered by the Fabians. This sought to set up 'Housing Advisory Committees' with half the membership appointed by the council from among their tenants to advise on maintenance and amenities on council estates. There would also be a sub-committee for particular estates and 2 tenants on the Council Housing Management Committee. (See *Housing and Class Struggle* by Ed Russell, 10p + post from 8 Portland Court, St Peters Way, London N1) This was a clear attempt to create structures that would integrate tenant dissatisfaction and prevent the emergence of genuine



should be a right

inhabitants drafted to more remote concrete housing estates on the outskirts of the city, where land is cheaper and the planners and architects have a 'blank sheet' upon which to express their 'artistic' talents unrestrained by the considerations of existing people and places. Politically also it has been far more advantageous to publicise the impressive numbers of slums cleared (and to a lesser extent houses built), than to invest in complicated programmes of renewal, modernisation and infill building.

There has over the last few years been a growing protest against these programmes of wholesale demolition. The state has responded with the provision of 'General Improvement Areas' and 'Action Areas' where designated areas within cities are given special treatment involving private improvement, infill building and environmental works (parking and play areas, tree planting, road closures etc).

Predictably it has been the more articulate and vocal 'middle class' areas that have benefited most from the availability of these schemes. Even then the schemes have been few and far between, restricted mainly to areas of historic and aesthetically pleasing buildings — local show-pieces (see 'the Barnbury Scandal' in the *Recurrent Crisis of London* CIS, 60p).

Their application to other areas has been unpopular with councils and their staffs because of their extremely complicated nature, with hundreds of different property ownerships, numerous different statutory bodies and myriads of different statutes and financial allocations — they are an administrative nightmare! The physical approach of continuous adaption, renewal, modernisation and partial redevelopment is obviously best suited to the needs of community involvement and control over the planning process, but it is ill-adapted to the needs of bureaucratically organised 'outside' housing agencies.

In opposing the Labour Party's approach to the housing problem we don't want to add fuel to the Tories' approach, which is based on antiquated notions about private property rights that are equally obstructive to genuine community planning and control of the environment. Some of the points we have made here, have indeed also been made by Tories over recent months, but this has just been a camouflage for their attempts to restrict public spending on housing even further than their Labour colleagues.

democratic opposition groups.

Another strategy adopted more recently has been the setting up of tenants co-operatives with the rules laid down by the council. Again this has been used to try and make tenants take upon themselves the responsibility for effecting the councils housing cuts particularly in respect to maintenance, (this is made quite clear in the Department of the Environment circular 8/76. 16/1/76).

Not that this strategy has always worked the way they wanted — attempts to impose a co-operative on the GLC Wellington Mills estate met with considerable local opposition. We wouldn't be opposed to all co-ops on principle where these were organised by the tenants themselves with the council retaining full liability for financing — this would involve a bit more tenant control, but it wouldn't really solve any of the basic problems which arise outside the confines of the estate.

The replacement of the private by the state landlord has some advantages. Personal identification of small landlords with their property has created some of the most strained landlord/tenant relationships and this experience is still common to hundreds of thousands, especially furnished tenants in the big cities. No doubt most of these people would prefer a council flat or house.

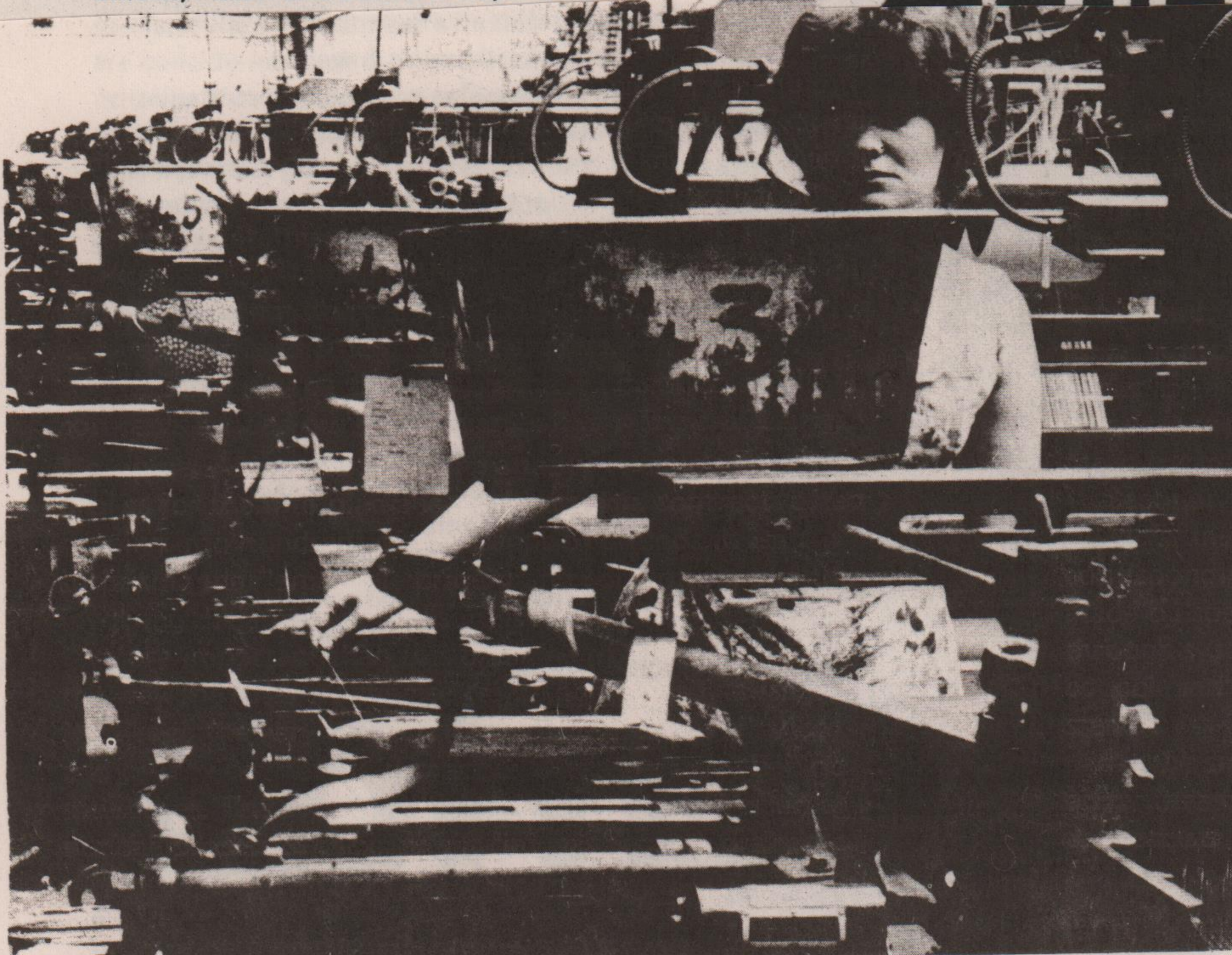
The larger investment companies concerned about nothing but immediate profits are generally worse than the council, whose rented properties are only indirectly linked to the profits of capitalism, through the councils borrowing on the investment market and payment to private house builders. Initially the development of council housing was both a result of, and in turn reinforced housing, as a political issue subject to open 'public' debate and influence. However, far from these schemes of "municipal socialism" gradually expanding and transforming the rest of society, it is they that have been transformed (see 'Free Offer' in *SR 2*). Starting off in a paternalistic fashion under the influence of the Fabians, they have become further and further integrated into the world of 'big business' and more and more bureaucratic in their organisation.

CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This has in practice been the trend throughout local government as a whole. In terms of sheer size modern councils are very important institutions. The West Midlands *cont.*
D.A

10 SOCIAL REVOLUTION

As the economic crisis deepens, and cuts in the education sector intensify, the *National Union of Students*, far from reacting as a confident, effective fighting organisation of students, is facing a severe crisis of its own. Two university unions, *Aston* and *St. Andrews*, have voted



EVERY DAY the lives of ordinary men and women are placed at risk simply because they go to work. At work they are exposed to every kind of health hazard, from dangerous chemicals to excessive noise; from unsafe machines and out-of-date equipment to the materials used in the construction of the buildings they work in. Often people are placed in danger as result of careless management attitudes and ignorance of the work processes and materials.

It's not that our knowledge of the hazards of work is small, but that the results of research are not made widely known. Authority has proved useless at both protecting and informing people at risk, because companies (private and nationalised) are in business to make

profits: protective clothing and the banning of dangerous chemicals costs money — an instance in which the search for profits kills.

Asbestos is one typical example of a dangerous material in everyday use. Nobody knows what level of exposure is either harmful or fatal. One brief exposure to asbestos fibres can result in their being lodged in a person's lungs, causing cancer years later — perhaps long after it is possible to identify the source. For many years asbestos was thought to be harmless, but even when the truth was discovered publication of early reports was suppressed.

Preventive measures cost money, and rather than give in to pressure from the shop floor, companies will transfer production to other countries, where

illness. In Denmark any shop steward who thinks a new substance may be dangerous has the right to shut down the plant and call the factory inspectorate. We have no such "right" under British law: as always we can only rely on ourselves, and must take direct action — the one sure way to safety.

Women workers particularly are liable to risk from dangerous chemicals. The woefully inadequate standards laid down (which are often not enforceable) are based on an "average" 70 kilo man. Many chemicals cause particular female cancers, birth defects and miscarriages, and recent research indicates a strong possibility that contact with some chemicals during pregnancy can result in cancer being passed to the embryo or to the newborn baby through nursing. Men can also pass on diseases that cause congenital birth defects and cancers.

At present, over two million workers in the UK are subjected to dangerously high noise levels likely to affect their hearing. The Factory Inspectorate Code of Practice in relation to noise suggests a level of no more than 90 decibels for an eight hour day, yet between 5 and 10% of people exposed to this level throughout their working lives will suffer loss of hearing — some seriously. In fact, hearing damage starts at 80dB.

It is important to remember that the range of intensity between loud and small sounds is such that it cannot be measured on a normal scale, so sound intensity is measured on a scale based on multiples of 10. eg 10dB is ten *times* as loud as 0dB, and 20dB is 100 times as loud. In fact each increase of 3dB means that the sound has doubled in intensity; 93dB is twice as loud as 90dB. Remember this if the management try to argue that "it's only a few decibels over the limit".

HOUSING CUTS *con. from p. 3*

Metropolitan Council is responsible for over three million people, a larger population than the whole of New Zealand, while the Greater London Council had an annual budget of around £930 million, a sum exceeded by fewer than 30 governments in the world.

Huge sums of money are borrowed in the short and long term through the stock market. Town Hall treasurers are in daily contact with stock market brokers.

The other side of the coin are the major building contracts handed out to companies like Wimpeys, Laings, McAlpine, Allons etc providing a fairly reliable source of profits for them to plan ahead. With single contracts often running into hundreds of thousands of pounds, it isn't surprising that large scale bribery and corruption, like that involving the architect Poulson, is rife.

More important than this breaking of the rules though, is the way the rules are themselves being gradually changed. Now even the very limited democracy of earlier district and county councils is in practice withering away behind the scenes. The councillors are still there elected as usual, but the process of decision making has become drained of

any real political content.

This has happened as a result of a dual attack. Firstly through the gradual erosion of local authority autonomy by central government controls exercised through the Departments of the Environment, Education and Health. These departments determine not only policy but even detailed planning through circulars and various other documents 'offering' advice ultimately tied to finance. Local authorities derive well over 50% of their finance either directly from government grants or from private loans sanctioned by central government and have very little room for manoeuvre.

Secondly with the growth of local authorities as major *financial* institutions their organisation has been correspondingly changed. More and more decisions are made by specialist groups of councillors and chief officers through systems of corporate management, with the full council and even many committees being mere rubber stamps.

At the same time a whole new group of public administrators drawn from the ranks of town planners, economists, surveyors and accountants is growing up with

cont. p.5

THE SAME CLASS

work is too loud, people get ringing in the ears after a few days work, or have to shout to be heard by people only a few feet away, get it checked (a *noise torch* will give a pretty good guide) and if necessary get the source removed. Baffles and sound deflectors can be built round machinery. Ear muffs are not the answer, as they cut out all sounds, which can be dangerous — but there is a device called a *sonic ear valve* that cuts out damaging sound, but still permits conversation.

One of the major sources of danger at work is chemicals, most of which come onto the market with little or no research carried out into the likely effects on the people who work with them. There are safe limits set out by the Factory Inspectorate and these are normally referred to as TLV's (threshold limit value). TLV's are supposed to set a limit you can safely be exposed to in an 8 hour working day, but in fact TLV values have *no legal force*. Always insist that the TLV is the maximum limit.

If you suspect a substance is dangerous find out the *exact* chemical name (as distinct from the trade name) — the warehouseman might be able to tell you, or the lorry drivers who deliver it may have the chemical formula noted on their TREM cards. If either of these fails trace it in the Chemical Society Annual Buyers Guide.

Get the Factory Inspectorate to make tests (under normal working conditions). They don't have to tell you the results, but they may do, but at least they will tell you if they think it's safe or not. You can try to persuade the management to run a survey and hold regular health checks. If you are still in doubt, contact a group such as BSSRS (see below) and ask them to analyse samples for you. Insist on good ventilation and personal protection such as masks and respirators — better still get the chemical replaced by a safe substitute.

a stake in the new system that provides them with a combination of financial privileges and personal power.

Through all these specialists all the issues to be decided are turned into purely *technical* problems, to be worked out 'objectively' through cost-benefit analysis and other techniques, as though differences of interest based on class, social group and locality just didn't exist!

This whole process is well documented in *Local Government becomes Big Business* by John Bennington (25p + post from CDP, Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SS).

