

NO.6

VIRUS

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THE ENEMY WITHIN

militant anarchism



VIRUS

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ANARCHIST POSSIBILITIES

Let's face it, anarchism is a thoroughly marginal force in British society, and has been from its origins. The 'movement' (if it deserves that title) has been in a state of permanent isolation from the outset, with continued failure to move beyond a collection of mutually antagonistic grouplets. The arguments, it seemed were all settled decades ago. State socialism, in one form or another has dominated the whole of the left and the labour movement. However things might be changing a little.

The complete and absolute failure of state socialism to deliver the goods both here and on a world scale, combined with Thatcherite populism has begun to weaken the authoritarian left's hegemony. The statist left is in a state of disarray. Bennism is nowhere as a political force within the Labour Party, the Tribune Group (does it still exist?) is impotent, Militant has cocked it up in Liverpool and faces an onslaught from the official leadership. The Communist Party has split in two, as has the Workers Revolutionary Party and the remnants of the International Marxist Group which entered the Labour Party has divided, and so on

Marxism as a doctrine is in a state of profound crisis. The predicted European revolution has not happened and the gurus of Marxism have not yet satisfactorily explained away this this sad state of affairs. In one area however, the hocus-pocus has gained ground, namely in the world of academia. University and polytechnic lecturers, who might otherwise have been completely conservative can now debate the finer points of Marxist obscurantism, whether it relates to literature, the classics, art, anthropology, or whatever. The fact that such types have little or no contact with ordinary people is, for them, neither here nor there. Marxism provides a rich seam which pays for the next bottle of claret and the monthly mortgage repayments.

'Its an ill wind', as they say. We anarchists should welcome the disintegration of the authoritarian left. Mass unemployment, the run down of the welfare state and the sheer physical disintegration of Britain's economic infrastructure has radicalised many people, especially the young. These people have not however been running headlong into the Labour Party, the Communist Party, or whatever. There is a growing mistrust of such options. Libertarian ideas are now being accepted on a level that has been previously unknown. The anarchist press has grown beyond recognition in the last few years. The number of groups producing magazines and news paper format publications grows continuously. Whilst sales of these are collectively tiny (even in comparison to the Marxist output) the trend is very encouraging.

As stated at the outset, we are extremely marginal but there are many possibilities open to us. We offer a variety of approaches and attitudes which provide the basis for creating a mass libertarian movement over a wide spectrum of issues where the traditional left has no hegemony. These include the womens', peace, ecology, squatters' movements and the unemployed.

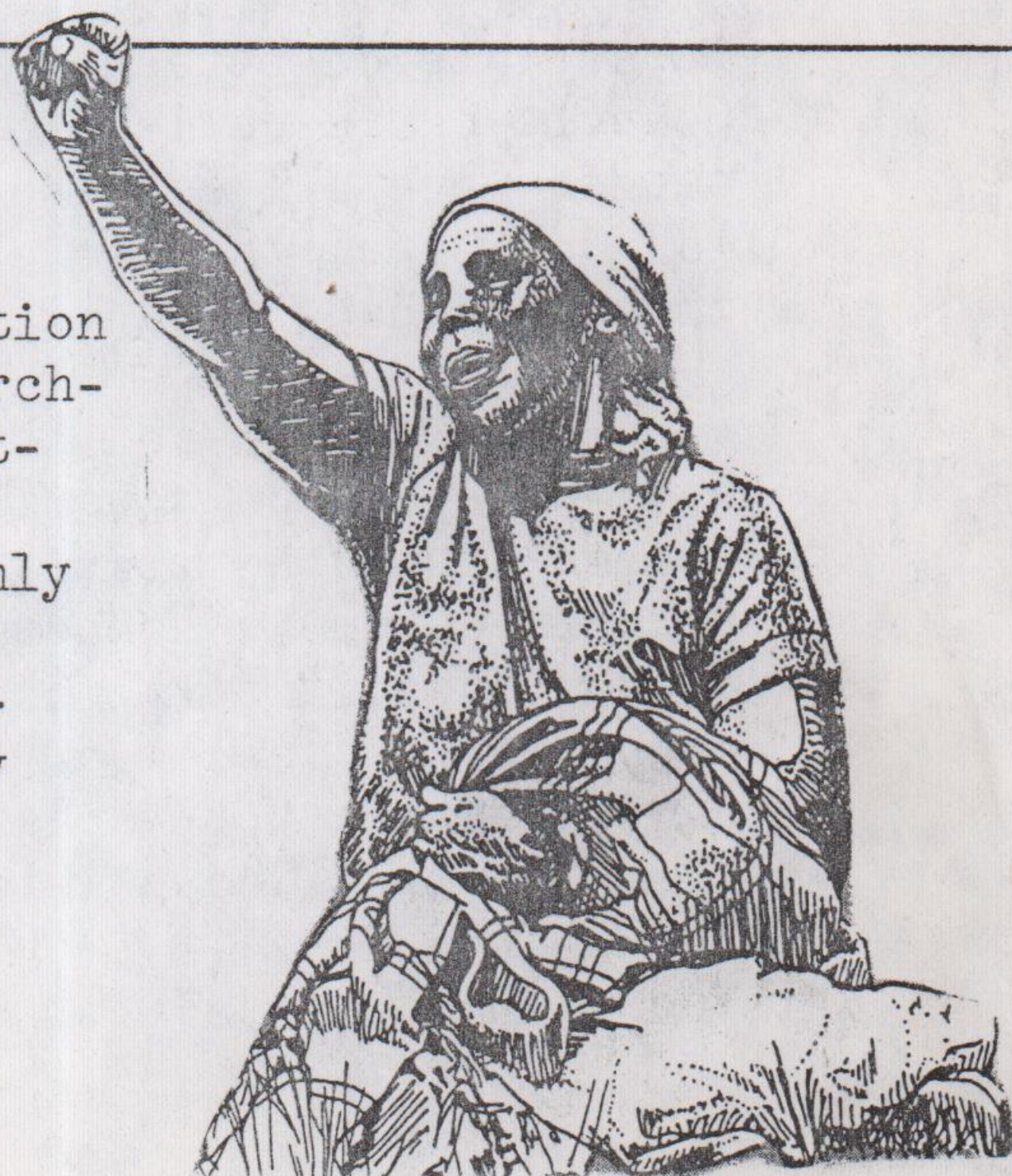
The labour movement however, which in many respects is a crucial area, is a much more difficult field to work in. The authoritarians are entrenched at all levels are highly experienced and well organised, as well as devious. Nevertheless many workers are turned off by the sectarianism and vanguardism of the Leninists and a more libertarian approach might win some support.

