

# SOLIDARITY

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A Journal of Libertarian Socialism. Issue 10. Winter 1985-86. 60 Pence

## Shady Statistics

Post-war education policy founded upon IQ deception

## Inner City Riots

Are fresh law-and-order measures only outcome?





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Cover picture: Buildings on fire in Brixton's Coldharbour Lane, September 28 1985. Photograph by John Sturrock/Network.

## SOLIDARITY JOURNAL NUMBER 10

### WINTER 1985-86 ISSUE

Published four times a year by Solidarity (London), c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6, United Kingdom.

Edited and produced collectively by the London Solidarity Editorial Group.

Solidarity is also the imprint of a series of pamphlets and books which now numbers more than sixty titles; and which have been variously translated into fifteen foreign languages. A list of those titles currently in print will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Publishing history. The present Solidarity Journal is the latest in a line of magazines produced by the Solidarity Group and stretching back to the early sixties. Solidarity for Workers Power, first in this sequence, was founded in 1960 and ran to 89 issues. This was succeeded by the nationally produced Solidarity for Social Revolution which ran to 16 issues and was in turn succeeded by the current journal. Our publishing history is complicated further by the existence in the sixties and early seventies of six or seven regional Solidarity magazines, among them those produced by the Scottish, South Wales, and North Western Solidarity groups; and by the publication of the shortlived, nationally produced, Solidarity for Self Management.

Printed by the Aldgate Press, London.



CHAMPAGNE EDITORIAL

# The first 25 years !

Scarcely imaginable way back in 1960, Solidarity is now celebrating its twenty-fifth birthday. Here we look back over the group's history and original purpose, and forward to lay claim to a future role

LATE IN 1960 a few ex-members of what was then the Socialist Labour League and is now the Workers' Revolutionary Party, having experienced some of the practices which are now being 'exposed' in the present faction-fight within that organisation, came together to discuss what had gone wrong with the leninist dream. Unlike many such groups before and since, who have limited their ambitions to trying to be better trotskyists, we rapidly came to the conclusion that what was wrong was not any particular application of leninist ideology, but the ideas themselves. Indeed, we went further and saw that much of what was wrong was embedded within marxism itself.

The group thus formed was called 'Socialism Reaffirmed' and published a monthly duplicated magazine called Agitator. Some felt this to be too reminiscent of washing machines and after four issues the name was changed to Solidarity. This title was soon applied to the group too.

From the beginning Solidarity was deeply influenced by the ideas of the French group 'Socialisme ou Barbarie', especially those of Cornelius Castoriadis (published by us, under the name of Paul Cardan). We rejected the crude economic determinism and elitism of much of the marxist left and committed ourselves to a view of socialism based on generalised self-management and freedom (see the



Castoriadis texts we published as The Meaning of Socialism, Modern Capitalism and Revolution, and Workers' Councils and the Economics of a Self-Managed Society.

Because we believe that ends and means are inseparable, our view of what constitutes a free society leads us to consider as politically positive or negative activities which are not simply different from





1960: CND packs its first 100,000 into Trafalgar Square; the Mini and the M1 are 12 months old. In January (see picture) anti H-Bomb protestors marched on the base at Harrington, Northants. Solidarity was soon to play a significant role in the Committee of 100 and Spies for Peace. Someday the story may be told.

the traditional left but frequently in a different political universe. We make no apology for reprinting yet again from our political statement As We See It:

"Meaningful action, for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. Sterile and harmful action is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others - even by those allegedly acting on their behalf".

Seen from this perspective, the traditional left has usually proved to be part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Over the years Solidarity has made significant contributions towards a clarification of what is wrong and what is to be done (sic). We have constantly stressed examples of self-activity, as well as documenting the real records of existing regimes, especially those enthused over by much of the so-called socialist movement - for example, we never supported the NLF in Vietnam, Pol Pot in Cambodia, Khomeini in Iran, or the IRA.

It has not been all beer and skittles. We have had our share of ups and downs, schisms and resignations. But unlike so many other groups we remain on comradely terms with our ex-members. This flows from our rejection of the idea that we are the sole guardians of the sacred flame, that all who disagree with us are at best ignorant and at worst in the pay of the CIA, etc., etc. Such attitudes, which are still widespread, are part of the rotten baggage of the leninist past. Few, even of those who now sharply differ from us,



seem to regret their time in the group. On the negative side, it must be stated that while we have never been organisationally orientated - we do not believe that the revolution is vested in us alone - we have failed to build a permanent network of autonomous groups. But this may perhaps have as much to do with the nature of libertarian ideas - that they flourish in times of political confidence and wither in times of difficulty and retreat - as our own failings.

In the past Solidarity has played a useful role in the development of such movements as the squatters, the direct-action orientated and genuinely independent anti-nuclear movement, and the emergence of new forms of struggle in industry, to mention but a few. We have also seen how such genuine mass movements have been recuperated and gutted of all radical content by traditional politics, and have become institutionalised and subordinated to the interests of

their dominant elites. "Popular planning" and "accountability" are now the catchphrases of every politician. This, too, has been a major theme of our literature.

To be as relevant in the future as we have been in the past we have to develop an analysis of these new processes. In a period where the institutional left has received a number of massive defeats, there is an opportunity to develop a libertarian revolutionary critique of the new "parasitocracy" which is living off the backs of the working class via local government grants and jobs, while its fellows in industry have created a huge trade union sub-bureaucracy which in whole areas has taken over the previously quasi-independent shop stewards' movement and brought the writ of the trade union leadership into the workplace. We see a new class growing to power using the slogans of socialism, but having little to do with socialism as we define it. There is work to be done.

## RIOTING

# Community warning

The Autumn's spate of inner-city disturbances may have only succeeded in gaining for the police an extension of their already sweeping powers. Certainly an ailing government has received a badly-needed law-and-order shot in the arm. Have the riots had any positive outcomes? ANDY BROWN assesses the events in Brixton.

IN 1981 AT THE HEIGHT of the riots the establishment was clearly alarmed. Such events had not happened in mainland Britain on such a scale this century, and few people knew exactly what to expect. The media were in a state of genuine panic, searching for the mystery men in balaclavas who were behind it all, and even experienced politicians like Michael Heseltine

seemed to be wondering whether the time had come to adopt new strategies before it was too late.

Four years on things look rather different. Riots have become an almost accepted hazard of life in the inner city, and it would be very easy to be cynical about them. After all, why should a riot have any more political significance



than, say, the regular confrontations between rival football fans, such as the recent one in Leicester which was nearly a riot itself? The venue may be different; but perhaps the content is similar.

There is certainly evidence for such a point of view. I doubt whether the women raped in Brixton think much of the political motives of their attackers. Such actions might, I suspect, be seen by some comrades as revenge attacks carried out by the poor against the rich (anyone remember Eldridge Cleaver?) There was, however, precious little class solidarity shown by some rioters in Brixton. There were fights between rioters over loot, there were muggings of fellow rioters and of bystanders, and there were a number of small black-owned shops which became targets for no good reason. Take into consideration the deaths of the two Asians in Handsworth who were a long way from being rich exploiters, and you do not have a movement it is easy to be proud of.

