

solidarity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

No. 6

DEC. - JAN. 78 - 79

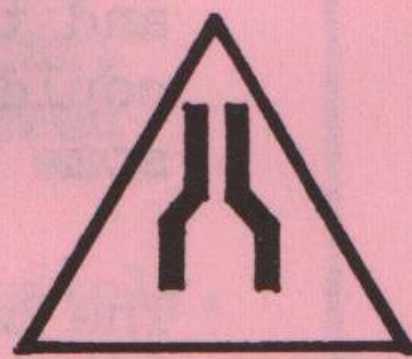
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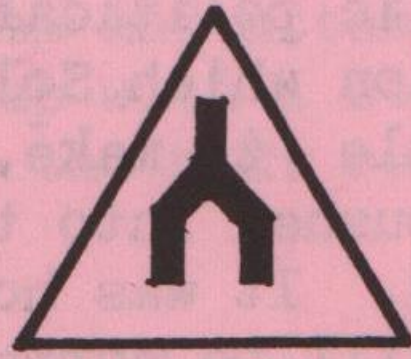
DRIVING ON THE LEFT
obey signals by authorised persons



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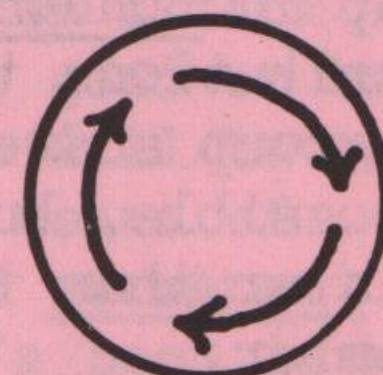
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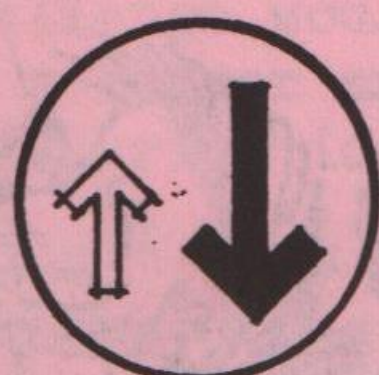
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TO OFFICIAL
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WAY AHEAD
CONFERENCE



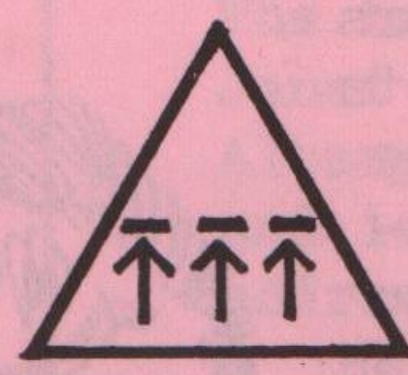
LOOK OUT FOR
PROTEST DEMO
PROCEEDING IN
WRONG DIRECTION



EVIL KNEEVIL
LEAPING THE
HISTORICAL
STAGES



TACTICAL
ZIG-ZAG TO
PRESERVE
PARTY PURITY



BROAD FRONT
CAUGHT IN
CONSTITUTIONAL
CHANNELS



OBLIVIOUS MARXIST
GROUP CONVINCED
OF HISTORICAL
DESTINY



HISTORIC MERGER
AHEAD! WOMEN
TO JOIN MALE
DOMINATED GROUP



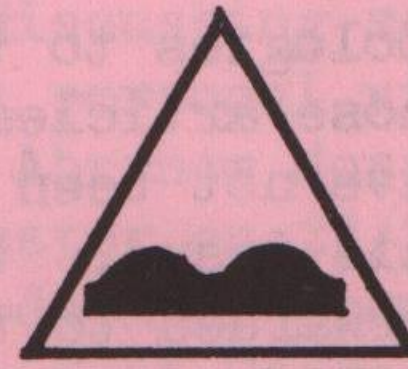
WOMEN JOIN
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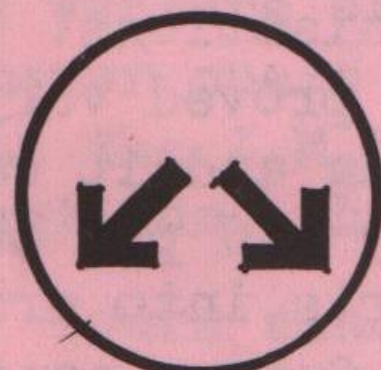
UMBRELLA
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IN TROUBLE



LENINIST GROUP
WITH NO WOMAN
ON CENTRAL
COMMITTEE



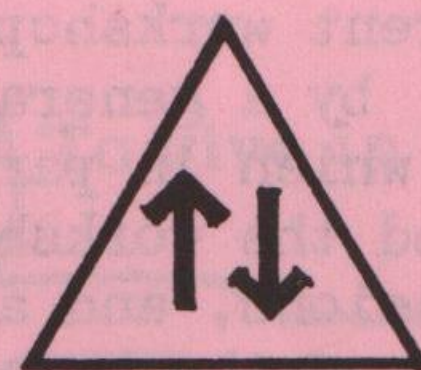
LENINIST GROUP
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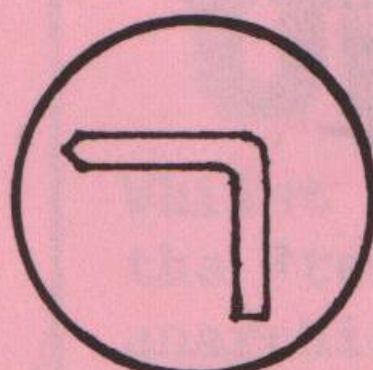
ALTERNATIVE
SOCIALIST



OPPORTUNIST
SOCIALIST



CONFUSED
SOCIALIST



LEFT WING
DEVIATIONIST



LEFT WING
DEVIATIONIST
ELIMINATED



beware signals from unauthorised persons

**Economic crisis?; Unresolved enigma;
Sexual revolution betrayed;
Revolutionary myopia; Ford Spain**

About Ourselves

SOLIDARITY NEWS

SOLIDARITY for SOCIAL REVOLUTION is produced in rotation by geographically separated editorial collectives. Members of local autonomous groups, together with individuals associated with 'Solidarity' are responsible for the contents and appearance of each issue. This one -No 6- was produced by members in Manchester and Leeds. The next issue will be produced by a group in London. Send contributions to the London group address as soon as possible, but certainly no later than the end of December.

The contents of the magazine (with the possible exception of the letters page) generally reflects the shared ideas of the group as a whole, although it is important to bear in mind that signed articles may not exactly correspond to this 'consensus.'

Apologies to those people whose articles or letters have not been published in this issue, these will be forwarded to the next publishing group to be considered for inclusion in the next issue. Please keep writing!

If you are interested in contacting 'Solidarity' write to one of the following addresses

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c/o 167 King St, Aberdeen

MANCHESTER
c/o 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester 1

OXFORD
c/o 34 Cowley Rd, Oxford

LONDON
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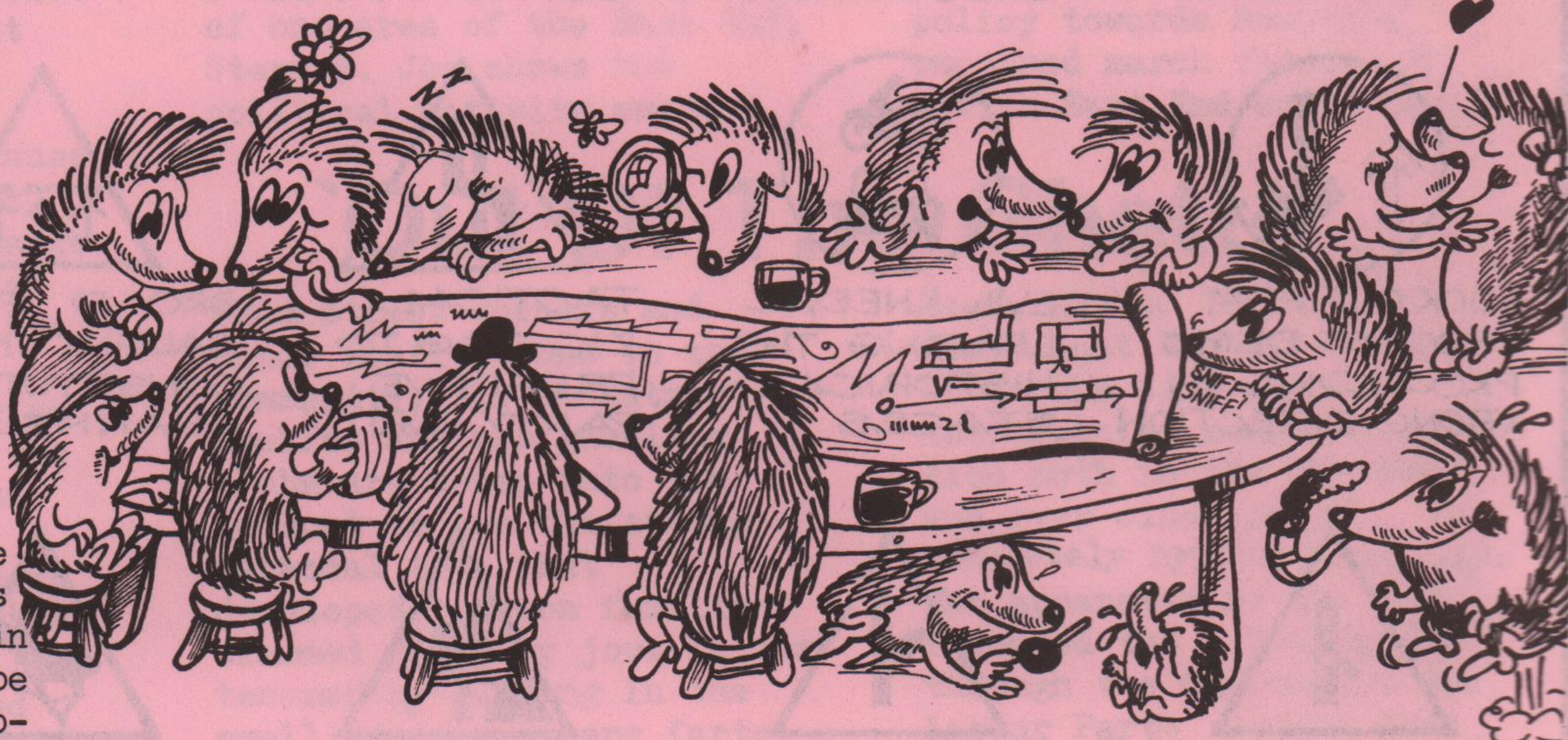
CONFERENCE

The last 'Solidarity' conference was held in Liverpool on the 28/29th of October.

Saturday morning saw an intensive discussion on the content of our magazine, Criticism was more evident than praise, and whilst the wide range of subject matter was welcomed, it was generally felt that the specific political contribution which Solidarity was able to make, had been pushed into the background. It was hoped this will be corrected in future issues.

Again most people considered that we couldn't on principle involve ourselves in 'anti-fascist' fronts like the 'Anti Nazi League' which contained an un-holy alliance of groups and individuals who were authoritarian, nationalist and racist in their own right. On the other hand a few individuals thought it was wrong to regard the ANL as a monolithic entity and that valuable work could be carried out in some local ANL groups.

The Saturday night social went down well, as did vast quantities of booze!



The theme of the Saturday afternoon 'open' session was "Fascism and chips" with a number of different workshops followed by a general meeting, which in part, summarised the workshop discussions, and also discussed the broad issue of Fascism and Anti-fascism. Most people seemed to feel that fascism narrowly defined, was not the major political threat today, but recognised that small fascist groups did represent a serious physical threat to minority groups in some cities in Britain. Some form of autonomous self-defence by working people was considered necessary to combat this.

More emphasis was placed on group reports Sunday morning, and members activities at work and various organisations. This however proved very time consuming and it was agreed to try and put these sort of reports into written form for future conferences. After various adjustments had been made it was reported that group membership now stood at 60.



UNRESOLVED ENIGMA

The following article is an introduction to a forthcoming new edition of the 'Solidarity' (London) pamphlet on Paris : May 1968.

In May 1968 the largest general strike in a modern industrial society broke out. It was not preceded by any economic recession, depression, slump or crisis. Quite the contrary: it occurred in a period of economic growth and rising standards of living for the entire society.

None of what had previously been considered as the classical economic preconditions of a revolutionary upheaval were present. This suggests that in our epoch the occurrence of mass revolutionary upheavals is not determined by economic conditions. The analysis of the economy had previously played a central role in the preoccupations of revolutionaries, particularly Marxists. But it is precisely the total inability of this approach first to predict, later to explain, the events of May 1968 that forces us to reconsider the relevance of this approach.