The new found popularity of anarchism might disappear as quickly as it arose. We need to consolidate our gains, otherwise we will be like a cork bobbing on the surface of the waves - totally at the mercy of external events. We need to encourage a more 'permanentist' outlook. We are here to stay and should organise accordingly.

One last point. Where anarchism has strength is in its concepts of direct action and propaganda by the deed. Individuals or groups can engage in these activities (its a lot more satisfying and effective as part of a group) - fly-posting, graffiti, publishing, sabotage - the gluing up of locks of nasty businesses breaking windows, slowing down and undermining machinery and working practises, riots, demonstrations, sit-ins etc. Anarchists need never be idle! On however small a scale start the process of revolution now. And let the world know about it.

VIRUS supporters have formed the ANARCHIST-COMMUNIST DISCUSSION GROUP which aims to create a national association of class war anarchists based upon the principles of anarchist communism. Our medium term goal is to bring into existence an ANARCHIST-COMMUNIST FEDERATION, and, if the group maintains its present rate of growth, to bring out a monthly newspaper, provisionally entitled LIBERATION. If you would like to see an end to the isolation, bickering and sectarianism which afflicts much of the anarchist movement, why not get in touch. C/O 84B, Whitechapel High ST. London. E.1.

VIRUS subscriptions cost £1 per year in either stamps or cash.





ANARCHISM AND ORGANISATION

PART TWO

Carrying on from the last issue of VIRUS we continue our series on political organisation. In this issue we begin the discussion of internal organisation.

The question of the internal structure of a political organisation is of no minor issue. It is very much a political issue which reflects our attitude to the class struggle, the revolution and the future society.

Ever since the First International, revolutionaries have debated the question of what sort of organisation should be constructed. Because of the success of the Russian revolution and the ascendance of the Bolshevik party, democratic centralism became the dominant structure copied by the majority of revolutionary organisations or parties. It was considered the only structure for an organisation that wanted the necessary discipline to carry out a revolution. A highly centralised organisation would then take over the state and once the counter-revolutionaries were no longer a threat, somehow democratic structures were to spring up and take over the running of the country, politically and economically. However the experience of the Russian Revolution showed that the state did not in fact wither away but was strengthened as the soviets and then the trade unions were integrated into the state, now firmly in the hands of one organisation, which itself was controlled by a small group.

But we don't need to go as far back as the Russian Revolution to see democratic centralism at work. All the major revolutionary parties today have democratic centralism as the structure. Despite their claims that democratic centralism is in fact democratic, those who have been members of such organisations can attest to the fact they are always more centralist than democratic. It is often argued that true democratic centralism has not been applied correctly. However, looking at the repeated failures of such organisations, perhaps it is time to conclude that democratic centralist organisations are inherently undemocratic.

The Russian revolution not only showed the undemocratic nature of Leninist parties, it also revealed the organisational weaknesses in the anarchist movement. Anarchists who had participated in the revolution, the factory committees and later in the Ukraine with Nestor Makhno started re-examining their own lack of organisation which had meant that they had been effectively liquidated, both politically and physically by the Bolsheviks.

Many anarchists reject the idea of a national organisation with a definite structure. Groups include anarchists of all types, including individualists, in one big happy "family". Often decision-making is individuals are allowed to "do their own thing" with little coordination between groups.

There are two problems with such unstructured organisations. One, the organisations continue to be marginal to the class struggle. Like the anarchists at the time of the Russian Revolution, though they are numerous, the anarchists are still outflanked by the Leninist groups. Second, lack of well defined structure often means that the organisations also end up undemocratic. As Jo Freeman pointed out in her pamphlet, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness",

"Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a 'structureless' group. Any group of people of whatever nature coming together for any length of time, for any purpose, will inevitably structure itself in some fashion", and "This hegemony can easily be established because the idea of structurelessness does not prevent the formation of informal structures, but only formal ones".

Here we can make a comparison between democratic centralist organisations and those with loose structure. There is nothing more infuriating than endless debates before deciding on a course of action. It is much easier for a core of activists to meet and decide and then tell the members what to do. In democratic centralist organisations this is done by the election of a political leadership.

This leadership meets regularly to decide the line of the organisation and their decisions are binding. They are not accountable to anyone until the next national conference. They are usually full timers with the time to write articles and books proving themselves to be the ones with ideas for the way forward. In Leninist parties the majority of the leadership are intellectuals. Those who were workers soon lost their roots in the working class because they had become full timers. Changes of line often takes the membership completely by surprise. Their concession to democracy is to take the 'line' to the membership and argue it. Needless to say they usually get their way as they can depend on a core of super-hacks to support them, they have a monopoly of the press and anyone who doubts the new line is unorganised and unprepared to organise against them. If a group of people did get together to put forward a different point of view, they would be accused of factionalism.

Now this description may seem very different from what happens in anarchist groups. However, even though there is usually no official political leadership there is the danger that informal political leaderships may develop. They may be people who have more experience, are able to speak and write more persuasively, or they may just be the people with the time and inclination to become more involved and therefore more influential in the group. People with children, those who work long hours or those heavily involved in trade union work or campaigns will not be the ones to become part of this informal leadership structure. As time goes on, this informal leadership becomes more implanted and the other members become accustomed to accepting their leadership. It could be argued that this doesn't matter because individuals are not forced to follow decisions that are made, but then you get back to the problem that the organisation will be ineffective in the class struggle if there is not a strong commitment within it for a particular course of action. The main organisational question is, therefore, how do we organise ourselves so as to be effective in the class struggle and at the same time maintain democratic structures where the base is firmly in control?