And yet, there is another side to the story. Speaking to people involved in the Brixton riot reveals that numbers of them were acting from conscious political motives, that many put themselves at considerable risk by attacking the police station for several hours, and that many co-operated to defend themselves and their area while neglecting the opportunity to loot for personal gain. Several people saw the action as a necessary response to a dangerous police force which had to be undertaken if there was to be any prospect of controlling the police in the future. As such the attack on the police station seems to have been approved of by a majority of black people in Brixton while the attacks on individuals and the shops was not at all widely welcomed. Similarly, in Tottenham the riot was perceived as a necessary response to increased police harassment over the previous few weeks. It seems that the remarks of prospective MP Bernie

Grant, unpopular as they may have been to an outside audience, were the least he could say to maintain credibility among his constituents. Seen in this context, the riots look much more positive. The bravery (to the point of foolhardiness), the initiative, and the ability to work for a common purpose without any controlling authority were all impressive. At the end of the riots, when they felt safer, the police behaved with casual brutality, but they had got the message - any time they are pushed too far, parts of the inner city community (both black and white, it should be stressed, for as usual the media got it wrong in pointing almost exclusively to blacks) can act to defend themselves. Such defensive actions are not the start of the revolution and they are certainly messy and contain incidents which no socialist defends, but they are actions taken by real people in response to a real need to defend themselves. As such they are reasonably effective and worthy of support.

Any award for bad press coverage must surely go to the Daily Express for the piece headlined 'Pretty face on the front line' which went on 'Amid the ugly scenes in Brixton there was at least one pretty face. Tense and alert 19 year old police girl Andrea Taylor was still worth a second glance even in her 'No 2' uniform'. And the SWP must qualify for some award for opportunism for having leaflets reading 'If you would like more information about the Socialist Workers' Party please...' out on Brixton streets within 24 hours of the riot.

Finally, readers should note that many people have been speaking since the riots for the Brixton community. This is virtually impossible to do. The comments in this article about the reactions of the community are generalisations based on speaking to a number of people who may not be representative. They should be treated with due caution.



# The ugly social consequences of elegantly simple formulae

In the second part of his article on IQ tests, PETR CERNY demonstrates how scientists in Britain misused statistical techniques in order to reach conclusions which suited their own beliefs. The 1944 Education Act legislation was then based on these conclusions, consolidating the existence of a class-biased education system. Scientific deception of this kind is not without its parallels today.



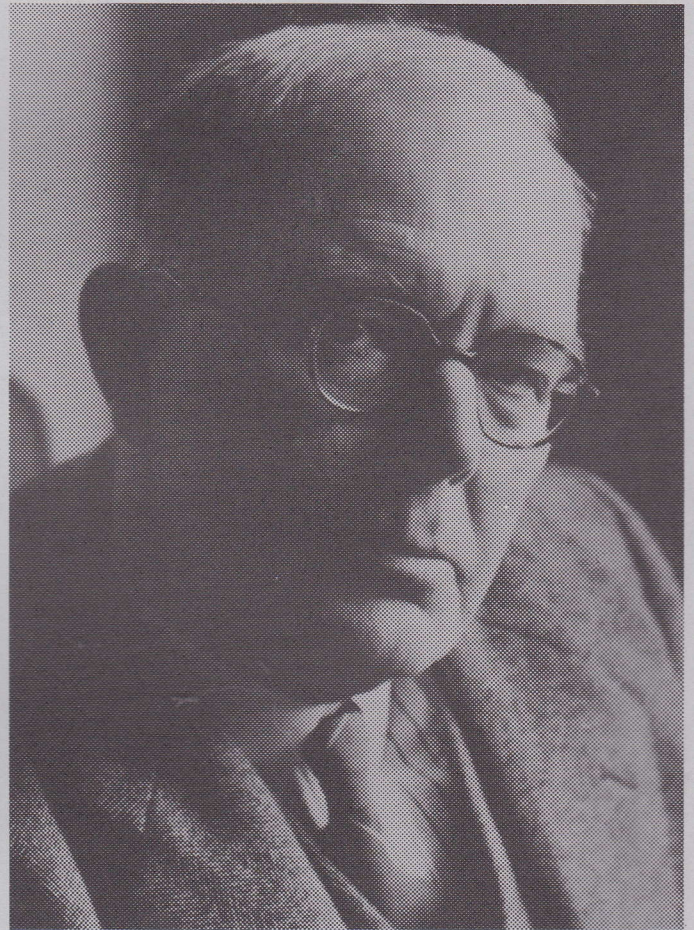


IN BRITAIN the history of biological determinism and its use by the ruling class is slightly different. In the United States biology has been used as a weapon to make scientific racism respectable, whereas in Britain it has been employed to establish class differences as biologically inevitable. The major political achievement of class biology in Britain was the 1944 Education Act.

This established a system of education in Britain which was based on selection at the age of eleven. The twenty per cent who 'passed' went into intensive exam factories called grammar schools, while the eighty per cent who 'failed' were condemned to wait for four years from the age of eleven to fifteen before they could seek their fortune, unqualified, of course, in the labour-intensive factories of middle-aged capitalism. An integral part of the selection process was an IQ test that would rescue the brightest of working class children from unskilled manual jobs and convert them into new recruits for the emergent technical management strata. There were many assumptions behind the whole process of selection at the age of eleven. But one thing did stand out: those children from middle class backgrounds did proportionally much better than those from working class backgrounds. Sir Cyril Burt, of course, argued that this was because the middle classes were more intelligent than the working classes.

Burt was the father of political biology in Britain. His methodology is used by both Hans Eysenck in Britain and Arthur Jensen in the United States. The debt which they both owe to Burt has frequently been acknowledged.

Burt carried out a series of studies on IQ and its relationship between identical twins who had been separated at birth and children who had been brought up by the same family but were



Cyril Burt, father of the 11-plus. Burt was convinced that intelligence is chiefly inherited. Knighted for his contributions to the 1944 Education Act, but faked data.

genetically unrelated, in which he achieved the impossible, obtaining correlation coefficients correct to three decimal places. He demonstrated that identical twins correlated, but unrelated children brought up in the same environment did not. It was later found that his purported collaborators, a Miss M Howard and a Miss J Conway, did not exist. He had invented the data.

I do not intend to go into Burt's proven falsification of data, but rather to criticise his basic methodology. However, I should mention in passing that Eysenck made his position on the falsification charge clear in a letter to Burt's sister, in which he wrote, "I think that the whole affair is just a determined effort on the part of some very left wing environmentalists determined to



play a political game with scientific facts".

In a sense, the intense debate about the fakery of Burt's later career has clouded the influence that Burt had in propagating the notion that intelligence is a real and unitary 'thing'. This, I think, is Burt's real crime. His methodological error was 'honest', and this has, in a quite literal sense, affected millions of lives this century, from British working-class children deemed to be failures at the age of eleven to American blacks deemed to be genetically inferior. His later faking was but an afterthought.