The new Community Land Act (read State Land Act), intended to aid "positive community planning" and return some of the gains of development to the 'community', will in fact, almost certainly reinforce the trend of local government towards integration with 'big business' and towards bureaucratisation.

It may even weaken some of the few existing planning benefits to the working community, by making profits from land deals more important to councils than purely planning considerations.

FUL PUBLICATIONS:

Hazards of Work — by Pat Kinnersly, Pluto Press, 90p. A good basic handbook.

A Cause for Concern — by Newham Rights Centre, Pluto Press, 5p. A pamphlet on the new Health & Safety Act.

Pluto Press, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Rd, London NW1

Guide to the Health & Safety at Work Act. 20p from *Labour Research Department*, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8HF

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees. Free from: General Info. & Public Enquiry Point, Health and Safety Executive, Baynards House, 1 Chepstow Place, Westbourne Grove, London W2 4TF.

Dangerous Properties of Industrial Materials. Lists the known dangerous chemicals, and their effects. Costs £19, but should be in any large library.

Encyclopedia of Occupational Health and Safety. Published by the International Labour Office at £20 — again, try the library.

Noise — BSSRS, 20p — see below (prices exclude postage)

ORGANISATIONS:

British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), 9 Poland St., London W1V 3DG (01-437 2728). Can help with general info, analysing samples, and even lending some items of equipment for taking samples.

TUC Centenary Institute of Occupational Health, Keppel St., London WC1. (01-636 8636). Free analysis of samples for unions.

International Labour Office, 40 Piccadilly, London W1 (01-734 6521) information.

The address of your local factory inspectorate should be listed in the 'phone book — it's ironically listed under Her Majesty's (?) Factory Inspectorate.

FIGHTING BACK

The Libertarian Industrial Network exists to co-ordinate libertarian militancy within industry. Already there are contacts in a number of different industries, some are listed below:

Communications/Postal Workers
Phil Ruff, c/o 123 Upper Tollinton Park, London N4.

Local Government
Ian S. Sutherland, 13 Deincourt Close, Spondon, Derby.

Refuse
Dave Barnsdale, 16 St. Leonards Rd, Surbiton, Surrey.

Printing
Albert Meltzer, 26a Eastbourne Rd., London N5.

Unemployed Workers
Ron Marsden, c/o 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester.

Health
Phil McShane, 11 St. Margarets Rd., Oxford.

Industrial Network Co-ordinator:
Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Waldon, Essex.

If there is no contact listed for your industry, contact the co-ordinator, and your name can be added to the network.

At present the I.N. is aimed at the whole of the libertarian left: Anarchists, Syndicalists, Revolutionary Socialists, Solidarity, libertarian communists (including Marxist)

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CONCLUSION

Our campaign against the housing cuts will not gain in strength by continuing with the myths of "our great welfare state". People who have suffered at its hands are not going to swallow that, and get enthusiastic to save it in its hour of need, as though it hasn't always been in crisis.

Neither can an enlightened campaign isolate itself from the attacks being made on all the public services. If we are successful in beating off the current round of attacks, the government and employers will find themselves in a real jam. Faced with that we will either be forced to retreat, or to advance, and organise independently and democratically to take full control ourselves, not only of the housing estates and construction industry, but of the entire resources of society.

We don't want the bureaucratic control of the state, we want full democratic community control of housing and the whole environment! **MIKE BALLARD**

Note. This article has covered a lot of ground in a short space. We would welcome articles from sympathisers covering some of the issues in more detail.

WORLD WIDE

Although the Popular Front government of Republicans, "Socialists", and Communists which was elected to office in February 1936 was no threat to the capitalist system as such, for the most re-actionary sections of the Spanish ruling class — the landlords, the Church, the Monarchists, the politicians of the right and the military officers — the reforms it proposed were too radical. Thus, on July 19th, 1936, under the leadership of General Franco, they attempted to stage a coup d'état.

While the government dithered and vacillated, the workers gave the only answer they could give — revolutionary action. Taking hold of whatever arms came to hand and hastily forming themselves into militias, they attacked barracks and strong points commanded by machine guns with little more than their bare hands. In one area taxi-drivers drove their taxis full speed at machine gun posts.

By July 20th Spain was cut in two. In the areas where the coup d'état had succeeded, members of the Falange, the Fascist Party backing Franco, committed terrible atrocities, murdering militant workers without restraint. By mid-1938 in these areas there had been 750,000 executions.

In the Republican areas there existed a situation of dual power, on the one hand that of the Popular Front government, on the other that of the workers and their militias. The factories were occupied and industries collectivised under the control of elected workers committees which organised production, shifts, wages, and labour. In Barcelona, where everything from public transport to boot blacks was collectivised, and painted red and black (the anarcho-syndicalist colours) the Ford plant was run by a committee of 18, the work-force totalling 336. The cinemas of Barcelona were grouped into a single enterprise controlled by a committee of 17, of which 2 were elected by a general assembly of all the workers in the industry, the other 15 by professional groupings within the industry.

The churches, symbols of a religion which always sided with the rich, were burned down and church schools closed. In some areas money was abolished and free distribution instituted. In the militias commanders and ordinary soldiers ate the same food, received the same pay, and fought under the same harsh conditions. Unemployment and poverty disappeared. People no longer addressed each other as "sir" but as "comrade" and "thou". Posters were put up calling on whores to realise their dignity and stop being whores. In the words of Orwell *"Human beings were trying to behave as human beings not as cogs in the capitalist machine."*

The main revolutionary organisation in Spain at that time was the CNT, the anarcho-syndicalist trade union. Despite a long and militant history of struggle there were within it strong reformist tendencies and when the popular front government in the name of "anti-fascist" unity invited the CNT to join it (for without the aid of the CNT workers it could not survive Franco's onslaught) these tendencies gained the upper hand. Thus despite a commitment to an abolition of the state and the ideal of free communism CNT leaders Garcia Oliver and Frederica Montseny became Minister of Justice and Minister of Health in a capitalist government, which only 2 years earlier had shot down revolutionary miners in the Asturias. From then on traditional anarchism in Spain revealed itself to be totally bankrupt, its bankruptcy making possible the "democratic" counter revolution which in turn opened the way for the triumph of Franco.

Likewise, the leaders of the POUM, a small but influential Marxist Party, by joining the Popular Front and participating in the elections, gave substance to the myth that the "democratic" capitalists should be supported in preference to Franco and his ilk, at a time when the opportunities for social revolution existed, when autonomous workers councils acting on their own behalf could have overthrown capitalism and spread the revolution far beyond the borders of Spain (1936 in France, where the Popular Front government of Leon Blum did not lift a finger to aid Spain, was a year of mass strikes and factory occupations). They paid for their mistake with their lives.

In accordance with Stalin's policy of alliance with "democratic" capitalists against Fascism, the Communist Party violently opposed the workers revolutionary actions. Communist leader Santiago Carillo proclaimed "We are fighting Fascism but we are not today fighting for a socialist revolution." Not today, nor tomorrow, nor anyday. Lacking working class support they began to recruit the middle class, raising the slogan "Protect the property of the small industrialist."

