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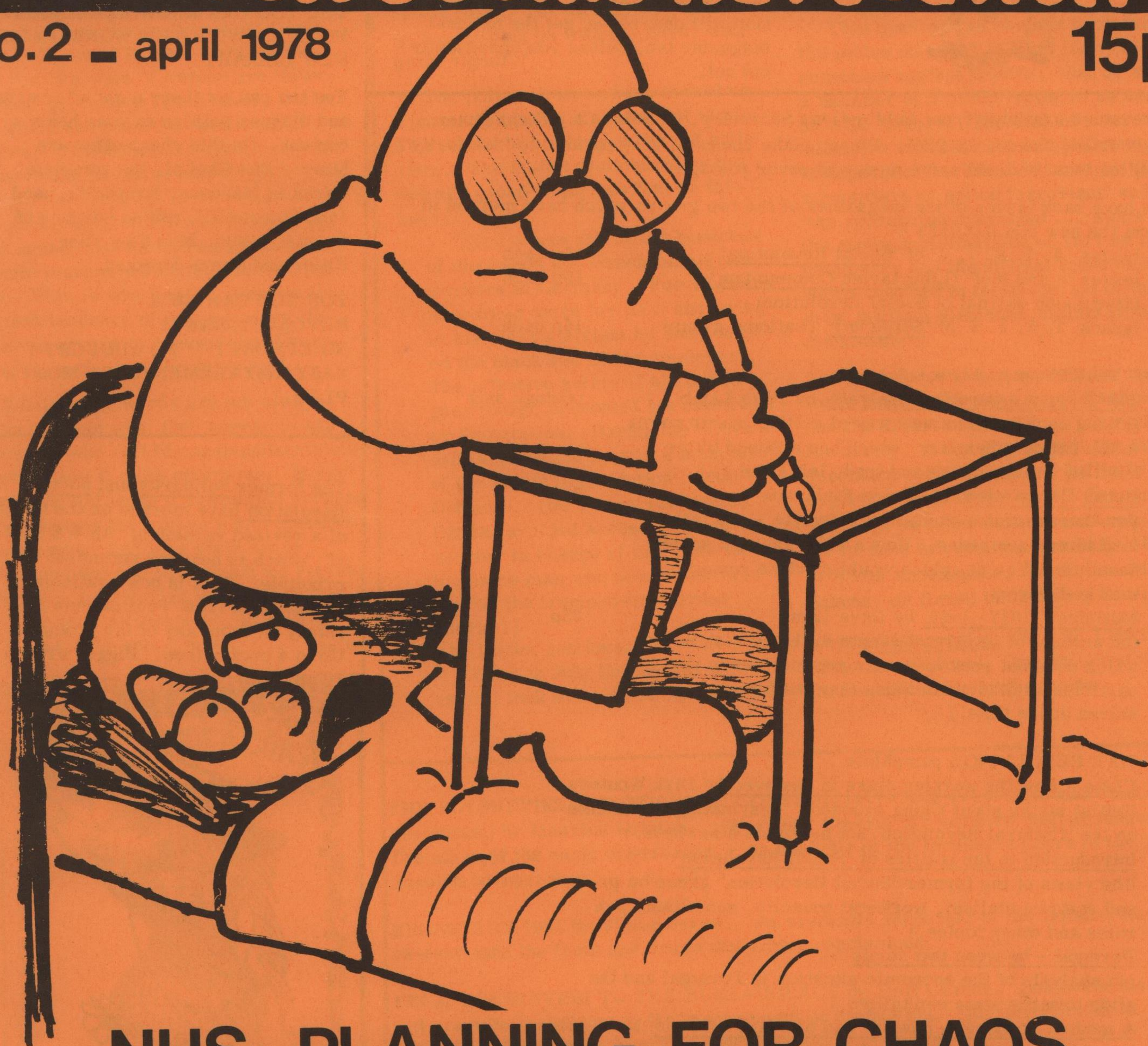
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FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

no.2 - april 1978

15p



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getting in touch

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We want to hear from you. Enquiries, news and views, articles, subscriptions and literature orders. It will help if you write to the people best able to handle your request.

Solidarity for Social Revolution is the magazine of the whole SOLIDARITY organisation. It is produced by local groups in turn. The first issue was produced by the Aberdeen group, this issue by the London group. The next issue will be produced by the Oxford group, to whom material should now be sent. While the contents of Solidarity for Social Revolution generally reflect the politics of the group as a whole, articles signed by individuals don't necessarily represent the views of all members.



