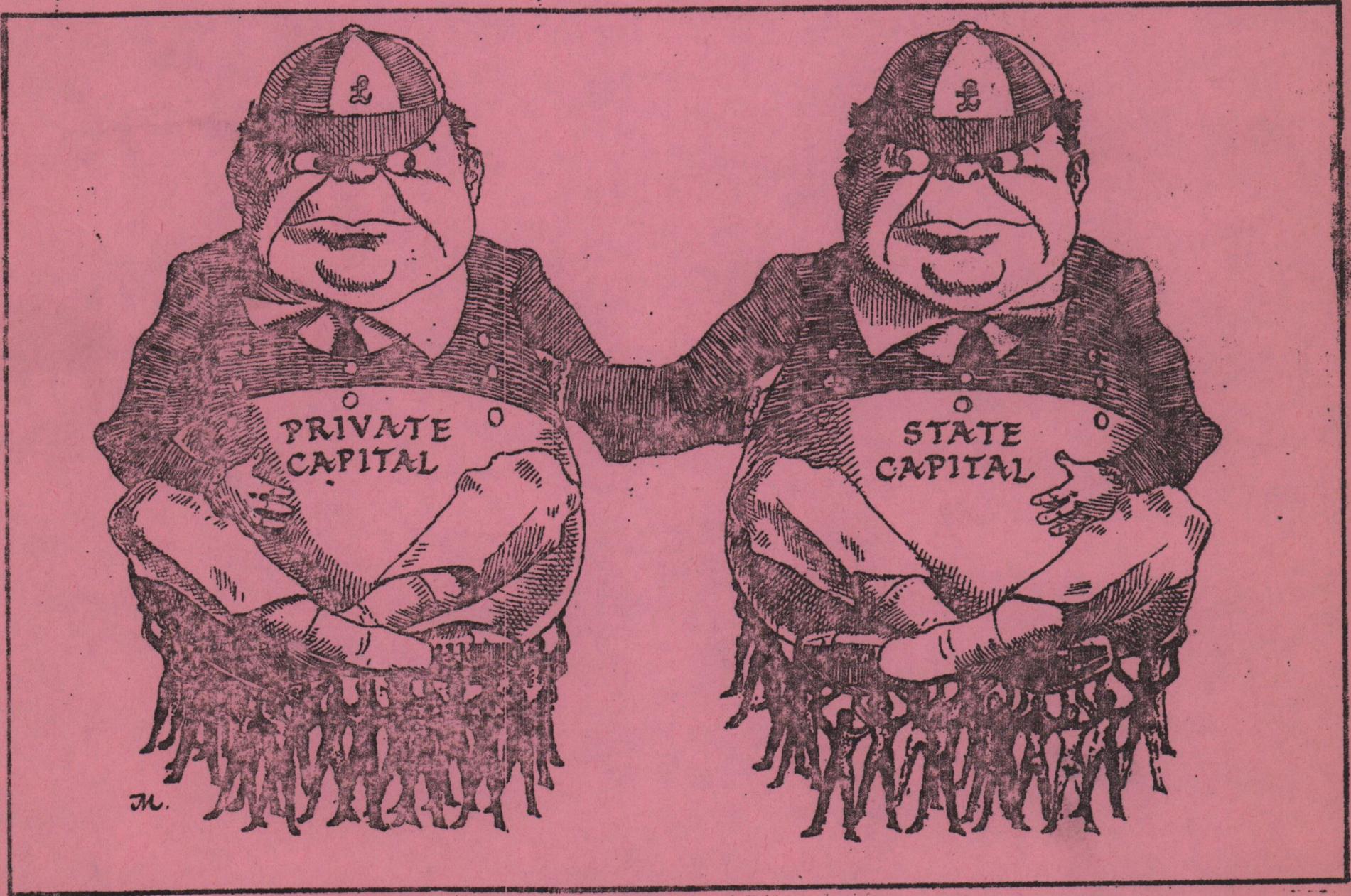


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INTERCOM No 3

revolutionary discussion bulletin



30p

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unnumbered Ultra-left entrism in the 'Peace Movement'

Also:

Leaflets and bulletins from:

'Wildcat' (Manchester)
'Careless Talk' (Stoke)
'Black Star' (Sunderland)
'Practical Anarchy' (Glasgow) - not in all issues.
and from Crew, Doncaster.

NOTES:

We apologise for the poor reproduction of page 22, which introduces and explains the following piece from P.Moore. If you can't manage to read it we can send you a copy of the original on request.

Can we ask contributors again to try their best to avoid the use of unnecessary jargon and to keep to the point.

We do NOT have any account in the name of either 'Intercom' or 'Wildcat', so please send financial contributions by way of blank postal orders, stamps or cash, or by prior arrangement to a member of the group.

This issue of 'Intercom' has been produced by the 'Wildcat' Group.
Please note the amendment to our address:

Wildcat
Box 25
434 Corn Exchange
Hanging Ditch
Manchester M4 3BN
England.

The next issue will be produced by comrades in London. See page2 for details.

Only a very limited number of copies have been produced so

PLEASE PASS ON OR LEND THIS COPY TO ANYONE ELSE YOU THINK MAY BE INTERESTED.

INTRODUCTION

The 'Intercom' bulletin and meetings were the outcome of a conference in Manchester in September 1982, which in turn followed the production of a pilot issue of a discussion bulletin called the 'New Ultra-Left Review' by the 'Wildcat' group in Manchester.

The bulletin was intended to promote an exchange of information on the activities of various groups and individuals who together form a minority communist tendency distinct from what is generally called the 'left wing' and who sometimes describe themselves as: anarchist-, libertarian-, council- and left-, communists. It was hoped that this information would provide the basis for regular discussion and debate amongst our political tendency leading to greater clarification of important issues and increased co-operation in practical work. (see Conference report for more on this)

The first two issues were produced by the 'Careless Talk' collective, this issue has been produced by the 'Wildcat' group and the next issue will be produced by members of the London Workers Group involved in the magazine 'Workers Playtime'.

Articles which conform to the basic political outline below and which in general are pre-typed on a 'Universal' stencil, to fit A4 paper will be automatically included. Other material is included at the discretion of the production group. Leaflets and newsletters will be included if they are on stencils or at least 200 are provided. 'Intercom' is generally available on subscription only at 30p per copy including postage.

THE FOLLOWING POINTS FORM THE MINIMUM POLITICAL BASIS FOR REGULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLICATION OF 'INTERCOM' :

1. Opposition to the class society which exists in every country in the world.
2. Commitment to the communist objective - abolition of nation states and the money/market/wages system and its replacement by the common ownership and democratic control of the worlds resources.
3. Rejection of 'nationalisation' as any kind of solution to working class problems.
4. Support and encouragement for independent working class struggle outside the control of the trade unions (including the shop stewards and 'rank and file' movements), and all political parties.
5. Opposition to all capitalist and nationalist parties, including the Labour Party.
6. For the active participation by the whole working class in its own emancipation through a social revolution which overthrows all governments, bosses and leaders.
7. Rejection of all forms of nationalism - for the internationalisation of working class struggle. *
8. Active opposition to racism and sexism.
9. Opposition to religion and all other ideological mystifications.
10. Support for principled co-operation among revolutionaries and opposition to sectarianism.

NOTE: ALL MATERIAL FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT, NOT LATER THAN THE END OF SEPTEMBER 1983, TO:

'WORKERS PLAYTIME' c/o C.1. METROPOLITAN WHARF,
WAPPING WALL, LONDON E.1.

and mark 'for INTERCOM'.

*(This point appears in its amended form which was previously omitted.)

REPORT OF 'INTERCOM' CONFERENCE

The last 'Intercom' conference took place over the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of July in Keele. Sixteen people attended throughout, representing three main groups: 'Workers Playtime' (LWG) from London, 'Careless Talk' from Stoke, and 'Wildcat' from Manchester, with in addition two comrades previously involved in 'Subversive Graffiti' from Aberdeen.

This was a slightly smaller number and narrower geographical representation than at the earlier 'launch' meeting.

As a result of people moving away from Aberdeen the 'Subversive Graffiti' newsheet is no longer being produced. The form of political activity of the 'Wildcat' group has changed over recent months. Various individuals seem to have lost interest in the 'Intercom' project and we have failed to involve others, such as the ex-ICC people and some of the class-struggle orientated anarchists. Also we had failed to generate as much real discussion as we had wanted.

For all these reasons it was thought necessary to reconsider the future and function of 'Intercom'.

The publication itself is still in demand and we all valued the contact and co-operation we had achieved so far but our base of support is very limited. Because of this we decided to continue with the publication, but to extend its function into a means of addressing other groups and individuals on our political fringe and to adopt a more positive 'editorial' policy.

The next edition of 'Intercom' is to be produced by London comrades involved with 'Workers Playtime'.

We also discussed ways in which those of us outside London could assist the 'Workers Playtime' publication and make use of it in our own activities.

Incidental to these discussions was a review of the past contents of 'Intercom' particularly No2 including the long article by Simon Leefe. It was felt that whilst this article provided a useful general introduction to the organisation of work and 'new technology' and might inspire a discussion of the capitalist economy, that its own economic content was very poor and largely lacked a sound historical and class basis.

On Sunday there were three main political discussions:

The first concerned our definition of the 'working class' and the process of working class struggle. Whilst a general distinction was made between the 'working class' (as propertyless wage labourers) and other classes such as the capitalist class, peasants, slaves, petty traders, tribespeople etc, most of the discussion revolved around the changing composition of the working class and divisions such as that between 'productive' and 'nonproductive' workers, supervisors and supervised, factory and office workers, direct producers of commodities and those involved in the reproduction of labour power etc. It was felt that these divisions could only start to be overcome in the process of collective struggle and that some workers (such as teachers) because of their special position could only become involved in large number when there was already a high level of activity amongst the rest of the class and then only by specifically rejecting their role in the system. It is hoped that an article might emerge from this discussion.

The second discussion was about the anti-nuclear and anti-war movement. Comparisons were made between the movement in other parts of Western Europe (particularly Germany and Italy) with that in Britain. There was

general agreement on the need to expose the single issue politics of the anti-nuclear movement and the organisation and activities of CND in particular. There was also a common criticism of the dogmatic feminism of many women in the 'peace' movement, who whilst looking beyond simple anti-nuclear politics, blamed 'male psychology' for the threat of war. At the same time it was thought that articles such as that in 'Workers Playtime' No1 oversimplified the make-up of the movement and ignored those involved in direct action against missile sites who rejected all wars between states on a more fundamental basis.

The last discussion took as its starting point the article on 'Centralism' in the last issue of 'Intercom'. It was felt that this article, fine as far as it went, might give readers the impression that the only differences we had with groups such as the 'International Communist Current' were over organisation. Whilst we did hold certain formal political positions in common, there were some fundamental differences in practice, particularly in how we view and relate to the class struggle.

Other more informal discussions also took place over the weekend which was in my opinion both politically valuable and a very sociable event. Our thanks to all the Stoke comrades who made it possible.

MB (Wildcat). July 83.

'World Revolution'

The 'International Communist Current' in Britain, responded in the July issue of its paper 'World Revolution' to the article in 'Intercom' No2 entitled 'A Reply to Centralist Critics', although it chose not to submit anything to 'Intercom' itself.

Unfortunately there is little in the way of a serious political response to the views expressed in the 'Intercom' article. Instead we are served up a series of sarcastic comments and snide remarks involving some very selective quotes from completely different articles. The contents of some of the articles undoubtedly deserve criticism but this isn't the way to do it.

The ICC still finds it impossible to understand the nature and validity of 'Intercom' as an open discussion journal for revolutionaries, which isn't surprising when their own discussions are hidden away in secret internal publications.

'Solidarity' (England)

In a letter I wrote following the initiation of a new series of the 'Solidarity' magazine I ended by saying; "Hopefully this new series of your journal will see some clarity emerging on the major issues facing us at this crucial time."

Unfortunately in the same edition of the magazine (No2) in which my letter was published this hope is immediately dashed. This issue is totally dominated by a long and tedious article from the groups mentor - Castoriadis - which has eventually exposed this individuals obsession with the concept of bureacracy as the road to capitulation to the propaganda of the Wester ruling class. Andy Browns' week criticism of the article pleads that "....he must see how easy it is to misrepresent what he is trying to say...." but taken together with other material from Castoriadis there is no room left for doubt or misrepresentation as to his position.

Those few, still members of, or influenced by 'Solidarity' should seriously consider the possibillity that Castoriadis is here expressing only the logical outcome of the groups pwn political positions over recent years, on such matters as; social democracy, the trade unions and CND.

Solidarity continued...

The only saving grace in this issue is John Kings clear refutation of Castoriadis arguments and his request that others publicly dissasociate themselves from them - we await the outcome.

MB (Wildcat) July 83.

THE ORIGINS OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT IN JAPAN

Written by John Crump

published by St Martins Press.

I had hoped to write a detailed review of this book but unfortunately I don't have the time before 'Intercom' is due out.