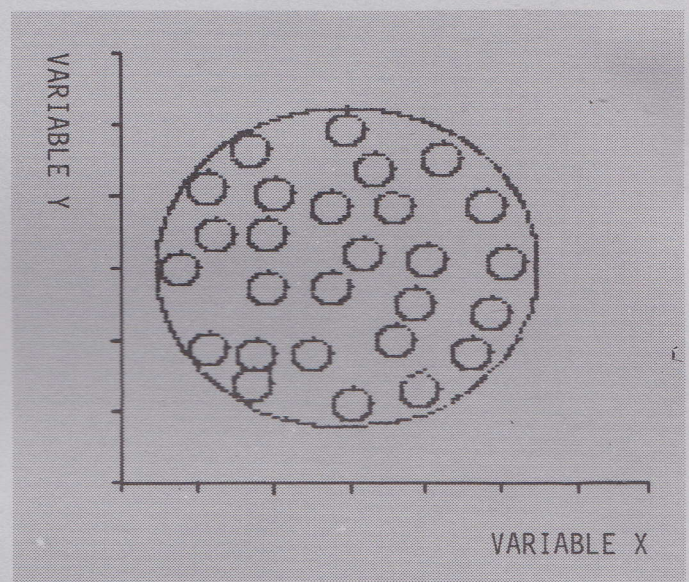
The central core of Burt's methodology was a statistical process known as factor analysis. In order to attack the reification of intelligence by Burt and later by Eysenck, I shall have to digress into basic statistics. Those readers who are statistically literate can skip this section.

### Burt's factor analysis

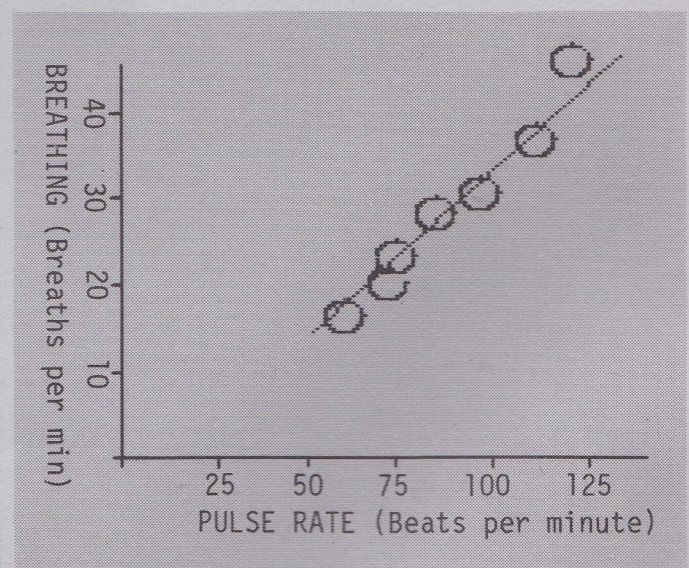
One of the basic statistical measurements is called the correlation co-efficient. This assesses the tendency of one measurement to vary linearly with another. For example, suppose that the length of a child's arm is plotted against its leg length during growth on a graph. A high correlation is obtained. This process first of all simplifies the data. Two measurements, arm and leg length, represented on a two-dimensional axis, have been reduced to a line of only one dimension. Since the correlation is so strong, this single-dimensional line represents nearly all the information originally represented in two dimensions. Secondly, a reasonable inference can be made about the cause of this correlation, because they are both partial measures of the same underlying biological process, growth itself.

In the basic simplicity of

calculating correlations lies a very great danger. Correlations do not always imply causality. For example, if your age is plotted against the increase in petrol prices over the last fifteen years a very high correlation will also be achieved; but what does this tell us? We can only infer a causality from a correlation if there is some other source of information independent of the correlation; thus in the case of arm and leg this is supplied by the biology of the process. The invalid assumption that correlations imply



Two Variables Which Show No Correlation



Two Variables Which Show A High Correlation Coefficient



causes is probably one of the most common and serious errors of human reasoning.

A two-dimensional correlation is easy to grasp, but what of correlations between more than two measurements? If we measured one hundred parts of a growing body in order to see how each part correlated with each other, we would have to construct a 'correlation matrix' containing ten thousand items, and in order to plot this information we would need to be in a hundred-dimensional space, so that we would need a graph with one hundred mutually perpendicular axes. However, we might be willing to simplify the system into fewer dimensions, losing information in the process, in exchange for being able to interpret the remaining information in biological terms. This idea lies at the heart of factor analysis.

Factor analysis is a mathematical technique for reducing a complicated system of correlations into fewer dimensions. It works by factoring a matrix, usually of correlation coefficients. The process works by calculating the best 'fit line' through the cluster of correlations. This line is then called the 'first principal component axis', and forms the first axis of a two-dimensional graph. In other words, the first principal component resolves most of the information represented by the matrix. The second principal component is represented by a line at right-angles to the first which resolves more of the remaining variation than any other line drawn at right-angles to the first principal component.

Since factoring is performed on a correlation matrix, it can be represented geometrically as vectors of unit length radiating from a common point. If two measures are highly correlated, then their vectors lie close to each other, the actual value of the correlation coefficient being represented by the cosine of the angles between any two vectors.

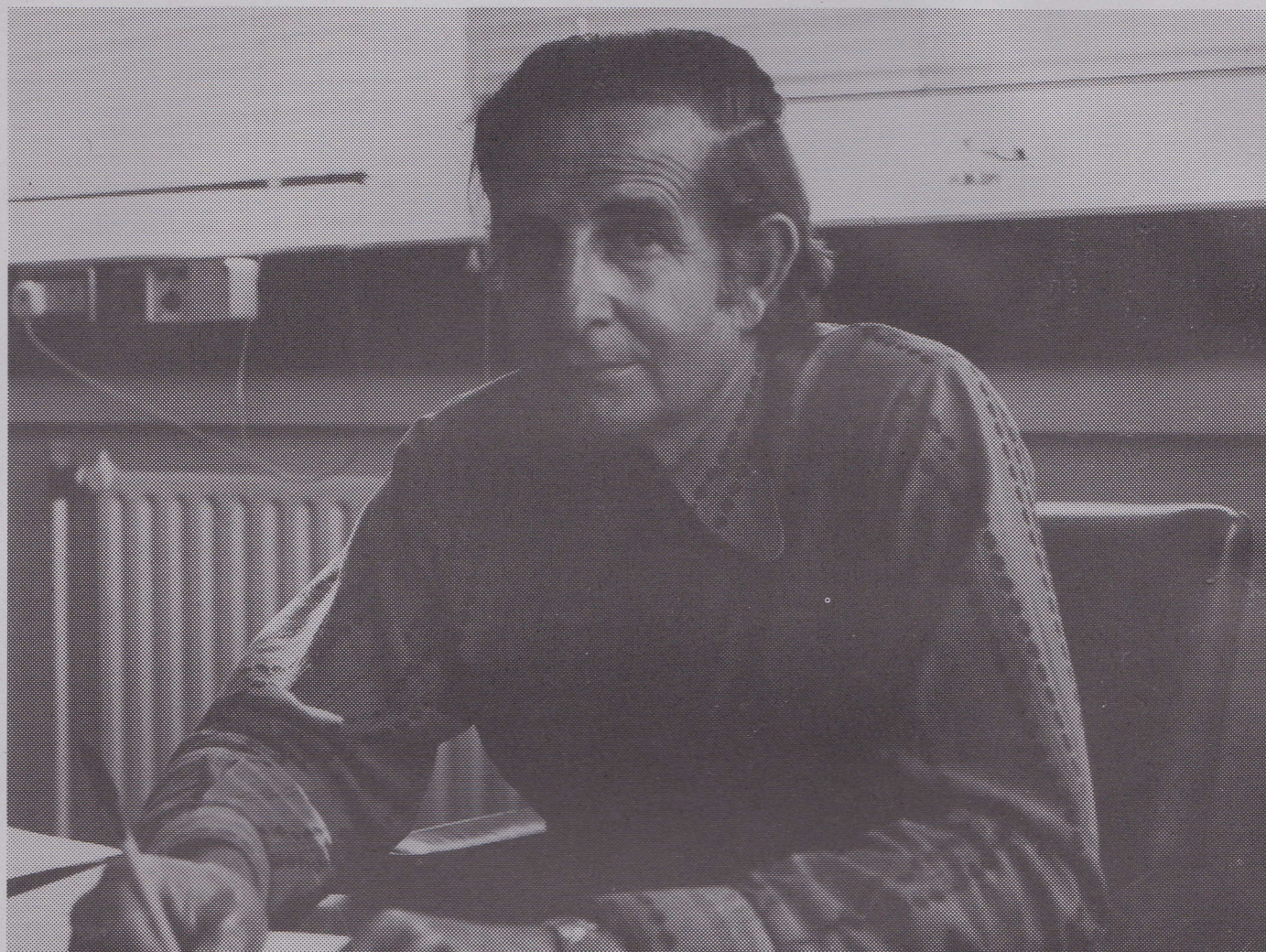
(E.g. if two vectors lie at right-angles (a ninety-degree angle), the cosine of 90 degrees is 0, and the correlation coefficient is zero; if the vectors overlap, the correlation is perfect and  $\cos 0 = 1$ , which is the perfect correlation coefficient). A matrix of high correlation coefficients will be represented by a cluster of vectors, each separated from the others by a small angle. When such a cluster is factored into fewer dimensions by computing principal components, the analyst chooses as the first component the 'axis of maximum resolving power', a kind of grand average among all the vectors. If a vector lies near this axis, it is 'highly resolved', and the axis encompasses most of its information. In this way, a multi-dimensional system can be reduced to a single-dimensional system containing perhaps ninety per cent of the information of the original system.