Gaining political strength from the aid given by the USSR to Republican Spain the CNT began to infiltrate the state apparatus, an apparatus which according to their theory the CNT should have destroyed. Using the positions which they gained they started a war of assassination against revolutionary militants, denouncing them as Franco's agents. Amongst those murdered were Andres Nin, leader of the POUM, Gonzales Moreno, secretary of the CNT in Mascaraque, the anarchists Berneri, Barbieri and Ascosa, and Bob Smillie of the British Independent Labour Party,

If food can be sold at a profit, it is sold. If it can't — dump it, destroy it, pile it up in "apple mountains" and "butter mountains" and "skimmed milk mountains". Or, better still, antisocialist

SPAIN

Spain today is the scene of great conflict. Workers' liberties and better living standards. The achievements of these past struggles will have to be learnt. The following is the fight of the Spanish working class over the last



ABOVE : 1936. "LAND FOR THOSE WHO
BELOW : 1976. Police in action in



THE SAME CLASS STRUGGLE

MIN

Workers demonstrate and strike for civil liberties re-act with violent repression. The working people the lessons of living article describes and analyses the 40 years.



Photo: Libertarian Struggle

WORK ON IT"
Barcelona.



Photo: L'Expres

who was fighting with the POUM.

In May 1937 Communist led assault guards attacked the Barcelona telephone exchange which since 1936 had been occupied by the CNT. The workers replied by erecting barricades and calling a general strike. For the second time the opportunity for revolution presented itself. However all the CNT leadership could do was broadcast appeals for calm and call on the workers to lay down their arms and end their strike. While the workers retreated in confusion, the Communists counter-attacked in force, killing over 500 militants. The POUM and the militant anarchist group, The Friends of Durutti, were outlawed and their members imprisoned. Thus, the Spanish workers' revolution was crushed. From then on the Spanish Civil War became a conflict between rival groups of capitalists and their foreign backers, who although they may fight among themselves were agreed on one thing — working class revolution, whether in Spain or elsewhere, must be prevented at all costs.

Although the Spanish workers suffered a severe defeat, both at the hands of The Popular Front and of Franco, they did not lose their ability to struggle. On May Day 1947 for example 50,000 Basque workers struck. Government reprisals sparked off strikes which involved over 40% of workers in the Bilbao region. In 1951 300,000 workers in Barcelona staged a general strike. Later that year 100,000 struck in Bilbao. Others, like the anarchist Ramon Vila Y Capdevila, who was killed in 1965, began a guerilla war which continues to this day. The regime's answer was the death penalty. By firing squad as in the case of the Basque nationalists of the ETA and the Maoists of the FRAP, or by the slow strangulation of the garotte as in the case of the young anarchists Joaquin Delgado and Francisco Granados Gata executed in 1965.

The death of Franco and the occupation of the Spanish throne by his puppet Juan Carlos has changed nothing. The working class is deprived of even the most elementary rights. Trade union and political activity are met with violent repression. Thus even as Juan Carlos appears in Catalonia speaking Catalan, his bomb-throwing police disperse demonstrators. Thus when workers took to the streets in defence of their living standards and were beaten up by the police, his answer to their placards begging for his help was to go off skiing in the Pyrenees. Thus when people call for freedom and an amnesty for political prisoners he remains silent.

Juan Carlos is very much a prisoner of the "Bunker", the politicians of the right who are determined to resist change, to carry on the policies of Francoism without Franco. His choice of Carlos Arias Navarro, a man linked irredeemably

with the Fascist dictatorship, his government, every member of which was a loyal Franco supporter, his debacle in the Spanish Sahara, clearly shows this. As Navarro did not even implement the very limited reforms promised under Franco, the advent of Juan Carlos is unlikely to transform him into an arch-reformist. Even if he were to be replaced with so-called moderates such as Fraga Iribarne, Franco's Minister of tourism and information from 1962-69 and ambassador to Britain, and Jose Maria De Areilza, ambassador to the U.S.A., the Spanish working class is very unlikely to gain.

The economic basis for reforms no longer exists. The Spanish economy, dominated by a regime determined to turn back the clock of history, was never dynamic. Bolstered by the tourist trade and by foreign capitalists, who found Spain with its low wages, long working hours, and its "social stability" a good place to invest their capital, the Spanish economy is now being adversely affected by the international crisis. Entry into the Common Market, now being pushed by such as Alfonso Escamez, President of the International Bank, will not change this.

The floating of the peseta, which devalued it by 11%, the domination of vital industries (engineering, electronics, communications, petro-chemicals) by foreign capital, the massive decline of agriculture and the import of food to feed both tourists and workers, the dissolution of the Ministry of Planning and Development, and rising unemployment, can only worsen the situation.

Spain today has not one popular front, but two. On the one hand the Democratic Junta, described by the Communists as a "temporary convergence between the working class and neo-capitalist elements". It comprises the C.P., Liberal Monarchists, Centreists and the "Popular Socialists". On the other hand the Democratic Congress, made up of Christians, "Socialists", Maoists, and the Carlists (who in the Civil War fought for Franco!) So anxious is the C.P. to unite with all and sundry that its leader Carillo has stated "The Party will join with no matter what political group, even with those who fought us in the past, and with groups that will undoubtedly fight us in the future." In an effort to court the church he stated "Socialism will come to Spain with a hammer and sickle in one hand and a crucifix in the other." What he had to say about the Polish coal which the Franco regime imported to break a miner's strike is not known.

There exists in Spain and in its neighbour Portugal a vast revolutionary potential. If, however this potential is to be realised then many illusions will have to be dispelled and many lessons learned.

GRAPES OF WRATH

You've heard of pasteurised milk, and you've heard of homogenised milk. Now you're in for harmonised milk!

What on earth . . . ? Well, the milk you have drunk up to now contains about 3.8% butter-fat. But on the Continent they skim fat off to 3.5%. As there is free trade among member countries of the Common Market, regulations have been pushed through Parliament allowing this skimmed milk to be imported. This is called harmonisation.

The quality of British-produced milk will be affected too. Milk producers in Belgium, Holland, France can reach the big London market more easily than farmers in Scotland, say, or Northern Ireland. The watery stuff will be cheaper than real milk so British suppliers will have to skim off their milk too, in order to compete. (Incidentally to produce this skimmed milk they will have to install expensive new machinery).

January 15, the House of Commons, midnight. In the holies of holies of our democratic way of life a handful of MP's (those suffering from insomnia) debate. Points out Peter Mills, Honourable member for West Devon: "**The Minister does not realise that big money is involved, which is why the Community (that is, the Common Market) wants harmonisation.**" Yes "big money" first, "consumer rights" also ran.

And how come you've not heard about all this before?