We hope you will subscribe by sending your name, address and £2.00 (for £10 we will send you a bundle of 6 copies of each issue) to the Publications Secretary, 23 Solar Ct., Etchingham Park Road, London N3. Make cheques and postal orders payable to 'Solidarity Publications'. You will receive the magazine regularly and any other publications produced nationally up to this value (minus postage).

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SOCIAL REVOLUTION pamphlets

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RUSSIA :

'The worker is the central figure in the political life of Soviet socialist society ...but it is important to emphasise in this connexion that the participation of workers in running the affairs of socialist society does not imply the impending abolition of the government apparatus, but on the contrary, leads to its more effective functioning with the simultaneous use of the creative forces, experience and knowledge of the masses. The control of all the processes of development of socialist society is based on the conscious discipline and organisation of the working people...'

Victor Ezhov, The Working Class in the USSR Today, Moscow, 1976.

We have known for a long time just what is meant by this 'discipline and organisation of the working people'. And we have seen the response of some of the working people in recent weeks: for the first time in 60 years a group of workers in Russia have managed to form an independent trade union. Part of their statement reads:

'We are part of the vast army of the unemployed, thrown out of the gates of Soviet enterprises for attempting to exercise the right to complain, the right to criticise, the right to free speech. We attempted to criticise publicly the plundering of socialist property, bad working conditions, low pay, high injury rates and the raising of production norms leading to waste and low quality production'.

These workers met while waiting in queues to complain to the authorities. From their discussions they realised their problems were not only theirs as individuals but also affected the working class as a whole. They therefore resolved to act collectively.

One of them, Vladimir Klebanov, a miner from the Donbas, became disquieted by the fact that miners had to work 12-hour shifts in order to fulfil the production plan. He was also worried at the high accident rate; in his mine alone a dozen workers were killed and 700 injured every year. When he became a foreman he

refused to demand overtime or let miners work in unsafe conditions. For this he was charged with 'slandering the state' and interned in a psychiatric hospital for 4½ years. For organising the Open Letter and talking to Western journalists he has again been placed in a mental institution. His complaint has been diagnosed as 'a mania for struggling for justice'.

Anatoli Poznyakov, a locksmith, asked for an increase in wages. For appealing against refusal, he was fined. Nadezhda Kurakina worked for 25 years in a restaurant for top Party bureaucrats. Waitresses were often fined for breakages when in fact the crockery had been stolen by management. For complaining about this at a Party meeting in 1975 she was fined and has been out of work since.

lead to the matter being dropped like a hot potato remains to be seen. At the present time the US government is trying to deport a former political prisoner, Pranas Brayniskas, who escaped from the USSR on a hijacked plane.

These events can be seen against the background provided by some recently published material by dissidents. The exile, David Zilberman, in an interesting article in the Autumn 1977 issue of the American magazine Liberation, points out that the intellectual dissidents are 'a narrow and generation limited group' who hardly number more than 800 individuals. Explanations of the small size of this group in terms of fear of persecution, or mass conformism, or Solzhenitsyn's accusations of 'normalised schizophrenia' are seen as mistaken. The dissidence of these people is also seen as qualitatively different from 'the widespread "unofficial" spirit of silent discontent, a typical feature of Soviet life'.

He goes on 'The fact of the permanence of this spirit in Soviet society

A MANIA FOR JUSTICE

These cases and hundreds like them have been coming to light. Apart from the institutionalised contempt for the working class that they demonstrate, it is also now clear, as Amnesty International says, that the political abuse of psychiatry is 'part of the very fabric of official response to difficulty from citizens'. The saga continues in the Western press with appeals to the ILO for support. Whether 'détente' will

is ... much more remarkable than the evanescent dissident activity itself ... mainly it is explained by the traditional popular mistrust of all official forms of state organisation, paradoxically shared even by the officials themselves. Thus a great deal of discontent in the Soviet Union is cultural rather than political in its nature. With such patterns of sentiment prevailing,

Recently, the USSR has adopted a new constitution to replace that of 1936. A group of political prisoners have suggested a new clause be inserted, to read: 'Every employee of the massive apparatus of repression be allowed, unhindered, to seize every Soviet citizen who expresses (even to his wife) his thoughts, writes, reads out loud a poem, or expresses his convictions contradicting a leading editorial in the newspaper Pravda. For all such activities, to be imprisoned and sentenced to 10 years in concentration camps and 5 years' exile in Siberia. Each person so sentenced to be deprived of all his civil rights, to be tortured by all those who contributed toward his conviction and by those who are to carry out the sentence. The convicted to be tortured with hunger, his health undermined by compulsory forced labour, and destroyed spiritually and physically. This is to apply not only to the convicted, but also to members of his family, and to those who show any human feelings towards him.'



