

SOLIDARITY

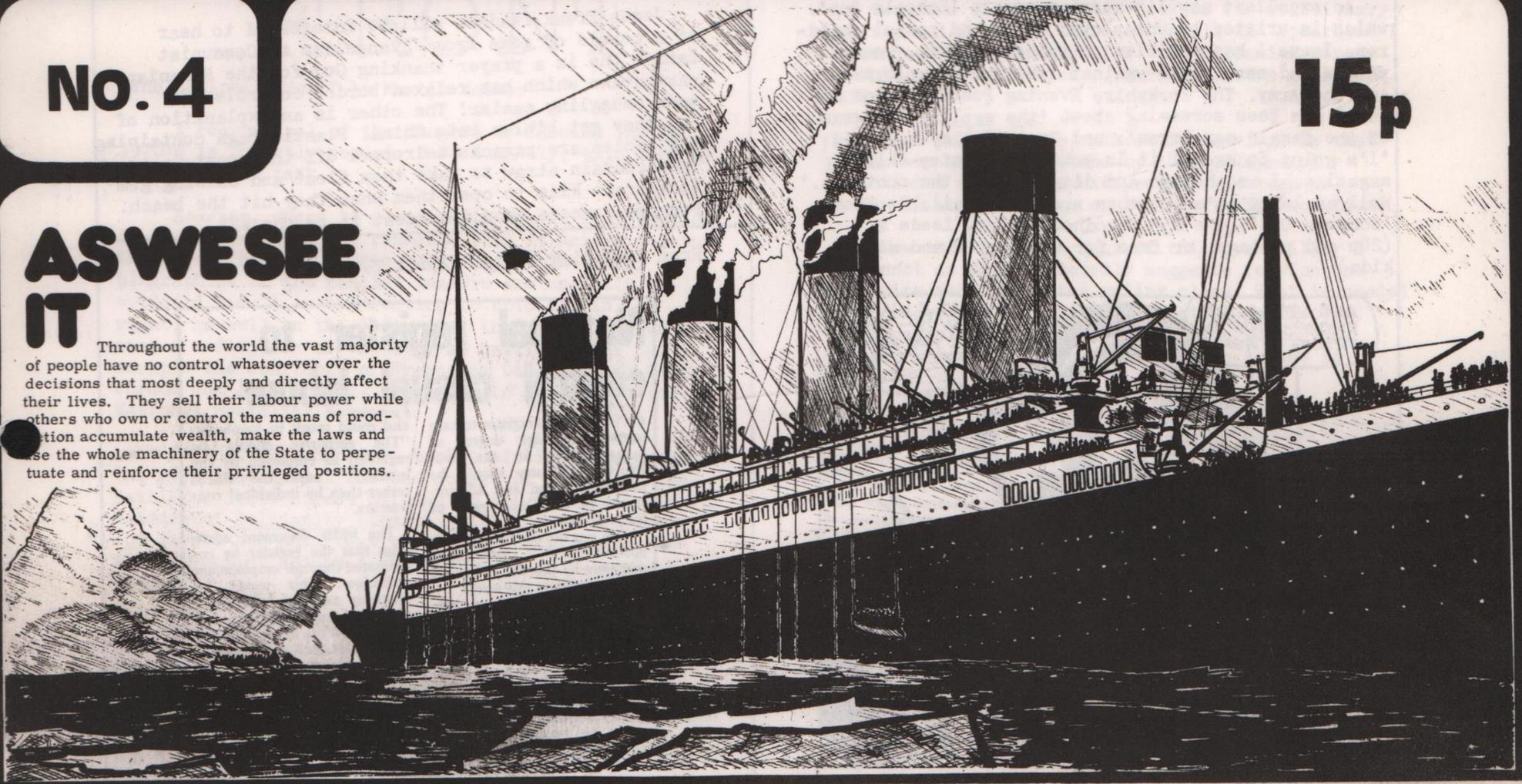
THE PAPER OF THE SOLIDARITY NATIONAL GROUP

No. 4

15p

AS WE SEE IT

Throughout the world the vast majority of people have no control whatsoever over the decisions that most deeply and directly affect their lives. They sell their labour power while others who own or control the means of production accumulate wealth, make the laws and use the whole machinery of the State to perpetuate and reinforce their privileged positions.



'Throughout the world' means exactly

does not mean everywhere except Social-Democratic Sweden, Castro's Cuba, Tito's Yugoslavia, Israel's kibbutzim or Sekou Toure's Guinea...



'Throughout the world' includes pre-Stalinist, Stalinist and post-Stalinist Russia, Ben Bella's and Boumediene's Algeria; Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Albania (and China)...



Our comments about contemporary society apply to all these countries just as much as to the USA or to Britain (under either Labour or Conservative governments)...



When we talk of privileged minorities who 'control the means of production' and who 'use the whole machinery of the state' to maintain themselves in power we are making a universal critique to which, at the moment, we can see no exceptions.

IT FOLLOWS that we don't regard any of these countries as socialist and that we don't act as if we had lurking suspicions that they might be something other than what they are:

hierarchically-structured class societies based on wage slavery and exploitation. Their identification with socialism is a slander. It is moreover a source of endless mystification and confusion. The enemies of our enemies are not necessarily our friends.



FIRST CLASS
DIED AT SEA
TOTAL 120
322
37%

SECOND CLASS
DIED AT SEA
TOTAL 162
277
58%

THIRD CLASS
DIED AT SEA
TOTAL 533
709
77%

In every country of the world the rulers oppress the ruled and persecute genuine revolutionaries. In every country the main enemy of the people is their own ruling class. This alone can provide the basis of a genuine internationalism of the oppressed. (to be continued...)

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COMPUTING SEXUAL REVOLUTION GRUNWICK
MONEY PROBLEMS BREWING WOMEN IN SPAIN

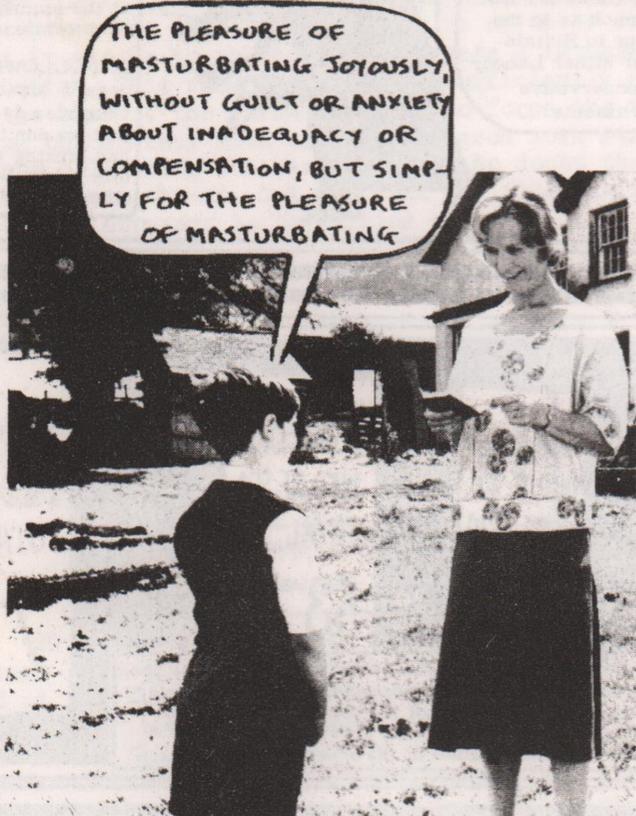
SAC 1972

BIJOU NEWSETTES

An excellent new libertarian mag is 'Schools Out', which is written by unemployed youth and school children. Issue 1 has articles on school strikes, young people and sex, youth against fascism, unemployment, and the Army. The Yorkshire Evening Post (2nd and 4th July) has been screaming about 'the explicit diagram of the female sex organ', and Denis Healey has said: 'I'm going to see if it is possible to stop this magazine. I am shocked and disgusted by the contents.' Well at least it's got them worried. Available from 'Schools Out', c/o 153, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds 2. (20p and postage, or free for unemployed and school kids)



An important new publication for conference organisers is 'Child Care', packed with useful information about how to run creches etc. Available price 10p from 'Child Care Bulletin', 112b Forest Road, London E.8. They plan future bulletins on the nuclear family, children as property, custody cases and state care, one parent families and children in squats



Jesus Freak readers will be interested to hear of a couple of gems from 'Evangelism to Communist Lands'. One is a prayer thanking God for the Rumanian earthquake which has relaxed border controls and made smuggling easier! The other is an explanation of how they get bibles into China. Plastic bags containing the bibles are parachute-dropped off the coast. They contain straw to make them float and chewing gum to attract kids to open them when they hit the beach. Perhaps someone should suggest it to the WRP.

From 'Building Design' April 29th 1977.

National register to control casual labour

ANY employees register to help control the high degree of casual labour in the construction industry should be nationally based and administered by the Department of Employment.

This was the main thrust of a document sent to Government ministers by the Federation of Master Builders this week.

The Master Builders' proposals conflict with earlier suggestions, which recommend that the register be locally based and administered through individual employers.

However, according to the Master Builders, such a scheme would be enormously costly, would take a long time to set up

and could result in loopholes. "The employee should be regarded as employed by the industry," says the FMB, rather than by individual contractors.

The FMB document advocates that the register be co-ordinated through employment exchanges. This would be relatively easy to implement, cover the whole workforce, and would allow the introduction of benefits for both the employer and employee, claimed the Federation.

Reaction from UCATT — which is still studying the proposals — has so far been favourable.

EMPLOYERS PROPOSED ACTION AGAINST THE LUMP. THE TRAD LEFT WILL BE PLEASED!

FOR A SOCIALIST LOOK AT THE LUMP READ 'THE LUMP: AN HERETICAL ANALYSIS' By DAVE LAMB. AVAILABLE FROM SOLIDARITY NATIONAL WORKING GROUP, c/o 34, Cowley Road, OXFORD.

We have all become aware in recent years that apparently liberal legislation usually turns out to be used in practice for trivial or positively authoritarian purposes. Race and sex discrimination laws are particularly notorious in this respect. Now it would seem that the US government's privacy act is no exception to this tendency. The giant computer manufacturer IBM has fallen foul of the new law — because its OS/MVT operating system (used in conjunction with the 360/65 machine) is insufficiently able to prevent the unauthorised reading of files by persons unacceptable to the government, according to the Comptroller General of the United States. The US Navy have been forbidden to use this system for filing personnel records, which would have involved time-sharing on the same machine with other users.