I couldn't explain that any better than Mrs Dunwoody, Labour Member for Crewe. So I quote:—

"My Honourable Friend (*she means the Minister*) is not being 100 per cent honest with us in coming here to say that we still have decisions to reach and a certain time before we need take a decision. I think he knows that the pressures on the country are considerable. He knows that it is probably typical of the way in which so many Community policies are implemented that measures of this kind are brought before the House late at night when nearly everyone has gone home and there will not even be any Press coverage. It will be a miracle if one word that is said by any Honourable Member in this debate is reported to the general public. The policy is to slip these matters in at night and thus make it difficult for people to get to know about them; and by the time they get to know, it will be difficult for them to take any effective action."

And William Ross (Londonderry) complained that "the Regulation has been put on the Order Paper in a most obscure way". Perhaps he expected them to put down "Regulation for Watering Down Your Milk"?

Don't assume that the MP's who are fussing are worried about the consumers. Most of them come from agricultural areas and are concerned with the business interests of farm owners. If it was *British* farmers diddling you, you wouldn't hear a squeak from them.

As Mrs Dunwoody cuts the cackle and talks quite straight, we'll quote more from her speech:—

"At present the Common Market has about one million tonnes (that's your new metric ton, a bit more than the old British ton) of skimmed milk. In Great Britain most butter-fat is drunk in milk. In Europe it is skimmed off and then, as the butter can't be used, fed to animals.

When those of us who are involved with the agricultural committees of the Common Market ask why this should not be considered as a form of food aid, we are told that the Commission does not feel that skimmed milk beyond a certain amount should be fed to human beings outside the Common Market, irrespective of their needs and the fact that many of them are starving to death. They are putting it in animal feed because the price must be absorbed somewhere.

Let us suppose that we conform to this 3.5 per cent butter-fat content. Are we to skim milk? If we do, will that contribute to the skimmed milk powder mountain? If it does, what is to be done with it? Will it be fed to animals, or shall we export it? If we export it, in what form and where will it go? After all, the Commission has said that it may not be part of the food aid programme above a certain level."

Why can't "surplus" milk be used in food aid programmes? (Not that we think they are the answer, but we'll come back to that.) And why, for that matter, are these "surpluses" not used to restore school milk here?

Because we live in a world where everything that is produced has a price tag. Competing commercial concerns, private and State, aim to sell their products on the market — at a profit. Because if they make a profit, they can survive and expand, and if they don't make a profit, their competitors drive them to the wall and they go bust.

If food can be sold at a profit, it is sold. If it can't — dump it, destroy it, pile it up in "apple mountains" and "butter mountains" and "skimmed milk mountains". Or, better still anticipate the "problem" by giving subsidies to farmers for *not* growing crops. Give food away? No — who pays for the transport? And it delays recovery of the market by making selling even more difficult. The market system has its own remorseless logic. It won't let you mess around with that logic. You have to scrap the system itself. Start producing for human needs under community control.

No — this side of the social revolution, houses are not built to give people somewhere to live, food is not grown to be eaten, milk is not produced to be drunk. Everything for profit. Otherwise — let houses stand empty (if squatters move in, get them out). Let fruit rot in the fields, pour the milk down the drain. Smash eggs, burn coffee . . .

And while millions starve — a cliché but still true — what is seen as the main problem of agricultural policy? Mr Howell MP for North Norfolk, spells it out:—

"We have an extraordinarily difficult problem before us. The European dairy herd is yielding much more per cow (*it's that "surplus" butter they feed them!* — *Stefan*). And yet the cow numbers are static. There is therefore a continual increase in milk, and this is the main problem with which we have to grapple."

Nature is too generous! She is sabotaging the capitalist system!

And now I want to return to Mrs Dunwoody. To shatter three illusions on the subject which she shares with many other people:—

1. That, if only the milk — or skimmed milk powder — could be sent to the poor countries in food aid programmes, it would reach the starving millions;
2. That, if it could reach the starving millions — and a little of it just might — it would restore them to health and happiness;
3. That it's all the fault of the absurd Common Agricultural Policy of this Common Market into which we've been bamboozled. I was going to say "dragged", but a majority of us obediently went and voted for it.

First, then — aid to the Third World. Under the World Food Aid Programme, sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other international organisations, thousands of tons of "surplus" butter-oil and milk powder were sent to India. This went by the picturesque name of "Operation Flood". A flood of milk flows! — past the starving millions and down the drain.

The National Dairy Development Corporation was set up in India to launch "Operation Flood". You see, the flood of milk from Europe and America was somehow supposed to encourage local production, to make India "self-sufficient in milk". Of course, by competing with local farmers for the available market, it could only have the opposite effect.

And the local market was — and still is — strictly limited by the ability of people in India to buy milk. And — surprise, surprise! — the vast starving majority in India cannot afford to buy milk. Even from the handy new vending

machines, of a type abandoned in Holland because they break down so often. Well — what to do? The dairy plant in Bangalore, for example, could only sell one tenth of its milk, collected from the villages.

After all, we can hardly give the milk away for free! But it can be converted into curd, ice-cream mix and other luxury products for the more affluent section of the population. Also, in the days before the new dairies, the peasants who processed the milk in the villages had the highly nutritious curd and butter-milk to eat. Not now!

But it wouldn't be fair to say that nobody benefitted from the food aid programme. The dairy firms — Hindustan Lever, Glaxo, and local Indian firms — subsidised by it made a packet. After all, the Chairman of the National Dairy Development Corporation was a Director of the Kaira Dairy in Gujarat!

So now you know why I don't want any of your UNICEF Christmas cards!

At least the children of the under-developed countries sometimes get milk some milk from their mothers' breasts. Not if it can be helped!

The Western companies are out to sell their baby foods. In view of the filthy conditions in which most people live in these countries, bottle feeding is likely to poison and infect children. And the mothers cannot afford enough baby milk, so they dilute it — with fatal results. Meanwhile breast feeding is discouraged and bottle feeding promoted by clever advertising. And they dress up the sales-girls as nurses — what a good idea!

But groups in Europe managed to get the situation publicised. War on Want pointed out that the companies had done the same thing in Britain before the First World War. Nestles took a Swiss group who protested to Court for libel. You are besmirching our honour, our reputation! (Not to mention our profits.)

The companies reluctantly retreated before public indignation. We can start up again when the furore dies down. People forget quickly, and it's not front-page news the second time round.

Now onto our second claim. Why,

even if some milk powder does get through to badly under-nourished people, is it not of great benefit to them?

Because protein foods eaten by starving people are not kept by the body as protein, but burned up straight away for energy. Milk powder is just an inefficient way of supplying that amount of any old food — of local yam, which the refugees don't have the money to buy.

In fact, research suggests that the problem of protein deficiency in the Third World is only the result of the general problem of *not enough food*. Surveys of nutrition in India show that those who ate a large enough quantity of food had enough protein in their diet. The staple foods of the world's peoples — rice and cereals — contain an adequate proportion of protein, the only exception being the yam, cassava and roots eaten in West Africa. People just can't afford enough food. If they could, or if — in a new society — food was distributed according to need, the technical means of producing enough would be found.