FRANCE 1968 - AN UNRESOLVED ENIGMA

On May 15, 1968 the largest social upheaval ever in a modern industrial society erupted in France. A general strike engulfed over 10 million people. The entire French productive apparatus came to a halt. So too did most of the service industries and the whole educational system. This social earthquake came like a bolt from the blue, stunning everybody - from government official to 'revolutionary' leftist. Eventually it brought about the downfall of de Gaulle, until then considered invincible by all experts on French affairs.

In addition to being totally unexpected, this upheaval had a number of new and unique features:

- 1) Its demands were centred around decision-making, not economics;
- 2) Its driving force was the students and the young rather than the working class, yet it engulfed the whole of society;

- 3) Action committees appeared everywhere: in localities, schools, factories. They took over - for a moment - the role of decision-making from the traditional authorities - whether elected or appointed;

- 4) People occupied their places of work or study, discussing how to manage their affairs themselves;

- 5) The trade union bureaucracy was seen as part of the Establishment, not as an instrument to defend those it claimed to represent;

- 6) The entire system of representative authority - even when elected by a genuinely democratic process - was swept aside. People demanded a direct role in decision-making, particularly in those areas which affected their daily lives.

After a few weeks the upheaval subsided. The regime survived. There was a moment when the CGT and the powerful French Communist Party could have brought about its downfall, merely by withholding support. De Gaulle could not even rely on the French police or Army, the majority of which either sympathised with the movement or was reluctant to attack it. He slipped away secretly to Germany, planning a military takeover with the troops there under General Massu. The PCF, realising that this upheaval was not under its control, and fearing that any further momentum might sweep away the CGT itself, exerted all its influ-

ence and power to bring the movement to a halt. The CGT used the occasion to wrest from the employers a number of economic concessions. The employers rightly saw this as a relief from the pressure upon them to relinquish their role altogether. The CGT thereby regained some influence among the older generation of workers. Meanwhile the new movement - unable to produce a viable, nation-wide structure of decision-making - gradually fizzled out.

The media and the traditional left try to forget or ignore this momentous upheaval. They label it as an 'aberration' from 'normality'. Or they describe it in terms of what they think they know: a 1905 heralding some 1917 to come.

All this is inadequate and dated. Anyone genuinely concerned with understanding new social and political developments must at least consider the following questions:

- 1) What motivated millions of people in a modern, affluent bourgeois democracy suddenly to take to the streets and demand fundamental changes in the existing system of decision making?
- 2) What did this upheaval achieve, and why did the movement fail to assert itself as a viable alternative?
- 3) Were the events an accidental aberration due to specific circumstances in France? Or were they a product of new



social pressures, common to all modern industrial societies?

The answers to these questions must take into account that France was not a tyranny and that the upheaval was not directed against despotic authorities. The country enjoyed relative affluence, the index of industrial growth was around 10%, there was hardly any inflation. The number of registered job-seekers was about a quarter of a million. Economic misery seems an unlikely cause. Nor was it a revolt against the misery of war. If political oppression, war and economic crisis are ruled out as causes, what remains? For traditional thinking, both of the right and the left: nothing. The questions remain unanswerable in traditional terms (that is one of the reasons they are rarely discussed).

Today, ten years after this upheaval, there are 1.5 million unemployed in France. Industrial growth indices have slumped to zero over the last few years. Inflation has doubled prices within five years and reduced real incomes for the first time since the war. Yet, despite all this, no one expects anything on the scale of May 68.

So how to explain 1968? The traditional revolutionary movement provided a descriptive formula: 'the students were the spark which ignited the working class'. This is a metaphor, not an explanation. Sparks do not emerge out of nothing. A lot of energy must accumulate before it can be released as a spark. Moreover, materials do not 'ignite' unless they are combustible. Why were so many workers, and people generally willing to follow the lead of

the students? Why does nothing 'ignite' today, when the economic grievances of workers are considerably more acute than in 1968?

When conventional ideas are found inadequate there is room to develop new ones. A creative development of revolutionary theory requires a close examination of new, unexpected phenomena and a readiness to

endow them with a meaning and intellectual courage for a new interpretation. This task requires considerable intellectual courage for a new interpretation implies the rejection of a previous one. But a political interpretation defines one's political identity. To depart from an old interpretation means to depart from one's previous political identity. This is never easy.

There were at least three new and unique phenomena in May 68:

1) Most of the militant activists were young people, born after World War II. They had grown up in a period of constantly rising living standards in France. The workers who came to support the students in their battles against the riot police were mostly young, too. The older workers were, on the whole, suspicious of the students. They pressed, at the end, for the termination of the strike.

2) The students' revolt revealed a new attitude towards their education. They protested against the content and form of their studies. But this was not a narrow-minded airing of a particular grievance. The students rejected the role of an elite in this society, a role that would confer on them many economic and social benefits. Who ever heard before of a mass movement of people refusing to be groomed for the role of an elite?

3) Hundreds of new graffiti, completely original in content, appeared overnight all over Paris:

- * Professors, you make us feel old
- * Examinations: Subordination, grading, hierarchical society
- * In the universities: 8% from the working class. In the borstals: 90%
- * The trade unions: a brothel
- * Neither slave nor robot
- * Workers of all countries - enjoy yourselves
- * Since 1936 I've fought for higher wages. My father before me did the same. Now I have a car, TV and fridge, but my

life is a dog's life. Don't discuss with the employers. Eliminate them.

- * All power to imagination
- * The future will only contain what we put into it today
- * One cannot create in a disintegrating society
- * Leave the CP as clean as you found it on entering.

These graffiti were not of the usual 'Right to Work' or 'A fair day's pay for a fair day's work' type. Nor were they of the 'Power to the workers' type. They expressed a new attitude to work, study, production and consumption.

Is this what human existence was all about: production and consumption? This unexpected question couldn't be answered by any strand of traditional political thought for the simple reason that traditional politics in the West rests precisely on the unquestioned assumption that human existence at least in its social context, is about continuous increases of production and consumption. In May 68, for the first time in a modern Western society, a mass movement questioned this premise. A Minister in de Gaulle's cabinet, reminiscing about the events ten years later, commented: 'the young were demanding a new meaning to life. But politics cannot provide such a thing'. He should have said 'old politics cannot provide new meanings, because they are themselves the product of the old meanings'. But that would have been too much for even the most perceptive Gaullist.

And not only for him or her. It would have been too much even for a perceptive marxist. May 1968 was as much a product of an existential crisis (the disintegration of the old 'meaning of existence') as it was a product of a crisis of authority relations. The latter grievance can be recuperated by various 'participation' schemes. The former requires a far more fundamental change because it questions the basic assumption upon which both capitalism and socialism rest.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

ECONOMIC CRISIS: MYTH AND REALITY

Cardan's Law

Ten years ago, perhaps even five, there was a distinct Solidarity position on economic theory, represented by the relevant sections of Paul Cardan's Modern Capitalism and Revolution. In a nutshell, Cardan's argument was this. Marx's economics were inadequate even for the nineteenth century. Above all, his central prediction concerning the tendency for the rate of profit to fall was devoid of any coherent theoretical basis. Other elements of Marx's analysis, while valid enough in their day, had been undermined by the massive structural changes which had transformed Western capitalism since the debacle of the 1930's. In particular, the tendency for the purchasing power of the masses to lag behind their productivity, which more than anything else explained the inherently crisis-prone nature of the system, had been overcome by state intervention, unionisation, and the consequent growth in real wages.

For Cardan the real contradictions of modern capitalism lay outside the economic sphere, narrowly defined, and were to be found instead in the authority relations and value structures of an increasingly bureaucratic society. Economic theory was largely irrelevant for the modern revolutionary, since the true crisis of modern society was not an economic one at all. This conclusion probably helps to explain why Cardan's position prevailed in Solidarity by default. No-one was sufficiently interested in the subject to challenge it.

Today there is no agreement within Solidarity on matters economic, simply a number of more or less coherent ideas, more or less contradictory

with each other, voiced by various people with greater or lesser degrees of conviction. Cardan's analysis, rather obviously doesn't fit the present decade as neatly as it did the 1950's and 1960's. Instead of rapid, smooth, sustained economic growth we now have relative stagnation. Unemployment is four or five times as great as the levels general twenty years ago. Inflation, though now on the decline, recently reached rates unprecedented in peacetime British history. Western capitalism as a whole is displaying many of the symptoms of economic crisis, something which (according to Cardan) should be a thing of the past.

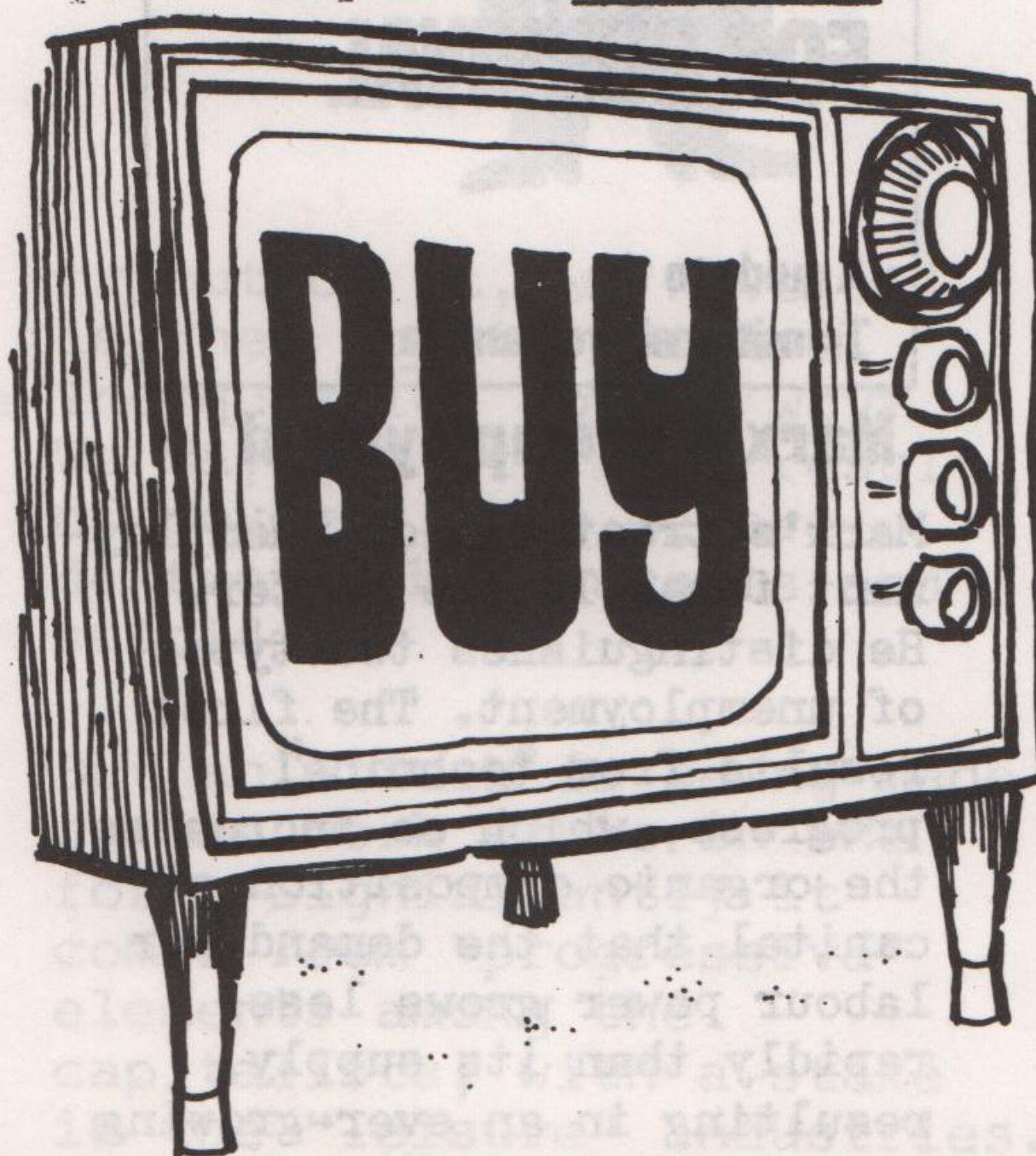
Contradictions resolved

Failure to attempt some sort of explanation of the present crisis has left us extremely vulnerable to attacks from the traditional left. 'During the 1950's and 1960s,' suggest the World Revolution group, 'many elements in the tiny revolutionary movement which managed to maintain a precarious existence through those long years of class quiet and economic growth were dazzled by the apparent 'success' of the capitalist economy in the post-war period. Socialisme

ou Barbarie, the Situationist International and others took this phase of relative prosperity at face value and declared that capitalism had resolved its economic contradictions, so that the preconditions for a revolutionary upheaval could no longer be sought in the objective limitations of the system, but purely and simply in the subjective 'refusal' of the exploited class. The very premises of Marxism were called into question, and those groups who went on insisting that the capitalist system could not and would not escape a new round of economic crisis were brusquely dismissed as 'relics' of the outmoded communist left, vainly clinging to a fossilized marxist orthodoxy..... (the present crisis is) an expression of the irreversible, historic decline of capitalism, a new outbreak of capitalism's death agony which could only lead to world war or world revolution. (1).

