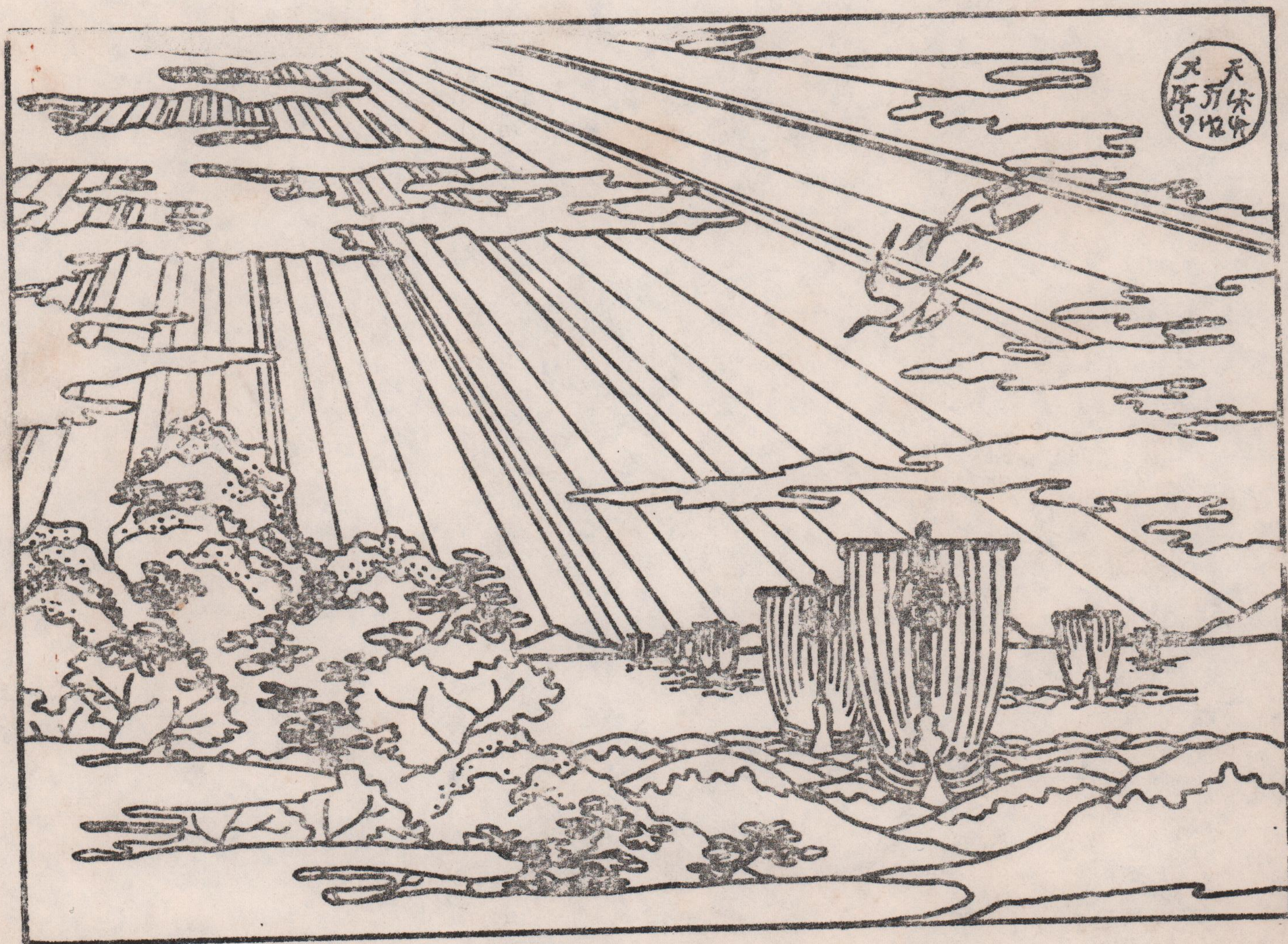


LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

No 8



INTRODUCTION

This issue of our discussion journal is edited and produced by members of the group SOCIAL REVOLUTION, in Hull and Mansfield. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the whole group.

We welcome articles, views and comment for future issues of Libertarian Communism. These should be sent to us in HULL and will be forwarded to the group publishing the next issue.

CONTACTS

S.D. Ritchie.
Flat 12,
152-154 Spring Bank,
HULL.

C. Gascoigne.
2 Elton Road,
Mansfield,
NOTTS.

M. Vallance.
51 Richmond Street,
ABERDEEN.

P. McShane.
11 St Margerets Road,
OXFORD.

R. Knight.
Box 217,
c/o 197 Kings Cross Road.
LONDON, W.C.1.

CONTENTS :-

| | |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| Page 2 | A Glimpse at Chinese Politics. |
| Page 6 | Libertarian Communism |
| Page 11 | Is Russia Capitalist? |
| Page 16 | "Men Against Sexism" |
| Page 20 | The Communist Idea in Japan. |
| Page 26 | EEC-Discussion. |

A few copies of Libertarian Communism No 7. are still available, from your nearest contact. Contains articles on Growth, Ireland, State Capitalism, World Revolution and more. 12p including postage.

Also available first issue of our new journal ;

WORKERS POWER
for Social Revolution
Contains articles on :
Labour Government
Imperialism
Portugal and Russia
Sex Roles.

12p including postage.

PRICE 10p

Cover Design by Sheila from an original print by Gakutei.

A GLIMPSE AT CHINESE POLITICS

One of the shortcomings of the many well-meaning people who have vague hopes for a new society is that they cannot bear the thought that there nowhere yet exists a society in which all men and women control their own lives. They need to believe in some paradise which has already fulfilled their dreams and which they can adore blindly without having to work out for themselves the real problems of human liberation. Stalin's Russia used to serve the function of a "workers' fatherland", but has become much less popular since Khrushchev revealed a little bit of the truth about the Stalin dictatorship, the purges and labour camps. Now another Stalin dictatorship, more distant and less accessible, benefits from the longings of discontented left-wingers abroad-- Mao's China.

Like a previous generation of travellers returning from Russia, select visitors return from China with glowing accounts of the new life of hard-working, self-sacrificing but happy workers and peasants, all taking part in the running of their factories and communes under the kindly gaze of the great leader. After two weeks of being shepherded along the prepared tourist trail, any remaining temptation to criticise is overcome by the racist thought that, after all, these Chinese aren't really like us: that we wouldn't like, for example, long sessions studying Mao Tsetung Thought after a hard day's work doesn't mean they would want to object.

Socialists reject the official myth of the State Capitalist regimes that power in them is held by the mass of working people, that they are "socialist" or "dictatorships of the proletariat" or whatever. Countries like Russia and China are ruled by tiny elites of ruthless Communist Party bureaucrats. However, it is often difficult to show this clearly from statements issued by the regimes themselves, the only statements that their supporters cannot dismiss as "capitalist propaganda". During the worst period of the Stalinist purges, the Russian press was full of news about the new constitution being discussed throughout the country - a marvellous scrap of waste paper guaranteeing citizens all the democratic freedoms they could ask for.

A few months ago I picked up in a lefty bookshop a beautifully printed booklet (10p) entitled "The Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Documents)". On the first page, a multi-coloured portrait of the great helmsman smiles out at us, the face of the haggard chain-smoking old dictator made smooth and rosy. After the photos of twenty more leading "comrades" (not yet exposed as double-dealing renegades) we come to such treats as "Report to the Tenth National Congress of the CPC", delivered by the up-and-coming Wang Hungwen, the said Constitution, and a couple of press communiques. You will be relieved to discover that the two reports were unanimously adopted by the Congress.

Once you get the hang of it, it's quite easy to extract some sort of meaning from the jargon and endlessly repeated liturgical formulas in this stuff. Surprisingly enough, that meaning is a fairly frank

explanation of the workings of a remorselessly dictatorial system. We still don't know how accurately these documents reflect the real social and political life of Maoist China, but they surely have some significance. So let's take a quick guided tour through the constitution. If you don't trust me, you can check up by getting your own copy straight from the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Peking.

First of all, Article 7 says that all other Chinese organisations - State organs, the Army and militia, so-called labour unions, peasant associations, women's federations, the Youth League, the Red Guards and the Little Red Guards (how sweet), and "mass organisations" - must accept the centralised leadership of the Communist Party. Again, Wang emphasises that "of the seven sectors - industry, agriculture, commerce, culture and education, the Army, the government and the Party - it is the Party that exercises overall leadership". He goes on to say that a Party committee's leadership must not be replaced by a joint conference of several sectors, which presumably had happened in some places. It is clear from the overall context that "leadership" means not merely a gentle guidance, as Maoist sympathisers might like to imagine, but the power to impose directives, by force if need be. In a genuinely Socialist society, of course, we don't have such things as leaders, commerce, governments and Parties.

Next, we ask how the Party is organised. "The organisational principle of the Party is democratic centralism." Well, there's no difficulty in locating the centralism. So let's forget the democracy for the time being, and set out the centralist features of the Constitution :-

1. Article 5 - The individual is subordinate to the organisation, the minority is subordinate to the majority, the lower level is subordinate to the higher level, and the entire Party is subordinate to the Central Committee.
2. Article 6 - Leading bodies convene Congresses (National Party Congress only every 5 years, local Congresses only every 3 years), but they can convene them before the due date or postpone them if they wish. Further, the convening of Congresses at one level is subject to approval by higher organs.
3. Primary organisations are set up in factories, mines and other enterprises, communes, offices, schools, shops, neighbourhoods, Army companies and other primary units. These must include the vast majority of the 28 million Party members. These units hold elections every two years, and the elections can be brought forward or delayed. The main tasks of the primary units are indoctrination, and "to fulfil every task assigned by the Party and the State". No mention is made of any decision-making powers at this level - Articles 11 and 12.
4. In elections there is no choice between representatives (let alone delegates) or programmes. There is a process called "democratic consultation" - some kind of behind the scenes negotiations.
5. The plenary session of the Central Committee is convened by and "elects" the Political Bureau of the Central Committee (20 men and one woman, Mao's wife), which exercises the functions and powers of the Central Committee between the not very frequent plenary sessions. Right at the centre, the Politburo contains a Standing Committee (nine men), under whose leadership "a number of necessary organs, which are compact and efficient, shall be set up to attend to the day-to-day work of the Party, the government and the Army in a centralised way" - Article 9.