RUSSIA

the question of the extensiveness of the current discontent is somewhat pointless since, practically, it is universal. This explains, of course, the large number of "consumers" of the Samizdat literature, and a heightened degree of sensitivity to the appearance of dissidents in Soviet society. It does not explain the paucity of active protesters. Sometimes even KGB officers and top state and Party functionaries enjoyed reading the dissident literature ... In a word the spirit of criticism in Soviet society is actually much greater and conformism less pervasive than in most Western societies, although with no immediate practical consequences for, and connexions with, dissident action. Why so?'

Zilberman answers this question by dividing the dissident movement into two distinct periods - before and after 1968. Before 1968 the demands by dissident intellectuals for a greater curb on the bureaucracy, economic reforms, greater cultural freedom, etc. could be seen as part of the era of Khrushchevite reforms within the system - at least by the dissidents. 'They obviously do not realise that in order to proceed with even such modest reforms as theirs, a radical change of the whole social structure of Soviet society would be required... When the majority of the once liberal and reform-oriented Soviet officials and Party functionaries realised (or rather intuitively felt) that the question was one of deep structural change they simply dropped their projects... The dissidents became isolated. Since then there has been martyr after martyr but their reliance on publicity in the West both reflects their relative weakness and a wider general assumption that their activities just wouldn't get anywhere.

We hope we can draw a revolutionary conclusion from Zilberman's statement that 'Practically no reformist change in Soviet society is possible because there are no significant social and political groups in it who are particularly interested in such reforms'. It is clear that the Russian working class is faced with appalling pressures: the official union structure controlled absolutely by Party and State; political 'reliability' a condition of employment; strikes legally described as sabotage and harshly punished; heavy sanctions against those who leave more than 2 jobs in a year. And of course the

psychiatric hospital waits for those who complain too loudly or too well (see, for example, On the Legal Situation of Workers in the USSR by Valery Chalidze, New York, 1976). The Russian working class clearly has an interest in revolutionary change.

We wish that all the Western Dummkopfs who believe that the Soviet Union is 'basically socialist' could see matters as clearly as the Russian worker, Mikhail Kukobaka, who wrote in 1977:

'One can imagine how, from the point of view of a Soviet propagandist, the famished unemployed from Britain, Canada and particularly the USA, tearing themselves away from the capitalist "hell" where "man is wolf unto man" ... would come to the country of liberated labour, where a socialist paradise exists and "man is friend, brother and comrade to man".

'And finally, inspired by "the immortal ideas of the leader of the

world proletariat" and discovering in practice how "Lenin's dream became reality", strengthened and sun-tanned, with little volumes of Leonid Brezhnev's speeches over their hearts, the former unemployed would return in droves to their countries. In a couple of months they would make a "world revolution" and the "bright future of mankind" would arrive...

'I would not claim that L. Brezhnev might once have dreamed of such an idyllic picture, but if he did, comrade Brezhnev would have woken up in a cold sweat. The proposition alone that the British unemployed might get to know "Soviet reality" on the spot would be enough to evoke nightmarish visions, for then all the years of propaganda, all this carefully created myth of a "socialist paradise", of the exclusiveness of socialism, would burst like a soap bubble'.

T. L. and J. Q.



WOMEN IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION by Liz Willis. New light on some largely ignored areas. 'It cannot be assumed that when historians write about "people" or "workers" they mean women to anything like the same extent as men'. 10p.