In opposition to both democratic centralism and a loose organisation we propose a federalist structure. In a federalist organisation, any posts which are held are for administrative purposes only and not full time. The officers are responsible in between conferences to a coordinating committee, an essential feature of an effective organisation. The coordinating committee instructs the officers on what tasks to carry out and may recall an officer if necessary. Representatives to the coordinating committee are delegated by their local group and are responsible to that group. Ideally, it should not be the same people who attend the coordinating committee each time so that it will be more difficult for a fixed leadership to

develop. Debate is a central part of the federalist organisation. It can take place on several levels, in the coordinating committee, in the local groups, black groups or interest groups - trade unions, anti-racist etc. All groups and individuals have the right to publish their point of view. The federation must be agreed on a set of minimum principles so that the organisation does not disintegrate into an array of different tendencies. However, within an agreed framework there will always be differing opinions as regards strategy, tactics, analysis, but these disagreements should not be considered divisive but part of the healthy functioning of the organisation.

No structure can guarantee that disagreements will not cause divisions and discord. However, a federalist organisation recognises and accepts these disagreements. Rather than causing splits and expulsions, members must often have to agree to disagree on certain points and look for common ground on which the organisation can move forward. A federation means the free agreement of individuals, and groups to work towards a common objective - the creation of a libertarian communist society. Disagreements may arise about how to get to that objective, but the objective itself should not be forgotten.

AUTHORS NOTE:

This article did not have any particular anarchist organisation in mind when discussing the weaknesses of anarchist organisation. The authors' experience of anarchist groups has been more in Europe than in Britain. To continue the discussion begun in this article, it would be interesting to hear how anarchist groups organise themselves and what strengths and weaknesses they may have.



UNION MEMBERS MUST GIVE THEIR
LEADERS TOTAL SUPPORT.....

A NOTE FROM LIBERTARIAN ORGANISATION
AND STRUCTURES.

L.O.S. was set up with the intention of understanding some of the things which prevent groups with basically anarchist intentions from achieving them. We are also open to the possibility that we might have to modify what we mean by 'anarchist forms of organisation'.

We are dissatisfied with the usual anarchist ideas of what to avoid in groups. For example we feel the classical concept of authority as something a minority inflicts on an unwilling majority is only relevant in a limited number of situations. Our experience is that there are many more subtler ways in which authority can develop, such as people getting bored, people becoming well intentioned experts, personal links inhibiting challenge or criticism etc, and these can affect even the most committed anarchist.

Also we believe that classical anarchist theory is not based on the way people really do think, feel and behave. For one thing it has not taken on the vast changes in culture and economics which have occurred since its foundation. Also, it reflects an over simplified nineteenth century concept that a group is a collection of autonomous individuals who decide everything through rational processes that they completely understand. In fact, a decision may be reached which seems rational (On first impression) but actually results from hidden motivations, such as a desire to smooth

things over, the impressive way someone speaks for it, or even just because people want to go home. Such considerations may seem trivial, but they can often be as significant as what people would insist their reasons were, and allowing for them can radically alter the way we decide to act.

Starting off from these criticisms we have been looking at groups, collectives and co-ops that we have been in. For example, the County Durham network of miners support groups has shown that large numbers of people can decide to adopt our ideas such as delegates to be mandated, although they would never dream of calling themselves anarchists. Unfortunately, these ideas often seem to get distorted or lost, even if no-one intentionally decides to set themselves up in authority. We feel it would be a good thing if the mechanisms behind this were better understood.

We'd like your help.

We'd like to work with a wider range of experiences than just our own, so if you have been in a group which came across these 'structural' problems (bearing in mind that there is often more going on in a group hi-jacked by Leninists than just their manipulations) we'd like you to send us details of what happened, why you think it turned out the way it did and how such failings might have been avoided. Any other comments would also be welcome, all letters will receive a reply and, in a few months, when we bring out a pamphlet on the subject, you will get a free copy.

Thanks, L.O.S.

c/o Days of Hope Bookshop,
62, Thornton Street,
Newcastle on Tyne.

DIVINE REVELATIONS NO. 362



REVIEWS



TOWARDS A FRESH REVOLUTION

The Friends of Durruti Group

Barcelona 1938

Like the ORGANISATIONAL PLATFORM OF THE LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISTS this document was written after the failure of a revolution. Arshinov, Mett, Makhno and the others wrote in 1926, after they had witnessed the failures of the anarchist movement to consolidate the great sympathy they had among workers and peasants.

This text was written after the betrayal of the Spanish revolution by the Stalinists, compounded by the inadequacy of the leadership of the C.N.T, the mass libertarian union, and the F.A.I, the anarchist organisation, to combat it.

THE FRIENDS OF DURRUTI GROUP ^{was formed} to further the revolution, and to win, the war against Franco and the Fascists at the same time. Its members and supporters were anarchist militants who had fought on the battle fronts. The foreword was penned in 1978 by Jaime Balius, an important activist in the group.

The text gives a brief political and economic description of Spain from 1923 onwards up to the revolution and civil war. It denounces the collaboration between the socialist forces and the bourgeoisie, and calls for the socialisation of the economy.

Like the Russian comrades who learnt so much from an actual revolutionary moment, the FRIENDS OF DURRUTI saw that there were many weaknesses in the anarchist movement of the time. "Revolutions cannot succeed if they have no guiding lights, no immediate objectives.... Although it had the strength, the C.N.T did not know how to shape and mould the activity that arose spontaneously in the street. The very leadership was startled by events, which were, as far as they were concerned, totally unexpected. They had no idea which course of action to pursue. There was no theory". The FRIENDS OF DURRUTI, like the Makhno/Arshinov group advanced beyond the confines of traditional anarchism. They saw the need for a co-ordinating body, a national defence council, elected by democratic vote in the unions. This body would carry on the management of the war, the supervision of the revolutionary order, international affairs and revolutionary propaganda.