The exact relationship of the Standing Committee to the Politburo is left unclear, but it is clear that these nine men have a firm double hold over Chinese society. First, they directly control the "necessary

organs". Second, they "lead" the Politburo, which "leads" the Central Committee, which "leads" the whole Party, which "leads" China. Over this hierarchy their control is perhaps a little less direct, with some decision-making power held by other high-ranking officials.

So much for centralism - now what about democracy? As Article 5 says "it is essential to create a political situation in which there are both centralism and democracy". Well, primary units (Article 12) are instructed to "maintain close ties with the masses, constantly listen to their opinions and demands", but this confers on the "masses" no specific rights at all. It is what all sensible rulers do who want to keep a watch on what their subjects are thinking. Then there is all the "consultation" and "deliberation", which again guarantees nothing.

The most remarked on "democratic" provision of the Constitution, made much of in Western news reports, is this section of Article 5 :-
 "Party members have the right to criticise organisations and leading members of the Party at all levels and make proposals to them. If a Party member holds different views with regard to the decisions or directives of the Party organisations, he is allowed to reserve his views and has the right to by-pass the immediate leadership and report directly to higher levels, up to and including the Central Committee and the Chairman of the Central Committee. It is absolutely impermissible to suppress criticism and to retaliate." But this rule gives no real power to the rank-and-file Party member. He or she cannot organise a movement to implement alternative policies, or even publicise his or her views, but only appeal to big bureaucrats over the head of little bureaucrats. If the higher level agrees with the comrade, they countermand the dictates of the lower level; if not, our comrade is in even deeper water. The real aim of this procedure is to tighten up central control by keeping higher levels well informed about what goes on at lower levels.

Some people's idea of democracy might be Wang's report that:-

"...the Party committees of the provinces, municipalities and the autonomous regions, the Party committees of the greater military commands and the Party organisations directly under the Central all set up groups for the revision of the Party Constitution, extensively consulted the masses inside and outside the Party and formally submitted 41 drafts to the Central Committee. At the same time, the masses inside and outside the Party in various places directly mailed in many suggestions for revision. The draft of the revised Constitution now submitted to the Congress for discussion was drawn up according to Chairman Mao's specific proposals for the revision and on the basis of serious study of all the drafts and suggestions sent in."

We wonder whether anyone sent in suggestions like - direct election of delegates who can be mandated and recalled at any time to councils at all levels, independent working class organisation, freedom of speech, press and association, abolition of bureaucratic organs. And what happened to anyone who did send them in. During the Cultural Revolution, when Central control was temporarily weakened, groups such as the Sheng Wu Lien in Hunan Province raised this type of demand, and were later suppressed as "ultra-leftists", many members being shot after appearing before mass kangaroo courts.

We should not imagine that members of the "great, glorious and correct" Communist Party of China have an easy life, passively obeying directions

from above without having to think for themselves. For if their higher ups are unmasked as traitors by a rival faction, then they too will be exposed to attack for opposing the real Party line. The Party line is a straight and consistent path forward if you study hard enough to detect it. Chou says :-

"In the last fifty years our Party has gone through ten major struggles between the two lines...and such struggles will occur ten, twenty or thirty times."

And it is "an irrefutable truth" that the correct line always wins out in the end :-

"If one's line is incorrect, one's downfall is inevitable, even with the control of the central, local and Army leadership." Treason never flourishes, for if it flourish, none dare call it so!

The incredible charges which Chinese bureaucrats make against their defeated rivals are made necessary by the dogma that whoever is in control at present represents "the dictatorship of the proletariat". Any opponent must be an agent of the "class enemy". After unanimously expelling Lin Piao from the Party "once and for all" (he was at the time dead!), the Congress then expelled "Chen Pota,...anti-communist Kuomintang element! Trotskyist, renegade, enemy agent and revisionist". In this abuse, the only label which may mean something specific is "Trotskyist". Chen seemed to be encouraging democratisation during the Cultural Revolution, such people are inaccurately called Trotskyists by the Stalinists and Maoists.

So the Partymember must often weigh up the risks of resisting the present leadership, in the expectation that the opposing faction will consolidate its power, against the risks of being later exposed as an accomplice of the enemy. The sort of risks involved are hinted at by Wang :-

"When confronted with issues that concern the line and the overall situation, a true Communist must act without any selfish considerations and dare to go against the tide, fearing neither removal from his post, expulsion from the Party, imprisonment, divorce or guillotine."

That's life in People's China! No wonder they worry about "combining unity of will with personal ease of mind and liveliness".

As for our fellow workers in China, we can know very little about their struggles, but we are sure they will keep up the fight against their rulers, the group which Sheng Wu Lien called "the red capitalist class". As part of the world working class, they will yet take part in building a genuine Socialist community.

Stephen Stefan.

NOTE - See also, article entitled "A Socialist in China" Socialist Standard, November 1974. and "Thesis on the Chinese Revolution" by Cajo Brendel, Solidarity pamphlet 25p.

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

The following is an extract from a much longer document entitled 'Towards a Communist Perspective' written by 2 people active in Community struggles in Islington, London, and in the 'Islington Gutter Press.'

How do people concretely experience things and struggle, and how do we, the libertarians left contribute to this process?

As we have seen within capitalist society peoples prime way of experiencing their life process is as individuals. They do what's natural, what they feel they must do to live. They work for some money, spend that money how they wish. They each look out from their own individual lives at an anonymous world, which seems beyond their control. However there are many processes and tendencies within that society which they contribute to and which involves them and affects them whether they like it or not.

Society gets more and more complex all the time, people are snared into an ever more total social web. At every point people rely on others increasingly and yet seem more and more distanced from these others. People always think that they are doing things as individuals but this is not in fact the case. What they are not conscious of is that all their individual actions coincide with those of others to keep a certain social order going that is in fact beyond their control but which they think of as natural. Until it goes wrong.

People are actually caught within a tight class system. What does being in a class mean? Because of these processes at work within society, behind peoples backs, patterns are established which repeat themselves within millions of peoples individual life situations. If someone is working class it means he or she will feel these external pressures pushing them in certain directions. Things will happen to them, which they experience as an individual, but which is repeated in a million lives. People feel that they must respond to a given problem and make the decision as an individual, not realising that everybody in their block of flats, out there in the street, sitting opposite them on the train is feeling and doing the same thing. The sum total of all these peoples individual actions come together as a distinct class force. When all these people, in their own private lives are forced to struggle for something as a necessity, class struggle begins. Thus in a way, the working class only really exists when it is forced to come together and struggle. When there is no struggle, when things are running smoothly, then everybody falls apart back into the grooves of their own life process. They become individuals again.

In capitalism there is a tendency to compartmentalise everything from the "division of labour" to the division between 'Political' and everyday life. Politics is 'out there' to do with experts (Politicians) with its own language. This split leads to the myriads of contradictions in peoples thought. People may be struggling for every penny they earn and hating every minute of their alienating labour but at the same time fall for the "scrounger" line of the politicians about those on SS who don't work in the NATIONAL INTEREST. People may be petty criminals yet would support "law and order". Workers strike while believing strikes are bad for the nation. Blacks vote for Enoch Powell.

In a society where so much is privatized, how can we each know how things affect the person next to us. Communism is about people fulfilling their own needs without getting other people external to their situation to do it for them. It is in the process of direct action that people can turn to the person next to them and discover they feel the same and quickly grasp the real significance of their actions. It is when action is co-opted and taken over by a leader who "deals with" things, councillor, shop steward, party committee etc., etc., that this consciousness is not allowed to arise.

What the libertarians have tried to do is find ways to cut across the divisions of society, both the divisions of person from person, and the divisions between work and home, work for money and housework, workers and non-workers etc, etc, (also the division of our real potential from our created self.) Perhaps, it is true, that this desire went to the extreme pole leaving the point of production a taboo area with too much bad history to be touched. Although we must struggle to get over our fears it is understandable why it has been left alone.

What the straight left has done by concentrating mainly on the politics of the point of production is reiterate the roles which capitalism puts people in. They are defining yet again the working class in the factory, working, rather than as a whole person who exists in other guises outside of work.

As we have said, capitalism is really a trick by which workers only receive a percentage of the worth of what they make. They are thus rationed and merely given what is considered by society in general necessary (this may include colour television if it is accepted to be so.)

The work situation is the place where struggle is most likely, where it is a little easier to recognize that everyone is in the same boat. It is the place where capital is forced to attack people, and where people are in the most powerful position (theoretically) to respond. Production is the key to it all but although it is important, it is not necessarily the only place where one can learn to experience capitalism as it really is.

In some ways it is easy merely to try to increase the 'ration', as work to most people is their means of life and they don't expect it to be anything else. (i.e. they don't expect to enjoy it too much or know all about what is going on there.) In other words because wages, and thus work, are so all-important they are the things people immediately fight around - more wages, the right to work. (The workers tend to forget the fact that this "work" is their own exploitation.) That view of struggle is reflected in the trade union movement which has consistently proved itself hostile to tackling any other injustice but that of not earning proportionately enough or losing one's job. We are not putting down this struggle to live in our capitalist society, for obviously we need jobs and money to exist.