Suffice it to say for now that this is one of the only easily available english language accounts of the origin of 'socialist' ideas in Japan during the period from about 1870 up until 1918. It deals with both the 'outside' influences of European Social Democracy, Russian Populism, American Christian 'Socialism' and various anarchist traditions and the way in which these were adapted to fit in with the particular class divisions and changing class composition of Japanese society in this period. It is written by someone who is not only a genuine revolutionary socialist but who places himself well within the framework of the 'intercom' project. The 'Introduction' itself is worth reading in this connection.

I know that the author, partly because of his uncomproising approach, had great difficulty in getting a publisher and it is now only available in a very expensive hardback edition (nearly £16 !) but it is worth trying to get it at you local library.

You might also look out for a longer, if largely uncritical, review by Mark Shipway in a forthcoming edition of 'Freedom'.

MB. 11.7.83

IMPORTANT IMPORTANT..... IMPORTANT..... IMPORTANT....

This issue of 'Intercom' has been produced by the 'Wildcat' group in Manchester. As a result of the money we have laid out for this, the high cost of our commercially rented accomodation address and the cost of free leaflets we are desperately short of funds.

You can help by paying promptly for any copies of 'Intercom' you take. If you think the 'Intercom' project is worthwhile and our activities useful then you could also make a financial contribution: cash or blank postal orders preferred. See address elsewhere.

IMPORTANT IMPORTANT..... IMPORTANT..... IMPORTANT....

TRANSLATIONS

Since we started producing INTERCOM, the Careless Talk Collective has received a steady stream of journals produced by groups in other countries. Regrettably the only ones we are able to read are those published in French. As other groups probably also receive these journals, we thought it would be a good idea to present a few translations. This does not necessarily imply any political agreement with the contents of the translations. Probably the most interesting paper we have received is L'EVEIL Internationaliste. They have recently produced a series of journals which translate articles into French. The most recent edition included articles from the groups associated with the INTERCOM project.

1. Workers' Voting Paper

NOTE: This article appeared under the title "Bulletin de Vote du Proletaire." It provided us with the inspiration to produce our own election leaflet - see elsewhere in this issue.

Their address is BP221 44604 St NAZAIRE Cedex France.

"I accept the WORK which kills me by degrees, for the good of my Capitalist MASTERS, bosses, extortionists and the other bastards, private zoos as well as nationalised zoos, and in general for the good of all the bourgeois who only exist to deprive me of all real human life.

"I accept this deprivation, in order to remain a slave, beast of burden among other beasts of burden. As regards my fellow workers, I only want competitive relations, so that I can sell myself more dearly. And I will force myself now and always to do more and more so that I will have the right to remain in the service of my MASTERS, clinging to the hope that they will throw me a pitying glance of recognition. And whoknows whether one day, by dint of tenacity and boot-licking, I will not myself reach the rank of Upholder of the System, since I haven't won the pools yet.

"And in everything I declare that I place myself in the hands of the UNIONS and the PARTIES, who think, know and lead for me. And if this world should be a failure, I prefer to die with them than to follow the path of ADVENTURE.

"I demand the PUNISHMENT of all those who inconsiderately question the ESTABLISHED ORDER and I insist that COPS and JUDGES, whom I pay for from my own taxes, should be lined up against them.

"I declare myself ready at all times to defend my COUNTRY: today, by multiplying my EFFORTS to defend the NATIONAL ECONOMY, thanks to all the plans of AUSTERITY that they make me swallow; tomorrow in enrolling myself in the national army to fight the WAR which will exterminate the workers of other countries (and also of my own) for the greater good of my leaders and bosses.

3 WORKERS' STRUGGLE IN FRENCH MOTOR INDUSTRY

To start its manoeuvres against the proletariat, capital placed the social democracy in government in France. For the proletarians, this bourgeois socialism meant more CRS (NOTE: CRS = paramilitary riot police), a fall in salaries, stronger exploitation of labour, stricter control of frontiers, more systematic expulsion of immigrants and a stronger attack on the unemployed. In resisting these attacks, some sections of the proletariat have shown that, whoever the government may be, it is not necessary to abandon the struggle against the whole system of bourgeois exploitation. After the struggle of the iron and steel workers of Chiers, the entire motor industry was shaken by a wave of strikes (April '82 - '83) Started outside and against the house-union of Citroen, the strikes were quickly shackled by the competing union, the "free" CGT. The government of socialist-stalinist shits tried to use the combativity of the (union workers?) to gain support for the propaganda of "the new code of labour". The CGT, the CFDT (NOTE: competing union federations), the minister of labour, all were identical in talking about the "dignity of the worker", the "new rights of workers", the "end of serfdom at Citroen"...

Unfortunately for the CGT and the socialists, the "poor immigrant (union workers?)" working in large numbers in the motor industry, "were too ignorant, too untutored, too little French," to taste the subtle joys of "the democratic rights won in the factories". Against rapid speed ups, very short notice to quit, the clock and discipline of work, strikes started again, this time more radical, at the Citroen factory at Aulnoy, affirming day after day the class line that exists between partisans of the "freedom of work" and proletarians in struggle.

Each day, groups of workers marched through the workshops to entice away recalcitrants, to face the scabs officered by the bosses. The 'social peace' was broken in the factory by the determination of the strikers to impose their class force, the managers were terrorized, the authority and discipline of work were swept away, production was sabotaged.....one of the strongest symbols of bourgeois order in France staggered under the blows of the workers struggle. Neither the CGT, nor the socialists, nor any other bourgeois force could tolerate seeing the emancipation of proletarian force, and after some violent confrontations between strikers and scabs, the bourgeois front of order, of discipline of work joined together in the name of "freedom of work" and "the interest of the French motor industry" to smash the rising workers' struggle. Auroux, the minister, the bosses, the unions, all censured the workers massive abuse of liberty and used bourgeois justice to prosecute them.

"Using violence to make workers strike is not, for the CGT, one of the actions of a union"...."For such criminal conduct the perpetrators are to be excluded from their community of work"(Auroux).... "We have proved time and again that the violence was not on our side. The court officials were able to establish that we restarted work; it is as we have always wished ... long live French law in the workshops of fear."(CGT)

Using their foul and devoted press the ministers Mauroy and Deferre are launching at the French a first appeal for a pogrom against the

struggling immigrants, depicted as a total rabble of fanatic muslims. Despite their great isolation, we should understand the importance of these struggles. Defend the class struggle, not allowing the comrades to be condemned, measures of lay-off threaten all combative workers who surrender to the state cops.....

Long live revolutionary struggle!

@

From the FRACTION COMMUNISTE INTERNATIONALISTE we received the first issue of their journal LA REVOLUTION COMMUNISTE. This issue is mainly devoted to their basic principles and an introduction to their politics. They are yet another left communist group (probably a splinter from the GCI) who are obsessed with their own importance and the role of some future "communist" party. They claim to be in the tradition of the Italian left.. If you've got a strong stomach, or are totally unable to think of anything better to do, you can contact them by writing to BP 99, Bruxelles 6, B-1060 Bruxelles, Belgium. For the views of some of us with regards to this type of politics see the articles on Organisation by Louis Robertson and Mike Stone in the last issue of INTERCOM. We reprint a part of their programmatic basis.

4. BASIC PRINCIPLES

"The indispensable organ of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is the class party. It regroups in itself the most resolute and advanced fraction of the proletariat.... The fundamental tasks of the party are defending and spreading revolutionary theory, organising and directing the proletariat in the development of its struggle...."

They claim the party is going to have a vital role in the "period of transition" as well. They "...proscribe all democratic, autonomist and libertarian positions and claims centralism as the only possible proletarian mode of organisation." Nuff said.....

@

We have received very little material from groups that could be described as libertarian communist. We would like to receive some, any suggestions?

THE ANARCHIST "SCENE" IN THE NORTH WEST: FURTHER COMMENTS AND REPLY FROM A "PROPONENT OF EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY REFORMISM".

Here we go again: most anarchists are trendies and especially ones who happen to be 'punks'. It really does piss me off having to continually listen to 'older generation' anarchists put down people newer to anarchism than themselves because of the way they choose to dress or because they're pacifists etc.etc. M.B.'s piece in the last issue of Intercom on the February NWAFF conference in Liverpool is yet another example of this.

Okay so many of us as you say are proponents of extra-parliamentary reformism, can you honestly say that workers standing on picket lines defending living standards aren't doing the same? Maybe we do want to put as you patronisingly put it "a militant gloss" on the various campaigns you describe but don't you by seeking solidarity and greater support for the struggles of what is after all only one group of people among others - ie. workers - do the same?

I know this will sound angry but then I am angry. The past couple of years has seen a larger number of people - mostly young - than for a long time in the ideas of anarchism, largely though not completely due to the influence of 'anarchist punk' bands. Whatever your views for and against the 'pacifism' of these bands (and I mean the likes of Crass, Poison Girls etc.), I would at least have expected some recognition from older anarchists of what they have achieved, but what do we get instead? Attacks on people at NWAFF and other meetings because of the way they dress. Scathing comments such as "Crass boys", "Anarchy and Peace lot". 'Critiques' of the music industry and youth culture such as those in 'Summer Of A Thousand Julys' and 'Anarchy 34', or 'The End Of Music' which either completely misrepresent or ignore things. And to cap it all M.B. of 'Wildcat' labelling us all a "motley crew".

Most of us would not recognise a working class movement if one "were under their noses". Now as far as I'm aware, the divide between those anarchists who believe in class struggle and those anarchists who don't is not a new one. To use the fact that you do to put down people who you think don't really does smack of intolerance and lack of understanding. Not to mention the fact that it is both bigoted and patronising. It is like some anti-sexist men who say women never oppress men. A pile of shit basically.

Regarding your criticisms of the NWAFF both in the 'Intercom' article and at the subsequent Stoke conference. Yes the NWAFF as it is at present is disorganised but you know, if the NWAFF is to have any point at all there does have to be recognition of the differences which do exist between anarchists and a greater degree of tolerance all round. You, having been 'around' so to speak longer than most of us, must surely be aware of this?

Gjon.

Brief Reply to Gjon

just a few points:-

- 1) I did not and never have 'put down' anyone because of the way they dress.
- 2) The language used in my last contribution was born out of frustration and may have been a bit over the top.
- 3) However my basic criticism still stands and is only reinforced by Gjon's letter. He still fails to understand that seeing the class struggle (in it's broadest sense) as the basis of the libertarian communist movement and struggle is not simply an individual preference, one of many choices open to the libertarian communist but an alternative view to that peddled by the proponents of the 'alternative society', 'life-style politics' 'individual solutions' and reformism in general.
- 4) I had not previously come across the pamphlet 'The End of Music' though I now find I have had previous political connections with the authors. It is now available from: Calderwood, 15, BoxV2 C/o 488 Great Western Road, Glasgow G12. Price 75 p.

MB

The following letter was received by the Careless Talk Collective

Dear CTC,

Firstly, in answer to your implied question "What is wrong with student groups?" (implied by "anyway, what is wrong with a student address"), this is a bit like saying "what is wrong with police-cadet groups" or "what is wrong with television-fan groups". Do you deny that universities are simply organisations for the propagation of lies (including recuperated pseudo-contestation). Do you really think that there is such a thing as a revolutionary student. The student is under training for becoming a conservative element in the management of this society, and is therefore already such an element. The role of the student is to glamorise survival within this society, to advertise the dominant spectacular modes of pseudo-communication which pervade the planet (eg. the lecture). To take the few students who pretend to be revolutionary, what does this amount to? It amounts to accepting the student terrain and thus this society. The only revolutionary thing to do with universities is to destroy them.

In 1968, in France, most students were interested in 'university reform' or the 'position of universities in this society' (!!) (the rest were just open conservatives). However, I am ready to admit that, compared to the 15-odd million workers on wildcat general strike, and to the tens of thousands of young and old workers and unemployed who fought memorable battles with the cops in dozens of cities, there were also a few hundred people who were, purely in technical terms, 'at' university who were also revolutionary. Naturally, they openly admitted that they were 'anti-student' and that they wanted the absolute destruction of the university. (Consider the scandal of Strasbourg in 1966, and the text of the first Occupation Committee of the Sorbonne, which left the Sorbonne, en masse, on May 17th to help form the Committee for Maintaining the Occupations).

A few more remarks about the articles in Intercom 2 :

Simon Leefe's article makes the mistake of considering technology as a sort of deus ex machina, apart from the fact that he is continually trying to analyse the crisis and the workings of the system from what the bosses think of them. Certainly it is useful for us to know what the enemy class thinks of the capitalist crisis, but this is not determinant in what they are, and in how the crisis began and in how it will develop.

To analyse the present crisis, one has to consider how the ruling class extricated itself from the last one. It is not a matter of simply saying 'by means of an imperialist war', because that is not the whole story. On what basis did the ruling class manage its system after the war. To interpose a few figures at this juncture, price inflation in Britain between 1949 and 1953 was over 30% and between 1955 and 1965 it was 36%. During the period of reconstruction, capitalism increased production in sectors of industry destroyed by the war (houses, for example, especially in Germany, Russia, Poland and Britain), but it also increased production of what are called 'services' (eg. semi-durable goods with deliberately built-in breakability, universities, as well as fashions). The continuous inflationist policies pursued by the ruling class from 1945 did not create any new market for the extra surplus value which was liberated by these manoeuvres, but the artificial nature of the 'demand' for these goods was to some extent hidden by the reconstruction industries, which were of course doing a roaring trade. The end of the period of reconstruction revealed the fundamental lack of real demand inside capital for this liberated surplus value (what I mean is, for its realisation, because of course capitalists always want surplus value) which was in the first place only liberated through State interventions designed to drive down real wages.