This makes me shudder, too, but I'm not at all sure just what Solidarity's answer to it would be. It would be a tragedy if uncertainty and confusion over economics lead the libertarian movement back to this sort of mindless ancestor worship. Without some reasonably clear alternative, though, it's easy to envisage precisely this taking place. There are some fundamental flaws in both the 'fossilized marxist orthodoxy' and in Modern Capitalism and Revolution, so that neither proves a reliable guide to the current crisis.

- (1) C.D.Ward, 'Marxism and Crisis Theory', International Review (of the International Communist Current) 13, Spring 1978, p.25.



Inflationary crisis

The first thing to note about the crisis is that it is quite radically different from the cataclysmic depression of the thirties, in fact quite different from all previous crises. It is very much less severe, for a start: 6-7% unemployment is bad enough, but it fails to compare with the 22% reached in 1932 (unemployment never fell below 10% at any time between 1921 and 1939). Second, as everyone knows, prices have been rising steadily, and have failed to show the slightest tendency to decline. In all previous crises worthy of the name the price level fell, often considerably (by no less than 35% in 1920-2, to take an extreme example). This, then, is the very first inflationary crisis. Third, and most important of all, it is most definitely the first profitable crisis in the long history of capitalism. In all earlier crises profits fell, and the deeper the crisis the further they declined. This time the 7-8% drop in real wages during stage II resulted (given stagnant output) in a profit bonanza which is only now coming to an end.

All these phenomena suggest that the capitalist economy is not simply reverting to type, that something quite new is going on, and that the slogan 'No return to the thirties' largely misses the point. If this is so, it follows that any attempt to disinter Marx is unlikely to succeed.

In fact Cardan's criticisms of Marx remain substantially correct, if in need of some elaboration. Consider first Marx's analysis of the tendency for the rate of profit to decline. This is presented by Marx as a simple result of the nature of technical change in advanced capitalism. The organic composition of capital increases more rapidly than the rate of exploitation, and down (sooner or later, and

allowing for various 'counter-acting tendencies') goes the rate of profit. Readers unfamiliar with the jargon should refer to the appendix, where (hopefully) it is all explained simply.

In his own 'Appendix' and 'Appendix to the Appendix' to Modern Capitalism and Revolution, Cardan demonstrates that there is no reason to suppose that this must occur. Marx's law is contingent rather than necessary, and the rate of profit may well increase rather than decline. It can be added that, if capitalists are concerned to maximise their profits, and real wages are held down, then the rate of profit will inevitably increase.

Cardan's argument isn't especially original. The point has been made many times, and no Marxist has yet come up with a convincing refutation. Many years ago, Rosa Luxemburg drew the appropriate conclusion. 'There is still some time to pass before capitalism collapses because of the falling rate of profit.', she wrote sardonically, 'roughly until the sun burns out'.⁽²⁾



A POLICY FOR SURVIVAL

A guide to the
Transitional programme

Marx & unemployment

Marx's treatment of unemployment fares little better. He distinguishes two types of unemployment. The first results from technical progress, which so increases the organic composition of capital that the demand for labour power grows less rapidly than its supply, resulting in an ever-growing reserve army of the

unemployed. It is important to realise that this need not be associated with the existence of surplus capital and is thus in principle quite independent of any economic crisis. In fact, by preserving the docility of those who are employed, it helps to forestall crises.

Bourgeois economists often describe this as 'technological unemployment'. Many pundits see it as a necessary outcome of the microprocessor revolution which is about to hit us. But Marx's account of technological unemployment suffers from exactly the same defects as his analysis of the falling rate of profit. Everything depends on the circumstances of the time (nature of technical advances, population growth, changes in economic structure, and so on). Very little can be said a priori.

The second type of unemployment, unlike the first, is invariably found in conjunction with economic crises, since it results from the emergence of surplus capital due to the inability of capitalists to find purchasers for their commodities. This leads, in Marx's terms, to a failure to 'realise' the surplus value contained in those commodities, hence to a decline in profits, and thereby to a reduction in their investment expenditures. The unemployment generated in this way is known to bourgeois economists as 'demand-deficient unemployment'.

The lack of purchasers which provoked the crisis has to be explained. In all probability it results, in a regime of laissez-faire, from the restricted living standards of the working class. But why, Cardan asks, should not the capitalists as a class, abandoning laissez-faire and using an

(2) Rosa Luxemburg, 'The Accumulation of Capital - an anti-critique'. M.K. Tarbuck (ed.) Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capitalism, 1972 p77n.

expanded state apparatus, guarantee that purchasing power increases at a rate sufficient to ensure that all surplus value is in fact realised? Marx never poses this question in any explicit manner, and certainly provides no answer to it. Cardan points to the massive growth of state spending, the increasing acceptance of unions, the expansion of the 'welfare state', as evidence that the lesson has in fact been learned. These developments, he argues, provide a sufficient explanation of the quarter century of full employment and rapid economic growth after 1945.

Theory of value

Finally it should be noted that there is not, and probably never can be, a convincing Marxist theory of inflation. The value of a commodity, Marx tells us, depends on the quantity of socially necessary labour embodied in it. So long as we are concerned only with the precious metals, this gives us a coherent theory of the value of money, and hence of its decline. When applied to banknotes, it is already a little tenuous. But try to get an intelligent answer from a Marxist to the following question: 'What precisely is the labour value of a bank deposit?'. This is not a refutation of the labour theory of value as such, for which quite different arguments would be required. It does suggest that when the Marxist faithful talk of the need to analyse inflation 'in terms of the theory of value' they are making empty noises.

In short, the 'objective limitations of the system' are for Cardan quite illusory and the real limitations of the capitalist mode of production turn out to have very little to do with economics as such:

'What appears to us as questionable in Capital is its methodology. Marx's theory of wages and its corollary, the theory of the increasing rate of exploitation, begin from a postulate that the worker is completely

'reified' (reduced to an object) by capitalism. Marx's theory of crises starts from a basically analogous postulate: that men and classes (in this case the capitalist class) can do nothing about the functioning of their economy.'

'Both these postulates are false. But both have a deeper significance. Both are necessary for political economy to become a 'science' governed by 'laws' similar to those of genetics or astronomy. But for this to be achieved, the things to be studied must be objects. It is as objects that both workers and capitalists appear in the pages of Capital. If 'political economy' is to study the mechanisms of society, it must deal with phenomena ruled by objective laws, i.e. laws not constantly modified by the actions of men and classes. This has led to a fantastic paradox. Marx, who discovered and ceaselessly propagated the idea of the crucial role of the class struggle in history, wrote a monumental work (Capital) from which the class struggle is virtually absent!' (3).

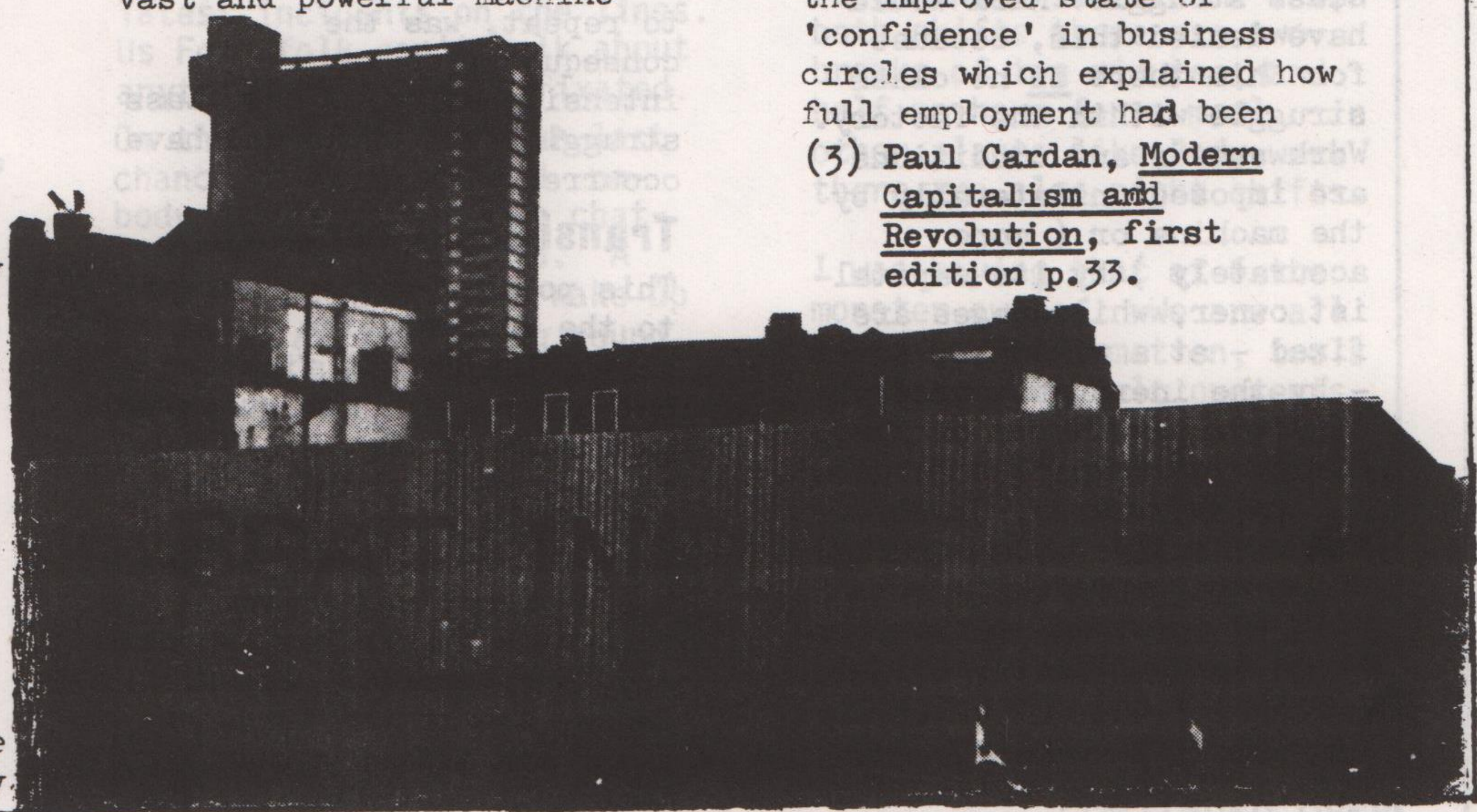
Frankenstein's monster

This criticism has become increasingly valid as capitalism has 'matured'. In the nineteenth century it was not as wildly inaccurate as Cardan implies to describe the capitalist world market as a sort of Frankenstein's monster, a vast and powerful machine

wholly out of the control of its human creators. When Marx described the worker as the slave of the machine, both on the shop floor and in a much wider social context, he wasn't perhaps so wide of the mark. But capitalism has moved on, leaving Capital and its devotees behind. The self-organisation of the capitalist class, focussed on the state, has been paralleled by the self-organisation of the working class, based above all at the point of production. This organised activity of both rulers and ruled has fundamentally changed the nature of the economy and its crises.

Cardan takes this a little too far, exaggerating the degree to which the traditional 'anarchy of the market' has been overcome in the bureaucratic phase of capitalism. The international co-ordination of accumulation remains at a relatively primitive level, and is constantly subverted by the transnational activities of giant corporations (whose rivalry serves to remind us that fierce competition is by no means a thing of the past). International complications aside, the success of Keynesian policies depends to a substantial degree on capitalists' beliefs that they will succeed, rather than on anything more substantial. One celebrated study concluded that fiscal policy in Britain after 1945 had been deflationary on balance, and that it was the improved state of 'confidence' in business circles which explained how full employment had been

(3) Paul Cardan, Modern Capitalism and Revolution, first edition p.33.



sustained. Conversely, one suspects, when capitalists come to believe in the 'crowding-out hypothesis', this is enough to make it true, however false it may appear to academic economists. (4). So long as the state sector does not comprise the whole of the economy, private investment decisions continue to determine the state of its health. These decisions depend on capitalists' expectations of profits, and are as 'rational' as these expectations themselves : that is, not very.

Nonetheless, it is important not to go to the opposite extreme. The orthodox analysts of 'the irreversible, historic decline of capitalism' are wrong, for the system has changed. So has the world-view of the ruling class. Milton Friedman got his Nobel Prize, but cannot get his reactionary advice acted upon, even in Chile (still less, one suspects, in California, where the corporations campaigned against proposal 13, and will no doubt take care that they win the next referendum). Cardan's account of the economic lessons of the 1930s is substantially correct, and to a very large extent they have been learned.