Libertarians have mainly shied away from working at the point of production (except as CUs in strikes) because of the strong TU, CP tradition in work situations. There has seemed to be no place for the non-authoritarian, anti-sexist, anti-leaders, non-bureaucratic self-organisation ideas of libertarians. As well as the fact that many of us were not working ourselves and we all tended to reject the work ethic. In many ways it is seen that the work place is the place where activity can be 'expected', in men's workplaces anyway. Just look at the miners strikes, they are nearly a yearly event in the calendar now.

There has always been a fear of being forced into the faults of others when organising in a place where there is so much history of Leninist politics. We have mainly rejected intervention in a straight left sense, we have always seen the need to organise from our own situation so that we

couldn't lose sight of our motivations and because we see that every function of human life embodies politics. Our fears perhaps led us to retreat too far and we have not fully worked out how we can transcend this fear and relate to work through a clear critique of capitalist society. We have mouthed ideas about linking work and community but until now this has been mechanistic and thus insignificant. If worked out clearly this link is totally subversive.

In this society people work and then spend and buy. There is a total split between production and consumption. Workers need not even know where what they make goes or where what they buy comes from and who made it or more importantly whether there is a real need to make what they are making. People mostly work somewhere now, not because they want to do that job, but because they need the means to live, money, wages. Work bears no relation to usefulness. Probably only a minority of workers make or do anything that would be necessary in a communist society or even that is really necessary now. In fact a lot of what is done is not only not useful but even dangerous and detrimental to life and a total waste of resources.

This separation of work from the product and the fact that work is the only means to live has meant that the struggle has been seen as control over ones wages and wage labour rather than control over what and how much we make through a knowledge of what we need! In fact the two, consumption and production, are inseparable and should be seen to be. It is only when there is a lack of some commodity that it is clear that production and needs are not linked in this society. What we don't feel we need, can soon be made a need through advertising, the media, thousands of shops etc. Consumption is the link between work and home; rent, fares, food, clothing heating, etc. Also there is the effect work has on your life at home, how it infiltrates into your 'private life.' The strenuousness, the tedium, the length of time spent at work has its effect on peoples relationships. The constant danger to health and body which could mean that you can have no life outside. Then there is pollution created by production and the senseless waste of resources used up in the vast units demanded by the capitalist system.

As long as the wage side of work is allowed to be seen as the pivot of the struggle to 'overthrow' capitalism then so many human problems go unseen and the splits of capitalism will continue. Women will not be an integrated part of the struggle, racism won't be tackled except of course when it happens to coincide with the quest for higher wages. If we really believe that politics is in every part of our lives, then we must understand how the needs of production design all our lives.

Capitalism can never be 'fair'. It depends on too much inequality and divisiveness. If it could then more equal distribution, more wages, better conditions of work can be adequate demands to raise the whole quality of our life. But if we know it can't be fair we have to look to see the ways in which we allow such inequality to go on. We must examine every minute of our lives to see what we do to maintain a system which is so alien to our instincts and try and define our real needs and feel what our frustrations are, where they spring from and more importantly how they manifest themselves.

Our needs and dreams are felt somewhere within us but it is hard to pin them down. People work for money and money becomes the key to our desires. Work becomes the only social reality and without a job you are almost without identity. Some of us have felt it hard to be an eternal claimant for similar reasons. But beneath the ambition, the desire for approval and success through 'work' our desires are simple and emotional. We want health happiness, love, friendship. Why we are not happy is just as relevant as why we are not rich. "You can't buy Love."

Capitalism doesn't allow you to deal with your desires, once found, in your own way. At the same time though, as we have said, people pride themselves on the feeling that they are free to choose. Men have to want 36-24-36 flondes and dominating sexual gratification and in order to get back some feeling of SELF they must be superior, strong, unemotional, COOL. Women have to find a place for themselves in a world of production where they MATTER. So they are allowed to be needed by being weak and submissive, beautiful when painted, dieted and dressed up and by being good cooks and MOTHERS. In short a complement to the male ego. (This is not to say that we all succeed in our roles.)

Libertarians have fought sexism, seeing it as a mode of control which we can exert on one another. It is obviously one of the ways peoples potential is limited. The phrase 'policeman in your head' is all too true. As long as men oppress women to regain some semblance of the power taken away from them all day at work and women take pride in their submission in order to be a 'good wife' then capital will remain in control.

Capitalism is able to keep us powerless in so many ways. It gives us the semblance of power in the form of sexism and competition in general and petty authority in the hierarchy of jobs. (There's always someone worse off). We are all small reflections of our true potential as there is no space in capitalism for us to take any real control (only the mock control of participation). As everything gets bigger and more and more centralized and computerized, our ability to satisfy our own needs and desires gets smaller and smaller and our power shrinks (windmills are ea sy to comprehend nuclear reactors are most comples). As we get further from being able to deal with everyday life, as things get too complex and alienating, so the realising of needs are harder to consider.

What libertarians have tried to do is to make struggle a part of everyday life without a special 'political' face. We have tried to work from our own situation and to break down the mystification surrounding the capitalist solution of ones own problems. In a world of professionals, experts in every field from POLITICS to DOCTORS to TEACHERS to CIVIL SERVANTS to PARENTS it is hard to find your own abilities again.

As Capitalism can in real terms provide us with less and less we must learn more and more to do things for ourselves. We must challenge our own created ignorance and powerlessness.

Health groups, womens groups, squatting, sexual politics, claimants unions, food co-ops, community presses, community facilities, collective childcare, all of these are part of demystifying what are taken as 'facts of life'. We want to be part of the new learning process. The breaking down of the classic learning process of YES/NO, CAN/CAN'T, authority. The council does NOT HAVE TO BE respected, it isn't the only way to be housed. Social Workers DON'T hold the key to our safety and schools are NOT the place of education. Doctors do NOT NECESSARILY know more about our own bodies or hold the answer to our problems. Police are NOT guardians of the people and the law is NOT just and only to be fought for in wigs and gowns in Latin. Newspapers are NOT things that come out of shops full of truth. Marriage and the parent family is not the ONLY way to live and raise children and we don't have to PUT UP WITH IT or MAKE THE BEST OF the continual fights and isolation it brings.

It is only when we can understand what we are capable of that the fear of the unknown disappears and we feel the real possibility of fighting for what we know we can attain in a situation where our lives are under attack. How could we run our lives without all the experts? Well with the present tiny ratio of imparted knowledge it does seem a bit impossible. We are allowed to revel in "Tomorrows World" on tele where we can see all the wonders of modern technology but we are never shown how possible it would be to be self sufficient in our own areas or homes using the useful

discoveries of science. We are not taught the rudiments of staying alive at school, everything is taught in the most alienated form. We learn about Archimedes in isolation but we don't learn about soil and gardening, about health and medicine, how to make useful objects. We are taught everything in terms of facts. There is no delving into the substance and development of these facts.

This is the importance of radical technology and science groups, radical health groups and mental health groups, radical education groups, public printing facilities and the dissemination of practical knowledge generally.

Obviously the practical side of things is not everything but without the tools the imagination can't conceive of building a new order. We also have to understand that things are no facts of life but can be changed in the same way as they developed (like hierarchy, male domination, money and many other things.)

We have written this to try and validate some forms of practise we have been into. There is always a tendency to look at the libertarians and see them as ineffective and not GROWING. But a lot of this dissatisfaction comes from the view of history we are given. In history we are taught that progress happened because of leaders, because of the actions of large organised groups important at any time. History never mentions the everyday the way consciousness really grew and grows and so we tend to evaluate ourselves in relation to the world using the same method as the history books and this is one reason we become dissatisfied.

Our task is not to construct the perfect lever to overturn a monolith. We are rather faced with an ongoing process which we must integrate ourselves with and accelerate. We are beginning to realise that ideology is not the prime mover and we do not feel it crucial to develop a convincing set of ideas with which to go in to 'convert' people.

Revolutionaries can never make things happen. (History, however, has shown how they can stop things happening by imposing their ideology or by building up precarious leadership situations which never taught anyone anything but disillusion.) It seems we can but inject new aspects of struggle into existing ones. In our everyday life we react to things that happen around us and like other people do what we think is right. We find ways in these situations whether it be at work, say as a teacher or at home as squatters or 'parents' to bring out the political nature of everything. We can expose the contradictions in situations and prove that things are not just LIKE THAT but that they are an integral part of the society we live in.

When we meet other people who are involved in struggle either as individuals or as groups we can be of support and in a way service those struggles and give a sense of importance to them. We can encourage those struggling collectively to see what their action means in relation to their own lives and to each other as people who previously were isolated, powerless individuals.

The way we organise ourselves as people who have similar ideas cannot be talked about in isolation from looking at what our everyday practise is, and what its aims are. It seems strange to think that we had a conference on organisation before on what was the basis on which 'we' were together. No wonder some of us felt so threatened under a situation of such urgency.

When we have come up against the discussion or ORGANISATION we have tended to put ourselves down for being ineffective and disorganised but look at what we have got together in Islington. We've kept a press going and a paper for 2 years. We've squatted and worked at our living situations and relationships in a consistent way for over 2 years. We've consistently raised the question of housing to the front pages of the local paper through our actions. We've opened and maintained a women centre along with many

other women for a year. And we've gained recognition and trust from many people in the area. This is not to mention the many struggles we as individuals are involved in.

Somehow, though, people insist on being able to 'quantify' their power. They almost want to be able to look at their books and see how many people there are or how many struggles they've initiated. Obviously a definite structure and organisation provides this possibility but it doesn't necessarily mean much. People have not historically fought for grand ideals directly but around specific demands ~~ar~~ from direct anger flowing from their everyday life. Do we need a complicated blanket structure people can join? We must learn to see every little uprising as proof of our belief that struggle grows organically out of your own situation and fades or stays and grows depending on the situation existing at the time.