Here, though, lies the danger. The elegance of the mathematics ends by producing a mathematical abstraction: the first principal component. This abstraction can be calculated for any matrix of correlation coefficients, but it is not a 'thing' with a physical reality; merely a mathematical concept. Factorists have often fallen prey to the temptation of reification, that is, of thinking of this abstract concept as having a physical meaning.

### Arbitrary nature of principal components

Charles Spearman virtually invented factor analysis in 1904, specifically as a technique for inferring causes from correlation matrices of mental tests. He calculated such a principal component in 1904, and then proceeded to make the cardinal error of reifying it as an entity which he called 'g', which stood for 'general intelligence'. Spearman thought he had discovered a unitary entity which underlay all higher mental activity, an entity





Hans Eysenck: sees hand of 'very left-wing environmentalists' in charges against Burt.

which could be measured by a single number and then used to rank people on a linear scale of intellectual worth.

The technique of using principal components to resolve correlation matrices is not the only one. There are many methods of inserting axes into multi-dimensional space. The geometric arrangements of principal components depends on the basic criterion used to specify them, that is, that the first principal component shall resolve the maximum amount of information, and that subsequent component axes shall be perpendicular to the first principal component. In the diagram (see top of next page), there are two clusters of vectors, with Spearman's 'g' going right through them. So does 'g' exist, or is it a meaningless average based

on an arbitrary amalgam of two different types of information?

In the 1930s factorists resolved this dilemma by rotating the major axes so that a positive projection was obtained for all the data. Maths tests project high on axis 1, while verbal tests project high on axis 2. Since both major axes are at ninety degrees, there is no correlation between them, and thus 'g' has disappeared! There is now no longer any general factor for intelligence, and so nothing can be reified as a single number expressing overall intellectual ability.

Which is the 'correct' technique? The answer is neither; they are mathematically equivalent, but they lead to directly opposing models of the mind. The first is a unitary

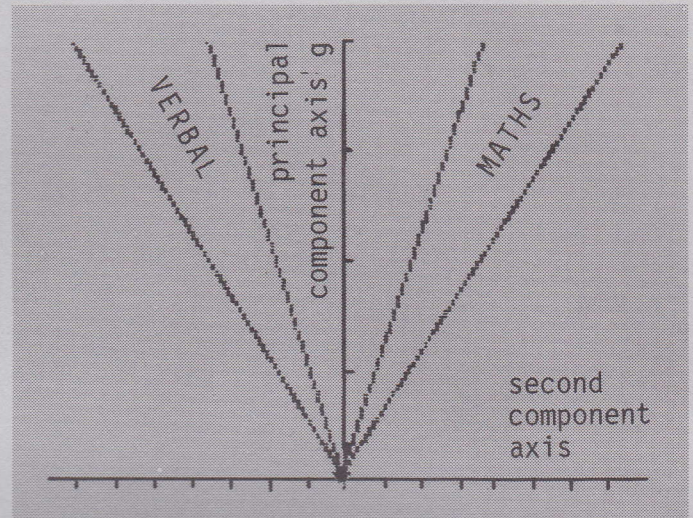


entity upon which all mental abilities depend; the other a model which sees mental abilities as perhaps unrelated, a person's total intellectual profile being determined by many non-correlated abilities. In the absence of outside data, from perhaps neuro-biochemistry or neuro-physiology, there is no way of deciding which is the best technique for analysing test results; it all depends on the prejudices of the researchers and the results that they would like to see. At the present time that outside data is lacking, and in its absence it is impossible to determine the overall level of intelligence of any person, a fact which clearly has the most important implications for our educational system and what pupils are trained to become and to do.

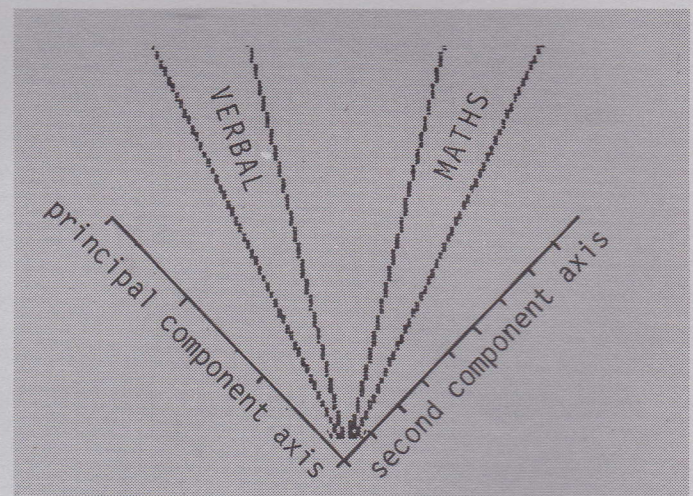
### The propagandists of Burt

Burt published his first paper in 1909. In it he argued that intelligence is innate, and that the differences between social classes is the result of heredity. His primary support for this position was the 'existence' of Spearman's 'g'. He published his last paper in 1972, claiming that intelligence was inherited and that Spearman's 'g' proved it. In the interim, Burt consistently used his prestige and authority to further the ends of the ruling class. In 1943, for example, he wrote, "The wide inequality of personal income is largely, though not entirely, an indirect effect of the wide inequality in innate intelligence". Further, he used the theoretical justification of 'g' to bring about a hierarchical restructuring of education in Britain. For Burt, 'g' had to dominate everything, and he saw a controlling, innate 'g' with subsidiary trainable factors as a determinant of British education. It was the justification for a linear ranking at the age of eleven - Burt was the father of the eleven-plus.