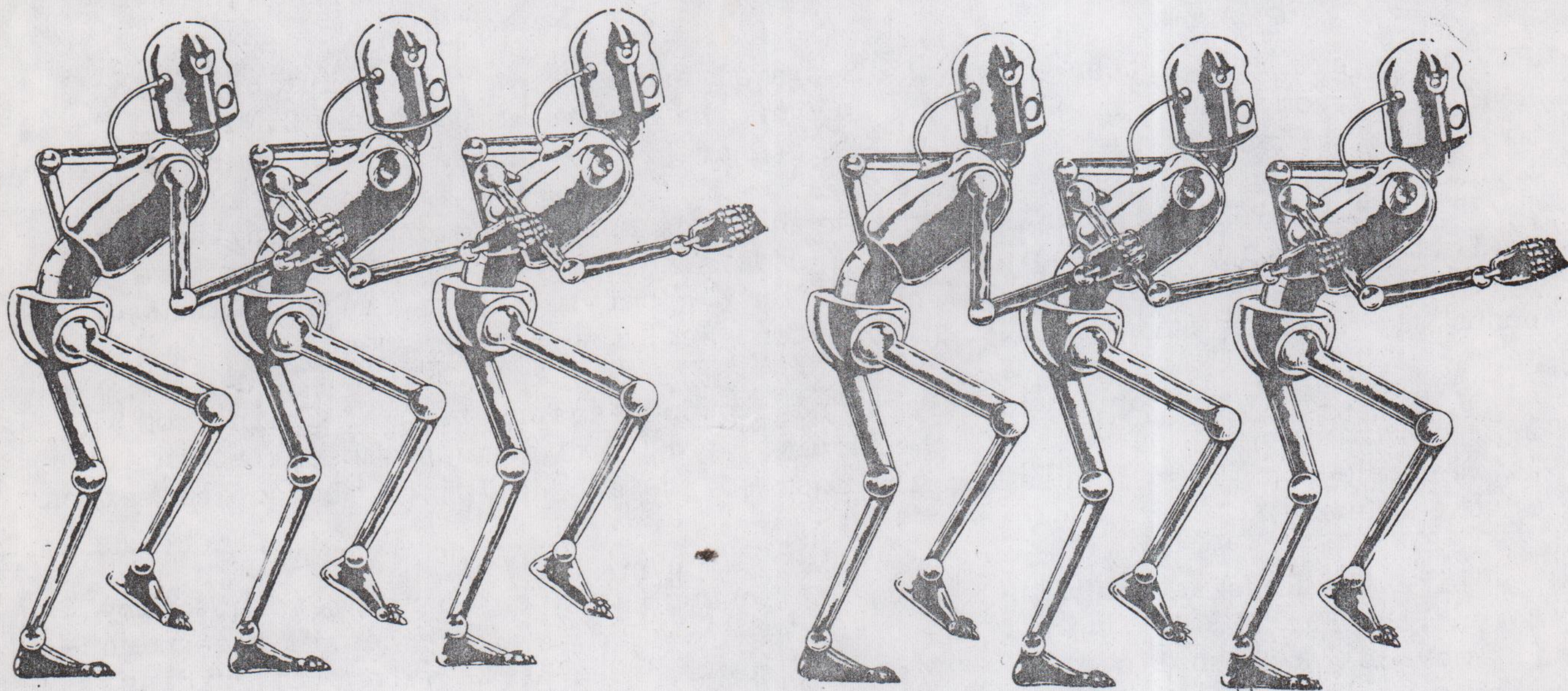
The body would be controlled by mass assemblies of the workers and all posts would be subject to instant recall. Some anarchists identified this body with the state. They failed to see that it would be under the full democratic control of the masses themselves, to coordinate the committees and councils that they themselves were creating.

Jose Peirats in his book 'Anarchists In The Spanish Revolution', accuses the FRIENDS OF DURRUTI of 'revolutionary Jacobinism'. He claims that they never had the importance ascribed to them by foreign historians when all the evidence points to the contrary. "The relative unimportance of its members, POUM participation, and the Marxist flavour of some of its communiques all serve to dilute the real influence of the FRIENDS OF DURRUTI".

A partial list at the end of the pamphlet shows that the FRIENDS OF DURRUTI were lifelong activists in the libertarian movement. As to working with the POUM and accusations of Marxism, arguments like these are often used by those in the anarchist movement who cannot rise above crude abuse and want to remain 'pure'.

The fact remains that the FRIENDS OF DURRUTI attempted to push the revolution forward, while others vacillated and were bogged down in confusion and in collaboration with the Stalinists and the bosses.

The pamphlet displays some of the weaknesses of the Spanish anarchist tradition. It asserts without evidence that Spain is the epicentre of the European revolution. It emphasises the role of the revolutionary unions without reference to other areas of struggle. Nevertheless it is a useful introduction to the ideas of an important and sadly ignored revolutionary current.