We who call ourselves libertarians on the other hand can make many decisions; we can move around, we can squat, we can work or not work, not marry; look after kids collectively, but this is because we have worked out our lives to be that way as part of a long perspective. But we are unusual. For most people change is a leap into the unknown that people are not educated to take and which is only taken in a situation too intolerable to do otherwise and where all else has failed.

It is depressing to see how conservative most 'revolutionaries' are. Somehow they think revolution consists of smashing capitalism and replacing it with socialism which will automatically make things better for all, iron out the inequalities. But in their analysis they still think in terms of many of the institutions of the former society, like money, power, centralisation, alienated work (only in the transitional stage, of course.) That is why we have tried to stress that a study of the historical role and development of such institutions is an important step to being able to conceive of their disappearance. To be communist requires imagination in a society as stultifying as ours, full of 'facts of life' and compensations. We think that most people have that imagination but they are told to consider it as utopian fantasy.

We must try and work to realise the fantasy here and now to show it is no fantasy but a real possibility.

Joan and Tony.

IS RUSSIA CAPITALIST ?

INTRODUCTION - The following is a response from an individual member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain to Stefan's article on State Capitalism in Libertarian Communism No. 7 (a few copies of which are still available). We do in fact agree with much of what is said and don't feel that it was at all contradicted in Stefan's article which we feel Charmain has in part misinterpreted.

Since Libertarian Communism is apparently a discussion journal I should like to comment on Stefan's notes on Russian Society and State Capitalism. I would first like to query the term Russian Society: what is meant by this? Is Stefan referring to all the Soviet Union or only to Russia itself? Is he accepting the old Russian mystique of the Spirit of the Slave, the uniqueness of Holy Rus?

There are also other phrases he uses which seem to me unhelpful in understanding Russia as part of the world capitalist system: such as 'the central political bureaucracy', 'bureaucratic relations of production', and 'a new

non-capitalist form of class society, with a managerial or bureaucratic ruling class.' More of this later.

But before we start attaching labels to whatever goes on in Russia, let us start by answering a few questions. In the first place, what is capitalism? The Marxist answer is that capitalism is a mode of production: not so much the political and institutional superstructure, as the underlying reality. It is the way we combine to produce and distribute wealth which determines the characteristics of our social institutions, generally speaking. Basically the capitalist mode of production is characterized by two key factors: (1) production is for profit - goods are made as commodities, for their exchange-value not their use-value; and (2) surplus-value is extracted from the producers of wealth by the wage-labour system (cf. serfdom, chattel slavery, the corvée etc.)

When we look at Russia, there can be no doubt that the 2nd factor - wage-labour - is obviously as much in evidence there as in any other country in the world. It is perhaps useful to compare the situation in a 'mixed' economy like Britain: wage-workers here are just as much part of the working class when they work for the State-owned enterprises as when they work for private enterprise. Returning to Russia, we know that from time to time some racketeer starts up a factory and runs it, illegally, as a private concern although masquerading as a State or cooperative concern. From the workers' point of view, they are exploited in the same way by State as by private enterprise. The workers in such private concerns are employed at similar wages, producing similar commodities and surplus value, just like their brothers in State factories.

But what of the first key factor, the production of commodities? Anyone who has lived in Russia, for however short a time, is aware that just as here goods and services are only produced as commodities. You are hungry, there is bread, but unless you have money, you stay hungry. Similarly with everything else you need. You pay rent for a flat, you pay fares on the trolley-bus or Metro, and if you are a housewife you shop around for bargains and special offers. Although in some areas the State makes things available free or nearly so, as with Britain's welfare services they must be seen as a subsidy which enables capital to pay less money-wages by making some payments in kind.

Also when we look at the work of a Sovkhoz or Kolkhoz, a factory, mine or chemical plant, or whatever, we find that management is desperately anxious to create more and yet more surplus-value, whether by management we understand a remote planning official or the men actually on the spot.

The role of production - factory work, conveyor-belts, the mechanization of farming, use of fertilizers to maximize productivity, the industrial division of labour etc. - is dictated by the need to make capital breed still more capital, by the production of surplus-value. Wage-workers in Russia produce surplus-value in the same way as those in this country: they are paid wages which are based on the value of their labour-power, they produce collectively more than they consume, and the difference between the value of their labour-power and the value of their product, which Marx called surplus-value, is consumed partly by the management, partly by the State (police, military, welfare etc.) and is partly re-invested as capital. This happens just as much when 'the State' controls capital as when multinational corporations or mammoth trusts perform the same role.

What do we mean when we talk of the State controlling capital? Some would argue that as in the West the State in Russia is the capitalist class's executive, or that the State is the **Capitalist class** organized as a collective. The capitalist class, of course, has evolved in the West from the early one-man show (e.g. in Arnold Bennett's Clayhanger) through partnerships and family firms (The Forsytes, for instance). As their capital grew, their

personal control of the business diminished; they hired managers to deal with first a few and finally all managerial functions, till already in Marx's time, the capitalist (owner of capital) was superfluous and redundant, all his useful functions being undertaken by paid employees. Nevertheless, if the owners of capital decide to, they can fire these paid managers, even the managing director, unless he owns a controlling interest. ("No one is indispensable".) Ultimate control remains in the hands of the owners. Although the individual shareholder may well have little or no control over his capital, once it is invested, because he has joined forces with big capital controlling groups, he shares in the capitalist class's collective control of capital. This control is also exercised in the political sphere, by capital's influence over politicians and civil servants.

Returning to the Russian scene, we find day-to-day running of businesses undertaken as in this country by professional managers, the salaried employees of the State, the owner. But who is "the State"? Who owns the State's enterprises, the State capital? Who controls investment of State capital? These are some of the questions Stefan has not attempted to ask. I believe they are nearly always asked.

In the first place, as in the West, whichever political party rules the country can control State-owned enterprises. In the West, the major political parties bow to the interest of the capitalist class, even when pretending to be Labour or "Socialist". (It was under Wilson's government that a large number of coal mines were closed down as "uneconomic", and under Attlee the British capitalist class embarked on an unprecedented, for peacetime, programme of armament expenditure.) But in Russia, we are told, there are no individual capitalists and therefore there can be no capitalist class. Hence, by Bolshy logic, we are told that since the Politburo, the Central Committee and the Partocracy are elected by "the people", this means that the national capital is controlled by "the people".

Let us consider a few relevant facts here. Fact no. 1: a very small minority of "the people" can actually become members of the Party - the vast majority cannot. Fact no. 2: it is virtually impossible to become a manager or obtain any high-ranking job without a Party card, and if a man is expelled from the Party, he will automatically become liable to expulsion from his job, merely for his non-membership of the Party. Fact no. 3: the result of this is that the Party has become the institution of capital control in Russia. Fact no. 4: Party membership and elite jobs, with super salaries, prizes and perks, combine to produce exceptionally high living standards relative to the living standards of the rest of the Russian people (cf. 'Socialist Standard' Jan. '73). Thus the Party membership card identifies a super surplus-value eater.

Now is the Party a "caste" as per Trotskyist theory, or is it a class? The Socialist answer can only be that it is a class, since it comprises a section of society defined by a particular relationship to the means of producing and distributing wealth. (Caste cannot be defined in this way: cf. Capital vol 1.) In this case, although ownership of capital is apparently a State monopoly, control of capital is definitely theirs. While they can do without legal personal ownership of mines and factories etc. (constant capital), they control the national capital as a collective, just as the Papal hierarchy controls the Catholic Church's capital. Also they have compensated for non-ownership by rather greater control of labour.

In Russia we find a wage slave working class, which has to sell its labour-power in order to live since it does not own or control the means of producing wealth. We also find a minority class which, by virtue of its political control of the State, also controls the State capital. Does this class constitute a "capitalist class"? Stefan tells us: "The rulers of Russia do not by themselves constitute a 'Russian capitalist class', since this implies capitalist relations among themselves. But collectively they are a part of the world capitalist class."

However, if these Russian rulers are "a part of the world capitalist class", it is impossible to deny that they constitute the Russian section of the capitalist class, which is merely another way of saying a "Russian capitalist class". But Stefan declares that they cannot be that "since this implies capitalist relations among themselves". He does not say what sort of relations he has in mind. Probably he means that they are not competitive. Let us try to clear the air by citing what goes on nearer home. In any local authority, each department fights ferociously for more finance - housing vs. social services, roads vs. education, and so on; yet all departments unite against a common foe - such as another local authority or perhaps a Government department. There is a similar situation in Government and the Civil Service. Likewise in large companies where there is both competition and cooperation. Look at the big capitalists in this country. In prosperous times it's a case of "Dog eat dog". Yet in bad times, when Labour looms up with nasty nationalization, or when foreign firms flood the home market with cheaper commodities, look how hard they try to cooperate. And never more effectively, perhaps, then when they close ranks against the workers.

Now let us look at the Russian Partocracy and see whether they have similar internal capitalist relations. Are they competitive in struggling for more capital investment, in selling their products as profitably as possible, given the various legalistic impediments (cf. planning regulations, price codes etc.), in buying labour-power, raw materials and other means of production or distribution as cheaply as possible? Of course they are. Are they competitive in the production of surplus value, either by lengthening the working day or by increasing productivity of labour (e.g. Stakhanovism or the competition between the various farming units in a region)? Yes in general they are: this is what management in Russia is all about - there are even incentives for "efficient" managers, usually money prizes. If they are not competing against each other, then they join forces and compete together against the Chinese or the Americans.

So it seems that the rulers of Russia do constitute a part of the capitalist class zealously competing to accumulate collectively more and yet more capital, by more and more effective exploitation of their section of the world working class. But Stefan, having denied that they are a "Russian capitalist class", goes on to stick on the label of "a managerial or bureaucratic ruling class", also "a new non-capitalist form of class society". We are given the idea that those who put forward these concepts are "obsessed with bureaucratic relationships (order givers and order takers)", from which we must assume that this is a superficial, sociological rather than economic, theory, dealing with the political and institutional superstructure rather than with the actual mode of production which is what ultimately determines the superstructure.