Class struggle

The crucial limitations to accumulation today are posed, not by any of the traditional 'economic contradictions of capitalism', but by the class struggle. Marx would have denied this, because for him there is no class struggle within the factory. Work speeds and conditions are imposed unilaterally by the machine or (more accurately) by its capitalist owner, while wages are fixed - at a miserable level - by the inexorable pressure of the reserve army of the unemployed waiting outside the factory gates. Short of the revolution, the working class can improve its lot only by political action, which takes place, both physically and conceptually, outside of production. The most striking example, to

which Marx constantly refers is that of the Ten Hours Act of 1847, legislated by a bourgeois parliament after a campaign led by Tory paternalists.

Cardan denies it, too, but for different reasons. For him wage demands are inherently recuperable, since a steady growth in the purchasing power of the masses is exactly what is needed to maintain accumulation. If full employment challenges the preservation of discipline in the factories, this leads (for Cardan) to a crisis in authority relations, but not to a direct threat to accumulation on the economic plane. In effect he denies the possibility that wage demands might go beyond the 'reasonable limits' within which they can be recuperated. Up to 1968, or thereabouts, he was quite right.

When the rate of profit did decline, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, it was not for the reasons given by Marx. It fell because of a sharp decline in the rate of exploitation, itself the product of an increase in rank-and-file militancy which affected both wage bargaining and the 'non-wage issues stressed by Cardan. This in turn was possible only once the fear of unemployment, inherited from the 1930's and very slow to dissipate, had finally lost its hold over a new generation of workers. The decline in the profit rate, to repeat, was the consequence of an intensification of the class struggle, and would not have occurred without it.

Transitional demands

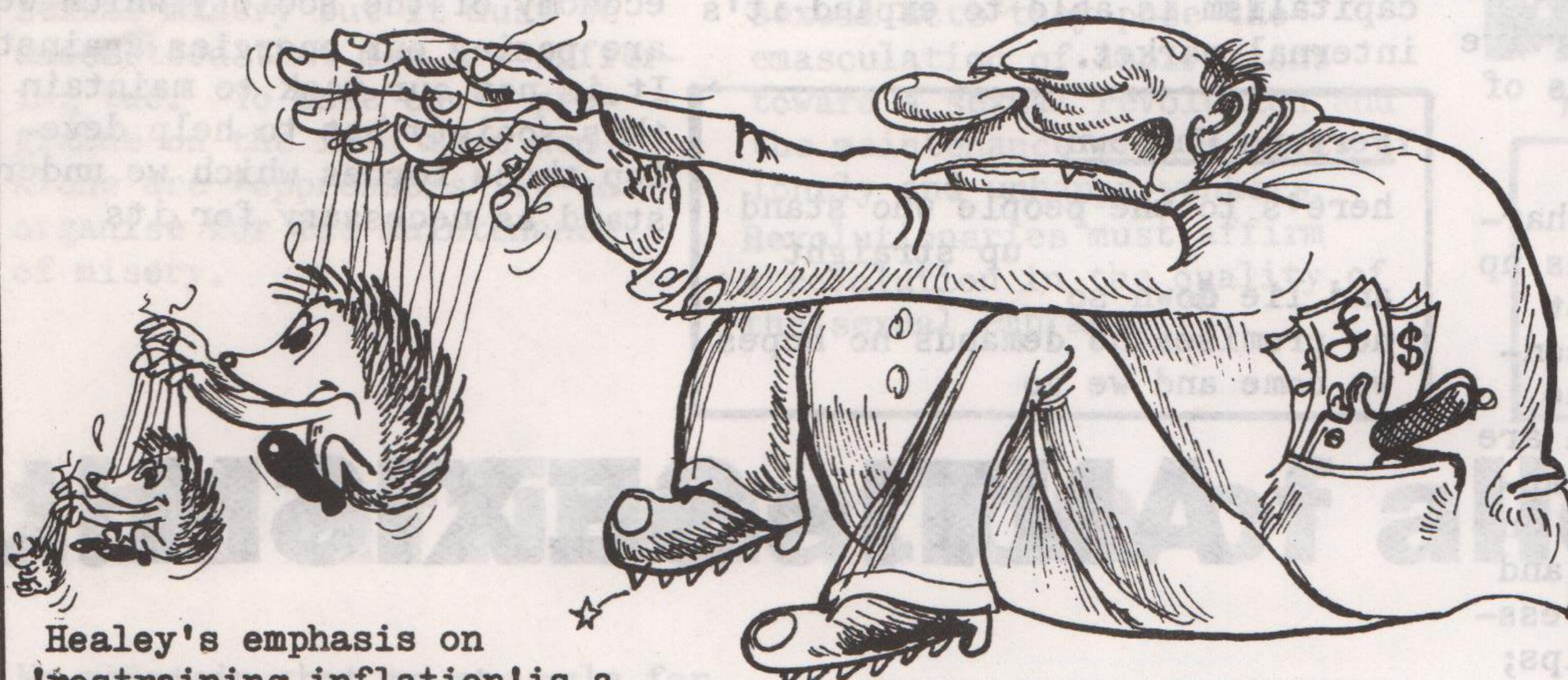
This posed a serious threat to the accumulation of capital, which is financed out of profits, and quickly gave rise to the acceleration of inflation. Inflation is the means whereby capitalists prevent higher money wages from producing higher real wages and lower profits. In this sense, and in the terms of cause and effect rather than moral culpability, the

working class is responsible for inflation. Profits normally account for about 20% of net output. If money wages increase by 30% (as in 1974), and the output is roughly constant, then either profits disappear - taking capitalism with them - or prices go up. Thus there are 'transitional demands' which, if realised, would prove inconsistent with the survival of capitalism : a 30% wage increase with a complete price freeze, for example. Whether such demands are attainable, or even worth making, is another matter. In any case, recognition of working class 'responsibility' for inflation implies neither the imputation of blame nor support for wage controls.

It does though, point to the origins of the present crisis. To a rather limited extent, the crisis was the automatic result of the profit squeeze, and the consequent lower levels of investment. More important though, was the deliberate reaction to these events of the ruling class itself. A conscious decision was taken by those in charge of the major Western economies to break working class militancy by restoring the threat of the dole queue. This has been done by the manipulation of state finances : by tax increases and cuts in public spending. There has been no 'conspiracy', for those

- (4) R.C.O. Matthews, ' Why has Britain had full employment since the war?'. Economic Journal September 1968 pp555-69. The crowding-out hypothesis states, crudely, that each one pound increase in state spending results in a one pound decrease in private spending, leaving total spending unchanged. Keynesian economists - still the majority - argue that this will only occur when resources are fully employed; the monetarist minority believe that it is true more generally.

concerned have been remarkably open about their intentions. This, for example, is Dennis Healey speaking in October 1975: 'The underlying problem of the depth of the world recession had turned out to be even more formidable than had been imagined. To a certain extent the present world recession reflects conscious decisions by individual governments to give priority to restraining inflation and to correcting payments imbalances at the cost of higher unemployment. I think it is fair to say, however, that miscalculation has played a part in some of these decisions.' (5).



Healey's emphasis on 'restraining inflation' is a little misleading. Inflation is an irritant, which makes life harder for accountants and creates uncertainty for politicians. It is not inherently inconsistent with the accumulation of capital, nor does it inevitably lead to hyperinflation and the collapse of the currency. The history of Fourth Republic France, and the rapid (and inflationary) expansion of the Brazilian economy since the military seized power in 1963, testify to both points. What really concerns Healey is the threat to profits posed by the working class power which underlies the present inflation.

The British disease

Still less are 'payments imbalances' an Act of God. They are the outcome of differential rates of inflation between national economies in the absence of offsetting changes in the exchange rates between their

currencies. If the inflation rate in Britain exceeds that in West Germany, and the pound is not allowed to depreciate (perhaps for purely chauvinistic reasons) a British trade deficit is inevitable. This produces downward pressure on the pound, which is seen as evidence of national decay and in turn provides ideological justification for the British government's 'priority' of restoring profitability. All very convenient for British capitalists, not to mention their German counterparts, who can use these symptoms of 'the British disease' as a means of reinforcing the docility of their own labour

force. Should the British government be reluctant to do its duty, a speedy run on the pound is easily arranged (remember November 1976, and the £ 1.50 pound?). Payments imbalances and currency fluctuations are powerful disciplinary agents in a world where national differences in working class combativity remain substantial. (6).

It is now possible to explain the three novel features of the present crisis to which I referred earlier. Relative mildness, because the crisis is very much the product of 'conscious decisions', and excessive deflation would prevent the full realisation of surplus value. Rising rather than falling prices, because of the previous successful pressure on the wages front. Profitability, because the strategy is working: the edge has gone off the class struggle, the

rate of exploitation has increased, and the reduction in working class purchasing power has not (yet) gone too far.

Probably a completely crisis-free capitalism is impossible. The world economy is too complex, and the conflicting pressures of rival capitalist interests and bureaucratic cliques too strong, for accumulation to continue for very long in an entirely smooth and harmonious fashion. But a relatively crisis-free capitalism is possible: we lived in such a world (a world of 'stop-go' and 'growth cycles', of unemployment rates dramatically lower than anyone thinks possible today) between 1945 and the early 1970's. That we no longer live in such a world is not due to the reassertion of economic laws 'nunciated by Marx in 1867, vulgarised by Lenin in 1917, and regurgitated by Mandel (or whoever) in 1967 (and 1977, and 1987.....). For those laws no longer operate. It is due to the 'subjective' refusal of the exploited class to accept the 'responsible trade union leadership', and the responsible wage settlements, that are offered them. The roots of the current crisis are essentially political, and as such are (in the strict sense of the term) indeterminate. As to the future - who knows?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

(5) Quoted in Santosh Mukherjee, The Job Creation Programme, International Institute of Management, 1977, p.4.

(6) A superb example of the cynical manipulation of exchange rates for political purposes occurred in March 1978, when the French franc fell by ten per cent immediately before the elections (when the 'Left' appeared likely to win), and then rose by ten per cent immediately after the elections (and the defeat of the 'Left').

THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION BETRAYED

INTRODUCTION

The following document was submitted to the Solidarity Conference at Laurieston by women and men from Leeds, as a contribution to the discussion on the womens movement and sexuality.

"We suggest that Solidarity's book 'Modern Capitalism and Revolution' be re-read in order to pay more attention to one of the mechanisms by which the economy develops - that is, by feeding off so called 'revolutionary ideas'.

OUR PROBLEMS, THEIR REMEDIES

Capitalism, in order to survive is now developing the means of ending oppression on the grounds of sex and sexual orientation, because the characteristic sex designations up to this stage of capitalist development increasingly conflict with the needs of the economy. At present women are discriminated against in employment, are burdened with an unfair share of childcare and domestic work and are oppressed in personal relationships; homosexual women and men are subjected to ridicule at work and elsewhere, and harassment by the law; and men, (although historically placed in the position of oppressors) are themselves exploited in their traditional position as worker/provider. But it is important to distinguish between the actions of sections of the bourgeoisie to modernise by internally developing the existing market (through encouraging a new consumption originating in a growing dissatisfaction with existing sexual life), and the self-conscious revolutionary movement itself. The ending of oppressive sex roles in many areas of social life is a conscious and major aim of modern capitalism. Revolutionaries must learn again how to distinguish between necessitated reform and social revolution. Solidarity has always struggled to be consciously revolutionary rather than an ideological instrument of economic reform.

CO-OPTING REFORMIST DEMANDS

The next stage of capitalism necessitates the expansion of the range of commodities which the proletariat is willing to buy. This requires a significant transformation of cultural values. It is within this context that the struggle against "sexism" is placed by capitalism. For capitalism 'women's liberation' is the stimulation of consumer demand. Individual autonomy for women is understood as the right to buy one's own house, car, cooker, fridge, etc. The militancy with which the women's movement pursue their aims merely makes sexual equality the most likely means by which capitalism is able to expand it's internal market.