Now to the third point — does it make sense to blame the Common Market for the destruction of food? The EEC keeps its small-scale inefficient peasant farmers in business by large subsidies in the form of guaranteed prices for their products. The problem arises from their inability to sell enough at these high prices.

In Britain and North America the process of centralisation in agriculture has not been held back like this. Big mechanised farms have been allowed to drive the small farmers out. Food is sold at lower prices. In this situation food is destroyed when prices fall below profitable levels. So, whether food is cheap or expensive, the waste of the market system goes on.

In John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath" this destruction of food and of human beings is painfully described. As we sink into the second great depression of the century, we can think over these words from the first:—

"The decay spreads over the State, and the sweet smell is a great sorrow on the land. Men who can graft the trees and

make the seed fertile and big can find no way to let the hungry people eat their produce. Men who have created new fruits in the world cannot create a system whereby their fruits may be eaten. And the failure hangs over the State like a great sorrow.

The works of the roots of the vines, of the trees, must be destroyed to keep up the price, and this is the saddest, bitterest thing of all. Car-loads of oranges dumped on the ground. The people came for miles to take the fruit, but this could not be. How would they buy oranges at 20 cents a dozen if they could drive out and pick them up? And men with hoses squirt kerosene on the oranges, and they are angry at the crime, angry at the people who have come to take the fruit. A million people hungry, needing the fruit — and kerosene sprayed over the golden mountains.

And the smell of rot fills the country.

Burn coffee for fuel in the ships. Burn corn to keep warm, it makes a hot fire. Dump potatoes in the rivers and place guards along the banks to keep the hungry people from fishing them out. Slaughter the pigs and bury them, and let the putrescence drip down into the earth.

There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolise. There is a failure here that topples all our success. The fertile earth, the straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificates — died of malnutrition — because the fruit must rot, must be forced to rot.

The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listen to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with quicklime, watch the mountains of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage."

This time the grapes must burst.

STEFAN.

WORTH READING!

Hot Off The Press! Libertarian Communism No.10. 22p inc. post. Articles include Ireland, BWNIC, and TOM; The Left and the General Strike; An editorial from "Combate" plus lots more. Some copies of L.C. 8 & 9 still available — 16p inc. post.

A Contribution to the Critique of Marx by John Crump. A joint SR-Solidarity pamphlet. 17p including post.

Anarchist Worker, monthly paper of the Anarchist Workers Association. 10p + post from AWA, 13 Coltman St., Hull.

Solidarity — a regular paper, + pamphlets on different issues. Send £2 to Solidarity, c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E6 to receive forthcoming issues of the paper and pamphlets to that value.



As the economic crisis deepens, and cuts in the education sector intensify, the *National Union of Students*, far from reacting as a confident, effective fighting organisation of students, is facing a severe crisis of its own. Two university unions, *Aston* and *St. Andrews*, have voted to disaffiliate: a number of other unions are considering such a move. Others, notably *Manchester*, have rejected disaffiliation, yet the movement in the constituent organisations of NUS for separation from the national union is gaining support from a considerable minority of students. In the *Manchester* disaffiliation referendum over one third of the votes cast were for disaffiliation. Why is this happening in such a 'militant', 'marxist' union? Can the 'moderate' reaction be stopped and what prospects are there for students?

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUS

Until the late 60's NUS was little more than a travel bureau/debating club, controlled by a right-wing bureaucracy. This situation changed with the radicalisation of students by such movements as the anti-Vietnam war campaigns. Since then, NUS has been controlled by the *Broad Left*, an alliance of 'left-labourites' and Communist Party members. It has launched a number of successful campaigns; around the issue of student autonomy under the last Tory government and more recently the annual grants and Education Cuts campaigns. Significant victories were scored in the early days of these campaigns: Thatcher's plans to destroy union autonomy were stopped, annual reviews of student grants were conceded. Now, however, the campaigns are being fought primarily to defend existing gains rather than achieve more.

The political inspiration behind the moves to disaffiliate is clearly provided by the *Federation of Conservative Students*: although they favour working within NUS in order to cripple it, it is their policies that are the main influence for disaffiliation: propaganda about a 'pro-Soviet', undemocratic NUS, etc, etc, is having the obvious effect of encouraging students to desert NUS. At the moment they seem to be losing influence to an extent, or at least when faced with active pro-union agitation. However, they could easily gain ground again in the near future.

Yet students do not basically form a reactionary mass; on the contrary, the political ideals of the average student are mildly radical social-democratic. The FCS and their more fascist hangers-on are making advances because *there already exists a profound disillusionment amongst students with the NUS itself*. The blame for this must lie within the NUS itself and with the leftist politicians who dominate it.

Anatomy of a Successful Campaign

In the early days of the NUS campaigns, significant successes were scored. The



NUS

WHAT NOW?

reason for this was primarily the real *mass involvement* of students. We saw widespread rent strikes, refectory boycotts and strikes/occupations in support of higher grants, as well as the regular mass demonstrations. Combined with the fact that the depression had not yet set in completely, these campaigns wrung concessions from the state. Recognising that mass self-activity leads to militancy and radicalisation, the state tried to buy off its future generations of technical and white-collar workers and management with more money: in reality this ideological

'ideological' weapon was probably the strongest in the students' armoury.

It would seem apparent that in times of crisis this kind of mass involvement is all the more necessary to halt the decline in students' living standards. To successfully do so would require an even greater consciousness, a realisation that a society based on exploitation and profit making cannot automatically satisfy our needs.

NUS Steps In

Faced with this new militancy, the state found itself with an unusual ally — the NUS itself. The leftist politicians running NUS were as frightened as the state of

mass self-activity by the students. Like all good union bureaucrats they only feel safe when *they* dominate struggles, for then they can keep it within safe confines and retain their own power. To channel student discontent along 'safe' lines, the mass demonstration was developed. Originally seen by students as a sign of their solidarity and anger, it became for NUS the focus of the campaign. All else was to be subordinate to getting students out on the streets of central London; to march past Centrepoint and down Oxford Street once a year. Having mobilised their camera-fodder, the bureaucrats would then go along to the *Department of Education and Science* with their figures to haggle over sums. Thus the 'mass demonstration' became a way of 'heading-off' student militancy. After four years of grants campaigns, what it had boiled down to is demoralisation and confusion amongst the mass of students, while NUS considers it's had a successful campaign if it's got 20,000 out on the streets!!