Since I think all these groups would agree that the capitalist mode of production is dominant in the world today, the onus is on them (and on Stefan) to explain just what sort of "new non-capitalist form of class society" they think has evolved in Russia. Even in terms of the superstructure ideology, laws, institutions, morality, the family etc.), Russia is amazingly similar to Western capitalist countries. For instance, while Russia has the K.G.B., the USA has the CIA and the FBI, South Africa has BOSS, Britain has the Special Branch etc. The family in Russia is almost exactly like the family in any European country. What of morality? Double standards there, same as here. Or compare the art of Nazi Germany and that of Stalinist Russia. We could go on, but it would be boring.

Stefan proposes a "synthesis" of the view of Russia as (state) capitalist and the other view of Russia as "a new non-capitalist form of class society". But in order to get us to accept such an improbable and sterile hybrid he will have to demonstrate:-

- that there has been an evolution of capitalism in Russia into a new form of capitalism ("a special new type of capitalism - State capitalism"), i.e. that there has been a qualitative change, not merely the sort of quantitative changes which have been taking place all over the capitalist world, where big fish are constantly becoming bigger, but never turning into whales;
- also that "bureaucratic society" is not characterized by the same key factors as capitalism, such as commodity production, wage-labour, and the accumulation of capital.

He has not done this so far. His notes must be seen merely as a build-up for his ~~scare~~-story, warning us all of the danger of "the Statists" coming to power and introducing a "bolshevik or fascist regime". In these crude and superficial phrases, he shows how little he has understood of Marxist socialism.. The factors which cause some countries to shudder under dictatorships while others maintain relatively "democratic" regimes are to be found ultimately in the economic conditions in the various countries, rather than in their political superstructure. The materialist conception of history is the key to this question.

Stefan's conclusions still remain unclear. Apparently we are to synthesize two views: one view says Russia is a special form of capitalism, the other says that it is a non-capitalist society. But these two views are obviously not reconcilable. He also says that in Britain the Statists "aim to oust the private capitalists" (my heart bleeds, I don't think), that the "Statists are the main enemy of Socialism" (and I always thought we had enough to do just fighting to get rid of capitalism), and that if they are not prevented from coming to power there will be dire consequences. The logic of these arguments might well lead the reader to vote Tory to keep Labour out. Was this intended? The aim seems to be to confuse and mystify people rather than to discover and express a coherent view which fits the facts and therefore can be readily understood. Such mystification can only serve the ends of King Capital, it is less than useful to the working class.

C. Skelton.

"When the socialists in the Russian government, after the victory over tsarism, imagined that a phase of historical development could be skipped and socialism structurally realised, they had forgotten the ABC of Marxist knowledge according to which socialism can only be the outcome of an organic development that has capitalism developed to the limits of its maturity as its indispensable presupposition. They had to pay for this forgetfulness by a wide, troublesome and victim-strewn detour which brings them in a space of time to capitalism.

To institute capitalism and to organise the bourgeois state is the historical function of the bourgeois revolution. The Russian Revolution was and is a bourgeois revolution, no more and no less: the strong socialist admixture changes nothing in this essence. So it will fulfil its task by throwing away, the last remnants of its 'War-Communism' and revealing the face of a real, genuine capitalism. The struggles within the Bolshevik party are preparing this conclusion, and with it the end of the Bolshevik party dictatorship. The line of development - whether that of a party coalition which hastens and alleviates the launching phase of capitalism, or that of a Bonaparte who protracts and aggravates it - is not yet clear; both are possible."

Otto Ruhle "From the Bourgeois to the Proletarian Revolution"
1924 - published by Socialist Reproduction. Price 40p.

"MEN AGAINST SEXISM"

EDITORIAL NOTE : Apologies for the late publication of this article which refers to the last London conference of "Men Against Sexism" and not to the more recent conference in Brighton, (which we would also welcome comment upon).

One of the results of the growth of the Womens Liberation Movement has been the appearance of men's groups which sympathise with its aims. In many cases these groups were formed by men who were under pressure to change themselves from "their" women in the WLM; even where groups formed independently the ideas are taken over wholesale from the womens movement. Just as in the WLM, a single umbrella covers a variety of conflicting approaches.

The conference in London on 16-17th November 1974, with between 100-150 men present, was the third. I, and quite a few others, had not been involved before, and my reaction was mixed and confused.

The men's movement had partly originated from the groups of men who ran creches at WL conferences. We had a creche at the Childrens Community Centre, which was lucky because the Centre had not been informed in advance due to muddled organisation. The creche was under-used, with only 7 or 8 children, and at times more men than children (why?). I stayed to help til mid afternoon on the Saturday and enjoyed being with the kids, certainly more than being with the men. Like many men (and women), I don't normally get to be with children, while those, mainly women, whose job it is to look after kids in this society's dehumanising division of labour - in home, nursery, school - are deprived of any enjoyment by scarcely ever getting a letup. If the conference had had a chance of getting down to discussing anything practical, it would have been a good idea to investigate how to organise some mutual aid in this area.

A van ferried helpers between the hall and the creche. When I came into the conference everyone was sitting round in circles (workshops). People were talking very quietly, often it seemed to those sitting next to them or even to themselves, and it was hard to catch what was said in the hubbub.

The first group I sat in was talking about the health work of the Islington group, which is trying to involve men in what is felt to be a women's field. They are working on the sort of medical self-help pioneered by women's health groups - studying their bodies, illnesses, sexuality to gain some independence from the medical establishment, which is dominated by elitist and sexist values. In another workshop, men were discussing their experience in giving talks to schoolboys; they had been invited by teachers in the WLM.

Both of these projects are worth expanding, but it was disappointing that other practical problems were not discussed, for example:

- how to fight sexism at work and in education, and how to integrate opposition to sexism with other struggles;
- how to connect up anti-sexism with wider aims such as social revolution.

- how to put over our ideas effectively in opposition to the mass media
- how to in practice resist sexism in personal relations with people, men and women, who accept it as natural.

I think that this failure is due to the guilt felt by many of the men, especially over their oppression of women in the past. They seemed more concerned to prove to one another, and to the women's movement, that they really were sincere, than to fight sexism for its own sake. "We must remember that we are on probation with the women's movement, who regard us with suspicion" said one brother. As we sat pondering our experiences and feelings in a way most men rarely do (consciousness raising'), I learned quite a lot, but it seemed an end in itself. Men had met in closed isolated groups (at present, in London, there are no men's groups open to new members!) and agonised together over long periods, and then were disillusioned that they were changing so little. Though self-criticism has its place in social change, there is nothing effective or progressive in self-condemnation; religion has been at it for thousands of years. There's a similarity between the "what shits we men are" attitude of some men and the doctrine of original sin.

The atmosphere was much more personal and friendly than you'd expect in a large gathering of men - though one gay man said he felt the atmosphere was frigid, which shows something of what gays must feel among more sexist men. We tried to avoid disguising personal statements in impersonal verbiage, and challenged one another when we did. But this was at the cost of making any social analysis - we are still a long way from the necessary combination of the personal with the theoretical.

There was a conflict at the conference which developed into a confrontation in the final full session on Sunday, bringing into the open the differences we had been suppressing. Soon after I came into the hall on Saturday afternoon, a man stood on a chair, announced that there was a women washing up in the kitchen and that we should be discussed with ourselves, and sat down again. Vegetarian lunch had been provided by a volunteer health-food collective containing both men and women.

I was annoyed - why didn't he just ask for volunteers, nobody would have refused? Were we all supposed to mill around in the kitchen asking to wash up? And he wasn't washing up either. My neighbour grinned - "He's just trying to put us down." A group of "militant" gays had come to the conference, convinced (I think) in advance that it would be a liberal fraud. Apparently some men, who had had little previous experience with gay people, had made remarks which they construed as sexist. They had retaliated by setting up a gays-only workshop, which created some bad feeling. In the final session, it looked as if they were trying to prevent discussion of future arrangements by filibuster, only being silenced by another gay man who was more tolerant of and patient with heterosexual men.

I'll try to sort out four different trends of ideas which came up - maybe two would do, and maybe any classification distorts the fluid situation. I'll label them for convenience, with their approximate response to the question "Do men oppress women?" And also, "Do straight men oppress gay men?" -

1. Gayist - Yes.
2. Ingratiationist - Yes, OK, but can't you see we're trying not to?
3. Men's liberationist - Yes, but sometimes women also oppress men; men and women are all (equally?) oppressed by the roles imposed on them by society.
4. Balanced - The question is wrong; it's more complicated than that.

1. The "militant gays" were interested in Men Against Sexism because the Gay Liberation Movement had collapsed and they had nowhere else to go. To them, reality was crystal clear - straight men were the people who exploited women and beat up gays, and threw them out of jobs and flats. Even to mention the possibility that men were also oppressed by their roles (at work, in the family, in sexual relations, or in war), or to explain the oppression of women as being by society or the ruling class, was for them a cop-out from men's responsibility for being oppressors of women. They believed that the men's movement was a sexist ploy to deflect and confuse the women's movement. They were also separatists, and advocated that we all become gay to avoid oppressing women so much (with or without the agreement of heterosexual women was not clear). Thus the term gayist. Others of us questioned whether avoiding close relations with women amounted to fighting sexism, and pointed out that the women in the Gay movement had left because they regarded the gay men as sexist. Though their attitudes reflected the terrible suffering they had undergone, they were also using their homosexuality to be "more anti-sexist than thou".

2. Many straight men were very much on the defensive before the relentless verbal attacks of the gayists, intimidated even. "There are a lot of pigs here" - "Yes, but we're a little less piggish than we were; don't dismiss us as hopeless" was repeated many times in different words. Except on the point of separatism, the "ingratiat-ionists" accepted the simplistic analysis of the gayists, but pleaded to be given a chance to reform.