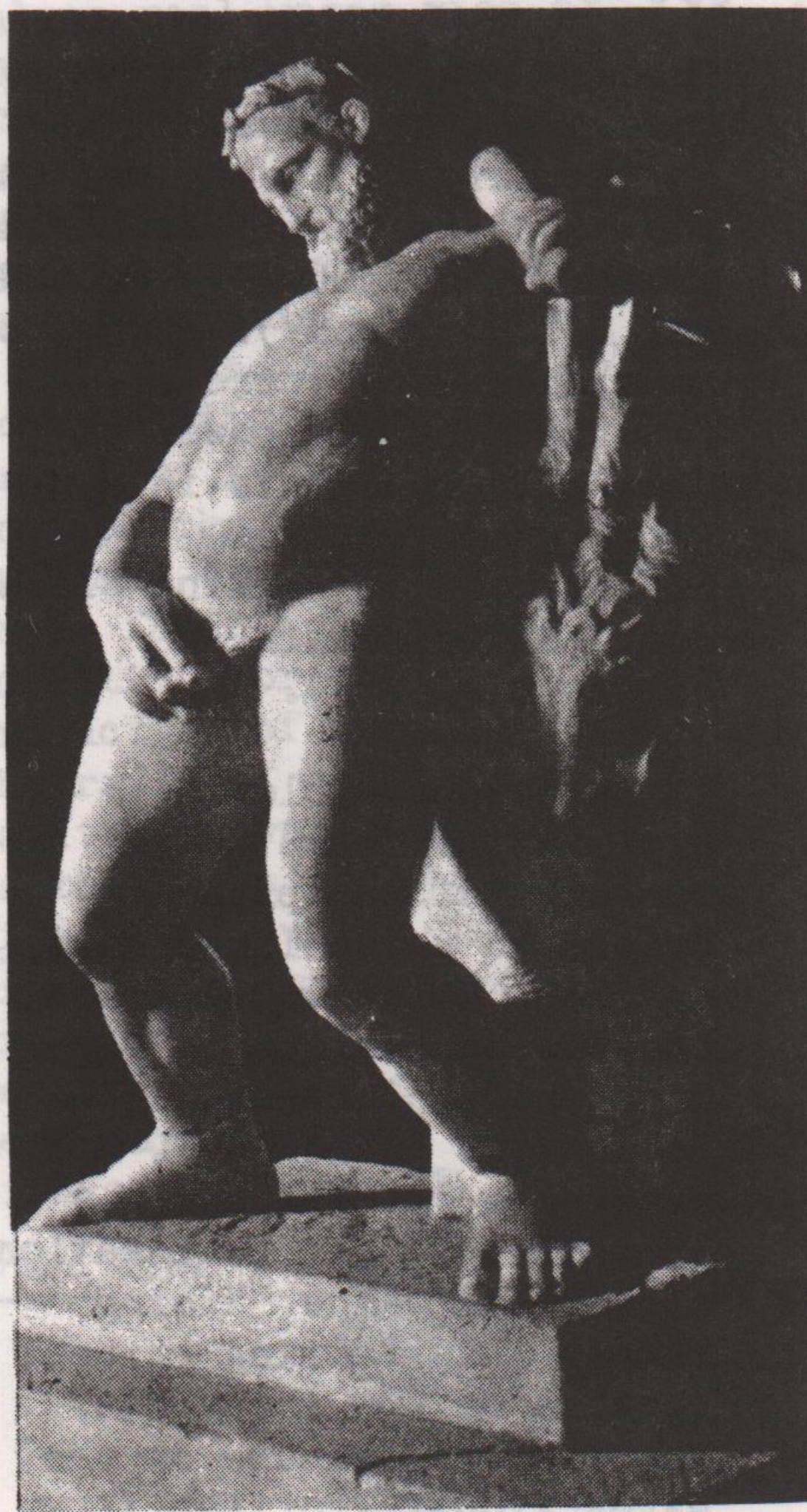
Persons Unknown

here's to the people who stand
up straight
and lie down so
no promises no demands no hopes
we come and we go

It does not matter to capitalism that the struggle against 'sexism' was initiated by people who would describe themselves as 'revolutionaries'. What remains important is that this struggle has now been taken up by capitalism as an irreversible reform which no longer requires 'revolutionaries' as the necessary personnel for its realisation.

It is understood that the project which capitalism is making of the struggle against 'sexism' does not contain the totality of the project originally initiated. At the same time, as revolutionaries, it is our task to publicise the significant developments of the culture and economy of the society which we are posing our energies against. It is not our task to maintain this society but to help develop those forces which we understand as necessary for its

ANTI-SEXISM....



negation. It is necessary to identify a given struggle as a necessary reform in order to make clear which actions are truly revolutionary. This project is not to be confused with a reactionary opposition to the proposed reforms.

SEXISM OR SEXUAL MISERY

We maintain there is an "IRRATIONAL IN POLITICS" which expresses itself as the failure of the worker's movement to ask itself, on anything but a minute scale, the questions necessary for it's own emancipation, and that the base of this irrationality is a sexually negative and miserable lifestyle. Consequently we identify in the movement for better sexual relationships a necessary step in the struggle for socialism. It is within this theoretical context that we greet all attempts at a happier affirmation of our sexuality.

We regard, however, the concept of 'sexism' as particularly harmful in this struggle. It is not true that all men prevent all women from discovering and developing their own sexuality in accord with their own desires. Women are also the instruments by which sexually negative ideology is perpetuated. It is also true that few women understand male sexual needs in the depth necessary to be able to engage in the sexual embrace in a way which fulfills masculine desires. In this society women are also an instrument of the oppression of men. We understand that the fervour with which women oppose 'sexism' expresses a deep and very real sexual misery but it must be understood that men are suffering too. To base one's programme on the idea that men alone are 'oppressors' is to organise for the maintenance of misery.

We maintain that the women's movement, by understanding itself as a 'women's' movement, merely perpetuates the conditions which maintain sexual misery and consequently capitalism itself. We therefore oppose all separatist women's organisations, understanding them as part of the expression of the society we oppose. The problem of sexual misery can only be solved by the conscious effort of both sexes.

We note that capitalism is increasingly aware of the potential expansion of commodity production based in sexual misery, eg. inflatable women and dildoes. By encouraging the affirmation of alienated sexual acts they pose the emasculation of aspirations toward a sexual revolution and the maintenance of a society of lonely and unhappy wankers. Revolutionaries must affirm a revolution in the quality of the sexual embrace.

Anxiety

joyful expectations gone
shot by a hairtrigger



Being a nun and a policewoman in America

Prometheus

it often seems
the greatest cause
cant redeem
one's chewed up balls

..the affirmation of alienation

We maintain that to struggle for a successful 'sexual revolution' not only requires the correct theoretical formulation of the problem but also a programme of physical sexual experimentation which alone guarantees the understanding necessary for a happy and affirmative sex life. This is not only to overcome the ignorance we have of our own and each other's bodily requirements, but is an expression of our understanding of the somatic* basis of ideology. To argue, without an attempt at practice, for a sexual revolution with those who are emotionally structured so that the sexual act is no longer enjoyable is as likely of success as the attempt to explain colours to those who have always been blind.

It is within the context that the development of theory requires the bodily enjoyment of sexuality that we understand the struggle against 'sexism' by capitalism as a step toward the possibility of the proletariat becoming revolutionary.

CLITORIS TODAY! BODY TOMORROW?

This project has already found partial expression in the Hite Report, which makes it clear that women are re-discovering orgasm after an historical period of its suppression. It is evident from the discussion of the clitoris and the vagina that this re-discovery is continuing, with some women now able to describe orgasm produced by the total embracing of the partner without particular genital stimulation.

Despite this understanding of the cultural devastation of their own sexuality, many feminists persist in the belief that men have retained their 'natural' potency throughout this historical period. It is assumed, throughout the report, that the male who quickly mounts his partner, ejaculates, then rolls over to 'sleep', has found sexual fulfillment.

It is time that women understood the misery of this 'fake' (protective) potency, behind which is a not-too-well-hidden fear of the sexual embrace (from which 'sleep' is usually the form of release, and which is often the result of the oppressive anti-sexual moralism of the mother).

EXPANSIVE ORGASM OR GUILT RESTRICTION

Men have historically matched the faked female orgasm with their own disguised misery. Capitalism certainly oppresses us, and it is at present possible to describe it as Patriarchal. But does this make men the oppressors? Could

CONTINUED OVER

*The word 'somatic' is used in the text to describe the pain and tension felt in the neurotically screwed-up bodies of the population. The ego may will the libidinous end, but the body does not will the means.

there be a more exact expression of the cultural repression of men than premature ejaculation? When men start to follow the initiative of women and begin the re-discovery of their own sexuality rather than merely trying to win feminine approval by the guilty acceptance of their partner's failure to orgasm, then a real programme of 'sexual politics' will be discovered.

If female orgasm is not tied to her procreational function, why should we continue to assume that it is necessarily so with men? Has it been culturally assigned this way, rather than biologically? If traditional intercourse is not the only area of orgasm for women, is it necessarily so for men? Orgasm without ejaculation removes an area of anxiety, (that is, the knowledge that ejaculation means the 'end of pleasure' and sleep, when the desire to continue remains as the expression of a neurotically interrupted psychosomatic process.).

Insensitivity, based on ignorance, to the needs of the opposite sex ('sexism' so-called) is the prerogative of both sexes. The call for action against sexism comes from the mistaken notion of male culpability. The moralising tone assumes guilt which has to be exorcised by voluntaristic acts. It can only be self-destructive a further negation of the struggle for self-actualised sexuality, and consolidate sexual misery in other forms.

KURTISH DELIGHT.

Production for profit involves a curious variety of dirty work: this is from a market research proposal read over the shoulder of a fellow tube traveller:

" Interviews with non-users, light users and heavy users will enable exploration of the changing emotional associations of Kurtish Delight. The impact of developments in sex roles will be investigated. In particular, we shall consider whether a replacement of the " slave girl" theme by a "princess" theme would be justified.

ECONOMIC CRISIS cont.

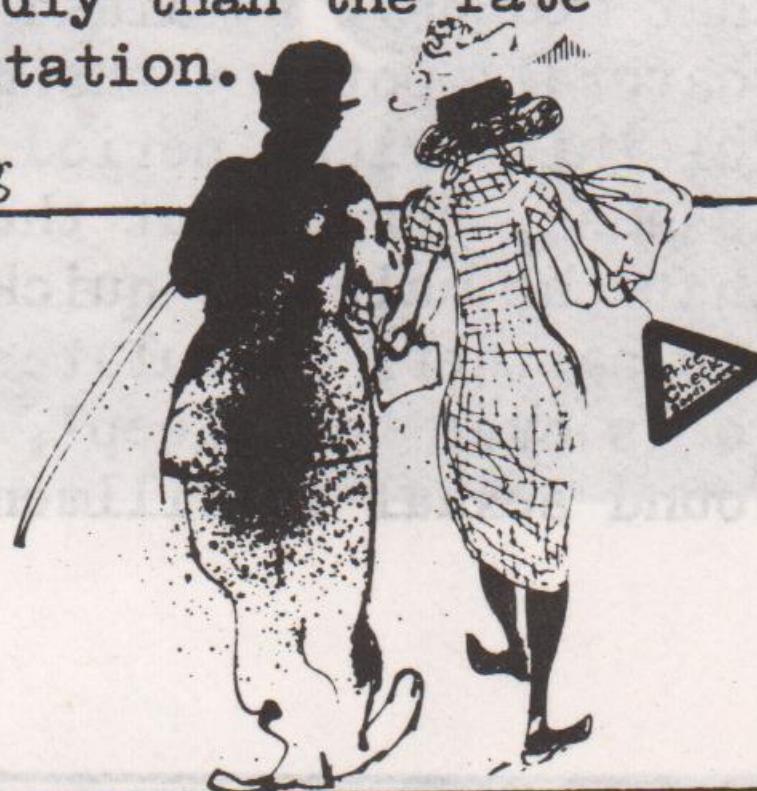
Appendix

FROM P 9

The following is Marx's argument concerning the falling rate of profit in a nutshell. Both living and dead labour are required to produce a commodity. Dead labour is that stored up in machinery, buildings and raw materials produced at an earlier date : this is constant capital, so called because it undergoes no change in value during the production process. Of the living labour used to produce the commodity, part is paid for and part is unpaid. The former is variable capital, so called because it is increased in value during production because of the performance of unpaid labour, which forms the basis of the capitalist's surplus value. The value of the commodity is simply the sum of the constant capital, variable capital, and surplus value contained in it.

The ratio of unpaid to paid labour, or surplus value to variable capital, is called the rate of exploitation. Unless real wages rise at the same time as the productivity of labour, assuming a constant working week, the rate of exploitation will increase as accumulation proceeds. (This is so because higher productivity means that less time is needed to produce the commodities consumed by workers and their families, leaving more time for the production of surplus value) The ratio of constant capital to variable capital is the organic composition of capital, which Marx expects to increase as production is increasingly mechanised, and to do so more rapidly than the rate of exploitation.

John King



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

When the fundamental existential assumption of a social system is questioned by a mass movement the system is forced to defend its innermost justification, hitherto accepted even by its adversaries. Once raised, such questions cannot be buried. And once a new, satisfying answer has been found it is the system itself which appears more and more as obsolete, until it becomes obsolete. May 68 did not - could not - provide an answer. But it did raise the question.