Dbord thus is right when he says that "the essential contradiction of spectacular domination in crisis is that it has failed on its strongest point - certain paltry material satisfactions - which excluded many other satisfactions but which were presumed to be sufficient to procure the continued adhesion of the masses of producer-consumers. And it is exactly this material satisfaction that it has polluted and ceased to supply."

I do not think that the IMF, CBI, OPEC, TUC, etc. counterbalance or stop the basic anarchic nature of capitalist production. On the contrary, anarchy of production was only temporarily halted during the post-war reconstruction, and is now asserting itself more. On the contrary, protectionist policies have become the rule for the capitalist classes of all countries, from France and the US to Russia and Britain. This is more than anywhere else noticeable in the country with the biggest total capital, the US. In fact, in Poland, where there is only one big capitalist, this is where the internal effects of anarchy of production are deepest at present, and soon the whole world will resemble Poland. Witness also the other bankrupt countries (Mexico, Lebanon) and the countries at war (Palestine, El Salvador etc.)

Simon is thus very wrong to say that "the 'health' of an economy is determined by how much money is in circulation". On the contrary, the 'health' of an economy, which is the same thing as saying the prospects for the capitalist class, is determined solely by the capability of that class to reinvest its surplus value.

It is not the whole truth to say that the crisis started because "for some reason, prices rose", or at least wrong to see this in terms unconnected from the general conditions of capital. The truth is that the fundamental contradiction between the interests of the individual capitalist (wants his workers to have as low wages as possible, but wants other workers to have high wages so they can buy his goods) and the capitalist class as a whole (wants as high a profit rate $(s/v+c)$ as possible, but also wants demand) has once again become determinant.

Therefore, the present crisis can only be seen as a generalised crisis of the capitalist system, and not even a massive increase in the rate of exploitation (which is nonetheless what the capitalists will try) will extricate capitalism from it. A war might, though (new reconstruction etc.), but capitalism will for obvious reasons try other methods first, namely the acceleration of the present worldwide increase in poverty, rate of exploitation, and unemployment. Still, one should not forget the scores of 'minor' wars since 1945 (Korea, Cuba, Angola, Palestine, Vietnam, Chile, S. Africa, SW Africa, Kampuchea, the Arab-Israeli wars etc).

The deepening of the capitalist crisis, and the dynamic of the class struggle of the proletariat, will create the conditions for the escalation of proletarian discontent (including its own consciousness of itself), which this time is already beginning to know that its emancipation must be its own act, the consequence of generalised proletarian self-organisation, of civil war.

Most of the contributors to Intercom still defer to the stage-sets of the patently nationalist CND (with big or small letters), even if they pretend to put a 'radical' tinge on the holding hands, chanting, and conservatism of the Greenham women. The stupid 'Subversive Graffiti' group in Aberdeen devote three A3 pages to a glorification of the pseudo-action at Greenham; they think it's some kind of action (!) to chant 'show us your number' when kicked by the cops. What would they do in a real class war?? Revolutionaries must, on the contrary (and this group certainly is not revolutionary) continually combat their own image in the spectacle. This is the first condition for revolutionary coherence. To think that revolution=its image in the spectacle, this is counter-revolutionary in every way - it is the whole locus of recuperation.

Marx put his finger on the nature of pseudo-revolutionaries when he said in the 18th Brumaire of L. Bonaparte that one cannot judge people by the conception they have of themselves, but only by what they are and what they do. Those who, like Marx, Luxemburg, Pannakoeck, etc., espouse a real anti-ideological practical-critical method, know that ideologies are 'ideas that serve masters'. Anarchism, Leninism, Stalinism, Trotskyism, etc. are all counter-revolutionary; their only purpose is to put a new disguise on the old world in order to strengthen it.

The real movement which suppresses existing conditions, the real communist movement, is developing elsewhere, in quality as well as quantity. Revolutionaries must intervene in this process by actively contributing to the homogeneity of class consciousness. Revolutionary organisations which may exist before the absolute power of the workers councils must explicitly prepare for their own dissolution at this time. Parties, Unions, etc. are antagonistic to the communist project, and their forms have been anti-communist for a long time.

There are many things to be done.

Revolutionaries must try to state the whole of the matter the destruction of capital and its manifestations (wage-labour, commodity production, nations, money, pseudo-life). Of course intervention will only be effective where something is already happening, where proletarians are already rejecting the unbearable poverty of their condition, even if these rejections are not yet violent. As a communist I refuse to conceal my views and aims; I openly admit that my aims can only be achieved by the violent overthrow of all existing conditions. No aspect of this society's domination must be shielded from our attacks. In this respect, the paternalistic self-denying of the 'Wildcat' sheets is more or less saying to proletarians: "We know that what you are doing is part of the revolutionary movement but at present you are too stupid to understand it, so we will only state half the matter and try to limit you to making more demands from your enemies". (For example the article on the DHSS strikes in Wildcat 7 says 'Struggle for 12% and nothing less' as their culminating piece of advice). (Another example is the advert for a gay switchboard in 'Subversive' Graffiti, which glorifies survival within this society. Would these social workers give 'help and advice' to gay bosses?)

Revolutionaries are people who act theoretically and practically inside the process of the total escalation and generalisation (in quantity and quality) of the present proletarian refusals of this society. Talking about civil war, just like civil war itself, cannot be put off to the indefinite future, a la Kautsky.

Generalised coordinated intervention is necessary, which must be coherent at every level.

Red Egbert July 1983

P.S.

Simon Leefe shows a certain lack of understanding of what revolution is all about when on p.11 of Intercom 2, he defines the alternative either as 'a large number of productive workers opting out of production' or what he calls 'the classic seizure of the means of production'. Defining things like this, which cannot really be considered as separate from the rest of his article, forgets several basic facts, which I shall list:

- +++ Revolution means civil war, because the ruling class will not give in.
- +++ The real suppression of wage-labour and commodity production is equivalent to the workers' direct possession of all aspects of their activity, productive and otherwise. In one very important sense, all of human activity (and passivity) is productive, in the sense that everyone's life-span is filled with time and therefore with irreversible choices. This is what pseudo-revolutionaries, because of their lack of dialectical thought, do not understand.
- +++ Yes, Proletarians must seize the means of production and everything else; this is the reality of the end of wage labour. From the very beginning, this entails workers producing things for themselves (food, arms to fight troops etc.) Of course there will be bureaucratic forces trying to pull this back onto the terrain of the system. This is, of course, no reason not to do it, because every inch of the way along the revolutionary road, there will be counter-

S.W.P : CONFUSION OR RANK HYPOCRISY ?

One of the most significant groups outside the orbit of the Labour and 'Communist' parties, in Britain, is the Socialist Workers Party. It is important not primarily because of its size (though its membership is around 4,000), but more because of the fact that its politics have seemed credible to many who have rejected the Labour Party and are committed to the objectives of working class struggle.

The SWP also has a seemingly clear position on Russia & Eastern Europe as being State capitalist, which separates it from practically all of the remaining Trotskyist groups, and this is reflected in their slogan : "Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism".

In terms of practical activity, an enormous amount of energy is put in by members, up and down the country, at picket lines, occupations, meetings, at workplaces, inside the unions, and so on. A pity is therefore that much of this potentially revolutionary energy should be channelled ultimately in the direction of supporting some of the very institutions which uphold the present system.

THE LABOUR PARTY

The first fact to consider is that the SWP considers itself part of the "Left": the very same "left" which includes the left-wing of the Labour Party. Right-wing dominance of the Labour Party is seen as a defeat for everyone on 'the Left', including the SWP, and hence for the working class. (see Socialist Worker 18.9.82 p.7).

As occasionally happens, a more enlightened view is put forward, pointing to the capitalist nature of all factions of the Labour Party. An article in Womens Voice pointed out that,

When the crunch came Foot behaved as all Labour darlings of the left always have. He worked flat out to convince us that our interests were the same as Thatcher's. She could never have done it without him.

The difference between Foot's activities over the Falklands and Ernest Bevin's over Germany is one of degree: Bevin had the blood of millions on his hands.

WV July '82 'The 2nd World War-Mongers'
p.17

How can it be that the same party which states in its principles that 'the present system cannot be patched up or reformedit has to be overthrown', trot out during election times the same old tired lie that Labour is somehow less capitalist, less chauvinist and less anti-working class than the Tories, and should therefore be supported ? 'Voting Labour without illusions' will do little to dispel the fraudulent claims that "Labour is the lesser evil", if the SWP help in contributing to that very myth. At least many in the Labour party probably really do believe that it is in workers interests to vote Labour, even if they are disastrously wrong. But for the SWP it's a 'tactic'!

they know Labour stinks but consider ¹⁷ the possibility of a boost in their recruitment figures from those who become disillusioned more important than actually telling the workers the truth.

A recent Socialist Worker headline ran like this :-

Another five years of Tory government ?
Another five years of rising unemployment, of savage attacks on the health service, of squeezed welfare services and soaring arms spending, of deteriorating inner city areas, of the installation of Trident and Cruise ? The prospect is almost too frightening to contemplate.

SW 30 Oct '82

Pandering to those who still believe in Labour, the Tories are made out to be the cause of the current attack on workers' living standards. This shores up support for Labour. The implication here is that there would be an alternative to this under Labour, especially with a more left-wing Labour government. With an eye to their recruitment figures differences with the Labour left are portrayed in terms of their parliamentary approach, rather than aims :-

The mistake of the Labour left has been to believe they can substitute electoralism for basing themselves on (workers') struggles.....the same minority of socialists, operating with a different, non-parliamentary approach, could both have a real impact and begin to break out of the ghetto in which much of the left finds itself.

SW 5 Mar '83

'The Alternative to Defeat'
p.3

The Left in the Labour Party is also harangued by the SWP for not being prepared to take on the Right: but nowhere is the critical distinction between genuine socialists and those on the 'Left' who simply want to manage the capitalist economic crisis, albeit with a greater degree of direct state intervention (as is outlined in Holland's 'Alternative Economic Strategy'), brought out. This shouldn't be too surprising given their own rather hazy definition of socialism. The vision of 'Socialism' as nationalisation plus workers' control is all-pervasive amongst the Left (including the SWP) and provides a common ground between such groups and the Labour Party. Precisely what form this workers' control should take is rarely gone into.

THE UNIONS

Combatting reformism also means challenging the way trade unions are used to control workers' struggles. For instance, the defeat of the health workers in 1982, was brought about in large part by the way the Unions mounted fake solidarity national and regional one-day stoppages, thus preventing the health workers actively seeking genuine solidarity. More recently, in the water strike the union negotiated a settlement on behalf of their members without it going to a vote. (Strikers had earlier rejected a slightly smaller offer). However the nearest the SWP comes to this is to point out the 'betrayals' of 'bad leaders', or the 'tactical errors' of left-wing ones, as the following comment on the miners' strike vote shows:

Whatever conclusion¹⁸ is reached from the ballot, it's clear that the South Wales miners were left isolated by a combination of serious tactical errors in the run up to the ballot. The result also cruelly exposed the NUM's left leaders who, in securing office, allowed their base to wither.....
.....Although Yorkshire is left led, there was little propaganda from the NUM offices.....And in Derbyshire reports revealed that despite a left-wing leadership, no work was done to win the ballot.....

SW 19 Mar '83

'Why the miners voted No' p.13

But with rank-and-file pressure the unions can be made to defend workers' interests, according to the SWP. The SWP adopt a similar line with those lower down in the union hierarchy, the shop stewards. So that although they can admit that BL shop stewards were 'with a few exceptions, arguing exactly the same as management' they continue to put forward their own members as shop stewards. The divisive nature of trade union control and organisation of working class struggle, has not deterred the SWP from adopting their arguments and slogans, even when they've known them to be wrong. During the Fords strike, back in 1978, the unions presented the pay claim as a 'special case'. The Ford Workers Combine, which included workers aligned to a whole range of left-wing groups (including the SWP), were quick to reinforce this argument by adopting the slogan 'Fords Can Pay'. But the SWP, in their more 'intellectual' publication, Socialist Review, showed that they were well aware of the divisive implications of this slogan:

Thus even when workers rejected the 5% limit, as they did at Ford, they justified their claims by pointing to the companies' huge profit: an argument quite compatible with acceptance of the 'national interest' and the application of the pay norm to other workers

SW Socialist Review 9 p.32 'Fighting Against the Stream'

However this did not prevent the SWP from endorsing the work of the Combine, nor from prominently displaying the slogan 'Fords Can Pay' in their paper.

An example of where this 'defence of trade unionism' stance can lead was provided in the Wandsworth dustman's strike in July 1982. Socialist Worker called for scabbing during the strike in order to keep trade union organisation intact, and picket lines were crossed.