3. In contrast, a few men completely rejected the "men oppress women" explanation (I stand to be corrected here if I misunderstand). Don't men have their own special oppression - as coal-miners, soldiers, sexual initiators, breadwinners and so on? "I'm in a position where I have to support a family who no longer love me. Aren't I oppressed?" said one. Esther Vilar wrote a book, not completely serious, in which she explains sexism as an organised oppression of men by women - not that any "men's liberationists" go that far. But there is a clear difference, at least of emphasis, between those who focus on men as oppressors (the anti-sexists) and those who focus on men as oppressed by society (the "men's liberationists"). In this country the choice of the name Men Against Sexism, instead of Men's Liberation Movement, marked the (temporary?) defeat of men's liberation, while in the USA there are two separate and hostile movements. But this category of men who, due to personal experience which they falsely generalise to apply to everyone (as we all tend to do), feel wronged rather than wrongdoers, was very small and isolated.

4. The men I have discussed are people who are basically talking about their own lives - a good thing, of course, but to understand and change the world we have to integrate the experience of many people into a social analysis. Those, like me, who thought in terms of more general social ideas, tried to take a more balanced view which recognised everyone's experience, as valid and also as limited. We should have perhaps put our views more forcefully, but we were there partly because we felt the inadequacy of highly impersonal "theory". As we still find it difficult to combine theory with practice, we were inhibited from trying to put the discussion into a broader perspective.

I'll now put over my own views. The idea of oppression is useful but vague; we should try to clarify what we mean by it, and make it refer firstly to the social organisation of capitalist society, and only

secondly to the resulting oppression of and by individuals. I'm sure there is truth in all such statements as - "Men as a group oppress women as a group"; "In individual cases, men can oppress women and women men"; "We are all oppressed by the social roles imposed on us"; "The working class, men and women, is oppressed and exploited by the capitalist class".

Such explanations only seem to contradict one another because reality is more involved than the words we use to discuss it. For example, a worker who, as a man, or teacher, or social worker, or foreman, or policeman, oppresses other workers, is also oppressed by those above him/her in the hierarchical organisation of the working class and by the employers. In fact, the employing class hire the "oppressing workers" in order to do the particular job of oppression for them. And oppression is a dirty and dehumanising job to do, and many people know it - having to oppress others for the boss in order to survive is itself an oppression. Men must fight sexism in themselves not only because otherwise neither men nor women can be freed from class society, but because a sexist character structure makes it impossible for men to resist their own oppressors now. The same masculinity which makes the factory worker beat up his wife from jealousy, makes him neglect the struggle for health and safety at work as old-womanish. The same masculinity which makes the American soldier in Vietnam rape and kill peasant women, gets him maimed or slaughtered in battle.

As in any conference, the most informative talks were those outside the official sessions, but for reasons of space I won't report on them. One final point is that in any future meetings women should be admitted - as one brother told me his wife had said - "You're all going to talk about relations with women, with no woman there to defend us!"

Stephen Stefan.

Note: See also on this, two articles in 'Solidarity' Vol 18. No 1. article entitled "Jealousy" from a back issue of 'Spare Rib' and "The Socialised Penis" by Jack Litewka, a 'Rising Free' reprint.

CIS ANTI-REPORT's No's 10 and 11.

"Courtaulds Inside Out"

"Unilevers World"

45p and 115p p&p from CIS, 52 Shaftesbury Ave,
London, W1.

千葉県

i) clearly sees the necessity for replacing the existing capitalist society with a new society of production for need where there will be no money or wages system, no repressive state or national frontiers

ii) even though conditions may be unfavourable for a speedy achievement of such a socialist society continues to relate its activity in a meaningful and urgent sense towards this end

To say this is bound to wreck quite a number of peoples jealously guarded illusions about a country such as Japan. In an essay on Pannekoek and Bordiga, Jean Barrot once wrote that: "They are products of the best elements in the revolutionary wave in Europe after the first world war. Surely there must be similar militants in other parts of the world, at least in the highly developed countries - in Japan, for instance. It would be instructive to investigate this." (Eclipse and Reemergence of the Communist Movement. Barrot and Martin. Black and Red Detroit. 1974.) I am not trying to score points off Barrot but the fact is that when one does look into this claim that Japan too must have produced its Pannekoeks and Bordigas, the results are a good deal more 'instructive' than he suspects. The whole point about men like Pannekoek and Bordiga, the source of all their strength which enabled them to unflinchingly recognise from an early date that it was capitalism which was being built by the bolsheviks in Russia and which gave them the courage to stand up to the big battalions of the IIIrd International, was their understanding of communist theory which they had painstakingly acquired by long years of revolutionary activity linked with an independently spirited study of - not exclusively but above all else - Marx's works. True Japan too experienced a wave of radicalisation in the period following the 1st world war but there was unfortunately no one here capable of fulfilling the role of those such as Pannekoek and Bordiga in Europe.

The person who perhaps came nearest to doing so was an anarchist called Osugi Sakae, for before he was murdered by the military police in 1923 Osugi certainly did refer on more than one occasion to the society which was emerging in Russia as state capitalism where the working class remained slaves to the wages system. In general, however, Osugi was unable to progress any further in his criticism of bolshevik Russia on the one hand and in his appreciation of what it would take to overthrow capitalism as a world system on the other than the level represented in Europe by anarcho-communists such as Alexander Berkman. Indeed some of his best criticisms of bolshevik policy were virtually literal translations of what Berkman (and to a lesser extent Emma Goldman) had written about Russia during and after their visit there. Osugi never read Marx's Capital (I have checked this with the few surviving militants who knew and worked with Osugi) and, although he seems to have been aware of the existence of organisations in Europe such as the German Communist Workers Party (KAPD) in which Pannekoek was active, there is nothing in his writings to show that he was significantly influenced by them.

Apart from anarchists such as Osugi, there was another group of militants in the period immediately following the 1st world war who - in a European milieu - might possibly have progressed to a revolutionary position. Their names (Yamakawa Hitoshi, Sakai Toshihiko and Arahata Kanson were the most prominent among them) are not well known in the West but they were a loosely knit grouping which initially cooperated in the formation of the Japanese 'Communist' Party (JCP) only to break away soon afterwards. From 1927 onwards they developed their ideas in a magazine called Rono (Worker-Peasant) and hence became known as the Worker-Peasant Group. Together with a section of the anarchist movement, the Worker-Peasant Group probably deserve to be known as the best elements within the pre-war Japanese working class but we can get a good idea of what a sorry 'best' it was by looking at the polemic with the JCP and its supporters which the group engaged in. Perhaps the most significant thing about this polemic is to make clear what it did not touch on. There was no correct grasp on either side of what a socialist society entailed and hence no critical analysis of the society which was being fostered by first Lenin and then Stalin in Russia. Both parties to the dispute were agreed that Russia was on the path to socialism and the Worker-Peasant Group's criticism of the Comintern went no further than what they considered to be the mistaken strategy it sought to impose on Japan's fledgling bolsheviks. The Russian government's New Economic Policy of 1921 was always regarded by the WPG as evidence of "Lenin's genius"! and even when some of its members translated and published Trotsky's Revolution Betrayed in 1938 they only did so because they considered that the Japanese public ought to have the chance to read for themselves what Trotsky had to say and were careful to dissociate themselves from his criticisms of Stalin. In fact, this attitude towards Trotsky is really all that is needed to answer Jean Barrot's claims. In his article Barrot contrasted Pannekoek and Bordiga with Trotsky and showed how they were qualitatively different from the bolshevik leader. Put in a nutshell they were communists while he was not. What speaks volumes about the situation in Japan, however, is that not only was there no one comparable to Pannekoek and Bordiga but that there were not even any trotskyists. In contrast to the situation in Europe, a bunch of supposedly 'independent marxists' such as the WPG could not even advance to the primitive level of consciousness represented by trotskyism, let alone go beyond it.

So far we have talked only about pre-war conditions but it is important to realise that this state of affairs has not changed significantly even since the war. Following the Hungarian uprising of 1956, Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in the same year and the sorry performance put up by the established left-wing parties in the disturbances which accompanied the Japanese government's signing of a security treaty with the USA in 1960, a so-called 'new left' did indeed emerge in Japan in the late fifties and early sixties. But, given the composition of this movement and the events which had brought it into life, there was never a chance that it would take on a revolutionary socialist character. Countries such as America also experienced the emergence of this so-called 'new left' at about the same period but this use of the same terminology should not be allowed to obscure some very big differences between the two movements. It is only too easy to criticise the much publicised American 'new left' of a few years ago but at least it can be given credit for including elements which were genuinely searching for alternatives to reformist social-democracy and infantile bolshevism - whether any of them succeeded or not is a different question. At least these healthiest elements within the American 'new left' had no illusions about trotskyist organisations like the 'Socialist Workers Party' and understood that their muddled recipes for state capitalism were totally irrelevant to the struggle for socialist revolution. On the other hand, one of the most pathetic aspects of the Japanese 'new left' was the glee with which it discovered trotskyism. The very first trotskyist grouplet to be formed in Japan was the Japanese Trotskyist League which was founded in 1957! and even today trotskyism and the pre-stalinist variety of bolshevism retain their glamour as something tremendously new and exciting - the last word in revolutionary marxism!!