In 1979 Arthur Jensen published



The Correlation of Verbal and Mathematical Abilities. 'g' is Spearman's principal component axis.



The Correlation of Verbal and Mathematical Abilities. On axis rotation Spearman's 'g' disappears.

an 800-page defence of IQ and the reality of 'general intelligence'. It is the theoretical underpinning of the whole race and intelligence debate. Jensen, however, is an extremist. Not only does he believe in ranking people, but the whole of biological life is centred around 'g' - in his 1979 work Jensen ranked an amoeba at the bottom of the 'g' scale with extraterrestrial intelligences at the top. He does not claim to have actually performed experiments on extraterrestrials, but he thinks that he has measured 'g' for various invertebrates, fishes and



turtles! Evolution for Jensen is just a march up the ladder, acquiring more and more 'g' on the way. Most evolutionists would be appalled by this linear parody of a vastly complex network.

The entire hereditarian school of genetic racism has the unreal nature of 'g' at its rotten core. It is not sufficient for anti-racists, therefore, merely to argue that the scientists have made mistakes in their measuring or like Burt have falsified their data to make it fit with their expectations, for that allows the case to go by default, and leaves the possibility open that honestly-obtained data may be found which does appear to show, for example, that blacks are on average less intelligent than white. Too much of the argument has been on this level. In this article I have tried, instead, to show that regardless of the data, it is not possible to give any meaning whatsoever to the concept of general intelligence levels.

It may seem that these two articles are too abstract and theoretical for a 'political' journal. We do well to remind ourselves that the enemy too can read. Fascism is not dead; rather, it is endemic. The latest National Front policy document contains a pot pourri of ideas stolen from the left, including demands for the withdrawal of American bases, production for people, not profit, and the replacement of big business by co-operatives. Naturally, it also calls for the 'repatriation' of all non-whites and their descendants. This proposal is prefaced by the argument that it has been scientifically proved that non-whites are genetically inferior to whites. The NF has read Jensen; it thinks it can justify its racial bigotry by appeals to science. Unless we too are armed with an understanding of the fallacies, we will not be able to answer these claims.

PETR CERNY

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## MASCULINITY

# Inside Clark Kent

A Metcalf and M Humphries, editors.  
The Sexuality of Men  
 Pluto Press, £4.50

THIS IS an absolute stinker, and if representative of the state of theoretical development achieved since the start of men's groups in Britain in around 1972 - and I guess it must be, since six out of its nine contributors are associated with the magazine Achilles Heel - then oh boy, something is desperately wrong. What that something is, is probably the basis on which most men's groups exist and their social composition.

But the book! Strong coffee is needed to wade through almost uniformly woolly and tedious articles, while a sickbag is required when overcome by the occasional stench of moral purity. All this is coupled with outrageously sweeping generalisations based on such scientific criteria as, for example, one contributor casually overhearing a fifty-year-old father joke "Well, at least it shows I can still get it up".

Getting it up and in seems to be defined as one of the major heterosexual problems - not, as usually understood, by the inability to do so, but its exact opposite. Potency and virility, real or imagined, is part of 'phallocentrism' (and if you want to know what 'techno-phallocracy' is, see page 92). To pep up flagging generalisations Freud and Marx get namechecks, whilst structuralism, bourgeois values, socialist morality and something called 'capitalism' get discussed to demonstrate that the contributors should be taken seriously.

Whether, on the other hand, the contributors enjoy sex seems more problematic, given that they view heterosexual male sexuality as in essence violent, a violence fuelled by unacknowledged emotional fragility and confusion which is caused by the screwed-up feelings men have, it is claimed, towards their mothers.

"In our culture male arousal is a real social problem" is a feminist quote mentioned in an endorsing context, whilst it is taken for granted that "psychosocial construction of masculinity in a capitalist society predisposes men towards sexual violence". Where that leaves non-capitalist societies in which women are horrendously mutilated by clitoral circumcision, and whether, for example, Czechoslovakia is 'capitalist' or 'socialist' (and if the latter, this means that across the border in Austria men come more aggressively) is not made clear.

Yes, there is a 'man' problem, and yes, those out in front venturing into uncharted territory are bound to take wrong turnings and come to silly conclusions, but that can't explain the general awfulness of this book. What is startlingly missing in the contributors' accounts is any serious reference to, and exploration of, their own experiences over the last twelve years living in a 'personal politics' milieu, as most of them obviously have done. How have their attempts at more 'progressive' sexual relationships, whether hetero-, bi- or homo-, worked out? What has happened to the class of '73 who read the Red Collective's The Politics of Sexuality in Capitalism pamphlet, felt that family, romance and monogamy were part of capitalist ideology, and acted accordingly? How many rude awakenings were there when it was discovered that - oh my God! -



genes and hormones play a far greater role than they were prepared to acknowledge? How many farces and tragedies ensued as a result? Was anything learned?

If this book indirectly supplies an answer, then it must be: very little. Hormones and genes are still bad news, pushed mostly to the edges of the discussion. It would be interesting to know how men in this milieu reacted when feminists who in the early 70s were arguing that "Women in Labour Keep Men in Power" reached their thirties and, discovering their hormones, began to chide them for for being egocentric and selfishly irresponsible in not wanting children. How did child-minding and watching children grow modify their theoretical conclusions about conditioning and role-play? Is the family about to be reinstated in 'personal politics' circles? For instance, there is an approving reference to the family as a

positive set-up in the introduction

These, and many other questions that would have illuminated many aspects of male sexuality, aren't answered in the book. Worse, and this is what really sticks in the gullet, one has to swallow articles such as 'Desire and Pregnancy' by a contributor who has never gone through the experience of sharing a pregnancy with a partner. This, after one has chundered through 'Men's Sexuality at Work'. The hardest work the university lecturer contributor seems to have done was pushing open library doors in the pursuit of research material for his unremittingly pedantic article, which constantly misses the mark because he hasn't a clue - as any male who has worked out of necessity and not choice for lengthy periods in boring, frustrating or dangerous jobs will quickly realise reading his pontifications.





On the plus side there are three articles which fitfully engaged the interest of this reviewer. The nearest you get to the proletarian masses putting in an appearance - if only in terms of image - is in the open necked shirts and denim jeans of the lumberjacks and the leatherbonded bikers of the gay pubs and clubs. 'Gay Machismo' looks at the ideological pros and cons of this representation of straight male sexuality - a caricature which at the same time has the power to attract. The writer's critical defence of it tends to fizzle out, but at least we occasionally get a flash of a human being behind the typewriter, especially the admission that wearing his keys on the wrong side of his trouser belt led to misunderstandings that must on occasions have been hilarious (he'd got his code signals wrong).

'Violence and Sexuality' at least tackles the possible influence of genes and hormones, only to dismiss it as an easy let-out clause on the part of those males who want to shore up male supremacy. 'Fear and Intimacy' is notable for its honest admission that 'Men have been involved in a process of change for over a decade in response to the challenges of feminism but, in truth, little has changed'. I would add 'or been developed theoretically'. It's an indictment of the book that a footnote summarising work of two researchers - one advocating biological theories of sexual differentiation, the other largely social theories - was the only thing that really interested me.