CHANGING THE PARTY LINE OR DOING THE "LENIN

QUICK STEP"

DON'T BE A SOLDIER!

the radical anti-war movement in
north london 1914-18 · Ken Weller. £3.25



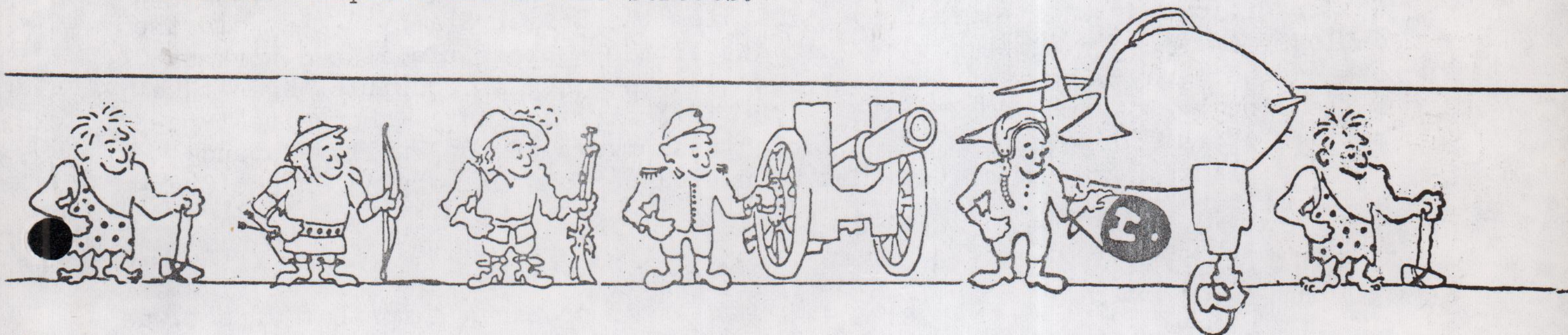
Ken Weller is a member of the libertarian socialist group SOLIDARITY, and his aim in this book is to show that "the main origin of the radical anti-war movement was not in the established socialist groups, or among middle-class pacifists, although both these currents made a contribution...rather it lay in the 'rebel' milieu which had existed before the war - 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".

Ken not only shows this in much interesting detail, he shows that whilst opposition to the war was amongst a minority at its start the determined and courageous stand of this minority gradually drew many elements in the working class to it. This wider movement in

its turn inspired the massive "wave of industrial and social unrest which shook British society to its foundations in the first years of peace"

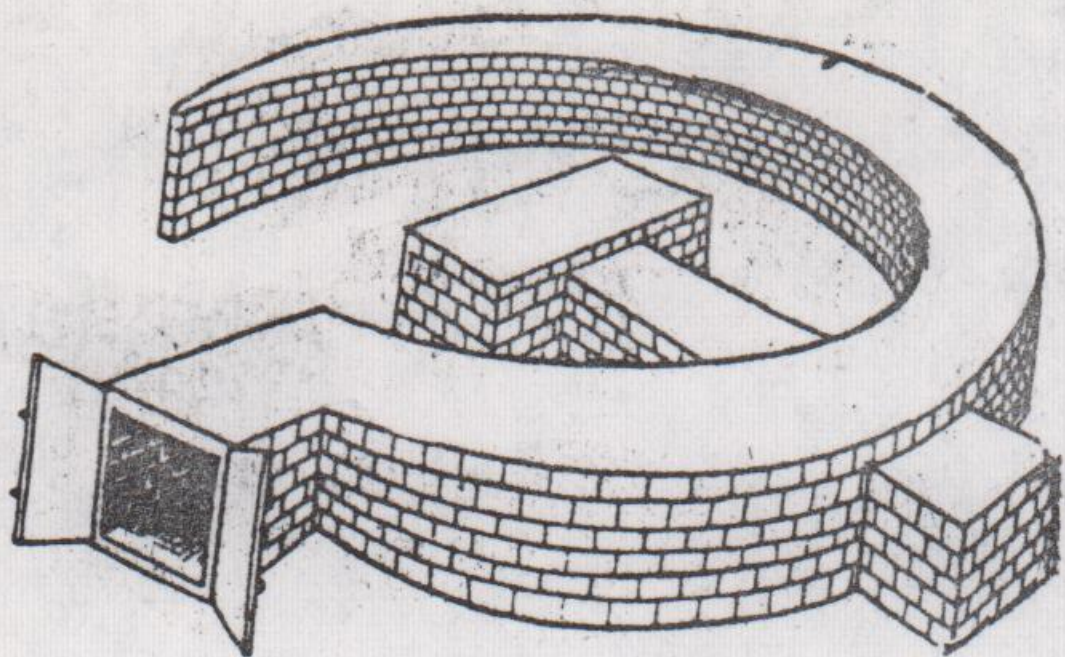
The anti-war movement in Islington teemed with working-class anarchists and syndicalists, and there are several accounts of the colourful careers of some of these militants. Many street meetings took place, despite often massive harassment from 'patriots'.

This book should be read, as a reminder that libertarian and anti-authoritarian socialist ideas have had some effect on the British working-class movement in the past. But, above all, the bravery of these anti-militarists should be taken as inspiration to rebuild a revolutionary libertarian presence in the workplace and in the streets.



To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, squeezed, mystified, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, despised, harassed, tracked, abused, clubbed, disarmed, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and, to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.

Joseph Proudhon.



LENIN ON CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

'In order to go on with the nationalisation of banks and proceed unswervingly toward the transformation of banks into nodal points of social accountancy in a socialist economy, we must prove ourselves successful....in catching and shooting grafters and crooks etc.' SOBRANIE SOCHINENIY, 'The Next Tasks of the Soviet Power', p.204, Vol.XV of the Works.

'There will not be any famine in Russia, if we take a full census of grain and other products at our disposal and if we show ourselves ready to mete out the harshest punishments for the violation of the established order'. Works p.246, see above.

'There was not a single revolution in history when people did not instinctively feel it and did not manifest salutary firmness by shooting thieves on the spot. The trouble with the former revolutions was that this revolutionary enthusiasm which maintained this state of tension among the masses and which gave them the strength ruthlessly to crush the elements of disintegration lasted only for a short time.' Works p.214.

'Does not class struggle in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism consist in safeguarding the interest of the worker from the small handful of groups and layers within its own ranks who obstinately persist in the traditions of capitalism? They still view the Soviet State as they did the employer in the old times : give 'him' as little as possible, as bad work as one can get away with - and squeeze out as much money as possible. Haven't we quite a number of such scoundrels in our proletarian midst - among the typesetters of the Soviet print shops, among the workers of the Putilovsky and Sormovo plants? How many of them did we nab, expose, and pillory?' 'On the Character of Our Press', p.419, Vol.XV.