Meanwhile it would appear that the same concern does not extend to US citizens in general. It would appear that not only does the FBI make its computerised records available to all members of Interpol, but that these records are not even accurate! For example, the records list charges made against US citizens, but omit to mention the outcome of each case. Although a California Democrat, John Moss, has been campaigning on this issue, there is no sign that anyone else in the US establishment is very worried about it.

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MILES OF FILES

COMPUTERS AND CAPITAL

Fear about computers seems to focus on the ways they can be used to intervene in "private life", to invade the sphere of civil rights, i.e. their uses by credit investigators and police, secret or otherwise. But computers are also increasingly being used in the control of people at work. Work is a sphere in which capital does not need to worry too much about civil rights. Capital has the "right" to know as much and to control as rigorously as it can get away with. We need to do a lot more research about the use of computers in the control of labour processes. And first of all we need to overcome the illusion that computers are used only in the control of material processes ("automation"); for they are used also to control labour. In a recent Financial Times article about the Volvo group work experiments there is some discussion about the way in which computers control the movements of trolleys which convey the work through the shop on electromagnetic tracks in the floor. But on the use of computers in the surveillance of labour, which is at the very heart of the system, all we are told is that "they have had some grumbles about the way computers have been used".



Little Sister, we're watching you.

Here is one story about how computers can be used to keep labour in line. As it happens it is clerical and administrative labour that is involved. The story takes place on the outskirts of Paris, at La Défense, an area of large modern office blocks. One of these, the Franklin Tower, is the headquarters of a big insurance company, Assurances Générales de France. The general information department of the company occupies four floors of the block, and in this department the general atmosphere is one of struggle and suspicion, mutual hostility between management and union. Union representatives are sent warning notes if they are caught distributing union leaflets. Overactive unionists are assigned jobs where a careful eye can be kept on them by selected supervisors. They look for any excuse to give them the sack.

In 1975 the Department installed an IBM 3750 processor. Its job was to monitor all telephone calls. It produced a monthly report detailing the time, duration and number dialled of all calls for each telephone. This in itself would be pretty worrying, of course, given the general atmosphere of "surveillance" in the Department; it would not have been technically difficult for the system to have recorded the contents of the telephone calls, without anyone knowing. But the IBM 3750 is a versatile device and its uses were to be extended in another direction. Glass partitions were installed on all the landings,

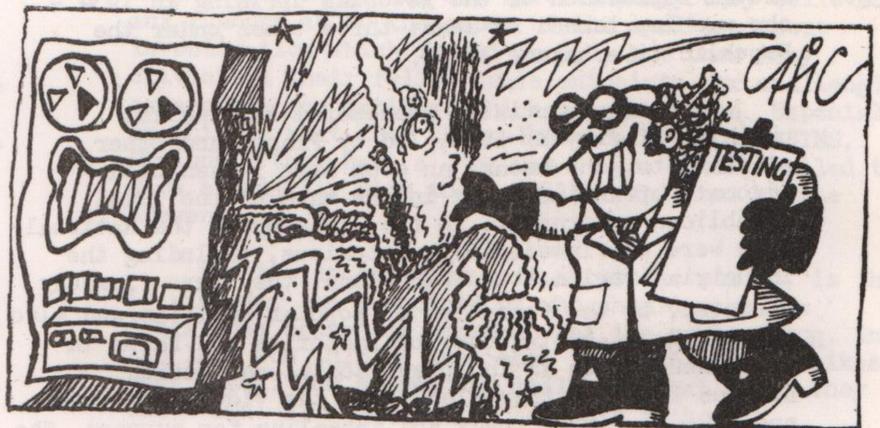
and exits and entrances to the four floors occupied by the department were fitted with glass doors with no handles. At each door there was installed a small gadget which would automatically open the door when instructed to do so by the insertion of a plastic card. Each employee was issued with his or her individual card and the IBM processor would thereby receive information about each person's movements, entrances and exits. This traffic information was stored and processed and used to provide management with a weekly printout for each employee giving full and detailed information on each employee's movements into and out of the different zones, the duration of time spent off the job, etc. Any time greater than five minutes spent in unauthorised absence from the job is then deducted from the employee's work count for the week (the system operates together with a flexitime system). Shorter "disappearances" are not deducted but they are recorded and printed out for management information, and this is supposed to encourage people to feel nervous about moving around too much. It is necessary to pass through a door and have your movement recorded in order to get a coffee from the machine, to go to the lavatory or to go and read the union notice board.

The 3750 has yet other possibilities. When connected with a computer, and this with a visual display system, it allows a supervisor to call up at any moment information as to the whereabouts of any individual employee. It can also, according to the IBM publicity brochure, be used so as to prevent, at any moment, entry to any designated parts of the building to any specified personnel.

Pressure from employees has, at this particular office, dissuaded the boss from activating these latter uses of the gadget. Moreover he has agreed to the introduction of a more complex system involving two different types of plastic cards - one individualised, used for timekeeping, the other nonindividualised, used for opening doors. Furthermore exit can now be achieved without using a card, the doors having been fitted with interior handles. It is still technically possible for management to use information from the "nonindividualised" cards for surveillance purposes because they do in fact still contain an individual code number. But this is in practice prevented by the employees who swop their cards around among themselves as a defensive measure.

Is the IBM 3750 in use in the UK? Used for what, by whom? Have struggles centred around its use in France? Any information please to the Brighton Labour Process Group, 41, Colbourne Road, Hove, Sussex.

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Dolores Ibarri Federica Montseny

PERSONALITIES

The "big names" of history already get a disproportionate amount of attention. Our concern as libertarians will generally be more with the largely unrecorded activities of those whose struggles are too often ignored and forgotten. But it can be useful to have a look at the personalities from time to time, with a view to demystification.

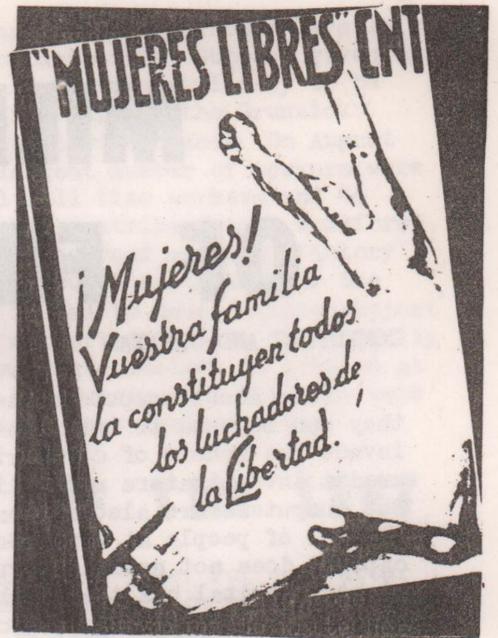
In the small welter of publications and programmes commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the "Spanish Civil War", mentions of the part played by women have tended to be few and far between.* Hardly surprising, in view of male domination in the media, and the more complete male domination in Spanish society at the time. But there are at least two women whose names must crop up in any account seeking to be comprehensive.

Dolores Ibarri and Federica Montseny both made their mark on the history they lived through, and there are one or two questions we can pose about their experience. Were their achievements (and failures) personal matters, or did they have a wider implication for Spanish Women in general? Did they have much in common, to enable them to gate crash the man's world of politics - or were the differences between them more significant?

It was as "La Pasionaria" that Dolores Ibarri became known to the world in the Thirties, personifying the resistance of the Spanish Republic to Franco's armies. But symbols, however romantically appealing, can mislead; the extent to which one individual can represent millions is severely limited. Dolores Ibarri had her own particular place in the complex political scene.

By 1936 she was already established as a Communist deputy in the Cortes (Spanish Parliament), a member of the Party's Central Committee. For a number of years she had been active as an organiser, especially among women in several "front" organisations, and was a forceful orator and propagandist. Uncompromising and often vehement in her opposition to the rightists - in March 1936 she urged the execution, in the name of the people's legality, of those responsible for the brutal repression of the Asturias uprising in 1934 - she was imprisoned at least three times under the Republic (i.e. since 1931).

After the partially successful Nationalist uprising of July 18 1936, led by Franco and other militarists, she became an even more impassioned advocate of anti-fascism in the name of the legal Republican government. In the areas where the Nationalists were not immediately victorious, including the industrial region round Barcelona, they were fiercely resisted, by the formation of popular militias and also by a large-scale takeover of factories and farms in what amounted to an incipient social revolution. Dolores Ibarri travelled round the "loyalist" areas, speaking to large crowds and appealing for support. She achieved a popularity and celebrity unique among personalities on the government side, and certainly unusual for a Communist leader.



In accordance with Party policy, however, her emphasis was on legality, the defence of the constitutional Republic, not on the furthering of social revolution, so that she must have met with some opposition. In fact, when she went to France with a delegation seeking arms and sympathy for the Republican cause, she was held up in Barcelona by anarchists. But the battle-cry of opposition to the rebels and invaders was sure to rally a good deal of support; and if her speeches sometimes had more colour than content this no doubt helped the process, in the short term at least.

It was with the defence of Madrid in 1936 that she became an international figure. After the government had departed for the comparative security of Valencia, she stayed in the beleaguered capital, using to the full her abilities as orator and organiser. She was credited with the slogans "They Shall Not Pass" and "It is better to die on one's feet than live on one's knees", although both had been used before, and were heard constantly on Radio Madrid and on loudspeakers in the streets. Many of her speeches were directed towards women, whom she urged to fight with knives and boiling oil to defend their homes and children, and to join demonstrations encouraging men to go to the front.

But there was another side to this fiery, if not bloodthirsty, character. She is said to have saved a number of nuns (from "the anarchists") and to have risked her reputation by such interventions. There were also rumours of a lover, as there generally are when any woman achieves a degree of notoriety, although the image of matronly mother-of-five was projected strongly too.

At the same time, the quasi-mythology and folklore masked a day-to-day political reality. La Pasionaria had her place as a loyal member of the increasingly powerful Communist Party, participating in government intrigues and squabbles, and supporting the suppression of the social revolution. She remained active to the end; when the International Brigades withdrew after defeat became inevitable, it was she who made the farewell speech. It was not until March 1939 that she left for France with other Communist leaders and members of the government. She was given asylum in the U.S.S.R., where she fared rather better than some Spanish Republicans, at least surviving to write her memoirs and eventually to return to Spain amid the expected sentimental brouhaha and embarrass the new-improved Euro-brand Spanish C.P. of the Seventies with pro-Eastern bloc remarks.