Revolutionaries recognise that trade unions don't defend the working class, and this is why we don't stand for office in the unions, but call for democratic mass meetings of all workers outside of union divisions, to elect revocable strike committees to run strikes outside and against the unions.

INTERNATIONALISM ?

The SWP slogan "Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism" is not borne out in practice, because of their support for national liberation movements. In an earlier edition of the book State Capitalism in Russia (published in 1964 under the title Russia: a Marxist Analysis) Tony Cliff wrote:

Were the backward countries isolated from the rest of the world, we could say capitalism would be progressive in them.

Revolutionary Marxists however, take the world as our point of departure, and therefore conclude that capitalism, wherever it exists today, is reactionary.....

p.130

But such a clear point of view is not reflected in their more recent publications. Only three years ago the SWP gave support to the 'liberation movement' in Zimbabwe despite having to admit today that:

.....in the black townships life is much the same as it always was, with growing levels of unemployment as the economic boom of 1980 gives way to recession. All that is different are the names.....

SW 19 Mar '83

p.5

'What's really happening in Zimbabwe'

The SWP's analysis of Russia as state capitalist only seems to have led them to support any nationalist sentiments in the working class movements of Eastern Europe. Whether it be in the form of arguing 'Solidarity' to take power in Poland, or a call for an armed insurrection against Kadar and the Russians' (see SW 30 Oct '82) it can only be of ultimate benefit to capitalist interests in the West.

CND & THE ACTION AT GREENHAM COMMON

The recent debate in Socialist Worker about ^{the} elitism of the womens' peace campaign at Greenham Common has obscured the fact that the SWP has supported CND. The CND argues that capitalism can be forced to get rid of nuclear weapons if enough people demonstrate their moral objection to them. Does the SWP really go along with this? Well not quite, but it does seem to believe at times that capitalism can be disarmed if CND would only stop playing down opposition to NATO and step up demands for unilateral disarmament:

by ducking unilateralism, the toughest argument against the Bomb, they (CND) have left their support weak and vulnerable to Thatcher's propaganda.

SW 19 Feb '83 'Thatcher's Nuclear Offensive'
pp.1-3 (my emphasis)

Yet only two months later we have statements it would be very difficult to reconcile with their previous conditional support of CND:

the form of protest they have chosen -- endorsed by CND-- which actively involves only a tiny number of individuals leads in the opposite direction to the sort of mass workers' movement which can get rid of the missiles by getting rid of the society which breeds them.

SW 2 April '83 'A reply to Greenham Common'
p.9

and,

The only power that can match that of the nuclear state lies in the hands of organised workers.

SW 9 April '83 'The way forward after Greenham' p.3

So having previously urged workers to support CND, they are now quite content in telling them it was a complete waste of time.

TROTSKYISM

Given these obvious contradictions, is it a remarkable thing that over the years, despite its growth, the SWP has lost a great many of its members who have left to become disillusioned with revolutionary politics? When the Socialist Review/International Socialism Group (as they were known)

first started out in the 'sixties they were more open-minded than many other organisations of the Left and represented, in Britain, a fairly conscious attempt to overcome the limitations of the politics of the Fourth International and the ideas of Trotsky that lay behind them. Hence their rejection of Russia as a "workers' state". More importantly they acknowledged the reality and centrality of the post-war boom and its effects upon working class consciousness and organisation. Other organisations (like the SLL) were still peddling the belief that world economic collapse was just around the corner.

The year 1968 seems to have signalled the failure on the part of I.S. to overcome these limitations and its gradual slip back into the Trotskyist tradition. Whether this was due to the events of May '68 in France, and the appeal provided by the sudden swelling of the ranks of I.S. with eager, militant youth, awaiting political action or the non-preparedness on their part to work out the consequences for their theory now that the post-war boom was coming to an end and a new period of economic crisis was beginning, is academic. What is clear was that after about 1970 the leadership had embarked upon a 'party-building' style which left little room for the theoretical questioning of the prior period.

As a result, all activity within the I.S. became orientated towards recruitment, and this has continued unabated ever since. It is the same story no matter what area of activity is considered: principles have become subordinated to tactics for getting more workers in the organisation.

What could have been a genuine movement in the early '70's within the unions to prepare workers for independent struggle became the National Rank and File Movement where any organised groups apart from I.S. were frozen or driven out. It substituted a lower, more local level of militant "leaders" or shop stewards (to be I.S. dominated) for genuine workers' democracy and self-activity. The same tactic underpins their attitude to the Labour Party. Putting Labour in office will mean more recruits when it is finally exposed in front of the working class. An important strand of the Trotskyist heritage which they have used in their pursuit of this objective is that of the 'transitional demand'. The so-called Right to Work campaign demanded full employment, invoking the idea that such a "right" could exist under capitalism. Secretly, of course, they knew that it didn't but by getting people to make these unrealistic demands upon capitalism they hoped (and still hope) to recruit amongst disillusioned workers. The idea that people will have their eyes opened by hitting their heads against brick walls, only reveals the contempt which lies beneath. Today, the manipulative response to movements like womens' liberation and CND is for its potential as a recruiting ground, with unilateral disarmament just being another 'transitional demand'. The culmination was the renaming of the organisation as the SWP in 1977. By this time the demands of maintaining a structure that would build the party meant that there could be no discussion which challenged its theoretical foundations. They could only respond by becoming less democratic: a number of small groupings were ejected in the mid-seventies, and many individuals left of their own accord. Their theory that a party was an organisation that brought together the majority of revolutionary workers in industry, and that 'such a party cannot be created except on a thoroughly democratic basis; unless in its internal life, vigorous controversy is the rule and various tendencies and shades of opinion represented' (D. Hallas 'Towards a Revolutionary Socialist Party' Party & Class 1971) conflicted heavily with the experience of many who eventually leave and become disillusioned with revolutionary politics altogether. And what is the Party being built for? Well they might not explicitly state it, but they believe as all Leninists do that the Party must take power on behalf of the working class.

For us today, the possibility that the SWP will seize power is an absurdly unlikely one. But this doesn't mean that we should ignore their ideas. The choice between a policy of 'all power to the Workers Councils' and one of 'all power to the Revolutionary Party' will be as fundamental tomorrow as it was in 1917. Furthermore their ideas are affecting the class struggle in limited but material ways in the here and now. Every time workers are railroaded into supporting the 'left-wing' capitalists against the 'right-wing' lot, whatever the 'justification', workers' own independent class interests become mere rhetoric to be used in the political battle between these different factions. Those who claim to be revolutionaries must recognise that the State today includes not only the traditional institutions (schools, media, etc.) but also its political organisations like the

DON'T VOTE.

THE ELECTION FARCE CONTINUES...

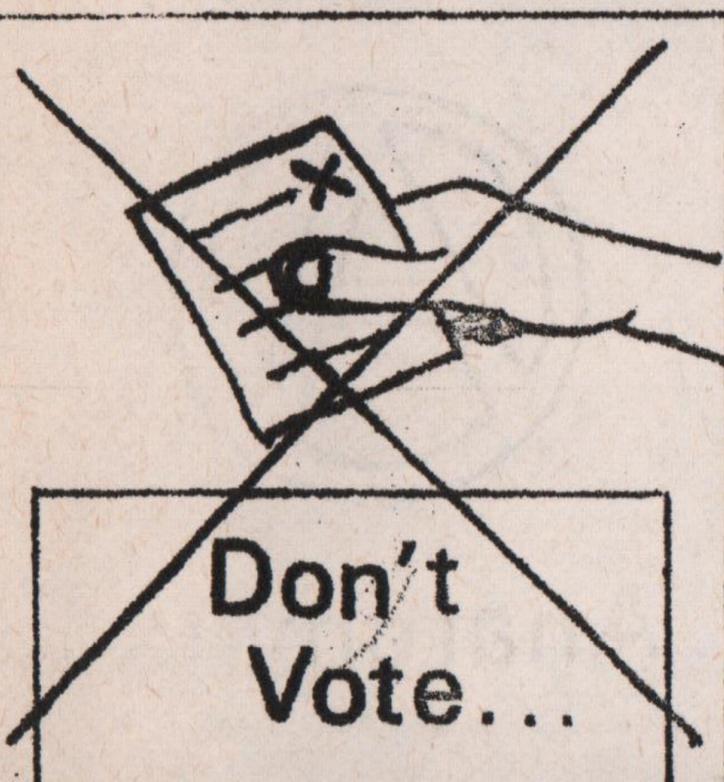
As you know, June 9th is the national election day and in the run-up to the forth-coming elections, the public is as usual bombarded with promises by the four major political parties that, if they are elected they would "get the country back on its feet" by implimenting some miraculous, "cure all" policy (usually either nationalisation, privatisation or some equally ludicrous scheme). And, unfortunately, the public accept these vote-catching lies, thinking that, if they vote for their chosen party the countries problems, and more importantly, their own problems, will be solved.

Why does this election madness go on? People are conned into thinking that parliamentary change is the only way that they can get things done. This is a cruel lie. As long as people think this, any thoughts of personally changing the way they live or the conditions they live in are rejected and "lobbying MP's" is thought to be the only way of achieving any real significant change.

ANARCHY, a solution.

However, if people rejected the parliamentary system and instead, started to reclaim their own lives, taking responsibility for their own actions, not letting themselves be pushed around, questioning their own relationships, questioning their role in

PTO



Don't
Vote...

society and making themselves aware of the policies of domination and suppression in this country (and others) in which we live, they would find it much easier to live and work with others with mutual respect and co-operation which would make governments (and all forms of authority) obsolete.

There are various things people can do to help themselves and others. Various groups of individuals have set up housing co-operatives, to share the money & responsibility of buying and developing property, gardening co-operatives to produce food & sell surplus food cheaply to others, information services and community centres to help others in need and to develop a sense of "togetherness" between people in a community, tenant associations, health and fitness groups, the list is endless. The only limitation is your imagination and determination.

It would be very easy to criticise all this as being "too idealistic" and to dismiss it, saying that "it will never work". It will only work if you are prepared to get up and make it work. We don't profess to know all the answers - you have got to find your own problems and solutions. All we are saying is that anything is better than living the mind-numbing pointless, isolated lives that we now lead, where the countries "leaders" tell us what we can and can not do.

Don't be conned by the electioneering lies of the politicians - they don't give a damn about you. Get up and do things for yourself. You've only got one life, live it!

This leaflet was produced by a group of anarchists from St. Helens. If you would like further information about what anarchy is and what anarchists believe write to:-

Box S.H.A.
31 Gothic Street
Rock Ferry
Birkenhead
Merseyside



Anarchy!

Labour Party and the various factions of leftist State capitalism. They must break theoretically and practically with all forms of ruling class ideology if they are not to become an obstacle to the working class movement.

WILDCAT June/July '83

Some comments on the 'Don't Vote' leaflet from St Helens Anarchists

This leaflet has been included in 'Intercom' at the request of St. Helen's anarchists, although it does not in our opinion express the basic revolutionary politics of the 'Intercom' project.

It does express a healthy rejection of authoritarianism and parliamentarism and it asserts the need for individuals to take responsibility for their lives. However, this is put forward as an essentially moral and individual choice outside any content of social class struggle. The only reference to collective activity is a list of mutual aid projects, which far from being 'too idealistic' as the leaflet suggests people might see them, are clearly quite practical petty capitalist enterprises or simply pleasant hobbies with as much relevance to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism as the local allotment society.

Real individuality can only develop in the context of independent class struggle against the system and become a permanent everyday part of life with the emergence of a libertarian communist society.

We are for class politics not community politics or individual moralism.

WILDCAT

REVIEW: the 'communist bulletin'

With issue number 4 of this bulletin, parallelling the conversion of its publishers from a discussion group into a formally constituted political group, there is a welcome, if only partial move towards an outgoing political journal and away from the previous indulgence in 'navel gazing'. This change is represented by articles on the recent British elections and on a strike at 'Aire Valley Yarns' in Leeds. There is in addition quite a good article criticising the International Communist Current theory of the 'left in opposition'. (Which incidentally appears at the same time as the ICC has published the first criticism of its own theory, by a Hong Kong comrade, in its 'International Review'). But this debate will be of interest only to a handful of revolutionaries.

Unfortunately, if understandably in view of their background, they find it necessary yet again to make formal pleas to both the 'International Communist Current' and the 'Communist Workers Organisation' for fraternal debate and cooperation, when their own experience must surely have taught them that for these groups to become responsible, non-elitist and non-sectarian would require a MAJOR political and psychological break they show little sign of making.

MB (Manchester)

The 'communist bulletin' is available for 30p plus postage from :
c/o Box 85, 43 Candlemakers Row, Edinburgh.

DISSIDENT EXPELLED FROM C.N.D. SHOCK EXPOSE

A fair amount has been written recently (at least within our limited political circles) about the bourgeois nature of the "Peace Movement". In particular, it has been pointed out that a Peace Movement which has no analysis of the causes of war (that is; no anti-capitalist perspective) plays an important role on behalf of capital by preventing the development of any real movement against war, any dissident anti-capitalist views which exist within the Peace Movement being denounced as "irresponsible"- i.e. a threat to the role of Peace Movement leaders as "responsible" bourgeois politicians.