An Irrelevant Union

Having effectively demoralised the mass of students, NUS then proceeded to alienate them too. NUS conferences are dominated by inter-policy haggling and discussions on issues such as Ireland,

Vietnam, anti-fascism, etc. These issues are important, but in many ways are 'safe' issues, since students can do little about them in practice: meanwhile, issues on which direct action is possible are ignored. These party battles are very satisfying to the bureaucrats and would-be bureaucrats; action is seen as passing resolutions and 'supporting' this or that struggle, usually safely tucked away in another part of the world. Students are, of course, quite unable to affect these struggles anyway, but they serve the purpose of diverting attention from real issues affecting themselves. Few discussions are held on the meaning of what we're taught or our role in society (except that leftists like to see students as some intelligentsia to lead the revolution — masturbatory dreams of Russia in 1917); how we can develop real links with other workers, especially those in our own colleges, instead of through 'safe' channels of union bureaucrat to union bureaucrat; developing educations as a social right for all — throwing open our facilities, etc.

Little wonder that students see little relevance in what NUS discusses and that a growing feeling of alienation from the union develops. This leads to demoralisation and support for 'moderate' politics as exemplified by the FCS, Labour Party, etc. The role of the left in NUS is one of weakening and confusing the student body at a time when unity and strength is required beyond all else.

Can NUS Change?

Given the will, students can force NUS to act in a more militant way; but this could be only a temporary gain. NUS is not anti-student because it is controlled by nasty people, but because of the social role it plays, along with all other unions. If an organ of struggle is created in the course of a dispute it will reflect the wishes of its membership. When this dispute is over, the struggle dies down. Then, despite the best will in the world, bureaucratisation sets in. The elected representatives, no longer having to justify themselves constantly to the rank-and-file, fall into a position of becoming permanent negotiators with the employers, in this case the state as personified by the DES.

No longer is the issue what the membership wants, but what the employer can afford. The result is haggling over figures and then selling the compromise to the members. They begin to see things in the terms of the bosses, and ultimately become their agents. It is just possible that this process can be averted to a greater or lesser extent in a small union (like one of NUS's C.O.s) but in a union of 770,000 meeting only twice a year it is near impossible to prevent.

What Future for Students?

The fight against education cuts, and for

unity in the student movement, cannot be won within the context of the present social system. To the state, students represent a long-term investment that will pay off in the future in terms of higher profits derived from the highly-skilled nature of their training. But we are in an acute economic crisis, and the first things that are cut-back are long-term investments. If this means that education suffers, then it suffers; this takes the form of college closures, layoffs of staff or leaving posts vacant and decreases in the real value of grants.

Only militant direct action can prevent this from being too drastic, and then only if real links based on solidarity, friendship and understanding are forged between students and other workers. *The idea that students are some kind of elite must be got rid of.*

At best though, this will leave students still on the treadmill of constantly fighting to maintain their standards: real gains will be almost impossible to achieve: students must actively work to maintain living standards in order to avoid demoralisation and keep their confidence. The only genuine struggle with any chance of success is that for a social revolution: only a libertarian communist society can free students from the constant need to battle authority, and make genuine creative study possible. This will involve the abolition of students as a separate sector of society, education will be open to all when required and not restricted to a young, small and relatively privileged group.

A Strategy?

The first priority must be to restore morale and confidence amongst the mass of students, and agitating for this could centre around the following points:

- ** rank-and-file control over all disputes and campaigns
- ** real links between students and college workers, academic and non-academic and with the wider working class community
- ** union policy within C.O.'s to be decided by regular mass meetings open to all students, and with union executives being unable to independently place motions before meetings.

This fight will have to take place in all areas, including within the local union bodies. We must not argue for leaving unions — such a move will only strengthen the forces of right-wing reaction; rather we should realise that success will transcend the bounds of the present structures and render them meaningless; we must constantly argue the point that capitalism offers no progressive solution to the problems students face.

Of immediate necessity is an organised libertarian communist presence within the student movement; only when we re-group our scattered forces will any progress be made. Anyone (individuals or groups) interested in building such a presence should write to us C/O London Group.

OIL contd. from p. 12

Over Troubled Waters" the alternative offered by the Scottish National Party is examined and their policy is shown to be heavily influenced by the ambitions of a small elite of Scottish financiers, bankers, economists, and businessmen. Changing one set of rulers for another offers no solution. What is needed, it is argued, is a complete political and cultural revolution. Industries must be controlled by workers and the community. Personal relationships must be transformed, in particular there must be an end to women's oppression. We must go beyond purely rational 'scientific' thinking to incorporate into our lives "the primitive" — sexuality, the dreams and visions of our unconscious, a pre-intellectual awareness which does not separate itself from the object of its attention but is as one with what it perceives.

Unfortunately however there is no discussion of the future of the oil industry in a free socialist society. Should it be de-centralised and run under workers and community control? Or is oil technology so large-scale that it would be impossible to run the industry democratically, and so the only course would be to dismantle it? The questions of how the revolutionary transformation might take place, and of what activities people can be involved in now — both in the oil industry and in the community — to hasten that transformation, could also have been examined in more depth. However these are small failings in relation to the achievement of the pamphlet as a whole.

Following the success of "Oil Over Troubled Waters" — it is currently being reprinted, only 3 months after publication — APP intend to publish a series of investigations into local industries. The latest, included in the May issue of the monthly "Aberdeen Peoples Press", is an analysis of the crisis in Aberdeen's fishing industry.

(Available for 17p inc p&p from APP)

The development of North Sea Oil is central to Britain's economic and political future. If you want to know what is happening, and **WHAT WE COULD MAKE MAKE HAPPEN**, read "Oil Over Troubled Waters". And if you want other people to know, get your library to buy a copy and take advantage of the cheap rates for bulk orders.