Federica Montseny was another well-known orator, but her sphere of political activity was rather different. She came from an anarchist family tradition, and was by 1936 one of the leading militants of the Iberian Anarchist Federation. (F.A.I.) Although the libertarian movement did not have "leaders" as such, there was enough of a "star" system for a few prominent figures to emerge as effective spokespersons for the large membership of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., the C.N.T. being the strong libertarian National Confederation of Labour. Federica Montseny was among those anarchists invited to join the Popular Front government, after the strength of the C.N.T. had been demonstrated in the widespread collectivisation that followed 18th July.

For an anarchist, whose basic principle was the total rejection of the state, such an invitation was not likely to win ready acceptance; but it was not rejected out of hand, as might have been expected. Overtaken by events, distanced from the mass of C.N.T. members, and already used to taking decisions in a small group, the handful of leading militants agreed to give the government the libertarian seal of approval. Their decision was ratified, in retrospect, by the plenum (full meeting) of the C.N.T., but remains a subject of controversy in the anarchist movement.

AND

Federica Montseny was well aware that traditional anarchists, such as her father had been, would be horrified at the idea of joining the government. Her first reaction was to refuse, but after 24 hours of heart-searching and argument she accepted nomination as Minister of Health and Social Services, claiming that this step was in the best interests of the social revolution.

It was at best a position in which she could help to bring about some reforms. This was done, to some extent, and women were able to benefit. Abortion was legalised, under controlled conditions. Refuges open to all women, including prostitutes, were set up - possibly a fore-runner of present-day Women's Aid centres. Birth Control information was spread with the help of committed groups such as the anarchist *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women). For Spain in the thirties, and compared with the situation there today, these reforms were not negligible.

Perhaps it was inevitable that, once in the government, the Minister of Health should be preoccupied, like her colleagues, with the cares and responsibilities of office. It was a far cry from the grass roots work of the collectives, and there was a strong temptation to identify with one's fellow rulers in their "difficult task" instead of questioning the basis of their existence. The anarchist ministers went along with the legalisation and subsequent erosion of the collectivisation, and helped to smooth the path for the Communist Party's consolidation of power.

In May 1937 the underlying tendencies came out into the open. The government's attempt to "disarm the rearguard" was firmly resisted by the workers of Barcelona, a stronghold of C.N.T. influence. After three days of fighting most of the city was in the hands of the C.N.T. and their allies, and the government was getting worried. Troops were withdrawn from the front to send to Barcelona if it proved necessary, and the anarchist "heavies" were called in. When her colleagues, the National Secretary of the C.N.T. and the Minister of Justice (yes, another anarchist), had failed to make much impression, Federica Montseny was sent on behalf of the Valencia government. She first obtained an assurance that troops were not to be used until she thought they were needed.

In Barcelona her car was attacked, but her radio broadcasts appealing for calm contributed to the confusion and demoralisation of the "insurgents" (i.e. the people who were trying to hold what they had made their own). There were concessions from the C.N.T. side and the government was able to assert its control. Shortly afterwards, the P.O.U.M. (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) was proscribed, and the anti-"Trotskyist" witch-hunt drove the anarchists into opposition.

Federica Montseny protested against the turn events were taking, compiling a dossier of evidence to counter the wilder fictions of the C.P., and demanding a change of government. But by then it was too late. After the defeat of the Republic she went into exile and continued to be prominent among Spanish libertarians in France. She won praise from commentators such as Burnett Bolloten for her honesty in being prepared to discuss, with a measure of self-criticism, the anarchist participation in government, and is still to be observed engaging in debate on this topic from time to time, in the libertarian press.

To each of these women a sort of stereotype can be applied, to fit them into an acceptable slot in male-dominated society (this is how their personalities were projected in a television play last July). Dolores Ibarruri's is the more feminine part - not the docile little woman, of course, but the passionate earth-mother, heart ruling head, devoted to home, husband and children. It is significant that the role she habitually assigned to women was essentially a supportive one, concerned with backing up the efforts of "their" men rather than struggling along side them on equal terms. At the same time, she functioned as an efficient leading member of an extremely hard-headed political party - stereotypes can't be expected to fit exactly.



Federica Montseny, on the other hand, comes over as the intellectual, the blue-stocking, committed to her cause and therefore, so the assumptions go, a bit sexless - although she too was a wife and mother. This is how male society has long dealt with women who step out of their appointed place - they can participate in the masculine sphere but will be regarded as not quite fully female. Perhaps it doesn't matter very much and will cease altogether when women are everywhere so integrally involved that their presence is no longer remarkable.

In any case, there is little sign that Federica Montseny was affected by it. She remained aware at least of some of the specific interests of women and did something about them, but without trading on her own femininity or conjuring up any romantic female role to fulfil. She recognised throughout that her political actions were what mattered, and whatever our criticisms of those actions she can be respected on that account. It is in political terms, in a wide sense which includes their womanhood without over-emphasising it, that we have to assess the careers of both those personalities in power at a crucial stage of Spanish history.

L.W.

* For information on this, see London Solidarity Pamphlet 48, Women in the Spanish Revolution.

MAYFLY



The Big Rock Festival had to die. When they discovered that you could bottle the Spirit of Woodstock as profitably as Gordon's Gin, what had been hailed as a cure for the disease became just another analgesic on the supermarket shelf.

But around the Parish Pump, good things are still developing. The Mayfly festival (so named because of its life cycle) has been a feature of Oxford life since 1970, but this year it really was "something else". Criticism that it had hitherto catered mainly for the fading hippy ghetto ("far out, in just three hours time we'll have yet another fifth rate Grateful Dead impression for you right here on stage") had sunk in, and a much wider variety of music was in evidence. This was very successful in breaking down the barriers between different subcultures, although the ultra-efficient (not to say speedy) stage crew and amazing weather also helped.

So with the gates of the Oxpens field firmly closed against police cars and hot dog vans alike, surrounded by the sovereign grottness of our decaying inner city, we settled down to the very best that the local music scene had to offer. To the musicians, the festival, and the benefit concerts that pay for it, are a useful showcase; it helps to sustain rock music as a living grassroots culture in the face of the power of big business and the technological unemployment their little black discs bring. Better yet, it's fun!

People who made "offensive" remarks about the Jubilee seemed to be universally popular - a far cry from the public response to the predictably puritanical posters and stickers vomited forth by the Trad Left. The only way we can hope to cut loose from alienated forms of "entertainment" such as the Liz Winsor Show is to create something better ourselves. And after dancing in the sunshine, watching the "Nationwide" team bopping on the box on Jubilee day was a bit of a come down, believe you me.

Theatre, like dancing, can transform us from passive spectators to active participants. An army of kids and dogs (who above all know what festivals are about) caused pandemonium by rolling a huge plastic inflatable cylinder over the sedentary audience - and of course the audience soon joined in. Someone posing very convincingly as the "District Fire Officer" tried to clear the field "because of the fire risk", provoking an astonishingly aggressive response - unfortunately, his subsequent efforts to convince us that it was a gag were drowned in cries of "DS bastard" and the like. This particular gig seems like an

unusually good way to get yourself killed. The open democratic organisation of the festival extended on the day to letting the audience decide whether to let two drunks beat up the stage hands and take over the PA! (There must be a pun there somewhere.....groan)

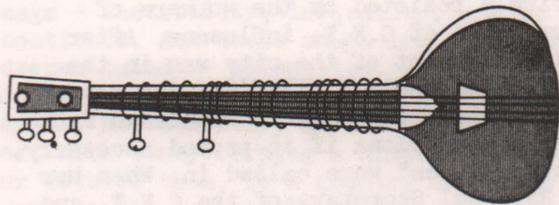
In the evening there were two very fine sets that you may get a chance to see for yourself. Aswad, a London-based reggae band, had almost everyone dancing to their uncompromisingly political numbers (police brutality/an everyday reality/on the streets of Babylon); reggae is ideally suited to dancing on a hot summer's day, of course. Ordinarily, religion makes me puke, but I have to admit that Rastafarianism is a powerful expression of black workers' oppression and aspirations, not to say of mine. Like the Christianity of the American slaves, it is double-edged. At one level, "Babylon" and "Jah" are no more than stirring poetic metaphors for oppression or liberation - but there is a danger that the religion could serve the interests of black businessmen and bureaucrats. (Witness Bob Marley's influential cop-out in the Jamaican elections). I hope bands like Aswad continue to keep the religion firmly coupled with explicit class struggle politics, or else junk it altogether.

And finally - Rocky Rickets and the Jet Pilots of Jive. Billed as a rock n' roll revival band (and very fine they were too), they were also the guerilla theatre team from the Bath Arts Workshop. They proceeded to take the piss out of all the phoney images of rock - the sleazy Mecca compere, the business manager, the League for Decency, the Ghost of Buddy Holly, Spider the Bouncer, the sexual frenzy - and Rocky himself, has-been rock star, egotist and coward, who had to be helped to the microphone yet tried to pass as a sex object. "We've had enough of peace n' love - turn on your best friend and start belting each other", he advised. "We're being recorded for the Old Grey whatsit".

The Rockettes, whose main function was to display their suspenders (and ultimately the rest of their underwear) to the audience, and be fucked/raped (depending on your interpretation) by ten-year old boys, were as erotic as cod liver oil, and all but two groups in the audience found them hilarious; some of the younger men were moved to whistling in a fragile display of adolescent machismo (bloody silly since we'd all been wearing a good deal less earlier in the day) and the more uptight feminists were outraged by it. Staying in character, Rocky whined "Spider, there's a Woman shouting at me - take her round the back and give her a good shagging". This only made matters worse, of course. A serious problem: can you caricature the female role without degrading women themselves in the process? Can you be sure that most people will get the point, given the tenacity of sexist ideology and behaviour? Can feminists avoid coming over as a radical version of the League for Decency? (Bear in mind that only one other woman appeared on stage all day - rock is still a male product).

Otherwise, it was remarkable how the show got the same message over to all of us, from aging Teds to punk rockers longing for the freedom or a job in Woolies. But what remains when you strip away the crappy images of rock? The music. You'd better believe it!