The following documents concerning the expulsion of a CND member clearly illustrate how this works in practice (at least within CND). The first text, which is a brief account of the events leading up to the expulsion, was written by an associate of the expelled member. The second is an article which the expulsion victim wrote for his CND branch newsletter but which was not published.

Hopefully this information will be useful to comrades both as an interesting "case study" to use in criticism of CND and as a means to stimulate debate amongst any CND/Peace Movement dissidents they might know.

A.W. -London

1)

CND EXPULSION: The Limits of Middle Class Moralism

In mid-1983 an outer London branch of CND took the unprecedented step of expelling one of its members* after a political debate extending to the highest levels of the national organisation. The expulsion itself was decided by a narrow vote taken at a meeting of the Hillingdon branch but in turn expressed wider conflicts within the anti-nuclear weapons movement. For example, before the expulsion, the member had produced a controversial leaflet and had gone with a small group to argue its politics among fellow CND members at the gates of peace camps; on at least one occasion they were openly told by the police that they'd be arrested for obstruction if they persisted but that all the other peace campers would be unmolested. Furthermore, in an argument with Bruce Kent (CND national chair) on the telephone, Kent insisted that CND's "non-violence" precluded the politics of this leaflet, while its author cogently replied that CND's commitment to a "non-nuclear defence strategy" obviously meant violence in defence of Britain, so violence as such wasn't the real issue; Kent had no political reply. This episode just goes to show that CND's politics is not about "peace" as such, not about "non-violence" as such, but is rather about promoting a particular (non-nuclear) type of state violence while opposing any anti-state violence. The real issue is patriotic nationalism- whether we defend the British state or defend ourselves from it.

- L.L.

*Pete Moore, a local youth worker and member of the local Police Monitoring Group.

2)

WHICH WAY CND? A Political Viewpoint. -Pete Moore

It is often stated that CND is the most successful mass movement in modern history. I do not question that CND can claim large numbers of supporters from a broad base, and that on occasions, such as marches, large forces can be turned out. However, I contend that a false confidence exists within our ranks. An enormous distance exists between the passive support of thousands, and effecting even the slightest change in government policy.

The majority of CND supporters place their faith in democracy, failing to realise that our democratic process has been refined over the years to create an illusion of participation, whilst denying the mass of people any real power in decision making. The next election will be fought on a wide range of issues.

Mrs. Thatcher will obscure defence behind the economy, law and order, and the Soviet threat. She will use her resources and acumen to manipulate the debate to minimise any support she may lose from unilateralists. Any concessions she makes will be token. Labour may have a unilateralist policy, but their chances of election are vanishing, and even should they win the chances of them reneging on their policy is high. I do not question the integrity of individual members, but the divisions

in their ranks and leadership make the party's ability to carry through such a policy minimal.

CND has to realise that to obtain their aims the problems of imposing an unwanted policy on a ruling elite have to be faced.

We have six months to stop cruise and several years possibly to stop the third world war. I suggest that the only rational response of CND at the present juncture is to launch a campaign aimed at making this country ungovernable until our demands are met.

We have to realise that the history of protest has been a process whereby the governing elements of our society have converted threat of revolution into controlled marches and demonstrations. This has been done through the media, education, policing, and many other methods. We have to break out of this strait jacket and return to a level of protest which is a real threat to the powerful. They must be challenged to either suppress us or to meet our demands.

A major problem in developing such a campaign is CND membership itself. Many are drawn from the middle classes, who are dependent for their social position on the very ruling elites we would have to challenge. For them a real conflict would exist. They would be challenging the orderly society which nurtures their very economic existence. We would be undermined by the elements within our membership and individual psychology, which have been conditioned to accept limited protest, and who positively benefit from a belief in slow democratic change, which in reality maintains the status quo.

CND needs to reassess its priorities. We are not a moral movement, but a practical one, with one aim of world survival. We should decide our policies practically and rationally, not morally. Debates over democracy, legality, and violence should be decided purely on the criterion of effectiveness in achieving ends.

A policy for CND that would give any chance of success must involve a combination of industrial strikes against war production, civil disobedience, both violent and non-violent, depending on tactical requirements, and extensive supporting explanatory propaganda. We have to move towards involvement in the trades union and labour movement and working class and away from providing emotional moral outlets for middle class moralists.

At a practical local level, we should meet far more regularly (maybe weekly), plan visible frequent protests at a level that the authorities will be forced to notice, and encourage full participation by all our members. At present Hillingdon CND functions like a local social club, rather than a dynamic protest movement. Those members who support action should speak up, rather than remaining silent at meetings. It is too late in the day to worry about peoples' sensibilities. The moral careerists have to be challenged in the interests of effective politics.

Personally, I propose that, accepting the imminent and almost inevitable arrival of Cruise and Trident, we must prepare to take part in a campaign of civil unrest, unhindered by legal and non-violent considerations. Instead of quoting Ghandi and Wilberforce, representatives of the middle-class Oxbridge elite of the British Empire, we should remember the residents of Cable Street, the slave rebels of the West Indies, and more recently the peasant farmers at Narita in Japan.

We are involved in a power struggle against the forces of capital and the state, and the sooner we realise the cold realities of that struggle the more likely are our chances of success.

Peter Moore,
49, Hayes End Rd.
Hayes End.
01 573 1331

NOTE This article was submitted to the Hillingdon CND Newsletter, but not published. I make no comment, but have taken the initiative to distribute it myself, as I believe debate on all contentious issues is essential. I welcome criticism and comment in any form.

A TECHNICIAN REBUKES A QUACK ENGINEER

A reply to Simon Leefe

Simon Leefe's article in Intercom 2 "An Engineer writes: Capitalism and the 'recession' (or what the hells going on?)" raises a whole host of questions which would probably take several reams to answer. However apart from the many unanswered questions which Simon raises there are several flaws in his analysis of the economic system which I would like to put right. This then is not a full scale reply to his article but an attempt to correct some misunderstandings of his regarding the recession, or crisis as I'd prefer to call it. I think the most important point to make is to distinguish between bourgeois economics (of which Simon appears to have a partial understanding) and that branch most likely to lead to our liberation often called Marxist economics (of which Simon appears to have no knowledge). Since Simon has dwelled on a tortuous explanation of the crisis from a bourgeois point of view I will concentrate on this aspect but not to the exclusion of Marxist explanations.

Bourgeois economics uncritically explains the market system and its bureaucratic alternatives. It treats the market as though it were a natural thing which would exist quite separately from any human involvement. It never looks beneath the system to see what social, political and economic factors are at work which turn things and people into marketable commodities. It rarely looks at the consequences of exploitation in the market. A bizarre example of bourgeois economic problem solving (or making) is an idea by Paul Samuelson, a Nobel prizewinner in Economics no less, who suggested that Robinson Crusoe should have developed a monetary system so that he could calculate what it cost him to pick fruit! When things go wrong with the economic system bourgeois economists can only suggest contradictory treatment of the symptoms.

But Marxist economics looks at the world from an entirely different perspective. It has a historical dimension which looks at the world as it exists for those who produce the wealth for our rulers. The historical dimension comes from the fact that the working class are separated from the ownership and control of the means of production. It is this separation that allows surplus value -profit- which leads to exploitation in the market place. Marxists do not look at problems from a narrow nationalistic standpoint but instead see capitalism as a global system affecting the whole world.

Simon's treatment of bourgeois economics is defective. He seems to say that the current crisis is caused by the end of the 'Free Market' which would otherwise cause the economy to be self regulating. Even those who advocate a self-regulating economy, which generally means a minimal state intervention, accept that there are bound to be slumps as well as booms. But contrary to popular belief there has never been a 'Free Market' under capitalism outside of economic textbooks and perhaps parts of the agricultural industry. The market of 'perfect' competition which is often what is meant by the "Free Market" makes a number of assumptions which simply aren't realistic under capitalism. Briefly it assumes that consumers (called households by the experts) and Firms have a perfect knowledge of the market. There is no room for trade secrets. Producers have always wanted to keep their technology away from their competitors. They are protected by ruling class control of copyright and patent laws. It assumes that all products within certain sectors are identical. Apart from food (and even this is not totally immune) one thing we can safely say is that no two commodities are given precisely the same image by those who sell them. Perhaps most important of all the theory of perfect competition ignores the vital nature of strategic industries on the national economy and the way governments

everywhere protect them. Steel, coal and shipping are among those in this category. Although governments may wish to minimise their expenditure on strategic industries no government would wish to see an end to steel making in this country, for example, whatever the price difference between the home produced product and its foreign competitors. However it is true to say that there has been a steady increase in involvement by the state in the economy.

Simon appears to think that the crisis was sparked off by the rise in oil prices in 1974. But rising prices do not fall from the sky and are not of themselves bad for the system. Previous trade slumps were marked by high unemployment or inflation. In the 1930's unemployment in Britain was very high but prices fell for example. In fact from at least 1861 until the 1970's there was a clear link between unemployment and inflation called the Phillips curve. As one went up the other came down. That link has now been destroyed. Bourgeois economists have had to invent a new word -stagflation- to describe the present situation. Although bourgeois economists cannot agree on the reasons for the crisis it is accepted by most academics that the oil price increases were a symptom of the crisis rather than its cause. Indeed many economic guru's interpret O.P.E.C.'s action as beneficial for the economies of Britain and some other western countries. To understand why this might be so it is important to grasp some fundamental concepts of bourgeois economics. In the bourgeois model of the national economy there is a circular flow between households and firms. Households sell their labour to firms who produce goods and services which are purchased by households. This simple model is expanded to take account of injections and leakages. Injections are government expenditure, investment and exports since they add money to internal trade. Leakages are taxes, savings and imports since they all take money away from trade in the domestic market. It is essential to understand this model to see why O.P.E.C.'s raising of oil prices did not cause the present bout of inflation. In 1972 the crisis was already on the horizon, unemployment was beginning to rise beyond one million (they changed the counting system to bring it down) and there was industrial unrest aplenty. The British Conservative government headed by Heath with Anthony Barber at the helm in the Treasury decided to inject a massive amount of money into the economy in the hope of stimulating production. This became known as the Barber boom. Industrial production did not rise sufficiently high to absorb all the extra money and the result was too much money chasing too few goods and in this situation rising prices are the only response, inflation had started to take off. In 1974 O.P.E.C. raised the price of oil, in those days Britain imported all of its oil and as a result more money flowed out of the economy - a leakage - to pay for these imports. This was a deflationary pressure, inflation might have been far worse without it. This view is one accepted by bourgeois economists like John Kenneth Galbraith.

Unfortunately there is no unanimous Marxist explanation of the crisis either. Indeed it is difficult to know who to include in the Marxist school of thought. Some who call themselves Marxists are really sheep in wolves clothing since they are nothing more than reformists. Among these are Communist Party economists who think that the crisis is due to unrestrained large monopolies making too much profit. Their solution (as if you couldn't guess) is to put them under responsible state control and that would be the end of the crisis. They justify this by misunderstanding Marx and confusing the state with the interests of the working class. If industry is not privately owned, they reason, then the working class is not exploited for the personal profit of the bourgeoisie. But revolutionary Marxists would dispute this complacent view of 'state socialism'. In the Soviet Union, as elsewhere in the Eastern bloc, the working class are still required to sell their labour to live. The ruling class still protect themselves with a vast military machine and enjoy

considerably higher living standards than the working class. The various national economies still compete with each other and the productivity and profitability of the various state enterprises is of vital concern to the ruling class.

But of those who take a revolutionary Marxist standpoint there are two theories which have most credibility. They can be called the Falling Rate of Profit theory and the Market Saturation theory. But they are by no means mutually exclusive.

The Falling Rate of Profit theory looks at the average return to capital. It states that the rate of profit will tend to fall as the ratio between 'Capital' and 'Labour' changes. As capitalism increase productivity then less workers will be needed. Since labour is the only factor of production that adds surplus value this creates a potential problem, especially if the working class resists efforts to exploit them further through productivity deals. There has been a steady decline in the return to capital for investment, in the 1960's it was over 9% per year, less than 6% between 1974 and 1979 and a mere 2% in 1980 (source National Institute Economic Revue quoted in "The UK Economy: A manual of Applied Economics" p16). Obviously profit is the sole motivating force for the captains of industry and when little or none is being made then this is a signal for major restructuring. Cutting costs is the only way to restore profitability and this is what has been happening in recent years. Increased productivity, getting the workers to work harder, redundancy and lower wages (by not increasing wages in line with inflation) are the most obvious examples of this. But this highlights a contradiction for capitalism. Lower living standards mean less purchasing power for workers. Unemployment can take on a momentum of its own. As point of production workers become unemployed then so too do those who depend on their trade and that of the company that employed them.