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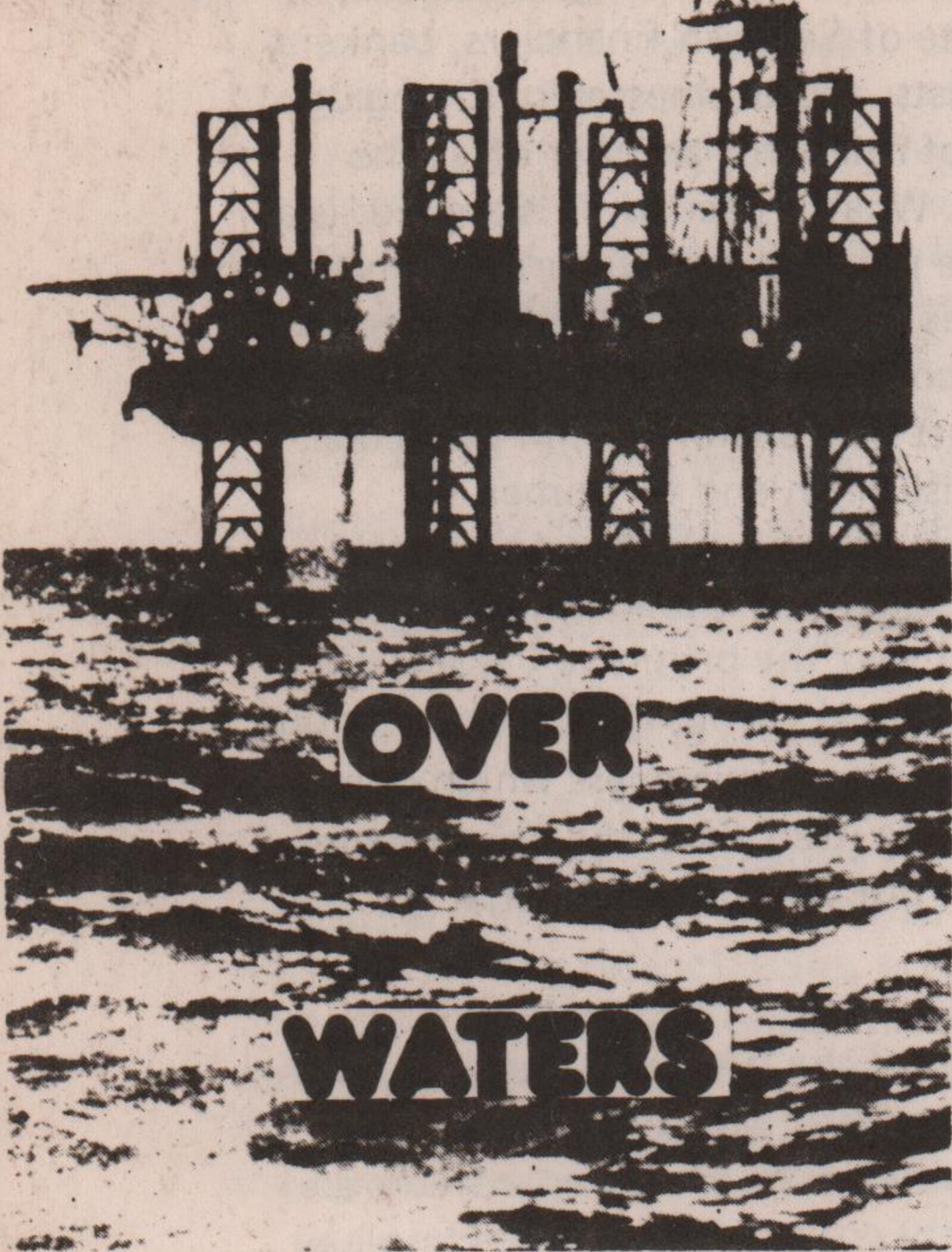
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OIL



Oil Over Troubled Waters, published by Aberdeen Peoples Press, 167 King St, Aberdeen. 60 pages, 35 photos. 75p. (Discounts for orders of 6 or more — details from APP).

North Sea Oil. The saviour of the British economy? Black Gold that is bringing a bonanza of big money and high living to North East Scotland? To find out about the reality behind the government and media myths, read *Oil Over Troubled Waters*. In this Aberdeen Peoples Press special report the development of North Sea Oil is analysed in a depth which neither the left or the commercial press have yet achieved. To give a brief indication of the scope of the pamphlet, some of the ideas covered are —

How the government's licensing terms and taxation policy have benefited the oil companies — Who owns Aberdeen, plus a run-down on the oil interests of Aberdeen and Scottish capital — How the local authorities in the North East have allowed oil developments to go ahead apace, to the detriment of the community — The unsafe working conditions in diving, on the rigs, and on the supply boats, and how they are caused by the oil companies' drive to save time, and therefore make money — The struggle of the Inter Union Offshore committee to unionise the rigs against ruthless opposition from the companies — How speculators have gained from soaring land prices — Aberdeen's drastic housing problem: how Council House building ground to a halt as office blocks sprouted merrily all over the city — Working as a Welder's Mate on the pipeline: a personal account.

Oil has sparked off an intense political debate about Scotland's future. In "Oil
cont. p. 1

NEWS

"The Dispossessed", the latest novel of the anarchist science fiction writer Ursula LeGuin, published by Gollancz, is now available in paperback. We have already reviewed the book in *Social Revolution* and at greater length in our discussion journal *Libertarian Communism*.

Ursula LeGuin's portrayal of life on the planet Anarres provides an example of the kind of socialist society we'd like to see. That is why we are publishing some extracts from her work.

FROM ANARRES

"The network of administration and management is called PDC, Production and Distribution Coordination. They are a coordinating system for all syndicates, federatives and individuals who do productive work. They do not govern persons; they administer production."

"Decentralisation had been an essential element in Odo's plans for the society she did not live to see founded. She had no intention of trying to de-urbanise civilisation. Though she suggested that the natural limit to the size of a community lay in its dependence on its own immediate region for essential food and power, she intended that all communities be connected by communication and transport networks, so that goods and ideas could get where they were wanted, and the administration of things might work with speed and ease, and no community should be cut off from change and interchange. But the network was not to be run from the top down. There was to be no controlling centre, no capital, no establishment for the self-perpetuating machinery of bureaucracy and the dominance-drive of individuals seeking to become captains, bosses, Chiefs of State."

"They knew that their anarchism was the product of a very high civilisation, of a complex diversified culture, of a stable economy and a highly industrialised technology that could maintain high production and rapid transport of goods. . . . The special resources and products of each region were interchanged continually with those of others, in an intricate process of balance: that balance of diversity which is the characteristic of life, of natural and social ecology."

But . . . you can't have a nervous system without at least a ganglion, and preferably a brain. There had to be a centre. The computers that coordinated the administration of things, the division of labour and the distribution of goods, and the central federatives of most of the work-syndicates, were in Abbenay ("Mind").

. . . Unavoidable centralisation was a lasting threat, to be countered by lasting vigilance.

PDC personnel are volunteers, selected by lot — a year of training, then four years as a Listing, then out. Nobody could gain power in a system like that. 'Some stay on longer than four years.' Advisers? They don't keep the vote. 'Votes aren't important . . .'

"The elements that made up Abbenay were the same as in any other Odonian city, repeated many times: workshops, factories, domiciles, dormitories, learning centres, meeting-halls, distributaries, depots, refectories. The bigger buildings were most often grouped around open squares, giving the city a basic cellular texture: it was one subcity or neighbourhood after another."

"The transport workers were the largest federative in the Odonian society: self-organised, of course, in regional syndicates which were coordinated by representatives who met and worked with the local and central PDC. The network maintained by the transport federative was effective in normal times and in limited emergencies; it was flexible, adaptable to circumstance, and the Syndics of Transport had great team and professional pride."

"PDC, the principal users of radio, telephone and mails, coordinated the means of long-distance communication, just as they did the means of long-distance travel and shipping. There being no "business" on Anarres, in the sense of promoting, advertising, investing, speculating etc, the mail consisted mostly of correspondence among industrial and professional syndicates, their directives and newsletters plus those of PDC, and a small volume of personal letters. . . . Eventually a letter got to the mail depot in the town addressed, and there it lay, there being no postmen, until somebody told the addressee that he had a letter, and he came to get it."

"The Dispossessed" Panther Science Fiction 75p.

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The next quarterly Social Revolution group conference will be in Aberdeen on July 3rd and 4th. Sympathisers are welcome to attend. Details from Aberdeen group.