B.H.





UNITED WE'RE STOOD ON?



Most people who've had any contact with the "left" are perplexed by its division into innumerable sectlets. These groups seem to spend much of their time bickering with one another, and in competing for control of various strikes, campaigns and committees, rather than getting anything done. It's not really surprising therefore that a lot of people who want to change things are nevertheless suspicious of the left groups, and tend to adopt a "non-sectarian" approach, based on the tenet that "we're all on the same side." This is an increasingly popular view, reflected in the emergence of The Leveller and similar projects; and some of the groups (e.g. Big Flame and the IMG) are now bending over backwards to appeal to "non-sectarian" sentiments.

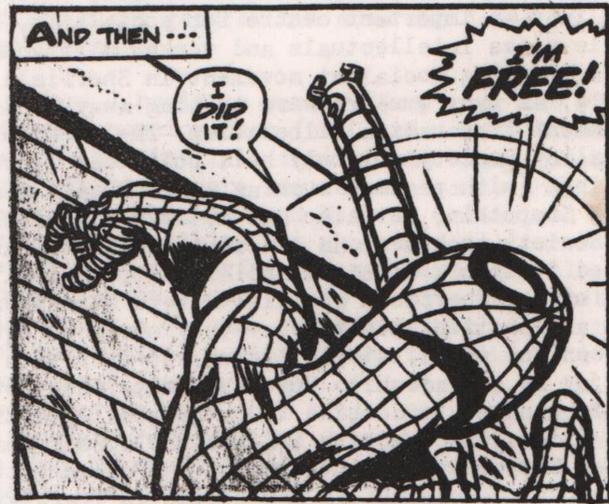
Whilst this attitude is well-meaning, it can lead to quite meaningless conclusions in practice. For example, the Big Flame pamphlet "Ireland - rising in the North" stated that "(Big Flame) are in total solidarity with all anti-imperialist socialist and republican organisations" - at a time when those organisations were busy liquidating one another!

In fact the assumption that anyone who doesn't like society as it is now must therefore be working for socialism, so we should/could all be working together, is logically absurd; it's like saying that everyone who hates cabbage eats cheese. Moreover, in the popular sense of the word, "socialism", as ideology and practice, covers two wholly antagonistic currents. It is used to describe both the tendency to centralise power in the hands of the state, union leaders and party officials, and the tendency of the rest of us to seek to control our lives ourselves, in some cooperative fashion. But bureaucracy and democracy, leadership and equality, nationalisation and internationalism, are mutually exclusive, as has been demonstrated by events in Russia and the other state capitalist regimes. In fact, the failure of state capitalism to appear to be an improvement on any other variety is one of the principle reasons for the fragmentation of the statist left; each little group has its own permutation of the same basic set of tactics, but the working class remains decidedly unimpressed, so new permutations are generated ad infinitum.

But supposing our "non-sectarian" is determined to follow a libertarian line of action. Since the dominant ideology of the "left" is statist, such activity would necessarily be "sectarian" and "divisive". So in practice many "non-sectarians" avoid the dilemma by thinking of themselves as libertarian, but applying only the vaguest emotional criteria as to what activity is worthwhile. In doing so, they reduce themselves to cannon fodder for the statist, since if they don't decide what to do for themselves, the statist groups will decide for them - and the statist are only too happy to work behind a layer of people who "seem OK". Just as the right has an armoury of emotive jargon that obscures class divisions ("the community", "the economy", "the security forces"), so the left speaks of "the labour movement", "progressive forces", "armies of liberation", ad nauseam, when they're talking about bureaucrats and their followers. In the women's movement "sisterhood" has been used to much the same effect. The response of many leftists to key phrases such as "South Africa" and "Trade Union" makes Pavlov's dogs look like a commercial for Free Will! Of course, "mindless militancy" works mainly to the advantage of the Labour and Communist Parties, given their already influential position; at least the other statist groups have some criticisms of reformism!

Unfortunately, if we turn instead to the anarchist wing of the "left", which has at least for the most part adhered to libertarianism, we find yet another plethora of little groups. If Marxism-Leninism is the ideological dustbin of history, then anarchism is its White Elephant stall. Every blind alley stumbled into by the iconoclasts of the past, from dogmatic pacifism to wearing funny clothes and throwing bombs, is enshrined forever in one little sect or another. For this reason an adequate critique of anarchism would fill many volumes; however, one might mention its tendency to reject theory, its occasional leanings towards the "tyranny of the individual", and its obsessive interest in what other anarchists are doing, as opposed to what the working class is up to. Like every jumble sale, we will find many things of value in anarchism, but also a lot of junk we could well do without.

For these reasons, many libertarians and council communists are today discarding the "left". We no longer see the fundamental division in society as being "right" and "left", but between those people who control society and those of us who are controlled. We are beginning to realise that everyone in a subordinate position (at work or elsewhere) is driven under modern conditions to resist the authority imposed on them, and that it is within the "working class" as a whole that the seeds of an effective libertarian movement lie.



However, we have not as yet wholly ceased to identify with the "left", and some of its worst traditions. Although libertarians do not over-emphasise the importance of groups to the development of socialism, and tend to organise in a loose and ad hoc way for the most part, those of us who still find value in more formal groupings find that sectarianism is still a serious problem. In so far as we isolate ourselves from the struggles of the people we live and work with, we are driven to huddling in paranoid little sects. So long as we seek security in the unique correct interpretation of social reality, which we alone possess, we will learn nothing from those around us, and will contribute nothing. If we allow the hierarchies which we are used to accepting as "natural" (including patriarchy) to reassert themselves informally in our organisations, autonomy will be trampled on, and schisms will continue.

At the time of writing, two very small groups (Solidarity and Social Revolution) are discussing a merger. Whilst not very significant in itself, there is at least some cause for optimism here. Let's hope our self-importance doesn't get the better of us!

B.H.

PIONEERS OF SEXUAL FREEDOM



A REVIEW OF "SOCIALISM AND THE NEW LIFE" - the Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter" by Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks (Pluto Press £1.80) and "A NEW WORLD FOR WOMEN - Stella Browne, Socialist Feminist" by Sheila Rowbotham (Pluto Press £1.50).

In her earlier book, "Hidden from History", Sheila Rowbotham provided us with a general account of the early movement for women's liberation and sexual freedom in Britain. "Socialism and the New Life" and "New World for Women" take a closer look at the life and work of some of the prominent figures in that movement - Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis and Stella Browne.

Edward Carpenter was born into an upper middle class family in 1844. After a short and unhappy career as an Anglican clergyman, he turned to socialism, buying a farm called Millthorpe near Sheffield, which he made into an important centre for socialists, both middle class intellectuals and worker militants. There was a thriving socialist movement in Sheffield in the 1880's, as many workers were turning away in disillusionment from radical liberalism. The Sheffield Socialist Society not only held political discussion meetings (with speakers such as Annie Besant and Peter Kropotkin) but also had outings and rambles. The Society took over an old debtors' prison and turned it into a cafe and social and political centre. Many of the Sheffield socialists were experimenting with alternative lifestyles - they stressed equality between the sexes, simple living, co-operation and the joy of comradeship. Unfortunately, they never really managed to combine their personal politics with wider direct action against the bosses and the state. Carpenter was involved in the clash between unemployed demonstrators and police in Trafalgar Square in 1887 (he was clubbed by a policeman), and some of his comrades helped organise unemployed marches in Sheffield and were involved in the strike wave of 1889-90. But when in 1893 a miners' strike reached the proportions of a local insurrection, the Socialist Society (now torn by a feud between Carpenter and his friends and a rival faction who favoured anarchism of the blood-and-dynamite variety) failed to make any real contribution to the struggle.

Carpenter's contribution to sexual liberation was outstanding - both in his books and in the way he lived his own life. (Though he did have the advantages of owning his own farm and receiving an unearned income). His writings - notably 'Love's coming of Age' were well known to radicals all over the world. He denounced the Victorian era as "a period in which not only commercialism in public life, but cant in religion, pure materialism in science, futility in social conventions, the worship of stocks and shares, the starving of the human heart, the denial of the human body and its needs, the huddling concealment of the

body in clothes, the 'impure hush' on matters of sex, class division, contempt of manual labour, and the cruel barring of women from every natural and useful expression of their lives, were carried to an extremity of folly." He tried to develop a lifestyle based upon the ideas of free expression of emotion, openness and honesty in sexual affairs, and love as a non-exclusive relationship. Although the law prevented him from coming out publicly as a gay, he allowed his homosexuality to become widely known in the socialist movement and in the Sheffield area generally. Not surprisingly, this raised a storm of moral indignation in certain quarters. A Mr O'Brien wrote a pamphlet against Carpenter, titled "Socialism and Infamy" in which he asked "Is the infamy which is said to have brought destruction upon Sodom And Gomorrah likely to bring in one form or another anything less than destruction upon the trade of Sheffield?"



Carpenter's contemporary, Havelock Ellis, also sought - through his extensive writings on the psychology of sex - to bring about far-reaching changes in social attitudes, though his approach was a very reformist one. He attacked the then orthodox medical view that homosexuality was a disease and a sign of mental derangement. He set out to show that it was not 'unnatural' by amassing evidence of how common it was among animals, among primitive peoples, in ancient civilisations, among famous literary and artistic figures and in all social classes. Ellis developed the liberal argument (much later to form the basis of the Wolenden Report and the 1967 reform of the law) that homosexuality was a private matter in which the law ought not intervene. He did not go so far as to adopt the libertarian principle that every person should be free to define her or his own sexuality. He defined masturbation as a healthy erotic practice, and supported campaigns for birth control, abortion and voluntary euthanasia.

Stella Browne was a feminist and socialist who campaigned for birth control and abortion during the 1920's and 1930's. The issue of control over their own fertility was one of intense concern to working class women. Lack of birth control meant one pregnancy after another, large families, overcrowding, and incessant household drudgery. It was said that, because of bad housing conditions, lack of proper medical care, it was 4 times as dangerous to bear a child as to work in a coal mine. There did exist a hidden folk knowledge of contraception and abortion. Home made contraceptives such as the vaginal sponge were used, but these were not very reliable. It is a measure of how desperate women were to avoid an unwanted pregnancy that they would turn to such dangerous methods of abortion as knitting needles and washing powder in gin. From 1926 to 1935, about 500 women died each year from the effects of back-street abortion.