The Market Saturation theory might be seen as a more sophisticated version of Falling Rate of Profit theory. When industrialisation took off in Britain the world was its oyster. Raw materials were readily and cheaply available in the Empire and elsewhere, as too were the people who would buy the finished commodities. It is essential under this theory that capitalists have to have new non-capitalist territories to expand into. As the nineteenth century developed other countries became industrialised and they too expanded into new territories. Not far into the twentieth century it soon became clear that the world was not big enough for them all. War is one of the consequences of this. When markets become saturated then competition becomes ever fiercer and this becomes one of the driving forces for war. Fierce competition means that capitalists have to prune their costs. Cutting costs directly affects the working class in terms of unemployment and lower living standards.

However the working class is not a passive spectator watching the various market forces fight it out. It is the fodder for capitalism and it alone can revolutionise society to change it for the better. But it is not a chemical agent which will only react when economic conditions force it to act. To a certain extent the working class has absorbed much of bourgeois ideology. As Revolutionaries within the working class we have to help our comrades at work and on the streets to understand the reality of the situation and give practical aid to act decisively. As Marx himself has said "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; The point is to change it."

STEVE BOWERS (MANCHESTER) With considerable help and encouragement from members of the WILDCAT COLLECTIVE.

- I. 3. Many of those who held the earliest form of state capitalist analysis for the Soviet Union rested their case on the fact that at that time only a minority of Russian industry was under state control. Most property was in traditional capitalist hands, but the state had political power over it, & the soviets & power over the state.

The analysis was therefore that it remained a classically capitalist state, except for state-dirigeiste power over industry, & except for soviet power over the state.

When - during the Third Period - Stalin proceeded to nationalise enormous amounts of soviet industry, to liquidate the kulacs & other petit bourgeois groupings & expropriate them; though this happened at the same time that he also liquidated the remaining workers' organizations & soviets; many Workers' Oppositionists & their international sympathizers submitted to C.P. party-discipline; believing Russia to be no longer state capitalist.

- I. 4. It was at this time that the Rosmer-Monatte group ("Revolution Proletarienne"), & particularly Simone Weil, evolved a new version of state capitalist theory, using the term then interchangeably with a newer expression "bureaucratic collectivism".

This held that certainly soviet power held the potential of going beyond classical capitalism, (though there had been remnants of such classical capitalism, as also of mercantilism and of other pre-capitalist remnants,) she & they agreed with Trotsky that this had given rise to a new Bonapartist bureaucratic caste, but differed from Trotsky in believing that this caste had collectively established its class rule, as a new form of state capitalist class.

They also analysed examples of the same trend to bureaucratic collectivism within social developments in both fascist & classical capitalist societies, (in the latter taking the political form of social-democrat or Keynesian Liberal reforms, or appearing without political influence in the internal arrangements of giant capitalist corporations, trade unions, the military & civil state bureaucracies.

- I. 5. Naturally not all of those who hold the soviet union to be a class society necessarily believe it to be the same sort of class society as the West; nor even that the West is tending in the same direction; nor yet that they are differing forms of the same basic system, both evolving from disparate societies into the same.

Nevertheless the two systems have sufficient characteristics in common for one or other of these to be fairly generally held amongst ultra-leftists; basically though those who hold the two to be differing forms of the same, or indeed the same may use a variety of descriptions - state capitalist, bureaucratic collectivist, managerialist, etc., - they generally hold the several descriptions as a matter of preference, the best among a number of more or less accurate terms.

Where on the other hand people insist on one such theory/description as against all others, this is usually indicative of a belief that the soviet union is a different sort of society to the West.

This raises the point is state capitalism/whatever a "progressive" or "retrogressive" system; and generally denotes a readiness to support one or other side in power struggle between stalinism & the West. Thus the SWP holds that the stalinist countries are state capitalist, solely because they have not been able to free themselves from the pressure of world market forces. It therefore follows that if enough countries become state capitalist (stalinist) the world market forces will no longer be dominant, - which is why the SWP is often readier to tail-end stalinism than are orthodox Trots.

In contrast not merely James Burn-

ham, but Max Schachtmann, Dwight Macdonald & others who have held the bureaucratic collectivist or managerialist thesis(es) have either seen in the system a new form of exploitation which must be resisted at all costs, if necessary in conjunction with the old order (Schachtmann, Macdonald, Eastmann, Wittfogel & Djillas) or (in Burnham's case) have regarded the West as more efficient & therefore "progressive".

Bahro manages to invert Wittfogel's argument in a sense, since while he might well endorse Wittfogel's claim that at the moment a bureaucratic collectivism born of an hydraulic society heritage is more exploitative, he sees it as progressive whereas Wittfogel saw it as retrogressive. The latter delineating the heritage from a pre-capitalist system, saw stalinism as a simple return to "Oriental Despotism". Bahro on the other hand, noting that in nature, it is not the dominant species at any time that evolve into new forms, so new dominant systems evolve usually from the previous second most highly evolved. By analogy he believes stalinism to be economically the most progressive system, evolved not from liberal-bourgeois entrepreneurial capitalism but from a developed form of hydraulic society.

- I. 6. One may assume that the ultra-leftist groups reject any theory that would lead them to favour one or other side in the Cold War.

Thus though any such groups may regard one or other theory as more scientific than another, and insist for its purposes on that particular description, it is not so doing in order to draw a distinction between the stalinist societies & the Western ones.

There are with any description difficulties. Apart from the fact that until Simone Weil state capitalism was universally used to convey an idea that was subsequently seen to be an inaccurate description; and that until the late 60s the SPGB still held officially that Russia's state capitalism was the product of private ownership of state capital, (thus making the share holders rather than party officialdom the wielders of power;) there is the valid objection to the term state capitalism, that in Marx's definition (Capital Vol. 1, Pt. 2., Chapter VI) the essence of capitalism is the existence of free labour. Labour under a stalinist system as under a fascist - and increasingly under Western Capitalism - is not in Marx's sense free. Marx talked of the possibility of industrial peonage, (De Leon referring to the fact that Feudalism did not come about as the result of technological progress, producing a superior/progressive economic system, but in readiness under external threat to sacrifice freedom for safety & security, warned of the danger of Industrial Feudalism.)

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- II. 1. The test of a class analysis is that it should be possible with one to determine the "contradictions" within existing society. Being able to determine such contradictions it should be possible to determine the springs of spontaneous resistance, that is the areas of future radical growth.

Indeed this would appear to be the only valid reason for insisting on anyone particular class analysis, for insisting on a particular designation for the contemporary society.

If I may be allowed a rule of thumb over-simplification, one can say that in this sense the contradiction is the point whereat the professed ethics of a particular system inescapably conflict with the inevitable economic & social products of that system. It is easy from this to see why Marx marked out above all else the Boom-Slump cycle as the ineluctable point of conflict between the optimism, the belief in a scientifically ordered universe and society, the devotion to "Progress" that characterised Victorian Capitalist society, and the actual workings of the system.

Though he wrote movingly on the evils of alienation of the product from the producer, though he stressed the psychological evils emanating from this, though he described the oppression of women, & other ills, it was the effects of the Boom-Slump cycle that for his day he stressed, as the crucial contradiction. Other contradictions existed and were recorded. One pre-eminently was seen as the source of contemporary revolt.

By the same token, the contradictions of today, between the professions of internationalism, democracy &/or socialism, & the facts of racism, sexism, militarism, neo-colonialism, ecological destruction are obvious, and obviously more significant today than in Marx's day.

Simone Weil said somewhere something to the effect of:-

"The nature of capitalism is competition, the normal form of competition for a state is war or war preparation, it follows therefore that perpetual war or readiness for war is of the nature of state capitalism."

- II. 2. Wrapped up with the Bomb are other issues. It is obvious the most visible form of mass destruction symbolises militarism; it is not much less obvious that the way it was used on Japan, after that country had asked to surrender, in order to test its effects, was racist. Any one who has thought about it is aware of the enormous bureaucracy that is wrapped up in the construction of nuclear weapons. The fact that no country that has made the Bomb, ever consulted its people first; (in England was the electorate and the parliament not informed, but even the Cabinet, and more particularly, Shinwell who was Minister of War, were in the dark;) makes the Bomb symbolic of governmental secrecy & bureaucracy. While radioactive particles are the ultimate in environmental pollution. The Cold War - of which the Bomb is the chief symbol - itself symbolizes the dominance of the Great powers and the neo-colonialism that flows from this.

Thus on all these grounds it was inevitable that lines of revolt should have come together as the resistance against the Bomb. The fact that an executive for avowedly cynical reasons, should have called for the launching of CND, hoping thereby to enlist cannon fodder for the Labour Left need not affect us; they would not have made the call had they not appreciated that there was already a spontaneous movement of revolt, from which they hoped to enlist recruits.

Lest it be objected that few revolutionaries predicted this spontaneous growth in advance, it is only fair to refer to one accurate such prediction, even though those who made it, singularly failed to follow up their prediction and not merely did not manage to carry a full revolutionary message to the CND rank & file, but didn't even try.

Writing in 1948, in internal documents in Common Wealth, Buck Taylor, arguing a managerialist analysis of society, and that managerialism was at the time going through a revolutionary phase, and for this reason the prospects for immediate libertarian socialist activity were slight, said that the first signs of resistance and increasing resistance to the two sides in the Cold War would be anti-imperialism, but there would come a point when this anti-imperialism would carry over into direct rejection of the twin Cold War blocks and that rejection would take the form of anti-militarism.

(Younger comrades will not have heard of CW. It was formed as a left-reformist party opposing the wartime coalition, fusing the left of the Labour & Liberal trends that had supported the Popular Front and - with the Stalin-Hitler Pact - reacted against stalinism in 1940. Waves of leading members left CW to re-enter the Labour Party in the latter years of the War, & immediately after its end; others turning either to left-stalinism or violent anti-stalinism; leaving a minority that starting with Buck's series of documents, set off on a long march to anarchism, but having tired themselves out, were not active in CND.)

- II. 3. No doubt there is a difference between CND now and during the First Wave. The first time round, though the leadership had ulterior motives in the launch, that launch was made in response to a spontaneous movement of opinion, as was demonstrated by the way people swept into the campaign, building local & regional organizations, planning demonstrations & carrying them out without reference to the leadership. This time CND is much like the Bevanites of the early Fifties - faced with the decline of the traditional social democrat and semi-stalinist Left, Bevan was able to stem the tide of retreat for a time by building a movement whose aims were reminiscent of the resistance to Ramsay Macdonald in the aftermath of the General Strike.

Last time round the Campaign was flooded by people totally new to politics. There were of course those who had joined the New Left the year before, many of them ex-C.P., many disenchanted Bevanites, a few relics of the older non-stalinist Left; but the vast majority were making their first excursion into politics; & this was just the first step as they moved Left.

This time the average member comes from the women's movement, from the ecological movement, has been active in the peace movement for years, whether as First Wave CND, opponent of the Vietnam War, or campaigner for troops out of N.I. It is in a sense a regroupment on the basis of a minimal programme.

However though there is in that respect room for people to look with a jaundiced eye at the Second Wave, to say that it compares unfavourably; it is true this time, as last, that the Campaign is reaching many people who were previously totally disinterested in politics, & unlike other single issues, the demand for unilateral disarmament is one that cannot be satisfied within the existing political system. Unlike much of the Fourth International Programme it really is a transitional demand.

(Though the move to enlist the campaign for advocating an "alternative defence" strategy, or attempts to limit its demand to that of a freeze, involve abandoning the revolutionary aim, & substituting a reformist one.)

- II. 4. Equally one must admit that the present campaign is less susceptible to revolutionary work within it. Last time round the very fact that the self-elected Executive refused to acknowledge the right of conferences to make policy, the very existence of regional organizations, etc., meant that there was a situation of "dual power" within the campaign.

The active membership created their own campaign regardless of the leadership, & if you were militant enough to work in these, dedicated enough to unilateralism not only to join a minority campaign, but to build it, in direct conflict with the state views of its leaders, then you were accepted as sincere by other activists; and if you came with the message we cannot achieve this unless we also achieve more, one's bona fides were established, & one's message was seriously considered.

This time the very fact that the Campaign is more democratic, that its constitution allows for diversity, that there are abundance of people round talking about revolution, having picked up the jargon from one or other of the vanguardist factions, makes it harder to win an hearing.

- II. 5. All this said, it remains true that we have in the campaign a movement of wide diversity, of very considerable rank & file activity and self-organization, all based on a demand that cannot be satisfied within existing society, on an aim which combines the issues of anti-militarism, ecology, anti-governmental secrecy, opposition to the Cold War power blocks and their imperialist connotations.

That provides millieux where the aims of the ultra left are in line with the movement's aspirations, & support can easily be won.

- III. 1. There is of course a danger that the movement will be co-opted into an unofficial extra arm of the Labour Party. The fact that CND flourishes while Labour is in opposition and is abandoned by all the bureaucrats when it is in power - or likely to get there - testifies to that danger.

Last time CND was not merely deserted by the reformists, but then it was wrecked by the Trots. It was not - in 1964 - a foregone conclusion that with the election of the Wilson Government the campaign would die. CND could have become a focus for effective Left Opposition to Wilson; but VSC which subordinated the struggle here to struggle on the other side of the world, & emasculated the struggle here, refusing to involve itself in campaigning for troops to desert, in opposing manufacture of arms for the American forces, indeed in opposing NATO, deliberately split the campaign & the Committee of 100.