Aki

**MY FRIEND IS MONEY,
MORE AND MORE
I CRAVE!**



**SOLIDARITY URGENTLY NEEDS
ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR
VARIOUS PUBLISHING
VENTURES. ALL CONTRIBUTIONS
HOWEVER SMALL (OR LARGE!)
WILL BE WELCOME. SEND A
CHEQUE OR PO TO YOUR
NEAREST GROUP ADDRESS.**

Libertarian Festival '78.

Two of us in Manchester Solidarity group were involved in helping to organise this festival in Manchester on October 14/15th : nearly 200 people attended.

We were very pleased with the level of self-organisation of workshops which enabled the whole affair to run fairly smoothly. Reports we had of the workshops, however, suggest that many ran on a superficial level and that more preparation (discussion documents etc.) is needed next time. Any offers? A good critical report has been written by Alan Westfall in 'Freedom' 28/10/78.

ITS THE SAME THE WHOLE
WORLD OVER

Introduction (Solidarity)

This article by a worker at the Ford Plant in Spain, will ring only too true to any line worker at any Vehicle plant in Britain. It drives home the point about the common situation of workers everywhere, one of the hidden bonus' -very hidden- for workers, of the rise of the multinationals has been and will be, the increase in the rate of internationalization of the workforce. The full consequences of this tendency have yet to be fully understood by revolutionaries.

(Ajoblanco):- Ford came to Almusafes (Valencia) as the cure for all ills. It flooded the Valencia countryside with gold, dragged the province out of the ditch in which economic crisis had sunk it, strengthened ancillary industries, created numerous jobs. All the servility of which local councils, deputies, banks, and ministries were capable was laid unconditionally at the feet of Mr Henry Ford II and his lads...

Here Antonio, aged 23 and worker for 13 months in the Assembly Plant of the Almusafes factory speaks. He does not relate the daily battles for better conditions of life and work in the factory; he does not speak of the strikes and disputes which have punctuated the short life of the enterprise. He will not limit himself to saying that the "fabulous" wages have remained the lowest in the motor industry. He wants to go deeper: to the fact of the division of labour from control of production. Here is the diary of a Ford worker who relies on himself...

Riii..ing. Half-past four and the bloody alarms going. Before dawn, naturally. In a series of reflex actions you open your eyes, get up and look outside. Night-time. It's always dark at this hour. Anyway you get washed and dressed and make some

FORD SPAIN

coffee. Before going out on to the street you have to check everything. Mustn't forget the lunch box -the old proles identity card-the factory lunch is revolting.

The Street. I live no more nor less than 18 Km. from Almusafes. Without looking to right or left you proceed to one of the stops for the buses which the company has kindly made available to transport the workers. This junk-heap leaves at 5 on the dot, and if for any reason you're not there on time, you have to go by taxi or any way you can. It's better to be in time. Hardly anyone goes in his own car... Five minutes before the bus is due to leave it arrives



at the bus stop so that in bad weather and in winter we can sample the cold and rain first. Half asleep, we go over the names of those we're still waiting for and exchange comments about the latest incidents on the lines. Us Ford folk can't talk about anything else we're fixated. On the way you get your last chance to doze off and nobody passes it up. No chatting or kidding around. A load of tired men who wake up automatically on going round the curve leading into the factory. I go down to the Assembly plant. There you come up against the spectacle of a huge iron grating with spikes on top, separating the outside world from the "World of Ford". You go in by way of a long corridor and a very narrow gate. One by one. This is where the submission starts: on the gate are two security guards

who ask to see the identity card that designates each and every Ford employee. (They keep tabs on us, you see; they'd like to control your ideas up to which beer you prefer). This disarms you, makes you feel more impotent than a machine. Then, once accepted by the men in uniform, you have to put on your own uniform of blue overalls. At 6 things get under way.

FORD CONCENTRATION CAMP

The interior decoration is tasteful: all painted in white and blue (the company colours), enormous machines, large bays, wide passages separating the lines. (In Ford, we comprise about 10,000 people in different shifts). If the heat is welcome in winter -adjusted to climate, they say- in summer it is atrocious. There is air-conditioning, believe it or not, but six metres from the things the temperature is like a furnace. Last summer, in "Upholstery", they had to install ventilators as a matter of urgency because the personnel were being overcome.

In the Assembly Plant where I work there are 2 shifts, rotated every fortnight; the fortnight you're on the late shift you leave home at 1 to start work at half-past two and finish at 11 at night. What with changing and packing up its about midnight when you reach "home sweet home". On both shifts there are two breaks of ten minutes, and half an hour for a meal. In other plants like Body-work there are also night shifts.

I was saying that at 6 the monster awakes. We are all lined up in formation, tools in hand. The belt presents you with the first car, and you tighten the screws like a maniac. The same mechanical operation 552 times in 7 hours 40 minutes, if we don't count breaks. It is easy to say it reminds you of Charlie Chaplin in "Modern Times", but we have to work it.

CONTINUED OVER

The "lines" are divided into sections of about 30 workers with their respective charge-hand or foreman. Above these men are the superintendents, managers etc., senior management in their turn at the service of other bosses. Sole objective, to "improve" everything by producing more.

The operations are horribly monotonous there are jobs where 1656 screws are tightened in one day, three per Fiesta. (Christ, what a lot!) This implies leg movements equal to 11,040 paces by the end of the day. Apart from the heaps of little tasks you have to do around the place to leave it neat and tidy, you have to include the crap you get from the foreman and the supervisor claiming the place has not been left properly. You tell them to go to hell of course. This sort of nonsense goes on all the time, and they all know it. They soften up their victim like psychological police. They study us one by one and in the end they almost convince you that you should "work harder".

BOSS, I WANT TO PEE...

(OR PLEASE TEACHER CAN I LEAVE THE ROOM)

Our daily dying at Ford continues with the running about we have to do behind the cars to stop them slipping off before the pieces are fixed together. It regularly happens that they move, one after the other, and no-one can stop the chain even if someone dies. At the end of the process there are some control sections which inspect everything, and if there is an error they pinpoint where it was committed and make you pay for it. And then the positions you have to adopt, which are something fantastic: you twist yourself about, tumble over or under the Fiesta, screw your neck around for hours on end or spend the time crouching... All amounting to 552 motors per day.

Also two comrades have to be outside the line, dedicated to the supply and preparation

of components and, when these tasks permit, relieving people. That means, when you want to go to the W.C. you wait your turn. 99% of times there are ten blokes ahead of you and it takes an hour to get round to you. And then you have to go at the double, because there is a pile of people behind you and if you're late they kick up a row. On occasions, some relieve themselves in the cars because they can't stand it. A few months ago a worker in "TRIM" who had been fined twice for going to the lav. a lot, collapsed. An intestinal disease brought the result we can perhaps imagine.

The "security police" meanwhile pass between the lines with walkie-talkie sets, sniffing round and messing about. Tension caused by work speed and close supervision make explosions frequent. We start hammering with the iron tools and yelling like mad. This tends to occur especially in the last 2 hours. It's a hellish sight. Drives you mad. For the record, the Ford diseases are those of the spinal column and the brain-box. Surveillance goes to the point of having "medical police" who visit us at home if we say we're ill. They don't trust the Social Security doctors.

This bad work of Ford's is shared by certain executives invited by the company from all over the world to raise the standard at Almusafes. Most of them were Germans, real nazis, some of whom stayed on for a while. To make us swallow the pill more easily, they keep handing out leaflets to us explaining Ford's position of everything that happens in the factory and the world. They also produce a review which they give out free: Ford World. On more than one occasion the workers have had a giant bonfire with all this bumbf.

HALLUCINATING WITH FORD

On the 1st of April the company came out with the one about the "rise in the cost of living" and raised the price of food: from 42 pesetas a course to 65, and beer from 8

to 11. We refused to accept the increase and went on paying the old price, but one day Papa Ford scolded us as bad boys" and left us with nothing to eat. At present we are boycotting the canteen and bringing food from home, and the whole mess has gone to arbitration...

Another outstanding characteristic here is that quite a few of the lads are from the country and it's the first time they've had a regularly paid job. The thing is that when Ford bought the 270 Hectares of good land in Almusafes at a rock-bottom price, the Francoist mayor of the place promised the farm workers that they would have work guaranteed. Afterwards they didn't let everyone in, but for those who did come the change of environment has been brutal: from cultivating fertile land in the open air to this concentration camp. All the same, some were delighted with the security of 28,000 pesetas a month and others, when they finish at Ford, even go to cultivate the little plot that was left to them.

When you finish your stint, you change and go to the police control. We have to go out one by one with our cards in our mouths and they go through your pockets in case you're taking away an engine or a Fiesta. The bus takes you away, round and back to your little house. On the way back, people don't feel like kidding either and no-one starts anything. When we get home it's about 4 in the afternoon.

I've said already that every fortnight I have to do a late shift. Going out at one and coming back at twelve at night. On this shift the bad feeling comes to a head: there are shouts, fights, collective explosions... When I get home, I generally grab a bottle of cognac and get blind drunk. Being at Ford is so bad that every night I dream about the factory: If the cars get away from me and break loose. If the cars get away... God, what a circus! Javier Valenzuela (translated by L.W.)

Ajoblanco, No 34, June 1978

MINIATURISATION OF REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES

The article, 'The Miniaturisation of the Proletariat' in SOLIDARITY No 4., begins a much needed debate on the social consequences of the probable loss of millions of jobs due to advanced technological development, and opens up a discussion on revolutionary strategy in this period.

The article elucidates the following:

1. 'Work' is the making of products that are sold for a profit.
2. Many more people, than those in production work, are engaged in work (in service industries) which does not fullfill the above criteria.
3. Lots of people are producing goods which are sold but do not make a profit.
4. An increasing number of people (in West Germany at least) are "playing" at working.

The principal conclusion one can draw, is that advancing capitalist economies, far from throwing people on the dole impoverished, can carry large numbers of non-producers of wealth and pay them.

DON'T FENCE US IN

The work 'ethic' only has meaning today in so far as existence outside of work can be as boring and as much a poverty of experience as 'survival' at work. The problem the state has to face is the effect on those who remain at work - however highly paid - in the essential production areas of "carrying" the large numbers who do not work but retain a relatively high level of buying

power. At present it prefers to have these latter do 'pretend' work.

Having a job is certainly one way to survive, but to say that the only way we can struggle is as a wage-earner, is to suggest that conflict is primarily centred on the workplace and that decisive all important issues can only be settled there. Surely the principal objective of struggle at work today, is eventual escape from the lousy job for ever. Why not index-related (ie. inflation countered) "wages" in return for dismissal! Finding ways of acquiring money and not working is the pursuit of many today. People in this situation do not cease to oppose or negate the system, simply because they are not in employment. In work



or out of it, we have all learned how to survive. The question now is why? We may not die as a result of poverty, but we are destroyed by neurosis and suicide.

But an "attack" is being made on the work ethic in one form. Significantly it comes from "progressive" elements among the capitalists, with a stake in the "leisure" industries.

Their encouragement of the anti-work nihilism of punk has promoted sales of records, magazines and clothes, even though this has meant denigrating hitherto sacrosanct aspects of the culture; such as the Queen, church, parents, school, army etc.

SIGN HERE FOR WORK

Meanwhile the "left" presents itself as the custodians of the idea of work as a worthwhile activity; union bureaucrats in order to retain control of their members; marxists with their 'right to work' campaign, cynically manipulating people to demand jobs from an economy which they (not we) believe to be in a crisis(1), which will result in the inevitable elimination of jobs anyway; liberals and social democrats with mystifying Job Creation Projects; defused eco-freaks, bemused alternative socialists, confused libertarians, denying the progressive element in an economic system which has created the technological and material potential for our liberation and asking us to turn our backs on everything we have fought to achieve.

Revolutionaries mustn't choke on this swill of half-digested socialist ideas.

Lucas Aerospace may be looking for ways of exploiting the ideas of concerned liberals, but how the hell can there be 'socially useful' products in a 'socially useless' society.

BUILDING OUR OWN PRISONS

By examining changes in the social institutions of our rulers, and those social institutions many people are trying to set up to counter them, we can

observe tendencies which are not in our ultimate interests. Indeed those activities engaged in by much of the 'left' are contributing to reforms necessary if the political system is not to run into social upheaval.

All but the most blinkered must have learned the lessons from the past, yet we are witnessing a new co-operative movement. A developing economy is always looking for other areas of investment, and the alternative co-ops are fair game. The guilt ridden among the middle class have money to use, so why not in Industrial Co-ownership, whole food, radical literature, book-shops and technology.

(Survival has never been a serious problem previously for them, but with their old life patterns falling apart, better to find a port quickly) Thus every economic manifestation of 'outside' society is re-established; buying and selling, trading, expropriation of surplus value, competition, marketing, etc. Despite this evidence being accepted, arguments are advanced that human relationships are improved, even though compulsion, duty, and protection of interests to name but a few irritations are rife. Surrounded by the products of the permanent left economy, their advocates announce that they are anti-consumer.