Stella Browne was one of the first to put forward the idea that women must have free access to contraception and abortion as a condition of free motherhood and self-defined sexuality. 'What is this ban on abortion?' she wrote, 'It is a survival of the veiled face, of the barred window and the locked door, burning, branding, mutilation, stoning, of all the grip of ownership and superstition came down on woman, thousands of years ago.'

Browne attacked the old male-supremacist belief that women were sexually passive. She declared her aim to be a truly communist society in which patriarchal marriage would not exist and where monogamy 'will no longer be stereotyped as the one life-long and unvarying form of legally-recognised expression for anything so infinitely variable and individual as the sexual impulse.' This set her at odds with the older generation of feminists who went in for 'purity and prohibition', and with both reformists and Communists, who wanted to keep sex out of politics.

Regrettably, the political tactic which Browne followed - that of trying to persuade the Labour Party to reform the law - did not match up to the revolutionary nature of her aims. She was a founder member of the Abortion Law Reform Association in 1936. ALRA's work as a parliamentary pressure group did achieve - over thirty years later, in 1967 - the legalisation of abortion, but with the decision being left to doctors, not to the woman herself. Now even the limited gains achieved under the 1967 Act are threatened, by the combined pressure of national health cuts and a powerful (largely Catholic) anti-abortion lobby.

Ironically, the National Abortion Campaign, which was started in 1975 as a militant mass campaign to fight for 'free abortion on demand, a woman's right to choose', is also becoming bogged down in timid constitutional tactics. Although NAC has succeeded in holding some very large demonstrations (showing that many thousands of women and men feel strongly about the abortion issue) its activity is largely confined to petitioning Parliament and writing letters to Labour MPs, which is hardly likely to achieve anything. In some other countries however, real progress towards free abortion has been made, by way of direct action. In Genoa, the main hospital has been occupied five times, forcing the authorities to provide abortion on demand, using the vacuum suction method. In Aix-en-Provence, a women's health group defied the anti-abortion laws by performing menstrual extractions. When some of the group were prosecuted, a very large demo was held in their support on the day of the trial, and the accused were acquitted.

The movement for free abortion in Britain is much stronger today than in the '20's and '30's. Direct action is a real possibility. Many of Stella Browne's ideas are highly relevant for us today, but there is no need to repeat her mistakes.

D.A.

HALF MARX

"A Contribution to the Critique of Marx" by John Crump (Social Revolution London, Box 217, 197 Kings Cross Road, WCl, and Solidarity London, c/o 123, Lathom Road, E6) 10p.

The aim of this pamphlet is to trace a connecting line of thought from Marx to Engels to Leninist state capitalism. In this, John Crump succeeds. At least in so far as success is to find quotations and examples from Marx and Engels' writings paralleled in Lenin. So here we have a good stick with which to beat the non-Leninist Marxists. (For Marxist-Leninists the argument that Lenin follows Marx is of course already accepted, but with a different interpretation).

But herein lies my first criticism. The pamphlet is very much in the trend of Marxist exegesis; the "what Marx really said/meant" school. My usual response is "so what?". The question applies to this pamphlet and I don't think it is answered adequately.

The minor theme is more interesting though, unfortunately, not developed in terms of its relevance to us today. John Crump argues that, unlike Lenin, Marx did have a view of communism which was not state capitalist. So how come much of Marx's writings lend weight to the state capitalist school? This anomaly is attributed to the fact that Marx was an 'activist' eager to 'get involved'. As he lived for the most part through a non-revolutionary situation, he was obliged to water down his communism to make his ideas more relevant to the actual on-going (capitalist) struggles of the day. The alternative was to remain 'pure' in theory, but impotent in the sense of shying away from day-to-day practice (a la SPGB, a party which, until recently, counted the author of this pamphlet among its members). John Crump asserts that the dilemma is still with us today and will not be resolved until the working class gets on the move and develops a communist consciousness.

Here I begin to part company over the view of communist consciousness (not explained - when is it ever? - but implicit throughout). Many times in this short pamphlet there are references to the 'correct' theory of communism, and Marx is criticised for deviating from this. But what is this 'correct theory'? Or, to bring out my point more clearly, whose 'correct theory'? To me there is something false about a dilemma which counterposes on the one hand theoretical purity and on the other the theoretically murky areas of activity. It is no use us bemoaning the fact that Marx, Lenin, the working class or whoever are deviating from the 'correct theory'. The task of revolutionaries (whatever that means) is to observe and learn from what is already going on in society, what is already revolutionary, and to participate with others in those activities in which we find value. (I know this is begging lots of questions, but for the time being, as they say in Yorkshire - 'nuf said!)

B.D.



THE MURRAYS: FEEDBACK

The article "Saved from the gallows" in Solidarity 3 requires comment :

The writer, B.H., calls for an end to the campaign of solidarity that has saved Noel and Marie Murray from being lynched by the Irish Government. Throughout the entire article runs the assumption that Noel and Marie are guilty of the charges made by the state prosecutor against them, although they have always pleaded their innocence.

Before letting the Irish Government lock the jailhouse door and throw away the key I for one intend to do everything I can to get both of the Murrays out of jail.

They have always pleaded their innocence, as I have just remarked, and the very fact that their co-defendant Ronan Stenson was released, and the charges against him were dropped, demonstrates quite clearly that the police are capable of arresting, torturing and obtaining "confessions" from innocent people. Why does B.H. believe that Ronan Stenson was innocent, but that the Murrays are guilty? Does B.H. believe the State, who on their own admission tortured a confession from an innocent man?

Not only were the police unable to establish a connection between Stenson and the Murrays, (a fact B.H. regards as proof of Stenson's innocence), they also failed to establish any connection between the Murrays and anyone else - yet four people took part in the bank raid that led to the fatal shooting.

If the Murrays were guilty as charged - does that in B.H.'s eyes justify the complete absence of a fair trial? The Murrays were tried by the Special Criminal Court precisely because there is so little evidence of their guilt that the prosecution dare not place the evidence they have in front of a jury. They dare not allow the Murrays to put up a proper defence, dare not allow medical testimony of the torture which extracted the "confessions", and dare not allow the papers to freely report that brutality.

B.H. refuses the Murrays both practical and political support because of the "absence of strong evidence of their innocence" - which is a bloody disgusting statement for someone who writes in a libertarian paper to make - B.H. no longer expects the state to prove guilt, but rather expects the accused to provide evidence of their innocence!

Several important issues surrounding the case have never been resolved. Why was an off-duty policeman (Irish policemen are not armed) carrying a gun? There is a discrepancy between the calibre of the gun the police claim to have found in the Murrays flat, and the fatal bullets (a discrepancy of .005 mm.) - why? The bank robbers were masked, and there were no witnesses to the fatal shooting. For several days the police treated the robbery as a normal criminal investigation, denying any political overtones. Then, the homes of a couple of hundred anarchist sympathisers were raided - the police apparently knew the politics of the criminals before they knew the identity - how?

Ronan Stenson has been active in the campaign to free the Murrays since his release - that in itself should speak volumes, but it didn't even receive a mention in the Solidarity article. I find it an interesting comment on "libertarianism" that B.H. believes the death penalty to be something to fight against, but is quite prepared to allow people guilty or innocent, to be locked away for the rest of their life. I say let's abolish prison! Full stop.

It seems from the tone of the article that "the original campaign was worth supporting on the issues of hanging and torture in Eire" - which is tantamount to making the Murrays political footballs, who are expendable after you've scored a point or two - even the Trots are not so dishonest.

The article also makes the baseless charge that the Murrays have attempted to substitute themselves for the working class as the creators of socialism - what drivel. Can B.H. quote one statement from Noel and Marie, made since they became anarchists, in support of this contention? Of course not. Two people, socially aware enough to call themselves anarchists, would know (even if B.H. doesn't) that two people don't make a vanguard or a party, that individual initiatives are no substitute for mass action. To claim otherwise is just sloganeering to bolster a weak case, and prejudice support for the Murrays. (Incidentally, may I ask the question: is it terrorism when a few people in Poland burn down Communist Party offices, as during the 1970 food riots?)

It is interesting that a paper describing itself Solidarity can feature one article advocating support against state repression for everyone from Agee and Hosenball, through Gay News to Socialist Worker, yet at the same time carry a second article calling for people to stop supporting the only people actually imprisoned in a political framework. Perhaps you'll consider changing your name to Lack of Solidarity, or Grudging Solidarity, or Partial Solidarity, or something similar?

With Ronan Stenson released following official recognition of his torture and innocence, and with the life sentences for Noel and Marie replacing the death sentences previously imposed, now is the time to step up support for the Murrays, to get them released, to show that the whole thing was a frame-up. Let's get on with it.

Martin Everett



Comrades,

you published an article 'Saved from the Gallows' (Solidarity no. 3) by B.H. about the Murrays case in Eire which contains a number of disturbing statements, coming from a libertarian paper which uses the title "Solidarity".

B.H. states that Ronan Stenson "is almost certainly innocent" and that "his only real 'crime' appears to have been being a pacifist active in the Prisoners' Rights Organisation". B.H. mentions that the Irish Government "admitted that evidence had been extracted from him illegally". But all they admitted was that Stenson had been held in custody illegally. Also B.H. mentioned the question of past associations between Stenson and the Murrays being in question but fails to recognise that, since his release, Ronan Stenson has joined the Dublin Murray Defence Committee and has been active publically in their campaign. An account of Stenson's torture is produced in Black Flag Vol. 4 No. 14.

B.H. compliments the 'massive campaign' in Southern Ireland on behalf of the Murrays, yet he criticises the libertarians in Britain for a 'pathetic' response, failing to mention at all the international protests (including Spain which resulted in arrests of comrades). Certainly more should have been done in.

Britain but I think note should be made of the Nov. 24th Day of Action in support of the Murrays. Newsline (25.11.76) reported: "Defence groups from Bradford, Brighton, Colchester, Huddersfield, Leeds, London, Warwick and York organised their own local activities". One could mention the pickets, meetings and financial contributions to the Murray Defence Fund - £60 from prisoners at Gartree is an instance of support hardly worthy of the word 'pathetic'. The support of the libertarian press was good, with Anarchist Worker bringing out a special supplement, Freedom giving adequate coverage, and Black Flag providing much useful information. Perhaps B.H. might have looked to the miniscule reaction of liberals who oppose the death penalty and at the virtual silence of the mass media to the Murrays instead of just noticing the weakness of comrades.