The reason why the book is bad is partly because the men's movement is a response to the strictures of feminism - it's difficult to hear yourself think when you're constantly being harangued - and secondly, many of the authors attempt to understand male sexuality within a marxist framework. Too often there is the feeling that a contributor is writing with one eye on the

possible reaction of a feminist sister or a straighter marxist comrade. While critical of crude marxism, for example that the Yorkshire Ripper was a product of unemployment, one writer for instance is at pains to point out that he is not advocating 'bourgeois individualism' when discussing the need for men to get in touch with their own feelings.

This fear of letting go of a theoretical framework - put another way, this fear of reality - can only lead, as it has done in other areas of the left, to such monstrosities as 'racism is always a white phenomenon', or the denial that there is a Protestant working class in Northern Ireland. Seen in this context, it's hardly surprising that The Sexuality of Men is pretty dreadful.

Unfortunately, though, there's more to it than that. The contributors are not on the margins of society, despite the pessimism of a couple about the possibility of their ideas affecting society. They are part of the post '68 generation - yesterday's Big Flames, Socialist Workers, International Marxists; today's Labour Party activists, town hall manipulators, TU and pressure-group careerists, and Channel Four 'radical' programme makers. Among them there are three university lecturers, one community worker, one advice worker for the National Council for One Parent Families, one film maker. Past studies and activities have included social administration and planning, adult and higher education, town planning, polytechnic lecturing. Publications by contributors have included or will include a book on liberal moral theory by someone who critically endorses 'socialist morality' (to be published by Routledge and Kegan Paul), Slump City - The Politics of Mass Unemployment (for Pluto), a contribution to One Dimensional Marxism (Allison and Busby), books for the British Film Institute, and Birth and Afterbirth: A Materialist



Account (Achilles Heel).

Towards the end of The Sexuality of Men we are told that in the 1970s "Socialist men were learning that they could analyse the fate of the international capitalist economy but they were speechless when it came to talking through issues in their sexual relationships". It's of little consolation to know that they couldn't even manage the former, for the discredited ideology they used in their attempt to predict the alleged crisis of capital (a secular version of the Last Day of Judgment) is still used by them to justify their role in administering, or hoping to administer, the majority of people in this country, whether directly through social policy decisions at local or national level, or indirectly through notions incorporated in sociology courses at polytechnics and universities.

Meanwhile, one has to go back to the 1971 American booklet Unbecoming Men to read a collection of essays which, sometimes with warmth, sometimes with humour, throws more light on male sexuality than The Sexuality of Men can ever hope to do.

PETE GRAFTON

## ANTI-MILITARISM

## The secret front of the Great War

Ken Weller

'Don't Be A Soldier!' The Radical Anti-War Movement in North London 1914-1918

Journeyman Press/London History Workshop Centre, £3.25

KEN WELLER has been researching the labour history of his home patch of Islington for over thirty years. Apart from a couple of Solidarity

articles in the 1960s, this 96-page book is the first published fruit of work which his friends and correspondents have been increasingly impatient to see in print. 'Don't Be A Soldier!' is a triumphant vindication of his own historical methods and outlook and of the support of the many individuals whose brains he has, as he acknowledges, mercilessly picked. It leaves one eager for the completion of his long-term project: the history of Islington's socialist and radical movement from, ambitiously, the 1850s to 1939 (a daunting task, as any practising historian will appreciate).

Ken's book is, in effect, a study of the unpromisingly-titled, but important and exciting, North London Herald League, founded in 1913 as a local support group for the then militantly socialist Daily Herald, and which petered out during 1920. From 1914 to 1918 the NLHL flourished as an umbrella organisation for all radical working-class opposition to the war - sternly differentiated by Ken from 'religious or ethical' objection. Sectarian allegiances became secondary and members of the Independent Labour Party, British Socialist Party, Industrial Workers of the World and anarchist groups collaborated in unprecedented fashion.

Membership of the NLHL also overlapped with Sylvia Pankhurst's East London Federation of Suffragettes as it developed, with three changes of name, into the Workers' Socialist Federation of 1918. There is a useful chapter on the WSF and its ramifications, as too on another metropolitan-based grouping, the Brotherhood Church. Ken's general interest in 'Don't Be A Soldier!' is in the response to the war of what he terms "the 'rebel' milieu", by which he means "the syndicalist and industrial unionist movements within industry, the radical wing of the women's movement and the wide range of networks and organisations which by



and large were very critical of the established labour movement". R M (Dick) Fox, one of the NLHL's leading figures, in Smoky Crusade - an autobiography which demands to be much better known (although if it was, an academic historian would no doubt have long ago embalmed the NLHL) - described the League as having "thrown its net wide... we had a membership of active militant people - not all militant about the same things, but in sympathy with all rebel causes, all movements of the oppressed and downtrodden".

The decade from around 1910 is, of course, a remarkable one in Britain, marvellous for its socialist heterodoxy and libertarian and direct-action tendencies. What makes depressing reading here is the casualty rate of revolutionary socialists as they fell to either the iron conformity of the Communist Party or the municipal socialism and parliamentarianism of the Labour Party. But this lament derives from the greatest strength and pleasure of Ken's book: the many potted political biographies which he has lovingly compiled of the activists men and women largely beyond reach of even that great work in progress, Joyce Bellamy and John Saville's Dictionary of Labour Biography. Ken, a rank-and-file militant himself, has written the history of a rank-and-file organisation, which never provided an institutional slab in the building of a national political party or movement, and has accordingly done justice both to the ethos of the NLHL and to its membership of working-class rebels.

My principal disquiet concerns the book's geographical imperialism. Is 'Islington' the LCC borough of 1900 (which, perhaps, is not unreasonable) or the GLC borough of 1965, at which, since it includes the former Finsbury - and hence Clerkenwell - I personally jib? More serious is the elastic, I think opportunist, conception of 'North London'. I am confident that Hackney belongs to East London. At

one point Enfield is outside North London, on the next page it is in. Ken regards this text as a 'first shot at the subject'. For a future edition - and his projected study of working-class radicalism in Islington - I urge him to clarify his thinking on this point and, particularly for the sake of non-London readers, to see that maps are provided.

DAVID GOODWAY

## STAR WARS

# Walking backwards from the apocalypse

Edward Thompson  
The Heavy Dancers  
Double Exposure

Merlin Press £5.50 and £2.50

Ben and Edward Thompson  
Star Wars: Self-Destruct  
Incorporated

Merlin Press £1.00.