It does not necessarily follow that we cannot prevent a recurrence of that.

- III. 2. At first blush, no doubt it does not look as if a Labour Victory is something we need consider for some time.

There are two things needing to be said. It is not inconceivable that the Belgrano issue could turn out to be Thatcher's Watergate. Like Watergate known before the Election to the Left, but only reaching the consciousness of the middle-of-the-way American voters, some four to five months after the election, & then at first in only fragmentary form. It would no doubt be optimistic to hope for a similar awakening, and one has only to look how quickly the States turned to "new clean boy" Carter, & from there back to ultra-Nixon-rightist Reagan, to see that such revelations leave much to be desired. But all said & done, it was briefly an awakening, & had the Ultra Left been prepared to exploit the opportunity fully it could have made many converts.

Thatcherism is not just a reversion to classical laissez-faireism. There is not now an economic base for laissez-faire Victorian attitudes on the basis of progressive manufacturing industry; - the "Iron Bridge spirit" that the Government now invokes went hand in glove with a massively expanding industry, the time of the industrial take-off, but industry still organized on a relatively small scale, starting from a tiny basis, and providing products for which there was an enormous pre-existing demand.

Thatcherism on the contrary is the political & state expression of asset-stripping. It was generally understood in the late Fifties & early Sixties that the rush of take over bids that gave rise to asset stripping originated from the vast sums of compensation paid by Labour for nationalised industries. This compensation gave private capitalism a new input of capital, but there was no longer the opportunities for productive private investment, & so the money was diverted into take-overs, & subsequently asset stripping.

There is a parallel with the early nineteenth century at the time of the Corn Laws and before. Capital having to pay for land and transport, at the very moment that it wrested from the landowners and mercantilists economic & political dominance injected into the ancien regime strata a new influx of monetary power. This led to a revival that financed the ultra-Peelite Tories, & the fight against the Repeal of the Corn Laws; but the revival of Tory power led it to collapse due to its own inability to cope with the contemporary world.

- III. 3. It is not therefore unreasonable to expect Thatcher's government to collapse in a similar way - whether or not the Belgrano affair provides the occasion - if that happens in the months before a new election CND will play a crucial role in political campaigning and in such circumstances could well serve as a suitable vehicle for getting across libertarian socialist ideas. The decisive factor will not however be then but after the Election, and it is at that stage that the influence of the ultra-left within CND will be vital.

OCCUPATION OF THE CRUISE MISSILE BASE AT COMISO, SICILY

For more than a year we have been organising the struggle against the construction of the Cruise missile base in Comiso.

For this purpose we have made the co-ordinating body of the self-managed Leagues, which gather the strength of different autonomous organisations of workers and farmers in the area who are ready to struggle against the american imperialistic project.

We have come to a point in our struggle in which it is not possible to continue with large demonstrations, hunger strikes and collecting signatures. We need to change to direct action!

They are building the missile base.

American soldiers are arriving in the area in great numbers.

The mafia of building speculators and drug dealers are assisting in the construction of the base and spreading their deadly products.

Everyday military and police controls are increasing in the area.

The moment has come in which we must move all together to occupy the base while it is still under construction.

The moment has also come to stop listening to the hollow reassurances and promises of politicians and tricksters who have sold themselves to the americans, the same people who restrain popular action for electoral and political reasons.

The moment has come for us to take direct action.

FOR THIS REASON WE HAVE FIXED THE 22 - 23 - 24 OF JULY 1983 FOR THE OCCUPATION OF THE BASE IN COMISO.

In those days we intend entering the old airport "Magliocco" which is going to be transformed into an atomic bomb warehouse. We intend to enter all together to put an end to this monstrous project.

But to get through this action we need to be united in the struggle, all convinced that only by resorting to the direct action we can get positive results.

We are all aware the times of listening to the politicians empty words and useless promises has finished.

Comrades, COME TO COMISO TO JOIN THE ONGOING STRUGGLE, which, at this moment, is of vital importance for everybody all over the world.

We need to stop the american imperialistic war mongering.

Comrades! if you cannot come, send us your solidarity, subscribe to support our struggle. Organize demonstrations and actions in your area concomitant with the occupation of Comiso base, so that the largest international prominence can be given to our project.

FOR MORE PRECISE INFO WRITE OR TELEPHONE COORDINAMENTO LEGHE AUTOGESTITE,
Via Conte Torino 1 - 97013 COMISO, SICILY, ITALY.
tel. 0932 966289

S O S

As Election Fever gets whipped up, the Labour Party is desperately running round trying to rally the faithful. "Fight the Tories - vote for Us". Forget the past, the cuts, the doubling of unemployment, the use of troops to strike-break. Things shall be different in the future... Will they?

Out of power Labour can well afford to dream up new 'improved' glossy packages to sell and con us with. They need to 'after a term in office.' They need to show some difference between them and the Tories, the promise of real change, of real improvement. All because they need votes. Anything promising will do - look how they've jumped on the CND bandwagon for instance.

But in power things are different. Running the system and "playing the game" means promises are quickly dropped, as ever in the scramble for high office and privilege. What are principles compared with a cushy number in the Cabinet? Differences between Labour and the Tories/SDP etc. boils down to how best to serve the Establishment - power to the State (nationalise) or power to Big Business (privatise). Either way - WE LOSE.

Right to Work?

Hand in glove with this is the TUC plea for the "right to work" - a pathetic cap-in-hand demand to be exploited. Yes, unemployment is evil. But 40 hours in a hell-hole producing junk, with no say or control about what goes on is no answer. Besides work is being abolished. The old heavy industries are dead or dying, and when the micro-chip gets under way there'll be no return. "full employment" is a myth. In the New Order planned for us mass poverty and mass unemployment will be a permanent fact of life. The "right to work" leads only to work of the digging holes and filling them in variety - work for work's sake. Anything to keep us occupied and under control.

Or Fight to Live

Technology could mean less work for everybody. The right to a full life of abundance and leisure. But things won't just "work themselves out" like that - least wise not for our benefit.

The Rich and Powerful (Bosses, Politicians, TUC) think they've got it all sewn up. While we look to them they can do what they like - use us for their own ends. When we vote they use it as another excuse (we've given a mandate right). So don't vote for any politicians! Don't rely on the Bureaucrats. Start taking some control of your own life. Eye-pass the officials. Join together. We need to fight back on our own terms and not hoist another Sell-out to power. IF YOU DON'T KICK IT, IT WON'T FALL. ITS YOUR CHOICE.

P & P CREWE ANARCHIST GROUP

FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO::

BOX CAG, C/O CAMM ST., COMMUNITY CENTRE, CAMM STREET, CREWE.

THE LABOUR PARTY - ROTTEN TO THE CORE

Margaret Thatcher's government is attacking our living and working conditions with a cynicism and brutality which has not been seen since the war. And they seem to be getting away with it. In the workplace there are less strikes than at any time since the war. According to the opinion polls almost half the population still intends to vote Conservative. Even amongst the unemployed, only just over one in four people blame the Thatcher government for their plight. The popularity of the main opposition party, the Labour Party, has never been lower.

Labour's Record

Michael Foot launched Labour's new programme as "the real alternative to the economic and industrial disorder which modern conservatism has inflicted". Not many people believe him. This isn't very surprising. The record of the last Labour government speaks for itself.

The Labour Programme pledges "an offensive against low pay". During the "Social Contract" wages fell more sharply in real terms than at any time since the 19th century. The new Labour programme promises to cut unemployment to one million within five years; under the last Labour government unemployment doubled.

The Labour programme promises that "Capital Tax" will be used to reduce huge inequalities of inherited wealth. During the lifetime of the last Labour government there was the biggest redistribution of wealth in favour of the very rich seen this century.

The Labour programme promises to increase spending on the NHS and education. The last Labour government slashed public spending and reduced the hospital and school building programmes almost to zero.

The Labour programme promises to abolish prescription charges. These were first introduced by Harold Wilson's Labour government.

The Labour programme promises to take a stand against nuclear weapons.

The last Labour government made a commitment to NATO to increase defence spending by 3% each year, even though it was cutting back on other areas of public spending.

Labour governments have a long history of cutting public expenditure, lowering wages and attacking working conditions, and generally doing exactly the opposite of what they promise in their manifestos.

In 1964 Labour came to power committed to abolishing Britain's nuclear weapons. The cabinet took a secret decision to spend £1 billion on modernising the Polaris missile.

"Socialist Parties" in other countries are just as bad. In France many people thought that Mitterand's government would be more progressive and better for the working class than the old right-wing one. They were wrong. The French "socialist" government has just introduced sweeping austerity measures. Mitterand has pledged that the French nuclear force will not be reduced "by a single missile".

Labour's Programme

When the Labour Party is in opposition it has to try to convince us that next time things won't be quite as bad. Ex-ministers admit that they made "mistakes" when they were in government. Dennis Healey now says that it was a mistake for the government to take the decision to modernise Polaris. Tony Benn says he was "wrong" to support the wage cuts enforced by the Social Contract. Left-wing groups like Militant say that rank and file pressure can force the next Labour government to carry through socialist policies. According to groups like Militant the problem is that Labour governments never have the courage to push through their socialist policies in the face of opposition from big business, the banks, and international capitalist organisations like the IMF.

Militant is trying to con people into believing that Labour's programme is -at the bottom- a socialist one. But although the Labour Party calls itself a socialist party, in reality it stands for a programme of state-capitalism. From the point of view of the working class, state capitalist measures such as nationalisation offer us no benefit at all. Nationalised industry operates as an inseparable part of the capitalist economy. Its aim is the same as that of private industry: to make as much profit as possible from the exploitation of its workforce. If profits are bad, as they are in the present recession, nationalised industries cut wages and make workers redundant just like any other business. Nationalised Industry workers have no more control than any others over how they work or what they produce.

In some countries - like Russia and Poland - the whole economy is run along state-capitalist lines. But in Britain all parties are agreed that what is needed is some form of "mixed economy". The Tories want to see more of the economy run by private business and less in the hands of the state. The Labour Party wants to see less private business and more state-run industry. But this difference between the two parties is really quite a small one. It is a difference of opinion about how to manage capitalism and how to run the capitalist state. Neither party can do anything to solve the crisis of the British economy, which is completely out of control.

The Labour Party in Government

There are times when the whole of the ruling class is convinced of the need for more or less radical state-capitalist measures. The most extreme example of this is during war time. During World War II the whole of the economy, as well as large areas of social life, were directly controlled by the state. The interests of private business had to be sacrificed in favour of the overall needs of the nation at war. But so also, to an even greater extent, did the rights of individuals and the health and well-being of the working class. Consumption was rationed; health and safety regulations at work were suspended; workers were not allowed to change jobs without permission; they were forced to work overtime and then lend their wages back to the government; strikes were outlawed.

In a recent interview Michael Foot said that "Britain during the war" was an example of the kind of socialism he would like to see. If this is the Labour Party's "socialist paradise" they can keep it!

The ruling class as a whole also tends to be in favour of state capitalist measures in times of economic recession and radical working class struggle. If all the resources of a particular industry are bought together under the control of the state, it is usually in a better position to fight off foreign competition. It is at these times, as well as during war time, that it suits the ruling class to have the Labour Party in government. An important advantage of having Labour in office at these times is that if workers are asked to make "sacrifices" in the interests of the national economy, they are more likely to comply if told to do so by "their own" Labour Party.

Because Labour tends to come in to office in times of crisis and recession this is why from one point of view we are better off under Tory governments than Labour ones! In sixteen years of Labour government between 1945 and 1979 real wages rose by 6%. In sixteen years of Tory government during the same period they rose by 61%. In fact although the two parties seem to spend a lot of time attacking each other, they work together when it comes to attacking the working class. Labour's phoney socialism backs up the more "honest" capitalism of the Tories. When Thatcher says that workers who go on strike are pricing themselves out of their jobs, or when she says that unemployment and wage cuts are inevitable because of the world recession, she

is just repeating what Callaghan said when he was Prime Minister. And of course this is what the papers and television tell us all the time. So its not surprising that so many people believe her when Thatcher says that "there is no alternative".

How the Labour Party Works

When the Tories are in power it gives the Labour Party a breathing space when it can try to refurbish its image as the party which represents working people. But this is very difficult because large sections of the party are involved in the administration of the state on a permanent basis.

When Labour is in government the party is controlled by the parliamentary Labour Party, which in turn controlled by the cabinet and the prime minister. But when Labour is in opposition power lies with the National Executive Committee and to a lesser extent in Congress. These two bodies are controlled by the Trade Unions, who have 90% of congress votes. More than half of Congress votes are in the hands of the leaders of just four unions: the TGWU, AUEW, GMWU and NUPE.

The trade unions are not the wild-eyed, militant organisations the press makes them out to be. Just the opposite. The unions stand for 'responsible' class struggle, where workers show respect for their leaders, where they don't claim more money than the bosses say they can afford, and above all where they are divided into different trades and industries and never unite in a common struggle which might threaten the stability of capitalism. In times of crisis like today, even normal limited trade union struggles for modest aims like a living wage tend to threaten the stability of the economy. So the trade unions tend more and more openly to oppose genuine workers struggles. A recent AUEW circular claiming to tell its members how to fight unemployment began: "DO NOTHING to endanger the profitability of your company..."