'The Red Army, as a result of many months of propaganda to that effect, was on par with the discipline of the old army. Harsh, rigorous measures, going as far as applying the highest penalty - shooting were used in the Red Army; even the old government shied from introducing those measures in the army on such an extensive scale. The philistines shout and howl: the Bolsheviki have introduced shootings'. Our answer should be : 'Yes we did! and we did it purposefully.' 'A Speech Delivered at the 2nd All Russian Convention of the Representatives of Politico-Educational Departments of the Red Army'. Oct.17, 1921, p.379. Vol.XVlll.

'An insurrection of White Guards is in the course of preparation at Nizhni. The utmost must be done, unleash a mass terrorist action, shoot and deport the hundreds of prostitutes who are getting the soldiers drunk etc. Do not lose a single minute. Shoot those with-holding arms. Massive deportation of Mensheviks and unsure elements'. To the Soviet of Nizhni-Novgorod. 9, August 1918. p.356 Vol.XXXV.

SOCIALISM, ANARCHISM AND THE QUESTION OF POWER

Political power involves the ability to achieve desired goals, even (or especially) if others are opposed to those ends. It often involves the use of force and violence, or the threat of such use, coercion.

SOCIALISTS of reformist and revolutionary varieties seek to gain power and exercise it through the centralised institutions of the state. The reformist approach to the question of political power is deeply flawed, for being willing to work through the existing state institutions, 'democratic' socialists delude themselves into thinking that they can be used to dismantle the economic and political institutions of capitalism. The whole history of 'democratic' socialism has indicated that, far from wielding power of the state, reformists are its prisoner. Only those reforms which do not seriously undermine the existing social order are viable. Those, like President Allende of Chile, who have attempted to use the constitution to bring about socialism have, sooner or later, been liquidated. This possibility does not however apply to most reformist socialist parties such as the British Labour Party, since they have no serious intention of bringing about a socialist system. 'Socialism', for people like Kinnock, is more properly described as welfare capitalism. It applies progressive taxation to provide social services but leaves the gross inequalities and exploitative organisations of capitalism intact. Real power remains with capitalism and the coercive state whilst the trappings of power are eagerly fought for by the 'socialist' politicians.

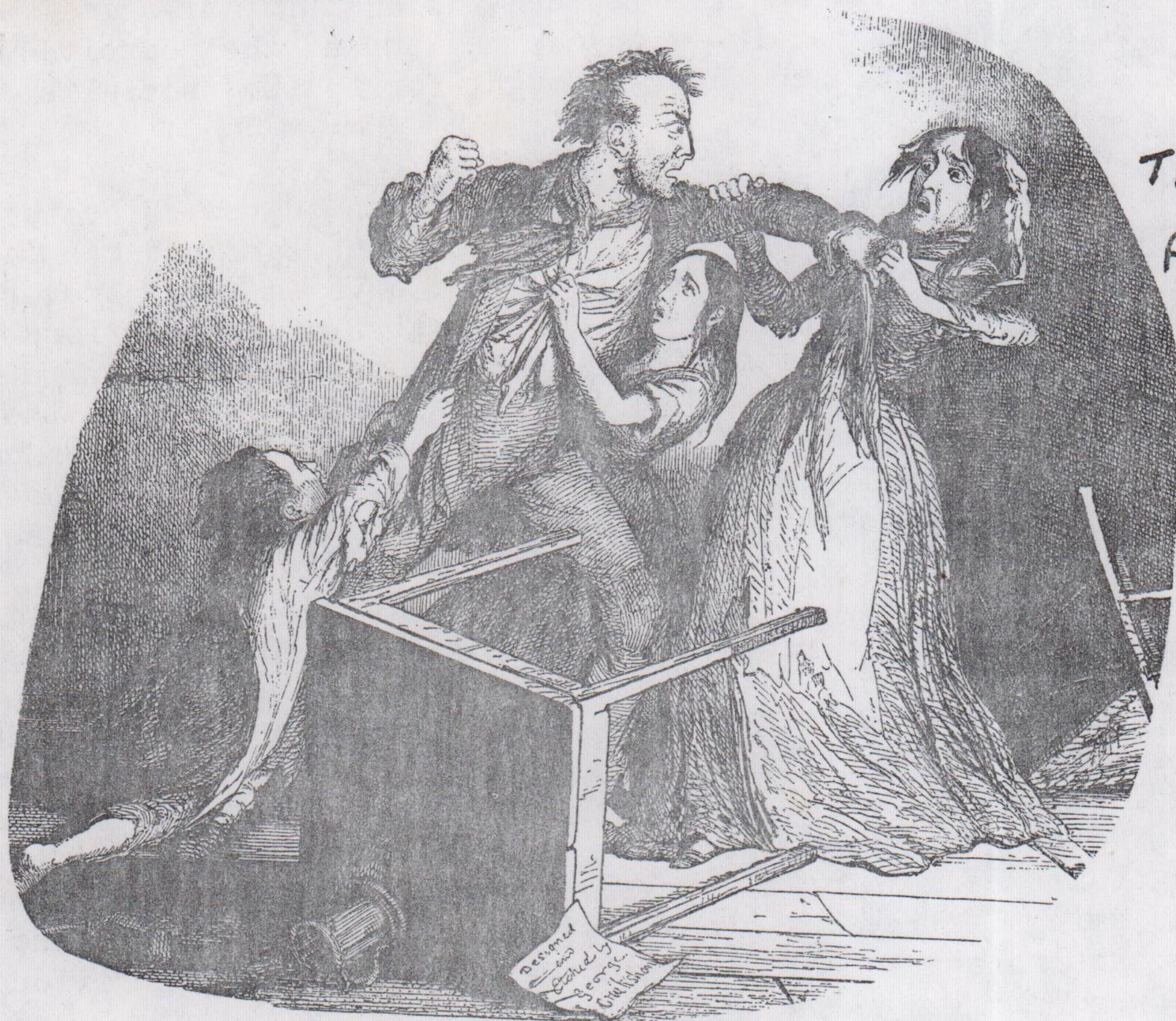
Marxists have always been aware of the limitations of the reformist approach. Power, they argue must be seized by and for the working class and the capitalist state must be smashed. (This is the 'classic' position. Even Marx, however, was willing in his later years to consider using the existing institutions to achieve socialism. See K. Marx, 'The Hague Congress' in Marx and Engels 'On Britain', 1962 page 494.) Power, for the Marxists, must be centralised and wielded by the proletariat, through dictatorship to eliminate all of the last vestiges of capitalism. As capitalist relics are destroyed, so the story goes, the need for a coercive state disappears, and thus the state eventually withers away, giving rise to a communist society.