THE PUBLICATION of these three works will probably win for E P Thompson the ambiguous honour already granted to George Orwell - in twenty years' time his essays and articles will be cited in language schools and on English course as models of excellent prose English. The clarity and grace with which he writes are important aspects of his position. When his writing is compared with the sterile, arid language of many radicals, Thompson is a still soft voice of reason. He exploits this feeling; he often presents his arguments as 'just plain commonsense'. But, of course, this is a role which he has chosen to assume. In reality, his 'plain commonsense' radicalism is no less artificial than the other roles assumed by today's radicals -



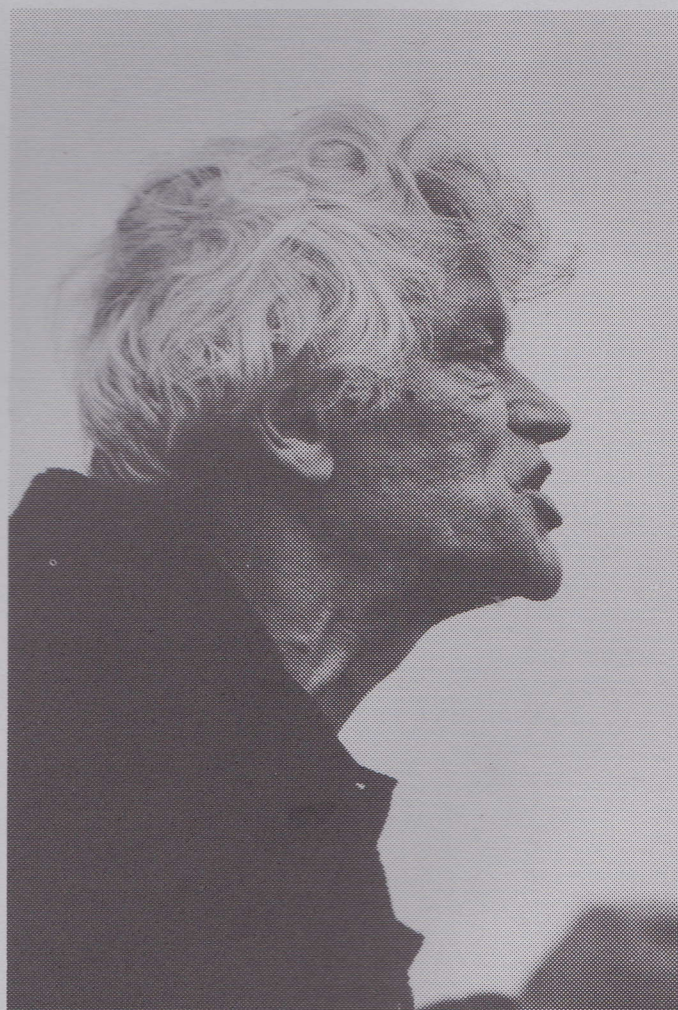
although perhaps it is less abrasive and self-destructive.

Often it is difficult to disagree with Thompson. We might want to argue about the precise validity of his concept of 'exterminism' - i.e. the arms race and world militarism - but all radicals must agree that the consequences of the arms race, even during peacetime, are both deadly and dehumanising. Our energies must go into resisting militarist practices and ideologies. Thompson does not simply argue against militarism. He progresses to outline a process to reverse the arms race. He argues that a major reduction in East-West tension is essential, and that two necessary preconditions for such a reduction are the demystification of 'the other side' and the establishment of freedom of speech and assembly through Eastern and Western Europe. Thompson's ultimate goal seems to be a sort of pan-Europeanism: a democratic, humane and communitarian federation of nations stretching from Russia to Spain. The establishment of such a federation would effectively end the arms race and drastically reduce - if not actually abolish - militarism, thus enabling social resources at present squandered upon military production to be turned to socially useful ends.

Thompson's arguments and proposals are persuasive. Certainly, we could ask for more - for example, what happened to the old socialist projects to end exploitation and alienation? Thompson rarely faces such questions directly, but implicit in his arguments is the reply that unless 'exterminism' is ended, there will be no socialist movement. International tensions and the construction of permanent war economies in both East and West effectively short-circuit popular radical movements by forcing them to become aligned within the present binary division of international power. In the last chapter of Double Exposure Thompson very effectively argues that exterminism

is the problem facing the world today, and that it demands some instantly applicable solutions. Other issues, he claims, must take second place.

In a sense, one cannot disagree with him. However, as one reads through the collected essays and articles in The Heavy Dancers and the extended retrospective essay of Double Exposure one comes to think that something is missing. These essays are repetitive. Having read and re-read the same argument presented in a number of differing forms, one begins to find some faults in Thompson's writing. He appears to be caught in a trap. Having been coerced into the role of 'peace movement spokesman' (he himself notes the demands which the peace movement makes of him in The Heavy Dancers), he finds one of the duties of this (unofficial) post is



Edward Thompson: Pan-Europeanist



to present backslapping and self-congratulatory appreciations of the peace movement's activities. This is a real tragedy, for Thompson is best as a sensitive but critical analyst. The most useful essays in The Heavy Dancers follow this model. In 'America and the War Movement' and 'The Liberation of Perugia' Thompson cautiously and politely advances some criticisms of guilt-tripping (and guilt-tripped) American activists, and of the simplistic analyses of 'machismo' put forward by some feminists.

Unfortunately, he seldom treats the British peace movement with the same critical sensitivity. He notes the existence of a pro-Soviet faction, but makes no comment in any of the books on the obvious internal strains within CND - such as the tensions between the central officials and local groups, or between those acting as a parliamentary pressure group and those committed to direct action. Thus he writes of the "life-affirming symbolism" of the Greenham Common peace camp, and praises Michael Foot's sense of principle and conscience; but he neglects to explain clearly what is productive about the Greenham peace camp (women's self-organisation, mobilisation and politicisation) or to give convincing reasons why Foot's party should be supported in preference to Heseltine's.

The same blurring of political principles by sentiment is evident in Thompson's analysis of East-West politics. He correctly avoids the dead-end exercises of 'blaming' one side, or of attempting to calculate which side is the most oppressive, and emphasises the crucial point that the arms race and world militarism can only make social conditions worse within both sides. The arms race is a reciprocal process which strengthens militarists on both sides. Radicals must avoid at all costs any positions of alignment to either side, and a 'third way' must be created. But what form will this

third way take? At this point, where coherent, decisive analysis is most needed, Thompson presents provocative but cloudy suggestions. He makes scattered references to the Greenham women, German Greens, independent Italian communists, Euro-Communists, left socialists, Dutch churches, Czech reformers, Solidarnosc, Hungarian revolutionaries and even to Krushchev's famous 'secret' speech. In some way all these groups and figures do represent some form of departure from the accepted binary division of international power. But it is obvious that they do not add up to a coherent base for a 'third way'.

Some statement of political principle is needed here by which each member of this long and heterogeneous list could be evaluated. Until he delivers such a statement, Thompson can justly be criticised as offering a sort of 'social-democratic' utopia as the solution to the world's problems. He seems to be arguing that if the West was socialised and the East democratised, then all would be well. This argument does have some strengths; it recognises the existence of repression both East and West. But its strengths are outweighed by one striking drawback: implicit in such an argument is the suggestion that the West offers an acceptable model of a democratic society and the East a model of a socialised economy.

These faults are most evident in The Heavy Dancers. The other two works are more informative.

No doubt some of the criticisms offered here have been too sharp. Thompson is one of the few articulate socialist voices in Britain who is making a libertarian critique of both eastern and western societies. However, if his critique is to be truly relevant to our situation, he should apply it to the organisations which have gained his sympathy as well as to the nation states which he abhors.