The problem with the unions is not just that they have bad leaders. Everyone knows how quickly a left-wing union leader becomes a right-wing on once he becomes general secretary. But the unions are integrated into capitalism at every level. National officials are permanently represented on government committees and QUANGO's. District officials are involved in a constant round of meetings with representatives of different employers' and management organisations. In a typical year about 450 such meetings take place in just one district of the AUEW. At a plant level shop stewards bargain with the management, offering to keep their members under control in return for a say in running the business. If they are successful, full time stewards are often given offices next to the personnel manager.

This regular and intimate contact and -in the case of full-time officials- isolation from their membership, teaches unions officials to understand the bosses' point of view, and constantly breeds new generations of "realistic" union leaders. They understand that their power in society depends on their ability to keep workers struggles under control, and preferably to crush them altogether if they become a real threat to social stability. These union leaders usually form the core of the Labour Party's right wing. Parliamentary leaders like Tony Benn can use their time in opposition, when they are freed from responsibility of government, to make radical speeches and shout left-wing slogans. The trade unions don't have the same flexibility. They are increasingly forced to appear as what they really are: not "the power of the organised working class", but the power of the state over the working class.

In local government the Labour Party faces the same contradictions as at national level. Faced with the realities of local government administration Labour councils tend to adopt a right-wing perspective. As employers of thousands of local government workers they behave like any other boss. Last year council workers in Manchester and Rhondda were forced to go on strike when

their Labour Party employers tried to sack workers for taking action against staff cuts. Even employees of more 'left-wing' councils such as Sheffield and Islington have had to take industrial action to defend their interests.

It is only in the constituencies that Labour Party members are permanently free from the responsibility of government. This is why the constituencies form the heartland of Labour's left-wing. Groups like Militant, and left-wing Labour MPs rely on the constituencies for their support.

However when radicals join the Labour Party they never succeed in forcing it to change in a revolutionary direction. On the contrary the Labour Party changes them. As a first step they are taught -by left and right wingers alike- to confuse state capitalism with socialism. Then the experience of holding positions in local councils or trade unions forces them to moderate their radical views. They emerge at the end of the conveyor belt imbued with capitalist ideology and ready to take their places in the leadership of the Labour Party and of British capitalism. The Labour Party is like a vast machine for transforming militant workers into state bureaucrats.

"Crises" in the Labour Party

The Labour Party is ⁱⁿ a permanent state of crisis because while it claims to represent the working class, its actions constantly prove it does no such thing. Labour leaders constantly call for unity; in fact the endless battles between left and right are necessary to maintain the illusion that the Labour Party can be changed.

Sometimes the battles between left and right can seem rather confusing. At the end of last year the papers told us that the new NEC represented a victory for the right wing. But this year, this same NEC has produced a programme which, we are told, marks a sharp turn to the left.

This confusion arises because in general the battles within the Labour Party are not about policies at all. They are power struggles between different sections of the party.

At the centre of these struggles it is usual to find the trade unions. The position of the unions is particularly precarious. They are constantly tying themselves in knots trying to prove at the same time to their members and to management how well they are defending their interests.

During the 50's and 60's, trade union opposition to strikes provoked a wave of unofficial struggles. This in turn provoked attempts by both Labour and Tory governments to control class struggle through legislation. The unions rightly saw this as a threat to their influence in society and to their power within the Labour Party in particular. For tactical reasons during this period it suited the unions to ally with Labour's left wing in its opposition to this legislation.

By giving their official support to a series of large strikes the unions were able to regain the confidence of their members to the extent that they were supported in massive demonstrations against both Wilson's and Heath's anti-strike laws.

Finally the miners strike in 1974 seemed to prove once and for all that "Britain is ungovernable without the support of the unions." With the election of the Labour government, and the resignation of Wilson in favour of Callaghan (who had supported the union's opposition to Wilson's "In Place of Strife" bill), the unions had regained their central position in the Labour Party. The unions were now free to abandon their former allies and revert to their natural position on the right of the party. The "Social Contract" marked the high point of the unions influence within British Society. They demanded, and got, full participation in the social and economic management of Callaghan and Healey's programme of massive wage cut's. No wonder Len Murray could say that "all in all trade unionists have gained more from

the (Callaghan) government in the past two and a half years than from any other government". For workers this same period was marked by declining real wages and growing unemployment. Nothing could illustrate more clearly the opposition between the interests of the unions, and those of the working class.

The long term results of the Social Contract were disastrous for the unions. In the wave of strikes between 1978 and 1981 they came closer to losing complete control of the class struggle than at any time since the 20's. This was the main factor which persuaded the Thatcher government to adopt the radical policy of excluding the unions from the process of government. Having lost the confidence of the membership the unions were in no position to respond to this challenge. The attempt to recreate the mass demonstrations of the early 70's in the "Days of Action" was a flop.

At the same time the Labour left seized this chance to try to take control of the party from the unions. Benn's attempt to wrest the deputy leadership from Healey - on the basis of new election procedures which the left had forced through the national conference giving the constituencies greater weight than ever before - marked the climax of this campaign.

When Benn failed - by a whisker - the unions quickly moved in to take their revenge. Benn, his supporters, and anyone else suspected of being unreliable supporters of the unions, were removed from a series of policy making committees.

Having regained control of the party, the unions and their supporters in parliament (notably a previously little known M.P. sponsored by the Transport and General Workers Union, John Golding) felt able to offer some consolation prizes to appease the left wing. One of these was the concession to unilateralism, which gives the programme its left wing flavour. (All the unilateralist promises are lies naturally). But the most important part of the programme is the commitment to a "national economic assessment". This amounts to a commitment that all aspects of economic policy under a future Labour government will be worked out in partnership with the unions. To the man or woman in the street this is just another name for an incomes policy. And so it is. But from the unions point of view there is a crucial difference: it means that the Labour Party has promised that next time the working class gets beaten over the head, the unions will be on the right end of the stick. Tony Benn doesn't want to miss out on the fun. He has given his support to the "national economic assessment", thereby showing that he recognises that, for the time being, the struggle for control of the Labour party is over.

The Labour Party: Enemy of the Working Class; Enemy of Socialism

There is an alternative to the policies of the present government, and to those of previous Labour governments. But falling living standards and rising unemployment as well as increasing coercion and boredom can only be fought successfully by rejecting the whole logic of the capitalist economy. Society must be reorganised from top to bottom so that resources are used to supply our needs and not to create profits.

To transform society in this way we will be forced to directly confront the ruling class. The repressive forces of the state can be overcome by mass struggle, democratic organisation, mutual solidarity, all strengthened by a common understanding of our aims, and of their importance. This cannot be achieved by a small number of "great socialist leaders", but only by the active participation of the entire working class - the vast majority of society.

On an international level, to transform society in this way means refusing to support the interests of "our" national economy against foreign competitors. It is this economic rivalry which provides the momentum towards world war. The threat of world war will only be removed when we

reject nationalism and patriotism in every form, and unite with workers across the world in our common war against the ruling class!

This kind of radical social change has always been opposed by the Labour Party -and always will be.

All sections of the Labour Party are patriotic to the core. During the Falklands crisis Michael Foot supported sending the task force, demanding that the government "proves by deeds what they can never prove by words alone." Even Militant was right behind Margaret Thatcher on this issue. Tony Benn opposed sending the task force - but like the rest of the Labour left he calls for nationalistic import controls. He wants to shift the effects of Britains economic crisis on to workers in other countries.

The Labour Party constantly calls on workers to respect the authority of their "leaders". When workers attempt to take control of their struggles for themselves, this is often the first step towards overcoming the artificial divisions imposed on our struggles by the trade unions. When we link up our struggles with those of other workers, over the heads of the union leaders, we experience the power which we have as a collectively organised class. On the basis of the experience of this power we can dare to struggle - not just negotiate the terms of our wage slavery - but to abolish this slavery altogether. Like the rest of the ruling class this prospect terrifies the Labour Party. Labour governments have always been quick to use the full force of state repression whenever workers dare to challenge the authority of their leaders.

In 1945, five days after the election of the Labour government, troops were sent in against London dockers on strike for a pay rise. The Labour government maintained war-time legislation which made strikes illegal. Troops were used again throughout the lifetime of the government against striking dockers, lorry drivers, power workers, gas workers and...boiler stokers at Buckingham Palace. (The same government took Britain into N.A.T.O., and took the decision to manufacture the Atom bomb).

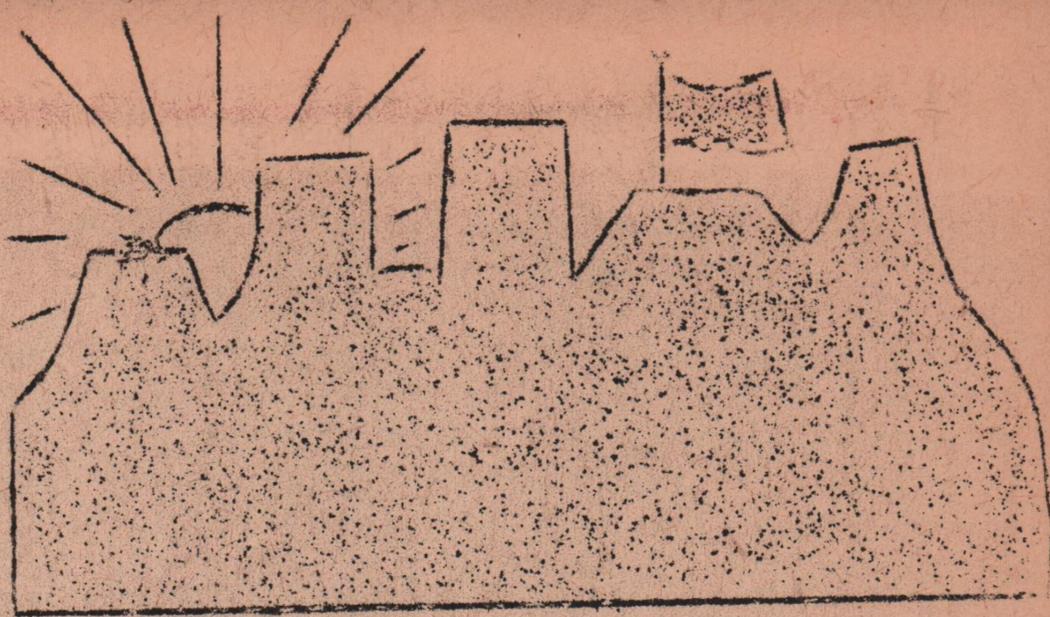
In 1979 Callaghan's government used troops in Northern Ireland to bring an end to the tanker drivers strike there - with the full support of the trade unions, who opposed the strike. At the same time the government considered using troops on the mainland against striking lorry drivers. In the end they decided to leave the job of smashing the strike to the Transport and General Workers Union. Hostility among drivers towards the union was extreme. One driver declared that Alex Kitson, the so-called strike organiser, "should have his head blown off." Kitson was later rewarded by being made chairman of the Labour Party.

If our struggles in the future are to be successful we will have forget all about the myth that the Labour Party and the trade unions represent the working class. If we want to destroy capitalism, we'll have destroy the Labour Party along with it.

May 1983

Printed and published by WILDCAT, Box 25, 164-166 Corn Exchange, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BN

CARELESS TALK



North Staffs Free Newsheet

RIGHT TO WORK?

MAY 83

ISSUE 5

FIGHT TO LIVE!

Why did this march get started in the first place? Even though most of those on this march are out of work, it wasn't organised by unemployed people nor was it their idea. The People's March for Jobs was organised by the TUC so that they could be seen to be doing something in these days of recession and redundancy. After the TUC leaders and their trainees have made their speeches to the unemployed they will get back into their Rover cars and drive, or be driven home to their expensive houses for tea.

The march will be supported by the Labour party because it makes a nice place to speak and pretend to know something about being out of work. When the speeches are over, the Labour leaders go back to their homes, cars and enormous salaries; while those of us who are unemployed or subsisting on CDP or YTS scheme wages have to hitch or walk home because we cannot afford the train fares.

On the face of it the obvious answer is for us to all have well paid jobs too. But we all know this has never been the case and never will be as long as profit governs society. So we stay unemployed, and envy those in work.

Work itself is usually boring and no one is ever paid enough because the bosses are always screwing profit out of everything. Infact if there is no profit to be made, then no-one is allowed to work; this is why you get unemployed building workers, stockpiles of bricks and homeless people all together in the same mess. This is as true in the nationalised industries as it is in the private ones. If profits are bad, or losses too high, they cut wages and sack workers. What should happen is so obvious and simple that people have trouble believing it or say it is impossible; people should be allowed to work at whatever they want to do but they should not be paid for it. people should not need to be paid because everything we need, either to work with or to live should be free. There is no need for money. This argument is often ridiculed by those who think that nothing would be produced if people were not forced to work by using money, yet who in truth would be idle if we had the choice to work at anything we liked? Things would be different certainly, but there is no one who can say that the working class are not capable

