

Libertarian Socialism Newsletter

no. 3

17.2.81

Many apologies for the week's delay (caused by 'flu). In order not to let this throw out the other dates, of meetings which are already arranged, we'll combine the two bulletins which had copy dates 21st Feb and 7th March to produce one, copydate 7th of March. So our timetable now reads:

- 28th February Meeting for people interested living in the North
Contact Keith Nathan at the address below if you're coming.
- 7th March Copydate for bulletin 4.
- 28th March meeting at the "Prince Albert" Wharf, Dale Rd., London N.1.
(near Kings X) from 11.00 (p.rompt) to 3.30pm.

Update on progress report.

Since 25.1.81 another £21 has come in. Six new subscribers. plus over a dozen enquiries from the New Statesman ad. (who have been sent newsletters 1 and 2). The NS ad. has another three weeks to run and a series is about to start in the Leveller. So, cash in totals £200.46; subs. just over fifty; people who want to be involved in the project coming up to 40; a couple of dozen who wish to be kept informed. We have arranged correspondents for the journal in Eire, Italy, France, Holland, Germany, Australia, USA and Nicaragua.

CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE PROJECT.

(since many people have written letters which have contributions in them we've taken the liberty of reproducing relevant sections of some of them.)

Most interested people have offered to write on areas of their particular interest, these include - Dissent in E. Europe; Unemployment/Social Security; Economic Strategy; Alternative Defence - Tom Wintringham and the Home Guard; Education; Feminism and Socialism; Architecture and planning. These are additions to previous offers/copy received.

M.E. Articles submitted to LS should be typed double-spaced, on one side only, leaving wide margins and space top and bottom of each sheet. Footnotes should be placed together at the end of each article. Writers should try to work within a length of 3,000 words.

LS should have a two-tier structure. Ownership should be vested in a collective not exceeding 100 persons. Each member of the collective would purchase one £10 voting share, providing working capital for the journal (non-returnable). Additionally, each member would pay a further annual sum of £1 to renew that voting right, and to cover administration costs (ie. newsletter, meetings etc.) This collective would meet four times a year, dealing with the overall direction of the journal and other publishing activities. It would be responsible for additional fundraising and would annually elect an editorial committee.

Editorial Committee would be responsible for organising the day-to-day activity associated with producing the journal (eg. commissioning articles, arranging production, distribution and dealing with finance, subscriptions etc.). It would be responsible to the ownership collective although in practice it would need a considerable degree of autonomy. All EC members should be members of the ownership collective.

Articles should be predominantly orientated towards contemporary issues and should have a strong extra-parliamentary component. Some of the themes are self-evident eg. environmental/ecological, sexism/anti-sexism, strategy/tactics others less so eg. strong state/militarism, internationalisation of capital and capitalist production.

We ought also to extend our themes to areas other journals don't eg. spatial aspects of ideology, politics of language, socialist ontology and epistemology, construction of knowledge within capitalism. Some articles could be translations but we should also attempt to generate new material. We should also include several book reviews.

AM We hope that the newsletter will concentrate on the anarchist/libertarian Marxist idea and its relevance to the Labour movement. We have seen too much talk which is divorced from action; where it has become little more than a game for isolated lefty gurus. What we need is a discussion around workers' alternative plans; the role of the welfare state and how we see it; why the feminists have failed to make their priorities and forms of action relevant to working class women in general; the role of broad fronts like the ANL and CND etc.... It sounds like a really useful project.

JW The biggest hurdle is organising the project in the first place. Leave it so that anyone genuinely interested/curious is able to get involved but don't be frightened of giving short shrift at the important meetings to found the journal to anyone who turns up as a tourist - who hasn't offered any help but wants to rabbit our time away. When all the work is done and you're getting near an edition for Pete's sake PROOFREAD (the old LC never was and its a common fault).

GA Consider using some space for regular interviews with ordinary people doing something interesting - occupations, campaigns, community projects. This will make a considerable real link between 'theoretical articles' (which are necessary) and simple news/accounts of events. A portable taperecorder and few hours typing and editing make the job easier than writing 'theory' too!

NL By all means we should aim at an A4 page, typeset, lithoprinted 32pp journal. If, by March 28th, we haven't enough money in or pledged to secure this then the need to make a start must take priority so we should cut our coat to fit our cloth and use a less attractive format to begin with. I think the choices are:-

- A5 printed (eg. the old 'Anarchy', Capital and Class, New Left Review, Readers Digest ha ha).
- A4 printed but typewriting/reduced rather than typesetting.
- A4 duplicated with printed cover and using electrosetencils.

KN I'm in favour of some sort of arrangement of the type ME outlines. The editorial committee idea needs expanding a bit:-

It needs some specifically allocated tasks such as

- a) Treasurer/Business Manager/Subscription organiser responsible for advertising/marketing/subscriptions/sales.
- b) a minimum of three people almost solely responsible on the 'editorial side' ie. getting copy, working on it, making an issue, commissioning, filling in the gaps.
- c) If the talent is available, and willing, then further 'specialists' in design/layout are necessary in the team.

On the question of style, we should work towards 'themes' per issue. This will be useful financially as it gives a longer sales life (almost indefinite) it will be useful for communications and discussion in that we can have a printed "debate", and, if the quality of material and quantity of response is good enough, this will provide the basis for dayschools, meetings etc.

to readers of 'LC'

Libertarian Communist publications are now distributed by the publishing group of the new quarterly journal Libertarian Socialism.

Publications available:

- * Libertarian Communist Review no.2 - setting the record straight on Michael Bakunin ; the role of a revolutionary organisation ; from Primitive to Libertarian Communism plus reviews etc. 30p.
- * The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. Written by an illustrious band of Russian exile revolutionaries, summing up their experiences of the Russian revolutions and charting the way forward. The start of the international libertarian communist movement 30p.
- * Tyranny of Structurelessness. First published in the USA. A useful contribution on the problems of organising for feminists and libertarians 20p.
- * Subversity - libertarian students newspaper. 10p.
- * Libertarian Communist supplements
 - H. Gary 1956
 - Russia 1917
 - Germany 1918/21
 - Spain 1936
 - Paris May 1968
 - Sketching the limits of Trotsky
 - Unwaged work within Capitalism
 - Socialism and Democracy
 - Peasants and Socialism+

(all supplements 10p except + which is 20p.)

Make po's/cheques payable to 'LCL', add 15p to total for p & p.
bulk rates on request.

Libertarian Socialism publishing group, 1 Grove Gardens ,
Leeds LS6 4EG tel. (0532) 780719.

SUMMARY

- * a large number of people have commented on the problem of organising and every idea so far has been similar in most respects to ME's. Specific proposals needed for the next bulletin if you disagree with any aspect of that one.
- * there is far less unanimity about the right mix although most people seem to want a mix of theme and review, again, your own ideas are needed.

Help is wanted to turn the pile of donated LC publications into money. If you get your local community bookshop to order some that's a big help.

The posters from Annarres still haven't been collected but pre-orders for your very own, very wonderful, genuwine Bakunin + quote ('Freedom without Socialism is Privilege and Injustice, and Socialism without Freedom is Slavery and Brutality') at an inflation-beating 50p incl.post. will be welcomed !

The remaining space is for the ideas you didn't send in.