I think it is important that we revolutionaries in the West clearly recognise this situation as it exists in Japan and draw the necessary conclusions from it, something we certainly have not done up till now. Language is a formidable barrier, of course, and the sheer distances separating Japan from the other advanced, industrialised countries make it easy to get the wrong idea about what is going on here. Yet these factors alone are not enough to account for the mistakes which have been made in assessing conditions here. Barrot's attitude of 'Japan is a highly industrialised country so there must be revolutionary communists there too' seems to me to be all too common. Unfortunately I do not have any of the Situationists' pamphlets with me at present but I seem to remember that in a footnote to one of them (it might have been The Poverty of Student Life) they had some very flattering things to say about an organisation here known as the 'Revolutionary Communist League' (RCL). This was all the more striking because the Situationists have never been known for the generosity of their criticisms (what was it they said about Pannekoek? - a "defunct theoretician up for grabs at bargain prices"!). In fact, there is nothing either revolutionary or communist about the RCL, since all along it has been the very type of antique bolshevik group which (in the West) has come in for the Situationists' pityless criticism. To give some idea of the sort of counter-revolutionary role it plays, it is sufficient to mention here that in recent years it has split into two rival factions whose main activity has since consisted of attempting to physically wipe each other out. So far several dozen people from the two rival factions have been murdered in this half-witted charade, the favourite method being for a group armed with iron bars from one side to lie in wait for and ambush a single member of the opposing camp and to then proceed to beat him to death. Needless to say, the theoretical level of the polemic which serves as an accompaniment to this dance of death can only be described as abysmal.

As we can see, then, the allegedly 'new' left in Japan was crippled right from the start by its identification of marxism with bolshevism. The pitiful thing is, though, that it is not only those who claim to be 'marxists' who make this mistake but those opposed to 'marxism' too. In an article in Libertarian Communism 6 Stephen Stefan pointed out that "distrust between 'marxism' and 'anarchism' in the libertarian socialist movement is now an obsolete irrelevance", which is true as far as it goes although I would reject Stephen's implication that it ever was relevant. (Surely it is enough simply to remember that there were defenders of commodity production - Proudhon, numerous social democrats, Bakunin etc. - and those committed to free distribution of products and the abolition of the wages system - Marx, Kropotkin, Engels etc. - ranged indiscriminately on the two sides to see that the polarisation which took place never was over the issues that are of central importance for the working class.) This division between anarchism and marxism is certainly something we need to transcend by developing our theory, for if we don't the situation in Japan offers an excellent example of the sort of impasse it can lead to.

Given the fact that the bolsheviks of the 'new left' can be written off as far as the struggle for a communist society is concerned, it is a section of the anarchist movement here which takes the laurels as representing the best elements within the post-war working class. Now, an important development that has been taking place within this section of the anarchist movement over the past few years has been an awakening of interest in the ideas of currents such as the Councilists and Situationists. One of the best journals they are producing is a magazine called Anarchism and recent issues have carried translations of The Origins of the Movement for Workers' Councils in Germany and of material issued by Point Blank as well as discussion articles on the now defunct Situationist International and on Council Communism (translated, in fact, as "Council Socialism"). All in all this is an encouraging trend perhaps, but at the same time one needs to keep in mind the obstacles to a correct grasp of socialist theory which remain. Just because it is accepted without question that 'marxism' and 'anarchism' have to be opposed ('marxism' meaning for those associated with Anarchism, of course, the doctrine of vanguard parties, visionary leadership and ruthless dictatorship elaborated by Lenin), groups like the situationists are imagined to be 'anarchists'. In other words, however genuine the efforts which are made to understand the theories of the Councilists (say) or the Situationists, this is done by attempting to fit them into the conceptual framework of a preconceived anarchism. As an example of this we can mention that presentation of the Situationists' ideas in the magazine Anarchism has been in a column with the general heading of 'Foreign Anarchist Groups' (and this despite the fact that Point Blank took pains to emphasise in a communication to Anarchism that "We are not anarchists") Nor is Anarchism an isolated case in this respect. Another example is the book the Extreme Left and Extreme Right in France by Irie Kon (Furansu no Kyokusa to Kyokuu. San Ichi Shobo. Tokyo. 1975) which has just been published here. The 'extreme left' which Irie talks about is classified by him into three sections - 'trotskyists', 'maoists' and 'anarchists' - plus some dissenting satellites of the CP (which include the Bordigist group Programme Communiste which, apparently unbeknown to Irie, has been independent of the CPs since the late 1920s!). It is hardly surprising that, given this basic classification, groups such as Revolution Internationale find themselves coming under an 'anarchist' heading. Nor is there any conscious misrepresentation by Irie here. It is just that the Japanese (to use his terminology) 'extreme left' really does conform to this trotskyist-maoist-anarchist line up, and for Irie at any rate, it is natural to try to categorise the French 'left' in the same way. Even if the misrepresentation is

unconscious, however, it ought to be obvious that the theory of a group like Revolution Internationale is bound to be misunderstood when the only way Irie and those like him know of examining it is through a pair of 'anarchist' spectacles.

As I wrote earlier, I think it is important that we revolutionaries in the west clearly recognise this situation as it exists in Japan (and even more so elsewhere outside of the advanced, industrialised countries) and draw the necessary conclusions from it. There are various aspects of the way in which capitalism grew up in Japan and the way in which the working class developed which can help to account for this state of affairs but what in my opinion makes it most important for us to recognise this situation is that, capitalism being a world system with the working class spread out across the globe and still sandwiched between layers of the peasantry and other social classes, the Japanese section of the working class is a far more authentic representative of the class on a world scale than are those sections to be found in the countries of Western Europe and North America. Certainly the effect on me, as one individual revolutionary socialist who happens to come from Europe, of living in a country such as Japan for a period has been to make me more convinced than ever of the years of long, hard struggle we have ahead of us before a communist society can be realised.

Important though these general questions are, however, there are only a limited number of points that one can take up in a single article and rather than deal further with them here I would prefer to concentrate on attempting to build up a picture of just how far the theory of communism has progressed in Japan. To do this I want to briefly outline the ideas of a more or less isolated thinker called Haniya Yutaka. Haniya is easily the most impressive person I have come across during eighteen months of searching for the communist idea in Japan but what one has to hasten to add to this is that he is impressive only by Japanese standards. The reason for all the background information presented up till now is that without it Haniya is likely to appear as no more than a nonentity to those familiar with the far more sophisticated levels of theory which exist elsewhere. Surely the point to bear in mind though, is that all of us have to be seen against the background of the environment in which we live and are active. Since the idea of communism is not something which descends ready-made from out the skies, we shall have to face up to the fact that for better or worse Haniya's ideas are apparently the most advanced that the Japanese working class movement has to offer and that the struggle to build a correct theory will necessarily have to start here from the sort of level which he represents.

I first became aware of Haniya Yutaka when I was reading one of the Tokyo evening newspapers one day and my eye happened to fall on a short article with the title: Abolition of Wage Labour and Commodity Production. If it were not for the copyright laws, it would be worth giving a translation of this article here since it contains in a nutshell all the strengths and weaknesses of Haniya's position. What I will do instead is paraphrase his arguments. The abolition of wage labour and of commodity production remains an empty dream, wrote Haniya, and this is true not merely in the capitalist countries but in the socialist (!) countries too. According to Haniya, in these 'socialist' countries the means of production have been socialised and medical care and education made free. In doing this the first steps have been taken towards abolishing wage labour and commodity production (!) The succeeding steps which ought to have followed

this are supposed to be the introduction of firstly free housing, then free transport and finally free food and clothing. Haniya's explanation of why this has not been done seems to be a bureaucratic one. In his allegedly 'socialist' countries the working people are supervised by a bureaucracy which concerns itself only with its controlling functions. This bureaucracy gives no thought at all to the fact that "if transport, bread and clothing were rapidly made free, then equality, liberty and fraternity (which are the aims of the revolution) would be realised".

As can be seen, it is a strangely naive line of thinking. Haniya has a clear understanding of the basic communist idea - the need for a society without wage labour or commodity production - but his way of understanding this is reminiscent of the bureaucratic analysis of Russian society which orthodox trotskyists adhere to and, even more so (particularly with regards to the phased introduction of free consumption) of the well-meant but rather cranky ideas of Kropotkin's The conquest of bread. It is true that when I subsequently met and talked with Haniya he was prepared to agree that Russia and his other 'socialist' countries were really state capitalist, but the very ease with which he conceded this point indicated the lack of importance which he attached to it. Haniya is a prolific writer (of novels and literary criticism as well as political articles) and has frequently restated and enlarged on the themes of the article which I have summarised above. He is also a writer who is popular among the left-wing university students' circles here. Whatever the reasons for the popularity he enjoys, however, it unfortunately does not derive from his presentation of the communist idea. Few if any of those who read his works have grasped the significance of this area of his ideas - not suprisingly, we might be tempted to say, considering the way in which he presents them ! Describing his own political position, Haniya calls himself an "anarcho-marxist" but, although it is true that his objections to commodity production specifically derive from Marx, the 'marxist' component of his thought is in general leninism. He was a member of the underground JCP in the years before the war and the scars of this experience still remain, particularly in his reluctance to recognise the bourgeois revolutionary role which Lenin fulfilled in Russia in 1917. Since the war he has been on the wings of the anarchist movement and has inherited from traditional anarchism some of its better features - objection to vanguard parties and so on. But it is not only the better elements which he can be said to have inherited from anarchism. Pervading all his writings there is a lack of class analysis, so that for Haniya the emancipation of the people has to be the act of the people itself. I say "on the wings of the anarchist movement" because, despite the fact that quite recently his ideas were presented at some length in one of the anarchist journals here (Museifushugi Kenkyu, NO. 2. 1974), as Haniya pointed out to me himself this should not be taken as an indication that - as yet, at any rate - many anarchists here share his commitment to communism.

I am afraid that I cannot append any comfortingly optimistic conclusion to this article. Considering the advanced stage of development reached by Japanese capitalism and the immense numerical size of the Japanese working class, the utter weakness of communist idea here should be a sobering indication to all communists of the immaturity of our class. Japanese capital today is a giant by any terms but the working class stands before it like a defenceless babe. Even in the other advanced, industrialised countries where the communist idea is slightly more widespread and rather more coherently developed, who can pretend that the situation is that much different? The best that I can say is that we communists are engaged in the hardest struggle of all, the struggle

to change the world. Hard though it is, it remains the only worthwhile struggle. If we are going to change the world, though, surely our first task has to be to accurately recognise the world as it is.