Finally B.H. suggests that "in the absence of strong evidence of their (the Murrays) innocence" libertarians should not continue to campaign against the imposition of life imprisonment on the Murrays. "It is surely impossible" argues B.H. "for libertarians to lend political support to 'anarchists', who by acts of terrorism...drive working people to support repressive measures of the state".

That the Murrays are anarchists is clear from the Court proceedings (see No Hanging Here by the Murray Defence Committee). Noel Murray stated: "the Murrays are anarchists". Black Flag referred to the Murrays as "our Irish comrades" and correctly stated (Vol 4

No 14): "Nothing prejudiced the case against the Murrays more than the fact that they were Anarchists". Another issue of Black Flag (Vol 4 No 12) includes a statement by Noel Murray from the court transcripts about money taken by the police from his house at the time of his arrest: "This money in fact is part of the funds of the anarchist movement. It was donated by different individuals and groups principally for the relief of prisoners. It was to be distributed through our relief organisation, the Anarchist Black Cross. It's not stolen money and I want it back for the Anarchist Black Cross". The Anarchist Black Cross state that they propose to initiate civil action in the courts to recover the money. Noel Murray also stated that the bullet found in the policeman's body could not have been fired by the gun found on his premises.

As regards the remarks over 'terrorism' and the 'absence of strong evidence' of the Murray's innocence I would suggest that the view that people are guilty until proved innocent is not a libertarian one and that there is room to doubt the Murrays' involvement in killing an off duty policeman (not everyone's idea of terrorism anyway). This is mainly for the reasons B.H. outlines over the Ronan Stenson case, the Murrays were found guilty because of a statement made under duress.

I know Solidarity state that articles published 'reflect the opinions of individuals and not necessarily those of the group as a whole' but in the light of your publishing B.H.'s article without comment I think a collective statement is called for. Otherwise we might begin to think of you as 'libertarians'.

Jerry Westall

Unfortunately, there has been no Solidarity conference since we received these letters, so that we are unable to make any statement on behalf of the organisation as a whole. In any case, as a group we do not usually have any monolithic policy on questions of this kind. B.H.'s views about terrorism in general are widely shared within the group, but opinion has been divided on the specific case of the Murrays.

The Orgbureau.

ANARCHISM & FEMINISM



ANARCHISTS BELIEVE IN THE POWER TO DETERMINE OUR OWN ACTIONS WITHOUT ABUSING THAT POWER TO CONTROL OTHERS. CONTRARY TO COMMON BELIEF ANARCHY IS ORDER - WITHOUT GOD, WITHOUT MASTER, WITHOUT STATE.

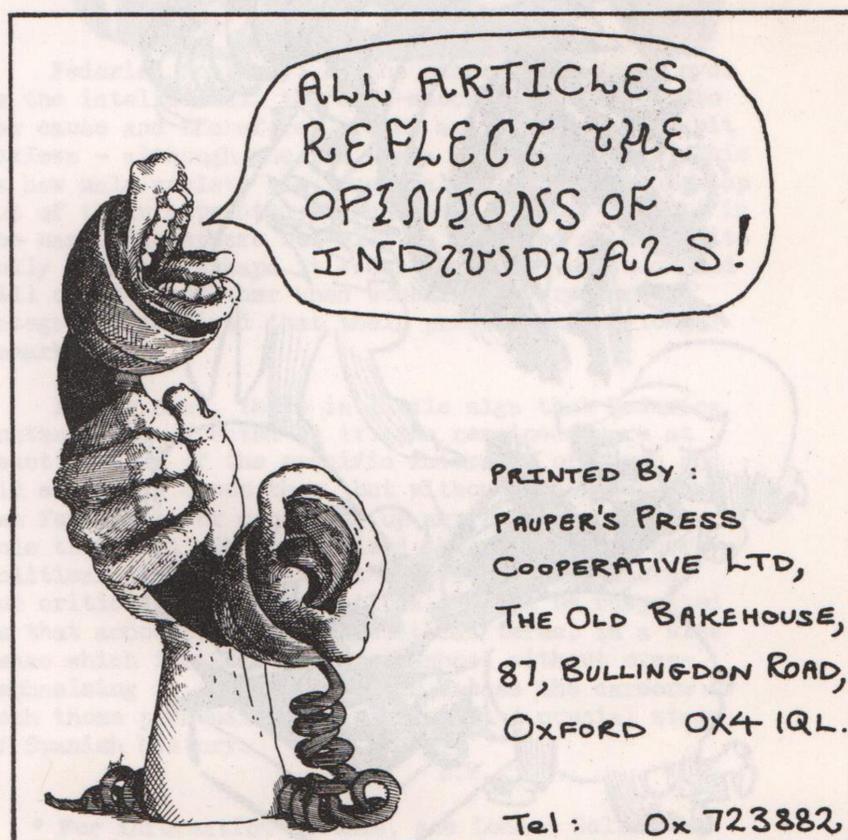
Nearly 100 women got together at Camden Women's Centre during the weekend of the 28-29th May to discuss anarchism and feminism. Why did so many women feel the need to travel from all over the country to discuss this, seemingly, obscure subject? What did we gain from the weekend apart from sun, good food and feelings of solidarity? What we discovered was, whether our individual roots were in the feminist or anarchist movements, we shared common ideas and aims - and from this grew a sense of strength.

The conference arose from a real need to express the fact that feminism and anarchism are the same. Anarchist women felt oppressed by sexism in mixed anarchist groups i.e. the theory and practice were often polarised. Some feminist women felt frustrated that direct action doesn't always come out of consciousness raising groups and there is a sense that as nothing is feminist enough the alternative is to do nothing. Feminist women have felt alienated from political issues due to the depersonalisation of the political and the depoliticisation of the personal.

The workshops covered the basics of life, children as property, sexuality versus genitality, mental health, revolutionary feminism, anarchism and the women's movement, sexism in the anarchist movement and class as it is defined at present.

It is hoped that as a result of this conference and in view of the interest generated, an anarchist/feminist network will be set up - one used to exist but is now defunct. A newsletter has been produced - for information and copies contact:-

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184 Landsdowne Drive
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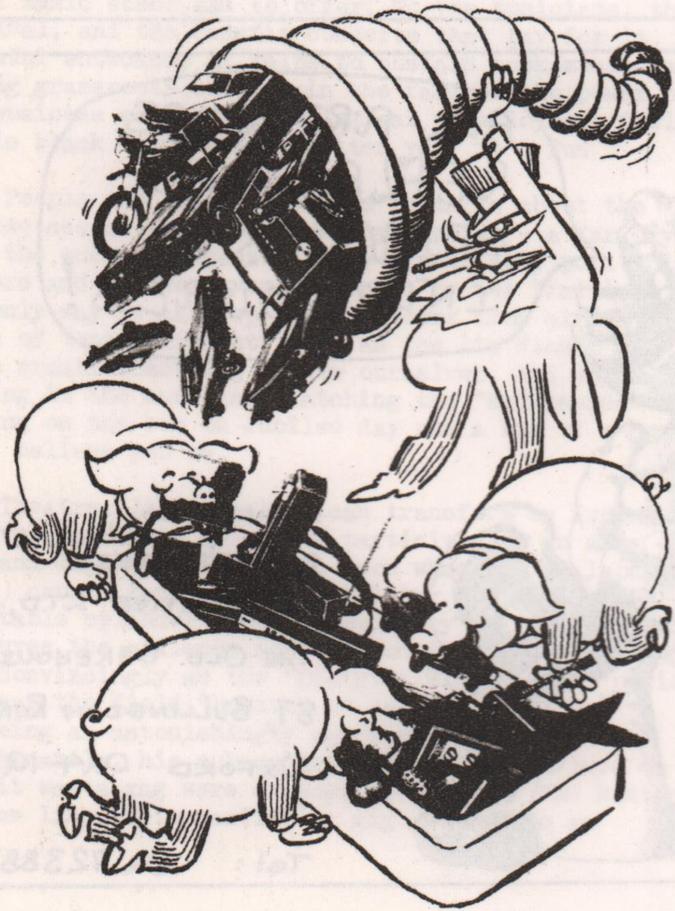
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WHO NEEDS MONEY? WE DO?

AB (last issue) is quite right to argue that scarcity cannot be abolished overnight, even if the night in question is the one after the revolution. "From each according to his (sic) abilities, to each according to his needs", won't be immediately possible, unless we're prepared to restrict our needs to the occasional hair shirt and irregular meals of roots and berries. The universal free distribution of all goods will take quite some time to organise, not least for the two-thirds of the world's population who at present don't get a sniff at "books, records, grapefruits and pictures" (AB's examples).

There are other reasons why full communism is something to be worked towards, rather than achieved instantly. One is summed up by the old anti-socialist saw, "Who's going to do the dirty jobs, then?". This is a good question, and one which isn't often answered. It's conceivable, though unlikely, that long queues will form of public-spirited citizens eager to do their spell at cleaning out the sewers. If not, what happens if the present sewer-cleaners (or miners, etc.) decide to take a leaf out of Paul Lafargue's little book and exercise the "right to be lazy". Lafargue advocated a general three-hour working day, which is certainly worth fighting for (not too hard). In the long run they could presumably be accommodated by automation, but this will take time, during which deaths from plague, hyperthermia, and the like will be on the increase.

Trotsky found a neat solution to this sort of problem; conscript the workers concerned and threaten to shoot them if they're late for work. Within limits the militarisation of labour is quite effective. But it's not really all that libertarian.



There's another reason why state capitalist terror won't help very much, even if it's politically acceptable (as it was to Trotsky). This is simply that it's impossible. The Greatest Leader of the most Dedicated Revolutionary Party can't possibly dictate the details of the production of paper clips and paint brushes and flower-pots and half-inch ballbearings and..... Actually the latest computers are big enough to allow the comprehensive planning of the entire Soviet economy in this sort of detail. On one estimate, the plan for 1978 would be ready for implementation in just over a thousand years.

This leads us back, with AB, to money. As any textbook of capitalist economics will tell you, markets facilitate production by providing information and incentives. They tend to do so more effectively than planning boards, which is why all the state capitalist countries are going back to them - in some cases very fast (e.g. Hungary; Chairman Hua's China?). To find out whether people want paper clips, you try to sell them. If no one buys them, you produce something else. If miners don't like lung disease, you offer them a wage differential in exchange. (Stalin was actually rather less authoritarian than Trotsky in this respect) Then they buy more paper clips with their higher wages, and everyone's happy. No bureaucracies, no party hierarchies, no secret police. Money makes the world go round.