The Marxist approach is very attractive. Unlike reformist socialism, it appears to be realistic - since the capitalist state involves the concentration of force to maintain capitalist rule, so will the victorious proletariat need such an instrument for its rule. The state, the Marxists argue, must be an expression of the will of the proletariat. The chief weakness of this formulation is that assumes the existence of a single, uniform proletarian will. In reality, except over a very limited number of issues, and for a very short period of time, no such single will can exist. Human beings believe passionately in very different ideas and value systems. Within the proletariat alone, there are clashes between individuals, within families, between skilled and unskilled, north and south, religious and non-religious etc. Any attempt to exercise power which assumes a single, indivisible will can only lead to dictatorship over the proletariat (or at least sections of it). This development was most clearly demonstrated after the October Revolution of 1917. In the name of the proletariat, workers were subject to secret police and army violence, dictatorial one-man management, militarisation of labour and the shooting of strikers etc.

Few Marxists have been prepared to allow the working class to act independently (the most outstanding contrary example being the 'Council Communist' movement) preferring to act as guides, leaders, or authentic interpreters of its 'true' interests. Proletarian dictatorships (so called) have been historically little more than party/bureaucratic despotisms in which any opposition, proletarian or otherwise has been repressed. The centralisation of power, superficially so attractive as a means of emancipation, has invariably lead to new forms of domination, hierarchy and exploitation.

Anarchists, have from the beginning, been aware of the dangers inherent in the concentration of power. As an effectively permanent condition (regardless of the good intentions to the contrary) we have realised the corrupting effects of political power. Given control over other people's lives, individuals however well intentioned, will tend to act in arbitrary ways. Power is enjoyable in itself and brings with it economic rewards, cudos and sycophancy.

On the other hand most anarchists have accepted the need for the exercise of power (as violence, force, boycotts, strikes etc.) as a means of bringing about the social revolution. Where we have parted company with the Marxists is in the way such power is organised and what happens to it on the morrow of the classless society. Anarchists are highly suspicious of centralised power, and indeed political mediation of any kind. A balance has to be struck between the requirements of achieving and defending the revolution on the one hand, and the avoidance of counterrevolutionary tendencies inherent in the exercise of power on the other. The fear of being corrupted by the exercise of power has been both a source of strength and weakness for anarchists. The problem is how to destroy the power of the old ruling class and, as far as possible disperse and atomise it throughout society. Anarchists, in their pursuit of the latter, have been unwilling to organise for the former and have consequently often fallen easy prey to both bourgeois and Marxist authoritarians.



THE ABUSE OF
POWER CAN EXIST
IN ALL SOCIAL
INSTITUTIONS.

A balance must be struck between the achievement of revolutionary ends and the avoidance of the tyranny of power. Bakunin, whilst himself pre-occupied with secret societies etc. outlined a means of combining effective cooperative organisation with individual/local autonomy. His approach can be summed up thus: organisations must found themselves upon federation with authority flowing from the base to the summit, from the perimeter to the centre, which could act as the coordinating body for the association as a whole. By such means, local autonomy is effectively incorporated into a unitary body. By the above means, both the organisation necessary for revolution and the impediment to the abuse of power and dictatorship are contained within a single movement. A concomitant to the above is a jealous guarding of individual/group autonomy and the inclusion of institutional safeguards such as the recall of delegates etc. (See the article on federation in this issue).

Revolutionary structures can be created which are both decentralised and effective. Revolutionary autonomy, as an expression of decentralised proletarian self-determination has been carried out on a number of occasions in the past, most notably in Spain during the Civil War, though with the lack of clear objectives the anarchists ultimately failed.

Recognising the problems inherent in the concentration of power, anarchists seek its destruction and disintegration (and this is what distinguishes us from the socialists). Thus we are anti-state, anti-capitalist, anti-party, anti-church etc. Power must, as far as is feasible, be atomised and equalised so that no single group or individual can dominate another. Freedom is only possible with the elimination of concentrated power and the generalisation of social and economic equality.



THE FUTURE SOCIETY

The vision of a future, anti-authoritarian, society has not been conjured out of the blue by 'utopian' thinkers in their drawing rooms. It can be glimpsed in the struggles of the oppressed throughout history, in the first workers' organisations, the early unions and cooperatives, and above all in the revolutions or aborted revolutions that have shaken capitalism in the last hundred years. At every high point of the class struggle, the workers and the population

towns and spontaneously experim-

By 'spontaneously' we mean without external directives from some party or group, not without or planning, in complete disorder.

In all of these revolutionary episodes, there has been an amazing collective capacity for creation, in complete contrast to the many years of submission that came before.

There are obviously big differences between the first French Revolution and, say HUNGARY 1956, but on every occasion it was the more exploited sections of the population that took the initiative, and their expectations were always egalitarian and ant-authoritarian.

Democracy was conceived as a sovereign people controlling where they worked and lived. Each revolution ended in tragedy, the workers were crushed in rivers of blood and betrayed by politicians who imposed totalitarian regimes. The idea of direct, working-class democracy was clubbed down with each of these defeats.