Light hearted scenario for the future! Consumer Associations and Councils join TUC. Threats from trade unions to strikers to get back to work are paralleled with commands from Consumer unions to buy more.

Integral with some of the co-operatives are the collective or communal houses, where the problems most people have in exclusive relationships with one person, can be transferred on to several. Hang-ups are seen as resulting mainly from

scarcity of persons. It is not that we treat people as objects (or subjects) that is wrong. They are! We treat them as possessions. Increasing numbers doesn't change things. Domination, submission, distrust, jealousy reinstate themselves. Care and concern, the moral by-products of a political system which physically and emotionally wounds, are transferred from the monogamous frying pan into the communal fire. The nuclear family, no longer a useful unit of production and consumption, or as effective a vehicle for transmitting authoritarian ideology, could be substituted by these collective casualty stations, with their built in ideological policing systems, which would be detrimental to any developing revolutionary consciousness, agencies of easy control for our rulers and retreats from contesting paramount issues. Home-spun, carpet-slipper socialism with tranquillity in the organic garden, leading to the living death. Some collective houses where one worker-provider is serviced by several non wage earning adults are microcosms of the situation in society where a few workers produce consumer goods for a large number of non producers.



THE WORKERS COUNCILS - WHERE NOW?

And what next for the Workers Councils. It is not simply that the state bureaucracy (and the traditional left if it got power) would use them in their own interests as

a means of exercising their authority; what is more important for us is the image and expectation revolutionaries have of them, and even more important, what is the inclination of the workforce to them.

For revolutionaries with few exceptions, visions are fixated in Russia (1917) Germany (1919) Italy (1920) Spain (1936) and Hungary (1956). In this period, the eruption of the Workers Councils was partly the result of lack of other organisations sufficiently expressive of workers economic needs and political demands; and took the form and action they did because of the nature, role and rationale of work at that time.

But France in 1968, with 10 million on strike had no significant workers council movement. It is argued that the CP prevented this. But 10 million on strike without so much as a by-your-leave from the CP were capable of further ignoring them. Perhaps there were more important reasons such as; union organisation developed so that it is more integral with the smooth functioning of the state and the free flow of the economy in meeting wage demands; historic reforms of health, housing, education, social services largely carried out, work no longer absolutely necessary to survival; thus all leading to questioning of the meaning and significance of work. And from there to doubts about the value of the workers councils as traditionally constituted. Despite the left's idealisation of work, its relevance is changing rapidly. The workplace is only one area of conflict over power relationships today, and therefore to retain a view of countering the ruling class anchored in an organisation based solely in the mech-

anics of work as we now understand it, is to proceed to isolation and defeat. The war continues in an expanded battlefield. Just as technology is changing the manner of working, so it is changing the manner of making decisions. Large democra-

tic decisions could be taken, and the information required to take them, made available, using sophisticated communications equipment. There is no need to fetishise the mass assembly. Participation in some of these could be as alienating as work itself.

Although deprivatisation of property and production and distribution means is an essential act in the process of human liberation, to collectively control and manage these in the form they are experienced by people now, would not be a liberating activity.

A world free of work and full of consumer goods is not socialism. Post-scarcity capitalism would be a better description.

Is the desire for power and the compulsion to rule a motor force in all past and present society? All rulers see themselves as morally compelled to be the guardians of humanity through the course of history. Capitalism is only the engine in a specific period of time.

Hierarchy, authority, elitism, privilege etc., prevails then as in all other systems. Surplus value is then only the oil, to lubricate the system. Work, whether it is 'real' (profitable) or 'pretend/acting' (unprofitable) is seen as a way of controlling and disciplining, as is subservience, to parents, at school, in prison and army, or obeying the rules while shopping. Contestation of all authority relations; not making demands for reforms which can be acceded to, is the area

for revolutionaries to work in. Otherwise all we are left with is moral outrage and indignation, and we will be smothered by the liberal 'left' in social work politics, or emasculated by the authoritarian 'left', if they achieve power.

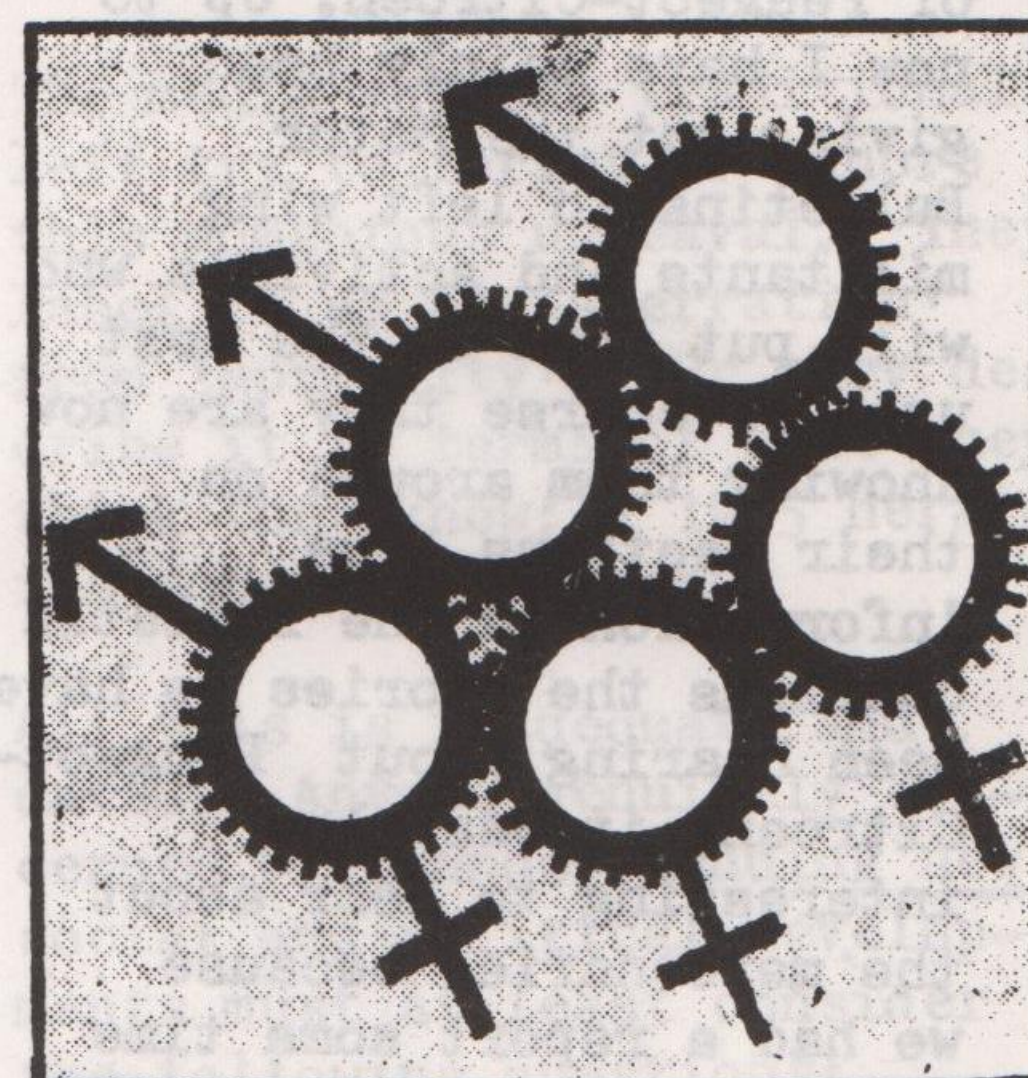
No more myths. We have to rebuild our dreams and visions, and break free of economic or any other material determinism. Capitalism can come and go, but rulers might go on forever. Material reward is not the motivating force for many who seek power; the Pope, state bureaucracy, union hierarchies and the Central Committee of every Bolshevik party are good examples. Economic interest is not the only cause of war. Extension and defense of deeply held beliefs and values, beyond crude materialism, are important factors. We are no different. That's why we struggle. But first recuperation, conscious or unconscious must be identified.

JF (Leeds)

1. For the marxists, hermetically sealed in their own reality, the economy cannot put people out of work, retain their standard of living, and remain profitable. Historically, it has proved the contrary. It is this aspect which is again being consciously tackled, whereby consumption and investment are increased with a reduction in the workforce and time spent at work, but without significantly affecting the material capacity to consume of those who are put out of work.

2. This does not mean that we spend our time on the reformist demands of the 'partial oppression' groups; gay, women, black, handicapped etc. Their reformist demands are accompanied by the inducement of guilt in other 'victims' (heterosexuals, men, whites, non-

handicapped). In the previous historical period calls for reform were accompanied by appeals to the consciences of the rich. The demands are acceded to by relative material improvements. The "separatism" issue, conveniently, helps define the groups as manageable cultural identities and this facilitates their absorption into the system as producers and consumers. Divide and rule once again. It is hardly surprising that black or feminist "mini-capitalism" establishes itself.



Pamphlets:-

The new Cardan pamphlet 'History as Creation' is now available from London Solidarity, price 40p plus postage. Also still available 'How the Bad Old Days Will End' a situationist inspired text. 5p + post from any group. If you are new to Solidarity politics you can read 'As WE Don't See It' and 'Introduction to Social Revolution' 10p each plus post from any group. Many more available from London group.

To subscribe to the magazine send a £2 cheque to 'Soly' Publications, c/o 23 Solar Court, Etchingam Park Road, Finchley, London N3

" Reform is a gradual process of revolution , " he said. " Once I watched while a keeper at the zoo gradually opened the door of the tiger's cage. The tiger gradually came out and mauled him."

LETTERS

The Editorial Group has resisted the temptation of writing long replies to each of these letters. We hope that other readers will take up the points raised in the next issue.

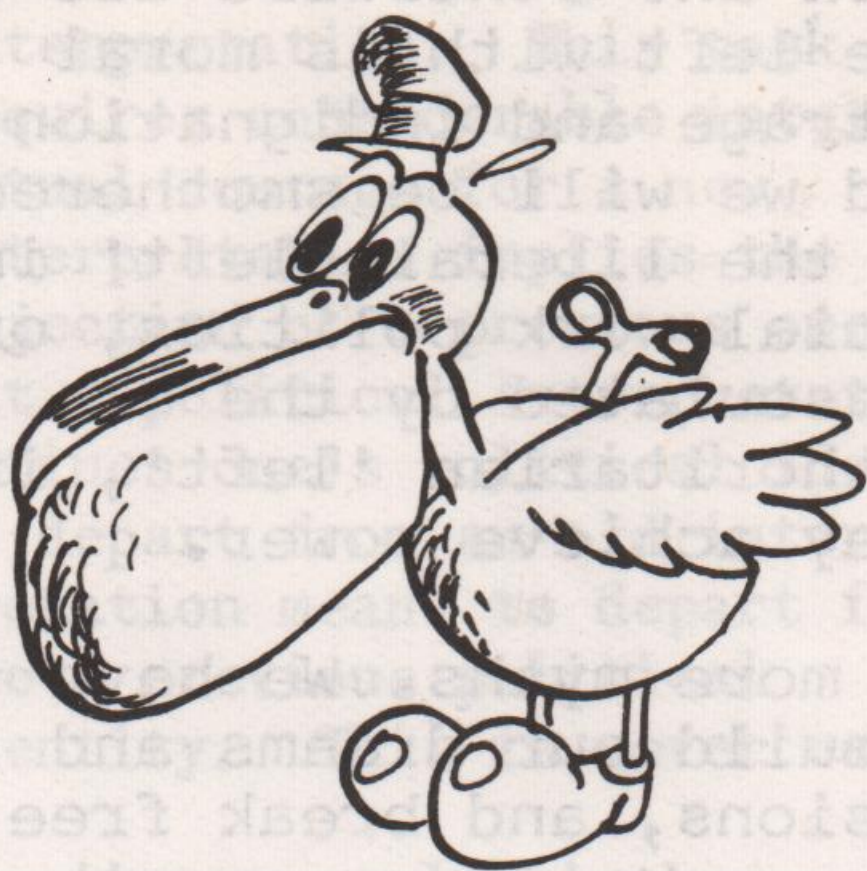
Dear Solidarity,

The reactions to the Motor Bulletins have been very good; most of the information we have been getting from the (left) papers gave very limited details of some of the anti T.U. and anti left actions of Peugeot-Citroen. Up to now I have mainly been giving out the Motor Bulletins to left wing militants and activists who will put them to the best use, of course they are now showing them around on their sections. The information in the Bulletin confirms the stories we have been hearing about Peugeot-Citroen; it was also interesting to hear about the mercenaries because we had a report some time ago about an algerian Commando Supervisor in the Simca (French Chrysler) plant at Poisy.

I have also given a couple of the Bulletins to comrades who work at the Whitley Technical and Administration Centre and others are going into the Ryton plant.