There is, alas, a snag - or rather lots of snags. Markets also produce pollution and resource depletion. They are usually highly unstable, generating the boom-and-bust condition that used to be known as the "hog cycle" (today it's the supertanker cycle, the chemical plant cycle, and so on), not to mention the mass unemployment of the 1930's (and 1980's?). Some bourgeois economists argue - to the delight of the Stalinists - that a self-managed market economy would be even more chaotic than nineteenth century capitalism. Even worse, some people are booming while others go bust, so that inequality is added to instability. If production operates like a casino (as Keynes once described the Stock Exchange) people are likely to develop the selfish attitudes of the compulsive gambler.

This points directly to the crucial flaw in AB's argument. Money is not "nothing more than a piece of paper", which can be slotted into any social arrangements that we care to choose. It conditions, distorts and confuses our social arrangements, however much we share it out, and share it out again. Let's get technical for a moment, and use a bit of Marxist jargon (still valuable in this context, I think). The general use of money means that we are producing commodities: not just things, but things for sale, for the market rather than directly for use. If we do so, we run into the snags - instability, inequality, and so on - that I've mentioned. And these snags are only symptoms of a much deeper malady - alienation. Producers of commodities relate to one another indirectly, as buyer and seller, not directly, as one human being to another, with money forming a hidden but impenetrable barrier between them. To a greater or lesser degree, these apparently insignificant "pieces of paper" dominate their lives, rendering impossible the emergence of the new type of human being who will live in a genuinely communist society. Greed, acquisitiveness, privatisation, mystification, all result. We remain slaves to the market, if no longer slaves to the boss.

All this is explained very clearly by Marx, and (rather more accessibly) in John Crump's recent pamphlet. (1) Crump is wrong, though, to assert that a money economy is necessarily a capitalist economy. Capitalism is a special form of commodity production in which a minority class owns and controls the means of production, and this won't be the case in a self-managed socialist society. The latter will be closer to what Marx described as "simple" or "petty" commodity production, where individual farmers, artisans and the like own their own land and equipment (pre-capitalist white colonies in North America, Australasia and - initially at least - South Africa were probably something like this. They ended up capitalist, but then so did feudalism, and we wouldn't want to call that capitalism in another disguise). The choice, then, isn't between abolishing money and retaining capitalism - for we can abolish capitalism while continuing to use money. What we can't do is to retain money and abolish alienation at the same time.

In other words, while we can't do away with money all at once, we must do so by stages, and pretty rapidly at that. The "transition to communism" - shades of old Leninist bogies! - needs serious consideration. Barely scratching the surface of the problem, I suggest two general principles - monetary equality, and productive conservatism.

Monetary equality means, simply, the thorough equalisation of incomes. People with dirty, dangerous and boring jobs (the division of labour, again, isn't something which will disappear overnight) can be compensated by working shorter hours, rather than by wage differentials. This avoids inequality in the consumption of commodities, and eliminates competitive emulation, which is the crucial factor behind the acquisitiveness which perpetuates scarcity. Note, though, that some compulsion to work is implicit in this principle, which is meaningless without it; and that a once-and-for-all reorganisation of production will be needed straight away, as poor people (who will gain) buy different things than the rich, (who will lose).

Subject to this qualification, productive conservatism means that we continue at first to produce roughly the same quantities of everything. It is then possible to identify the most glaring sources of waste - say, arms production, advertising, motorway and office building - and eliminate them, devoting the resources thus released to the production of useful goods and services which can now be supplied free, on demand. (AB's example of public transport would be a good starter). This can be done progressively, and by conscious planning. Although comprehensive planning in minute detail is impossible, selective planning of particular sectors of production is perfectly feasible, and can be done in a genuinely democratic way. (2) This too reduces emulation; no one is likely to want to change their bus every two years to keep ahead of the Joneses. Eventually the market withers away, together with the attitudes of mind which it creates, and which serve to sustain it. Perhaps our grandchildren will be able to light their bonfires with the last remaining banknotes.

L.S.D.

- (1) John Crump, A Contribution to the critique of Marx, Solidarity (London)/Social Revolution (London) 10p
- (2) Paul Cardan, Workers' Councils and the Economics of Self-Management. Solidarity (London) pamphlet, belying its title, is an excellent speculative analysis of the politics of a self-managed economy but is woefully vague on the economic criteria that workers' councils might employ.



BREWER'S DROOP



Production of Skol Lager at the Burton Brewery of Allied Brewers was reduced due to technical difficulties and as a result the amount available to Tetley's at Leeds dropped.

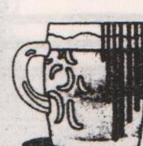
Management decided that deliveries to the wholesalers should be kept to full capacity, while the company's Ted Pubs (Tenanted and Managed) should have a restricted delivery. The draymen, members of the TGWU and GMWU, met on Monday morning, and decided that for their long term job security, the wholesalers should not receive supplies, and full deliveries should be made to the Tetley pubs. The first eight men who refused to deliver to the wholesalers were then taken to the management office, disciplined and sent home. Another mass meeting took place and a vote to strike until they were reinstated was unanimous.

All essential supplies were blacked in and out of the brewery; mail, canteen food, brewing ingredients etc. With the weather improving and thirsts getting bigger, the management climbed down, the men were reinstated, an agreement to increase the percentage of Skol to the Tetley pubs and reduce that to the wholesalers was reached, as a compromise for returning to work, three days after the strike started.

A depressing factor was the reaction of some staff in the offices who have recently joined the union ASTMS to stop management kicking them around, in other words to resist arbitrary management directives as to what they should do or not do. Unfortunately they believed any rumours as to the cause of the strike without investigation which is bad enough, but then they criticised their fellow trade unionists for challenging management prerogatives, which is even worse. Especially as this is what they themselves are doing in ASTMS. Obviously they have a long way to go, having failed to show solidarity with their fellow employees at the brewery.

But the encouraging part about the strike, is that it was over the principle of who should make the decisions: bosses or workers. And the workers won. In the long run this is much more important than strikes over money. The bosses can deal with that type. They can't deal with challenges to their authority.

(Written after an interview with some of the shop stewards involved).



GRUNWICK

In 1972 and 1974, massed pickets at Saltley power station brought about what seemed the most significant victories ever made by the British trade union movement. It seemed as though the miners had shown the way and the rest of the movement had only to follow in their wake

Instead we have had phase 1 followed by phase 2 and now it seems likely by some disguised form of phase 3. From what appeared a significant position of strength the British trade union movement has succeeded in negotiating a sharp reduction in the real standards of living. This would seem to indicate that whilst the battles of British industry may be won on the picket lines, the war is lost over tea and sympathy at Downing Street. The effort put in by the miners in 1972 and 1974 has been dissipated and destroyed by three years of jargon about 'the battle against inflation', 'the need to save the Labour Government', and 'One last push for Britain'. Instead of serving to promote the interests of trade unionists, the trade union leadership has negotiated, on their behalf, real wage reductions which have been a major cause of unemployment.

Yet after three years of the debilitating talk of compromise and 'common sense' we have suddenly found that the trade union movement has once again pitched into an all-out battle on the picket lines. Or at least a part of the movement has. Whilst the leadership is steadily trying to get the members to agree to a 'flexible' phase 3 the so-called 'best elements' of the trade union movement have been down at Grunwicks battling it out with police.

AN ADVERTISING STUNT?

In many ways nothing could be better for the TUC General Council and the Labour Cabinet than to have Grunwick exist as a means of diverting attention whilst they make their deal. The unions can shout militant slogans about Grunwick whilst talking of compromise in Whitehall. The various revolutionary groups can be left to sell each other their literature and trade blows with the police in the rough area of Willesden. Meanwhile the leaders of 'the movement' are trying to settle the details of phase 3 undisturbed in plush offices. In short Grunwick will have been a meaningless and harmful advertising campaign if it gives respectability to the trade unions and diverts attention from the machinations of the leaders.

the cops arrive



This does not mean that everybody should have left the Grunwick strikers to their fate. Support given by one group of workers to another is obviously to be encouraged. Without outside support the Grunwick strikers would never have stood a chance. On August 31 last year (when the largest number of workers were on strike) there were 91 full time workers and 46 summer student workers out on strike from a workforce of 429 weekly staff. Down the road a second factory has worked normally throughout the strike. For the strike to be successful it had to have outside support and it should have been supported. Whilst the majority of workers at Grunwick may have decided to stay on at work (motivated largely by poverty) the minority were definitely correct to fight back against their treatment by the firm.

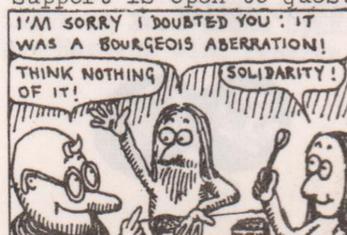
THE ASCOT OF THE LEFT

Alone such a fight was a bad joke. For week after week there were precious few people on the picket lines and it was quite normal to find even the front gates completely devoid of pickets whilst workers came and went and supplies arrived. This was the situation before the mass pickets arrived. This picket made life difficult for Grunwicks but it failed to shut the factory. Indeed considering the effort which was put into maintaining the mass picket it was largely ineffective. From the outset it had an air of unreality about it. For several days a ritualised battle developed in which at an agreed time and place the left could have a battle with the authorities and the police could have their violent fun. Then it was agreed that the police would stop the workers bus so that 10 strikers could explain their case to those still working. This deal gave the police a break from the street battles, allowed the union to get out of an embarrassing situation and took away any prospect of the pickets closing down the factory.

Yet even before this deal was made the pickets were failing to have the desired effect. They arrived in the morning for the battle with the bus but by afternoon it was quite possible for supplies to enter the factory and workers to come and go without the least interference. With the union insisting more and more on the picket keeping within the law and avoiding 'confrontations' with those still working, the picket gradually became useless even in the morning.

But despite the partial nature of the mass picket it did have the potential of providing just the sort of support that the Grunwick workers needed. It is difficult to think of any means by which such solidarity action could be brought about (at present) without the assistance of shop floor links made through the trade unions. It is also difficult to think of any other source of finance for such a struggle than the trade unions. It was hardly surprising therefore that the workers at Grunwick eventually turned to APEX for help. In a nineteenth century dispute like Grunwick a nineteenth apparatus like a Trade Union may well prove to be of value.