The French Revolution created one of the first Bourgeois republics. At the same time revolutionary ideas emerged among working people in the 'revolutionary sections'. While the Jacobins erected a tyrannical state, which ultimately allied with the triumphant bourgeoisie, the 'Enrages' and 'bras-nus', composed of small artisans, but also of workers employed by the new masters, experimented with other ways of organising. The idea emerged of the revolutionary communes (municipalities) directly controlled by the people, and a republic of these freely federated together.

In 1871 the Paris Commune reinterpreted and updated these ideas. The Commune was elected and mandated by the population. The idea of freely federated communes emerged again, and they were seen as taking over from the ruling class and the state.

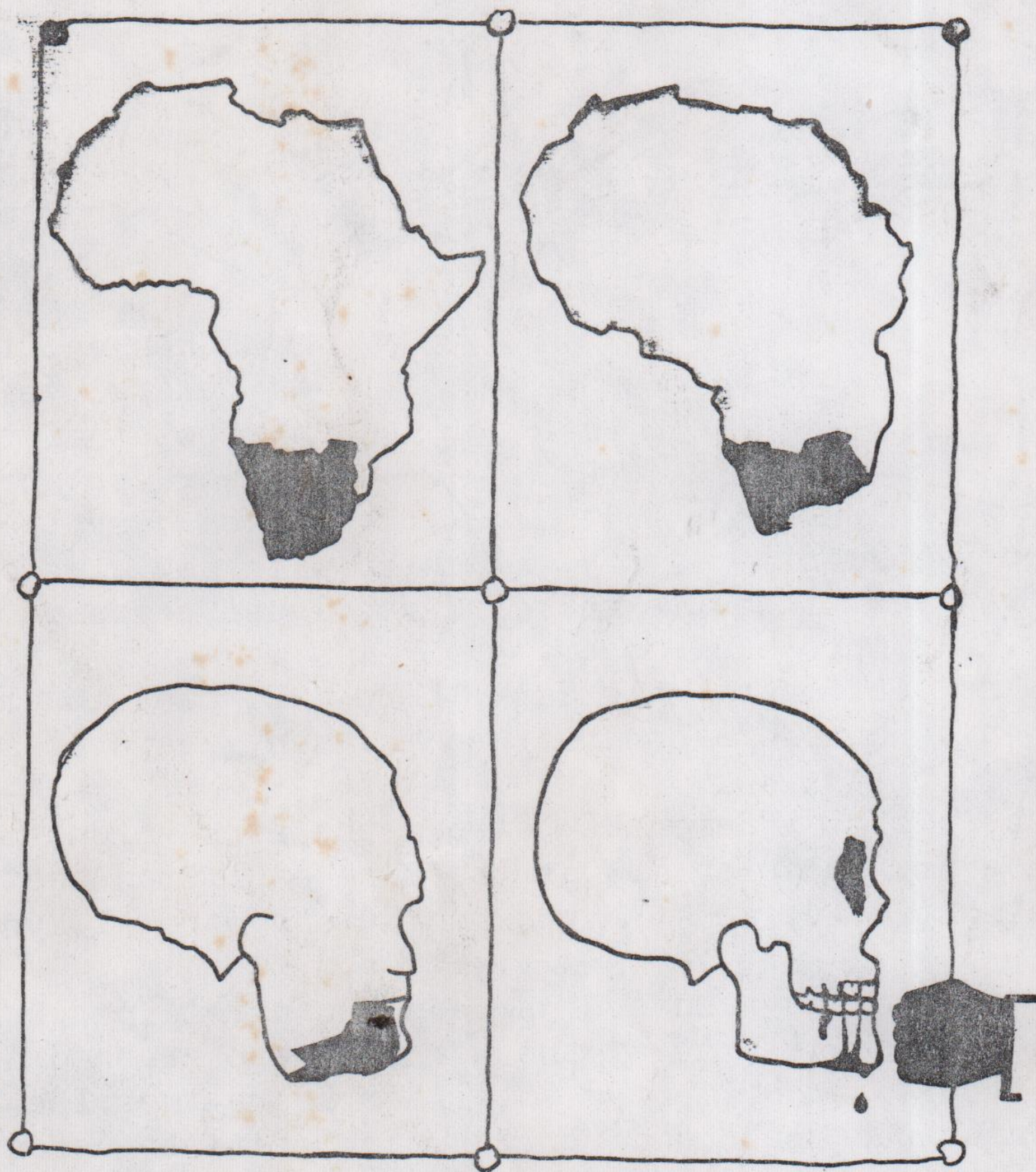
In 1905 in Russia a revolutionary upsurge gave birth to the 'Workers' Councils' ; in the work places committees were nominated by workers ,and in many towns councils of workers delegates emerged,ready to take over production and society itself.This was a spontaneous creation,amazing all the self-styled revolutionaries of the time.

In 1917 in Russia,contrary to all official versions there were not one but two Octobers:that of the workers,peasants and soldiers,who started to run society,and that of the Bolsheviks who set up their government and began to impose their dictatorship,robbing the Soviets (councils) of all real democratic content in centralising power in their own hands.They attacked those militants who refused the one party dictatorship (socialists,trade unionists,anarchists),state capitalism was imposed against the spontaneous socialism of the workers and peasants.

Between 1918 and 1921,workers set up councils in Germany,Hungary,Ireland and Italy.

In Spain between 1935-37,many experiments in self-management in the work place and community took place,with the active presence of anarcho-syndicalist militants. This was followed by workers' councils in Hungary 1956,in liberated Algeria,where experiments in self management were smothered by the new State,in France in 1968 where the idea of self-management sprang up everywhere.Ideas of direct democracy and self-management can be seen in the workers' Cordones in Chile,before the Pinochet coup,in the agricultural collectives and socialised workplaces in the Portugese Revolution (1974) and in currents within Solidarity in Poland.

Thus we can see from this brief survey that the 'natural' form of social organisation is democratic ,egalitarian and free.The ideas of anarchism,socialism or communism,call it what you will,was the creation of a class born within capitalism namely the working class.It was enriched or clarified by many thinkers,but they did not give birth to it.



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