JOHN COBBETT



## FUNDAMENTALISM

# Dogma that should not be hounded

From ROSE KNIGHT, Manchester

I found the article by Bob Potter 'The Last Days of This Wicked System of Things' in Solidarity double issue 6 and 7 very interesting, though as socialists didn't we already know all this? But there is one element in Bob's discussion which I find unacceptable. Bob says that the "authoritarian personality" cannot be influenced by political argument; also that "dogmatic" communities or organisations cannot be destroyed by "enlightened" discussion. In other words, people as individuals or groups cannot by reasoned argument persuade any other individual or group to change their view, however rational the argument might be. At the same time, socially inadequate persons are drawn to the dogmatic group through their deep-seated fear of uncertainty and chaos, because it offers security which the real world can never supply. (I apologise if my paraphrasing is too crude).

As a socialist, I find the implication of this view is that either we must be social inadequates, or that joining a libertarian socialist organisation that is working for revolution by democratic means of persuasion through argument, such as Solidarity, is a total waste of time. If we also believe in the trendy view that we can only learn by our experience and no-one else's counts, then we can't learn from history; it's doubtful that we can learn at all. This is a very depressing view for a

socialist to accept.

It appears Bob realised this (I am assuming this was written for his thesis); for the sake of making it into an article suitable for Solidarity, he hastily added a final paragraph: "The answer, obviously, must be the re-building of people's self-confidence. Only when individuals learn (my emphasis) to take control of their own lives" [will things change]. But from Bob's own argument they cannot learn from anyone else. They join dogmatic groups because they lack self-confidence, so how can they re-build their own confidence? How can they control their own lives when they fear the unknown and it is their future lives, apart from death, that is unknown and frightens them? His answer is not at all obvious; it is a "Catch-22" answer.

The only way I can get around this catch is to draw on my own experience. I know that I can learn from other people's experience. As a child I didn't need to stick my hand in the fire in order to understand the meaning of the word "burn". Did you? Some people may be more tolerant, some may be more dogmatic, but no one is born either. Therefore, the majority of people on the 'continuum' are bunched in the middle, each capable of swaying from tolerance to dogmatism and back, and so on, sometimes learning, some rejecting all different views. For me this has meant that at some times I have been a libertarian socialist/anarchist and at others a hardline marxist into exclusive and divisive factionalism. In the latter frame of mind, whilst a member of Solidarity, I was in the forefront of a faction that hounded out a member who was previously a political compatriot, simply because he wrote an article for another group's paper suggesting that it wasn't necessarily



blasphemous to vote Labour. If you read Freedom, it seems that DAM have done the same thing to one of their members.

Now I'm no longer a member of a political faction or organisation, I wonder how I could have treated that comrade the way I did. I remember being attacked for being too tolerant, for being a "swampy" by other members of Solidarity, because I was a feminist and supported CND. What happened? When the economic crisis started to push the political climate to the right, socialist and anarchist groups of all shades dwindled in size. As a result, the prevailing climate was of backs-to-the-wall-and-come-out-fighting, attack being the best form of defence. To examine the group view would lead to loss of faith and therefore loss of membership. As Bob shows, the thought is frightening. It means being cast adrift in an alien and hostile world. Isn't that why I needed the group: because if I thought I was a social freak, how would I survive? Changed personal circumstances forced me out of the group and I've survived, of course. But I had already lost faith long before that and wouldn't face up to it. Nor was I the only one who had lost faith; some preferred to respond by reaffirmation, by repeating the creed by rote, reacting to reasoned argument dogmatically. Often people become most aggressive when they are least sure of the validity of the group view.

Reasoned political argument may appear at times to fall on deaf ears, but this doesn't mean it has no effect. When I was at my most dogmatic, comrades who tried to reason with me may have failed at the time, but not in the long term. Unwittingly they played on my doubts; so I responded with more dogmatism, yet my doubts grew. Whether I could have exorcised those doubts, or whether I would have taken control of myself to break away from the group without the external trigger, I will never

know. External triggers are, however, abundant in life's minefield. I didn't change in a vacuum; other people, both individuals and groups, influenced me. Nothing comes from inside the individual that has not been learned in some form from other people. At this point I turn back to Marx, though I hope not dogmatically. Everyone can be changed. When a shift in consciousness occurs it gives rise to new social movements and destroys others. How does consciousness shift? Marx said through class struggle; he also said Man creates his own history (women too, of course). Argument, discussion, ideas, critical analysis, is all part of that creation. These human faculties cannot be divided from human change.

Love to all

## COMMUNISM

# Out in the snow

From JOHN QUAIL, Leeds

Just a line on your stuff on the CP in issue 9. I can't say what's happening in London but I see nothing here, out in the sticks, to indicate that the decline in the CP is not continuing. After a period of intense in-fighting they have lost their grip on the Trade Council to ex-Trots who are now Labour Party members. Some of the stalwarts are still around but they now have no control in any union or organisation at place of work - such as are left - in Leeds. They are in great difficulty.

It used to be said that the two largest CP branches were Glasgow and Hampstead. Glasgow is in decline but perhaps Hampstead is still healthy. If it is, it may be because people like Marxism Today



can think strategically and have found themselves a specialist niche. The Labour Party doesn't go in for strategy, just knee-jerk electoral opportunism, so for now, maybe the CP looks good. But wait until the manifesto is sorted out and strategy can be packed away; the CP will be left out in the snow.

The 'broad left' concept has always been one of the CP snuggling up to the Labour Party and trying to exclude the 'ultra-left' from the orgy. Now the Trots, at least, infest the Labour Party and provide another reason why the CP will be kicked out of bed.

Having disposed of that small matter can I now request that we perhaps concentrate on "emphasising the potential for a far more radical unity based on a common refusal of powerlessness in everyday life and the project of generalised self-management". And can we do it in practical detail, at length, in the few precious pages available to us, rather than using them for examining the entrails of the CP? - for I assure you that beast is dead.

Yours fraternally

## POWER STRUCTURES

# A second look at Foucault

From TOM JENNINGS, Newcastle

I liked both of the pieces in issue 8 - especially the (rather strained) comparison of Le Guin and Foucault.

On 'Questions of Power' it seems to me that John Cobbett has had what is a common problem with Foucault. Foucault's systematic undermining of conventional discourse (including libertarian)

is exhilarating, but afterwards one feels an uncanny inability to criticise meaningfully what one has read. That's what I tend to feel, anyway, even on re-reading one of his books. Even so, I suspect that John has misunderstood what Foucault means by "power" and the way that he tries to "theorise". The criticism of History of Sexuality consistently misses the point as a result.

For a start I've not detected any "single-minded concentration on elite power" (my emphasis). Similarly, I find incredible (and so would Foucault) the idea that a "closed model" (of power relationships) is what is being proposed. Resistance to power may or may not be possible as a relatively "autonomous and spontaneous growth" but what is, by definition, absolutely certain is that it has to be resistance to something (such as "existing power relationships", for example).

To me, Foucault is investigating the patterns of resistance to existing power structures at the same time as looking at the nature of those structures (and he has come up with some surprising results). This at least surely is an eminently sensible enterprise. The realisation that more than is usually assumed would need to be changed if "modern power structures are...[not to be]...capable of infinite co-option of dissident thoughts and desires" is not necessarily pessimistic. It is only necessary to be so if those having "thoughts and desires" fail to realise that the overt expressions of current power regimes (such as states, political and economic institutions, etc. - in themselves tremendously significant, of course) are just that - overt expressions of something deeper. I feel that Foucault's work (not just the latest book) needs to be examined from an anarchist point of view rather more closely and less dismissively that appears to have been the case in John's article.

Best wishes



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