Things in the Stoke plant are pretty quiet, we are not getting a lot of info about what is going on between the National Officers of the unions, they are making a lot of noise about getting guarantees from Peugeot-Citroen management but even if they get these assurances (which I don't think they will) they are not worth a damn anyway, Chrysler have already proved that.

The general feeling to start with after people heard of the takeover was a feeling of shock and to a certain extent a sort of feeling of relief as most people on the shop floor



had a good idea that Chrysler (U.K.) was in danger of folding and feared a repeat of 1975-76 - the Chrysler UK crisis period, when nobody seemed interested and it was suspected the plants could have closed down; then at the last moment the Labour government made the loans to Chrysler to keep it going. So at first there was this sort of feeling of relief ('Well it doesn't matter who's paying the wages as long as we still have a job!') Working for one multinational is much the same as working for another.

As the weeks have gone by, and different reports start to come in from researchers and speculation that Peugeot-Citroen only wanted to keep certain Chrysler models in production, as well as the truck division, the dealer network plus the lucrative Iran franchise. (This Iran order is definitely a major part of Peugeot's thinking as Chrysler has an exclusive contract with the Iran National Company to be the sole supplier of 4 cylinder car engines until 1980.) This contract was waived last year to allow Peugeot to also supply a 4 cylinder engine to Iran.

So now there is growing concern that a lot of jobs must go in the Coventry plants, - at first speculation about Linwood closing made people here think that Coventry was safe - but now it seems as though it could well be the other way round, particularly at the Stoke plant, unfortunately there is a very strong feeling of

parochialism and self protection prevailing in both the Stoke and Ryton plants and this is quite strong among the convenors and leading shop stewards.

There has not really been any attempt at the Stoke plant to try and get the shop floor moving, in fact, the opposite is taking place, there has only been one meeting since the merger was announced and that was just a report about the Coventry convenors going to a meeting with the national trade union officials to get the right to have 12 lay members (the convenors) present at the meetings which will take place between the government and the trade unions.

At Linwood the lads seem to be a lot more on the ball, some of the stewards have started a strong movement for a nationalisation call instead of letting this deal go ahead, this is the best long term solution in my own opinion.

Unfortunately there are not many of us at Stoke making this call, which suits the plant leadership as they don't have to put up any real fight and can leave too much in the hands of the National Officials, at Linwood the militant stewards have a lot more control at the Joint Shop Stewards Committee and over the convenors than we in Coventry (both plants.) The Linwood stewards-activists - and some of us in Coventry are also trying to get a national shop stewards meeting called. I hope this gives you a bit of an idea of what is happening at the moment.

All the best.

R.B. 10-9-78.

Chrysler - Stoke.

SOLIDARITY MOTOR BULLETINS

The London group has now successfully published eight editions of this bulletin which covers struggles in the motor industry - world wide. Each issue is 10p + postage : discount for bulk orders from the London address.

Dear Friends,
Having read Solidarity's pamphlets by Paul Cardan on the deficiencies of conventional Marxism, it surprises me that there seems to be no attempts to voice these criticisms towards those who perpetuate the present Marxist groups. Why does not Solidarity take advantage of the open-ended nature of the Socialist Challenge venture launched by the I.M.G. and join it with a view to influencing its participant groups. This venture already includes two bodies having strong criticisms of Trotskyism : Big Flame and the Libertarian Communist Group. They lack, however, the acute analysis offered by Cardan.

Solidarity is, unfortunately, hardly known outside Libertarian circles. Participation in Socialist Challenge would give access to a larger audience for Solidarity ideas.

I don't want a quick response from the people editing this particular edition of S.S.R or from whatever national committee or organisers/delegates Solidarity possesses. I would prefer to see this matter debated by all Solidarity supporters and a collective decision made, one way or the other.

It would seem to me that, as people with a purpose of enlightening others about the society they live in and their own capacities, an opportunity such as this venture offers, whatever one's reservations about the I.M.G.'s intentions, should be taken.

Yours sincerely,
Steve Dawe.
London E.C.1.
26/10/78.

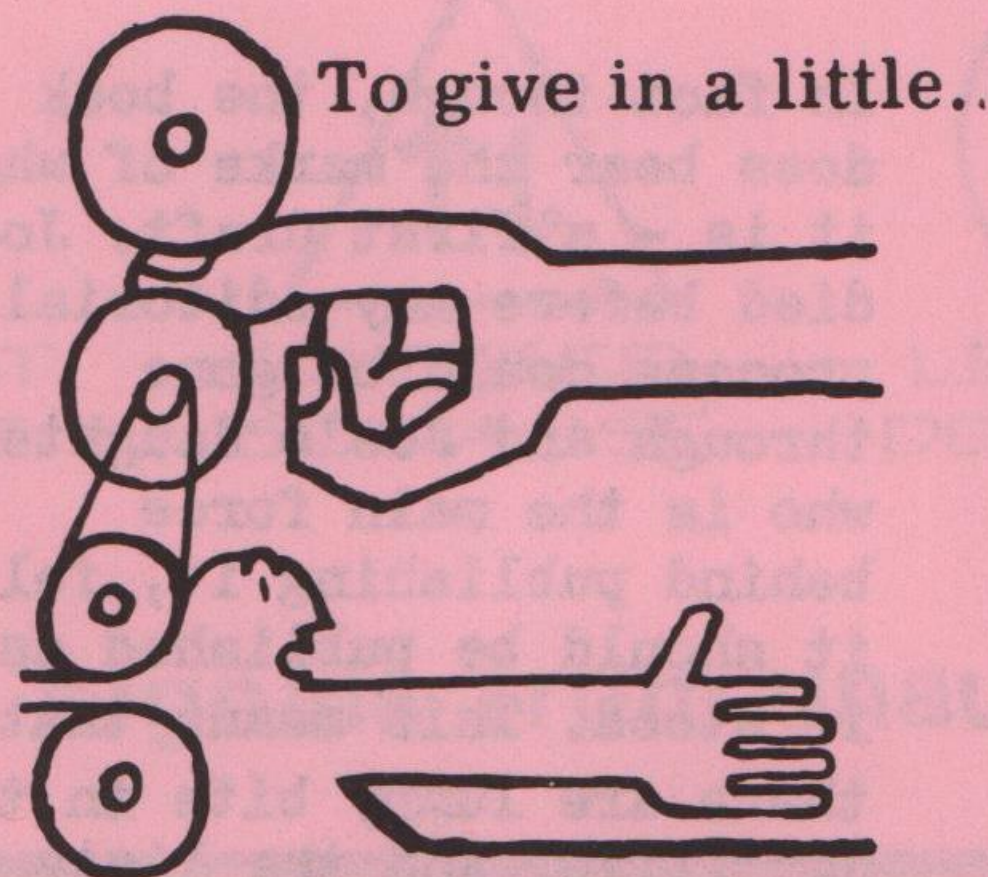
Current Polish joke about the inflation crisis in Poland's economy :
Comrade X. " Will there still be money under Communism?."
Comrade Y. " There will be nothing but money."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

There was lengthy discussion on Sunday afternoon on the need for a more explicit statement in our 'As we see it' document on sexual politics. Most were in favour of something going in, but there were important differences over our assessment of how far capitalism is itself abolishing restrictive sex roles. In the end there appeared to be slightly more agreement than when the issue was last discussed. Four people were chosen to work on the problem in more depth and attempt to come up with a statement for the next conference.

The next conference will be in Manchester at the end of January/beginning of February 1979, and the Saturday afternoon session will be on the theme "Concepts of Class," It is intended to discuss, and hopefully attempt some conclusions, on the various theories of economic class, bureaucracy and patriarchy which appear to represent different aspects of reality, but are often presented as totally irreconcilable views of the world. For more information contact the Manchester group.

Editorial Group (No 6)



.....is to lose a lot.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

I remember waiting with Joe and other members of the Solidarity group at Speakers Corner when the N.F. were proposing to march there and 'the left' had mobilised to oppose them. I remember Joe's contempt for the paranoid rhetoric of the very people who are likely to use his book for an indiscriminating 'bash the fash' policy. A combination of alienated political muscle-showing demonstrations and immigrant helplessness to fascist gangsterism are merely variations of the themes of the 30's and now. The community under attack - no matter how good or bad its friends - will have to find its own means of effective and permanent defence. Joe's book is well worth reading.

J M Q

The book was published by Janet Simon, 29 Troutbeck, Albany Street, London NW1 and is available from that address price £3.00 net.

advert

'Men Against Sexism' National Conference : open to all men interested in discussing sexual politics from a personal viewpoint. Venue - Abraham Moss Centre, Manchester on 23/25th. Feb. 1979. More details from MAS c/o 544 William Kent Crescent, Hulme, Manchester 15.

Persons Unknown

Whilst 'Solidarity' repudiates the 'terrorist' activities which anarchist groups have sometimes engaged in, it is clear that the six anarchists charged with 'conspiracy to cause unknown explosions with persons unknown' are the victims of state terror. It is possible that the case against them is so ludicrous that the courts will eventually throw it out, but this cannot be relied on. Donations and further information from : Persons Unknown (London) Box 123, Upper St., London N1. Regular reports in 'Freedom' and 'Peace News'.

Review

Too much political history is written to forget the mis-fit and make the myths fit. Anyone who has read the autobiographies of career socialists must have noticed how only those aspects of their life are included which, viewed from their later prominence, give the impression of a steady implacable destiny. Everything else is conveniently forgotten whether it be Tom Mann's career as the landlord of the Enterprise Pub in Longacre when he was summonsed for watering the beer or Willie Gallacher (later William Gallacher Communist MP) and his early Anarchist opinions. This method of writing down all the news that fits is not only bullshit but double bullshit.

It is bullshit once because nobody leads a life that simple, that free of change and contradiction. It is bullshit twice because the implication of a few people's star-written rise to fame and fortune is the destined seat in the mud for the overwhelming majority of us. If history is only made by the few, who was it fought in all those wars - and refused to fight, who were the people who were sent to prisons - and sometimes burned them - who were the people who were governed - and who brought governments down? I think we can go some way towards answering these and similar questions by saying that for the most part it wasn't the hacks, politicians and trade union time-servers whose books litter the second-hand shops and annoy the historian.

Joe Jacob's book is different. Subtitled My Youth in the East End-Communism and Fascism 1913-1939 it charts Joe's involvement with the Communist Party, his

conflicts within it and his expulsion against the background of class conflict and the rise of fascism between the two world wars. Joe was a great talker and his memoirs are voluminous - over three hundred pages of text. The very fact of someone writing this much about their life up to the age of 26 could readily be interpreted as an act of colossal egoism and I must confess that I was apprehensive before reading the book. I was pleased and relieved to find that it is something else entirely.

Joe is an unselfish narrator. His life is there - with a rueful awareness of his own spots and belmishes - but it stands in the middle of an account which is an attempt at a natural history of the political life in one period of one area of the East End, Stepney. Joe shows how political activity emerged

from street corners and older institutions in the community. The backstreet bookies and the gambling clubs are woven into the account as are the strong personal ties that developed between families crammed cheek by jowl in the tenements - living in the smell of each others farts as the Spanish say. The names and potted biographies of friends, local characters political comrades and competitors pour off the pages.

In fact though, the book does bear the marks of what it is - a first draft. Joe died before any editorial process could be gone through and Joe's daughter who is the main force behind publishing it, felt it should be published as it stood. This means that there are lumpy bits in the narrative, and the lists of names, for example, can get a bit overwhelming. The book's virtues make this well worth putting up with, however.

One of those virtues is that it is not a comfortable book of nostalgic detail for the non-specific-workeritis-struck voyeur. Joe could be a bloody pain in the arse to those he disagreed with. He is the only person who was not only expelled from the Communist Party twice but from the London Solidarity Group once. The History Workshop people were reluctant to publish the present text because it contained harsh criticisms of people 'still alive and active in the movement.' His historical narrative is also a contemporary political intervention.

Joe describes the dissention inside the Stepney Communist Party, of which he was the Secretary during the Battle of Cable Street. It becomes clear that the C.P. opposed a 'They Shall Not Pass' policy towards Mosley's proposed march through the Jewish East End until the

'Out Of The Ghetto'

last minute. It becomes clear that the C.P. cashed in on the band-wagon of anti-fascist mass-mobilisation both in the thirties and ever since in a completely hypocritical way. The apparatus of the C.P. favoured the 'long march' through the unions and the Labour Party rather than 'street work' (i.e. organising street meetings and opposition to the fascist meetings.) Joe Jacobs was expelled from the C.P. for his advocacy of 'street work' that had seen its climax at Cable Street. And the Battle of Cable Street which is supposed to mark the downward turn of fascist fortunes in the East End, marked only a short break after which provocative street meetings by fascists moved even closer to the centres of the Jewish areas of Stepney. The C.P. which was at that time a (if not the) major political mobilising force in the area demobilised the opposition to the fascists.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19