At Grunwick the boss refused to make the slightest concession and even such a moderate union as APEX was forced to adopt a militant stance and prepare for a stand-up fight. The union did its best to take away all the initiative from the workers in struggle and to keep the strike legal and above board but it also provided contacts and monetary support. Whether the union did more harm through its destruction of worker initiative than it did good through its support is open to question in this case.



OR WAS IT?
CONTINUED ON
FACING PAGE

BACK TO FRONT

"The National Front" by Martin Walker

A reappraisal of the dangers of fascism in the 1970's is urgently needed. Unfortunately, this book is not up to the task.

However, where it does make a useful contribution is in the detailed and readable form it brings together the recent history of the ultra-right. The murky biographies of the fascist leaders are usefully outlined and it is interesting to note how in the right, as well as the left, that the splits are as much a reflection of emotions as politics. See for example the courtship of Francoise Dior by both Colin Jordon and John Tyndall which led to a split in the National Socialist Movement.

On the other hand the book unwittingly perpetuates the myth that credit for the defeat of Mosely in the Battle of Cable Street belongs to the Communist Party. Readers of *Solidarity* (London) will know differently. Joe Jacobs has said that popular initiative was much more important and that the Stepney C.P. trailed events.

As one might expect from a liberal journalist, Walker falls over backwards trying to be 'objective' about his 'National Front friends'. He admits in his introduction that he has wined and dined with several leading members of the National Front and this combined with his belief that 'the NF is a legal party, presenting a coherent and not unthoughtful program to the electors', means that the book is biased and the evidence he has collected is incorrectly interpreted. Consequently, rather than believe the more probable version of the 1965 shooting on Tyndall that it was a set-up to discredit the Jews, Walker claims, as Tyndall does, that it was the work of anti-fascists. Furthermore, in the use of language, Walker reveals that he is more prepared to condone right wing violence than 'left wing resistance'. For example, he accuses the left of violence at Red Lion Square when Kevin Gately was killed, but he ignores completely the proven racist attacks made by the NF and other right wing groups.

Its most serious shortcomings, however, are theoretical. Walker's analysis of fascism is woefully simple. He sets up the straw person of a distorted Trotskyist theory ("We have come a long way from the classic Trotsky theory of fascism. We are no longer talking of the deliberate encouragement of a violent anti-communist party by an alarmed bourgeoisie.") and proceeds to draw a false conclusion, that because the NF are eroding the Labour Party's electoral base the way to oppose the NF is to rely on the respectably racist Labour leadership and to try and live with it.

It is apparent throughout the book that Walker hasn't understood fascist ideology. When Tyndall is being openly Nazi, it is acknowledged, but at other times Walker deals with the NF as though they are engaging in conventional politics. He can even call A.K. Chesterton's theory of a conspiracy of "Jewish Wall Street capital promoting Communism" as 'logical'.

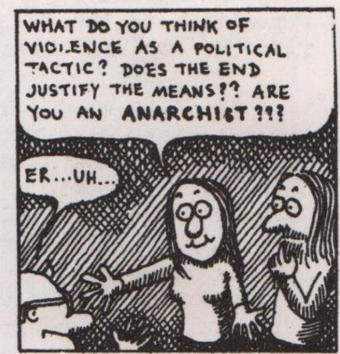
Another important failing is Walker's underestimation of the role of ideology in the rise of the NF. However opportunistic their propaganda, hostility to capitalism is an important element in its appeal, and cannot be dismissed as 'mere anti-capitalist noises'. The NF's election manifesto calls for the abolition of the Stock Exchange if (as seems entirely probable!) it cannot be so reformed as to eliminate speculation. The fact that fascism in power sides with big business against the working class does not stop

it attracting support, on the road to power, from many whose hatred of big business runs very deep. However, as the 1974/5 split in the Front, which led to the formation of the National Party, illustrates, there are tensions within fascism between its reactionary and radical factions. Richard Verall in 'Spearhead' denounces the 'radicals' for 'the perennial heresy of Nationalist politics...Marxism in the guise of Nationalism.'

What Walker notes, almost in passing, is that people who are overwhelmed by the collapse of established values and hierarchies can turn as easily to authoritarian as to libertarian solutions.

How then to guard against this possibility? We cannot as Walker absurdly suggests rely on the Labourite section of the ruling class. What is needed is a coherent libertarian alternative to fascism. Unfortunately, the useful information Walker has collected is wasted. We await someone to use it constructively.

G.J.



Many of the cartoons on these 2 pages are taken from 'Positive Feedback' available from 21, Nicholas Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxox.

GRUNWICK and the UNIONS

What cannot be doubted is that in the vast majority of modern industrial disputes the union serves only to handicap the workers involved. As soon as most disputes begin there is an instant rush for the conciliation machinery. The trade unions set about reducing the demands of the workers and the management makes a few concessions to get business back to normal. In this situation the Trade Unions can only hinder the struggles of the workers since they believe it necessary to dampen down workers demands in the interests of compromise and to take away workers initiative because they lack the expertise.

I wish to ask who it is who lacks the necessary initiative and experience. Is it the leaders who were happy to negotiate Saltley into a defeat? or is it those actually involved in disputes? The Trade Unions are so concerned with the need for compromise and responsibility that most industrial disputes now take place against active resistance from them. The fact is that at Grunwick the management refused to negotiate in a meaningful way. The unions therefore couldn't adopt their normal role and found themselves involved in an uncomfortable and lengthy battle on the picket lines. Those who see this brief flash of militancy as a normal stance for a trade union will be sadly disappointed when the top Union leaders emerge from Downing Street with the next pay agreement. It may well be the case that in a small nineteenth century dispute like Grunwicks the union can help (as well as hinder). It is however undoubtedly the case that when it comes to negotiating national pay deals the unions help no-one - except that is their leaders and the Government.

A.B.

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU PUKE TIME

"I have never been an emperor, never a king. All I have ever been is a soldier in the great army of labour."

Jack Jones T.G.W.U.



Public transport fares in Glasgow are reckoned to be among the highest in Europe and are certainly the highest in Britain. To travel two miles on a Glasgow bus will cost you 26p, in London a similar journey will cost about 16p. In late March of this year, the Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Executive (GGPTE) announced another increase of 9%. This was coupled with a decisive cutback in the frequency of services - a 5% reduction in the daytime mileage of each bus - and a programme of centralising the garage (depot) system which would gradually lead to a reduction from 8 to 4 garages. Unlike the previous year's increase, put into effect in April 1976, when a small group of libertarians carried out a determined poster and sticker campaign backed up by propaganda of the deed, the main opposition to the '77 increase came from the rank and file bus workers themselves.

The main stimulus of self-activity on the part of the bus crews came from a nucleus of twelve to twenty people at Partick Garage which was threatened with closure. The previous year, Bridgeton Garage in Glasgow's east end had been closed with little opposition but the Partick crews were a lot less compliant. Several months ahead the Partick Garage Action Group carried out a vigorous campaign to persuade other bus workers to back them in their opposition to the Garage closures and fares increases. Liason with the action group had been made by both the libertarian Fair Fares campaign and by the SWP's Rank and File Committee. The former had advocated the 'good work strike' and a refusal to implement the new top fare. The latter was more concerned to channel protest into mass lobbies although they did support the idea of a fares boycott.

The ball was squarely at the bus workers' feet. A month or so previously, as part of the usual strategy to nip protest in the bud and channel it away from anti capitalist struggle, the trade union representatives had organised a demonstration and meeting. This had shown the Partick people and sympathetic bus crews elsewhere that they were going to be on their own and that it was up to themselves to create a favourable situation. This rank and file was sufficiently strong by the time of the fares increase to force the trade union bureaucracy into backing the good work strategy of not collecting the new top fare. No doubt they saw it only as a threat, but the rank and file saw it as a necessary strategy to be carried out.



By this time the trade union bureaucracy had enough leverage to start negotiations with the GGPTE and at the same time undermine any unity existing between various garages. When mass meetings were held to discuss the proposed action two garages voted against it, including Knightswood which had a militant reputation and included several Communist Party members and sympathisers. Divide and rule triumphed again helped by scare tactics by the GGPTE on the 'illegality' of the proposed action.

BURY MY BUS AT GOVAN CROSS

GGPTE PRESS RELEASE

"A commemorative treasure chest is to be buried in the foundations of the new workshop now being built in Govan....among the items....preserved for future generations in a special cask are a complete set of Underground tickets, a conductor's whistle, a set of driver's buttons, a long service medal, coins of the realm dated 1977, copies of the PTE staff newspaper, a copy of the Glasgow Herald and a copy of the Govan Press".....and with them no doubt 307 buses, 300 jobs and Partick Garage....."

The increase came into effect on a Sunday when there are fewer buses and fewer passengers than normal. It is impossible to gauge how widespread the boycott was but it had happened, possibly for the first time in Britain. The GGPTE were frightened and were threatening to discipline anyone found not to be enforcing the new fares. The unions were worried too and after one day the boycott was called off. As one steward put it "We have made our protest. It's up to the public now". An imaginative and highly effective form of struggle had been turned into just another protest.



On the same day the closure of Partick Garage went ahead as planned, the crews started working from another garage. The Action Group had become increasingly isolated and their talk of a workers' cooperative could never be taken seriously. Apart from stickers and wall art the Fair Fares people had done little to assist them. Yet again the trade union leadership, including shop stewards (many of whom are aspiring bureaucrats) had succeeded in diffusing the struggle. The bus workers themselves had failed to generate a form of coordination outside the trade union channels. Workers in garages not threatened with closure had failed to give their support. Links with the public had not been built although one could see that the idea of a fares reduction was a highly popular one. The cynicism and skepticism of working people that they can do it themselves was just as apparent as feelings of knowledgeable militancy.

In contrast the GGPTE was well prepared and various ploys such as the suspension of the 26p fare between 9am and 4pm helped to sidestep the action over fares and cuts in services: action which for once was concerted. Whether Partick is the test case and garage reorganisation back to the situation where bus crews have to travel huge distances to get to their work goes ahead smoothly over the next few years remains a problem, and more imaginative action by the bus crews and passengers could well be on the agenda.

K.M. & P.G.

(Graphics by CLYDESIDE ACTION - many thanks).