John Crump. Tokyo. March, 1975.

EEC - DISCUSSION

NOTE: The following two articles generally sum up the views expressed during a discussion on the "Common Market" at our Easter conference.

NO TO NATIONALISM

The Common Market issue is coming to a head with the referendum. The problems it poses for socialists have not generally been seriously discussed. The bulk of the left has taken a position in favour of withdrawal. This has grave dangers for the working class. There can be no doubt that chauvinism is one of capitalism's most powerful weapons for dividing the workers, yet here we find all sorts of 'socialists' joining in a chauvinist campaign, to the extent that several union leaders have appeared alongside Powell and other Fascists. It is therefore necessary to examine the issue carefully.

What is the reason for the E.E.C.? Basically it is an attempt to develop a European capital independent of U.S. and Russian imperialism. The 1960's saw growing concern about U.S. hegemony, culminating in Servan-Schreiber's 'Le Defi Americain'. In order to counter this threat, increasing efforts were made to unify European capital. Also there was earlier a political motivation, an attempt to overcome the divisions which led to 2 World Wars. Many people were led to regard the E.E.C. as an attempt to go beyond the nation-state; instead it is an attempt to create a bigger one.

British capitalism was divided on the issue; some sectors, particularly industrial ones, wanted to enter; others were not so sure. The city operates on a global basis anyway, and was not greatly worried. Some were attached to the U.S.A., still others (probably correctly) were scared of the competition they might face. Finally the general consensus decided in favour of entry; however, large sectors remained opposed. If the ruling class had been unanimous, the matter would have been settled long ago - there is no plan for a referendum on N.A.T.O. !

The Labour Party opposed the E.E.C. in 1962, with an emotional speech by Gaitskell about '1000 years of history'. This managed to unite the party, then deeply divided, by appealing to its chauvinist basis. Later a Labour government tried to take Britain in, but failed. After the election of Heath, Wilson was faced by a problem similar to Gaitskell's. Six years of power had exposed the viciously reactionary nature of Labourism. The working class were rejecting it and, even worse in the eyes of Wilson and Co. were beginning to reject the whole Parliamentary rag-bag. So Wilson (initially), Benn and Co. again adopted the anti-EEC position and, hey presto, party and unions were again united. The left turned eagerly to this diversion. Michael Foot

babbles on about 'national sovereignty', 'threat to Parliament' and other matters of profound socialist analysis. John Gollan joined in saying that the (Feb '74) election was not being fought on the basis of internationalism! The various vanguards followed, after some quibbling. 'Socialist Worker' now tells us that 'all socialists must vote no' but of course only in an internationalist manner.

What arguments are produced for this line? Firstly, it is suggested that the E.E.C. is a capitalist institution. It can hardly have escaped even Foot's notice that independent Britain is not the promised land. Nor is it likely that the referendum will include provision for I.S. to vote 'for a Socialist Europe'. The simple fact is that we are to be faced with a choice between 2 modes of capitalist organisation. Another reason is that we would lose the right to 'an independent foreign policy' i.e. to kow-tow to U.S. imperialism of our own free will. Socialism cannot be built in Britain alone. Nowhere has any real evidence been produced to show that the workers will be better off as a result of withdrawal, either immediately or in the long-term. The most popular argument for withdrawal is that entry raised prices. Prices rise all over the world, because of the growing crises of capitalism, which uses inflation as a real wage-cut.

Why has the Left taken this position? Basically because, however 'Marxist', however 'revolutionary', it remains fundamentally national. All its policies are directed towards the Labour Party. The slogan of the entire Left is 'nationalise' - no one notices that this means 'make national'. Several groups have recently produced pamphlets on the motor industry which hardly mention the situation elsewhere, and none advocate uniting with workers in other countries. Politics has become completely dominated by the bourgeois nation-state (for a good analysis of this situation, see Nairn's 'The Left Against Europe' New Left Review 75).

The lack of serious theoretical justification for the anti-EEC position does not avoid its practical consequences. Apart from the alliance with Facism mentioned above, unions are actually cutting what few links they have with European unions, at a time when wider unity is more necessary than ever.

Should we support entry, as Nairn suggests? If we were obliged to take a position on one side or the other, the answer might be yes, just as Marx for instance supported free trade. However, it is not the task of revolutionaries to take a position on every issue of capitalist politics, but to show the way to transcend that politics. For over a century, workers have been divided and bamboozled by chauvinism, especially in Britain. Now the bourgeoisie is compelled to question it itself. Then let us use the opportunity to attack it altogether, not in the name of a larger nation, but of a united world working class. Let us say to workers 'the ruling class is already united, unite to oppose them'. The referendum is irrelevant - whether the answer is yes or no, we should call for workers unity. As a first step it is necessary to put forward the proposal for world solidarity in the car industry, so far the worst victim of the crisis.

NEITHER WASHINGTON OR BRUSSELS BUT WORLD CLASS STRUGGLE.

Phil McShane.

WHY SOCIALISTS SHOULD SAY "NO"

As the campaign for the EEC referendum gets under way and the opposing capitalist camps pour out a flood of pro and contra propaganda, the question arises of what attitude socialists should take both towards the EEC and the campaign. Although no one in our grouping takes a pro-EEC position (however there exists not only Social-Democratic pro-entry groups but also an outfit called Communists for Europe whose reasons for staying in will have to be answered) there is a majority which says that the question is one of a contradiction between rival capitalist interests, that it doesn't really matter to workers whether Britain is in or out, because although the language of the exploiters may change the fact of exploitation will not, and therefore advocates abstention in the referendum. The minority, basing itself not on the social-chauvinist outlook of the Stalinists and Tribuneites but on the internationalist outlook of World Socialism says that socialists should campaign for a massive no vote from the working class. It is the purpose of this article to explain the views of the minority.

Right away there arises the problem of how Socialists carry on their work amongst the working class. Do we from the olympian heights of our ideology (based of course on the infalable texts of the masters) present our ideas in an abstract manner hoping that someone someplace will listen, on the odd occasion condescending to stroll down when the activities of the workers happen to coincide with what we're advocating, or do we as an integral part of the class participate in the day to day struggle seeking to transform basic class consciousness into revolutionary consciousness, modifying our theory in the light of our praxis? If the answer to the latter is affirmative then not to participate in the EEC referendum because we're internationalists is like not participating in wages struggles because we want the abolition of the wages system or not fighting prices rises because we're for the abolition of commodity production. It was because such attitudes were taken by the "Marxists" of the Socialist League and the SDF at the end of the 19th. Century that the workers brought into struggle by the new unionism turned towards the reformism of firstly the ILP and then the Labour Party.

Having said all this, how then and why do socialists take part in the struggle against the EEC? The EEC is the economic arm of Western monopoly capitalism just as NATO is its military arm. The continuation of British membership of the EEC can only strengthen the capitalist system viz-a-viz the European working class, (already we have seen the mobilisation of NATO troops to crush the general strike in France in 1968 and heard of NATO's counter insurgency plans from that would be Bonaparte General Walker). British withdrawal would weaken the capitalist alliance without isolating in any way British workers from their European fellows. Likewise, British entry has been bought at the price of dearer food something which of course suits the profit hungry monopolies. Workers, who are not the simpletons some people think they are, know this and it is the inability of workers to pay rising prices as much as the "wogs begin at Calais" outlook, the legacy of a now defunct Empire, which determines their opposition to the EEC.

It is, therefore, the task of socialists while working for a massive no vote to explain that there is an alternative to the EEC other

than the "little englandism" currently being peddled from the ultra-right to the 'Communist' Party. This alternative is a Socialist Europe taking in not only the EEC countries but also those outside including those now under Great Russian domination. (As internationalists we realise that Socialism can only finally triumph on a world scale; it is, however, unrealistic to imagine social revolution will break out everywhere simultaneously. Europe, as recent events in France, Italy, Greece and Portugal has shown, is the weakest link in the world capitalist chain.)

We must not pose the question of a Socialist Europe as a kind of abstract afterthought as the trotskyists do, but begin to build for it now by waging an all out struggle against chauvinism, for working class internationalism and by making contacts with workers on the continent as the first step towards a European Congress of Workers Councils. If we fail to do this we will abandon whole sections of workers to the radical right whose anti-capitalist rhetoric is now beginning to sound more convincing than that of the Labour left. To abstain means to abandon the historical role we as socialists have chosen. It is as simple as that.

Terry Liddle.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

We are in general agreement with the majority view in our group as outlined in Phils article.

Also we disagree with the implication in Terrys article that our role as socialists stands or falls on the EEC issue. There really is NO comparison between participation on one side or the other in the EEC referendum campaign and our involvement in the direct action of our class in strikes, occupations and boycotts to defend or improve our quality of life.

WORTH READING

BENEATH THE CITY STREETS - Peter Laurie -- about the alternative system of Government in Britain prepared for use in nuclear war or civil unrest.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES - (Hansard), House of Lords for Wednesday 26th February 1975 (Vol. 357. No, 53.) Debate on motion proposed by Lord Chalfont, calling attention to subversive and extremist elements in society. HMSO 22p.

DOWN AMONG THE WOMEN - well written feminist fictional story. By Fay Weldon.

CEYLON: The JVP Uprising of April 1971. Solidarity pamphlet 25p.

VIETNAM: Whose Victory? By Bob Potter.

TEACHERS ACTION - periodical of Teachers Action Collective. 10p per copy. 3 issues so far.

Most publications mentioned in this issue can be obtained, post extra, from "Rising Free" 197 Kings Cross Road, London, W.C.1.