PORTUGAL: THE IMPOSSIBLE REVOLUTION? by Phil Mailer. An eye-witness account by a deeply involved spectator. The recuperation of 'popular power' and the drift towards state capitalism. The consequences of the 'putschist' concept of the social revolution. In Portugal the 'revolutionaries' were part of the problem, not part of the solution. Paperback £2.25; hardback, £5.00

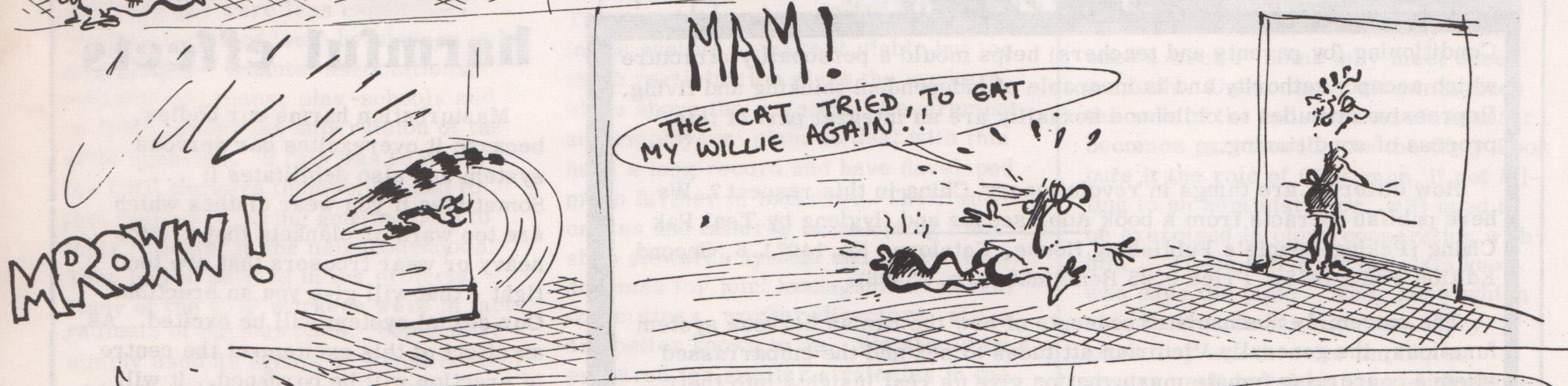
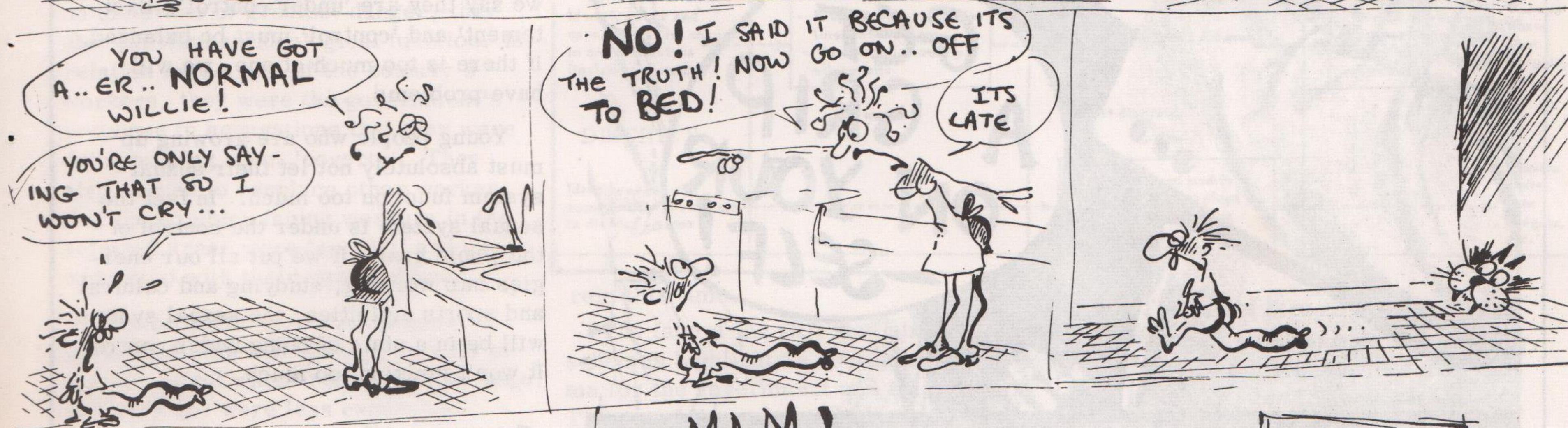
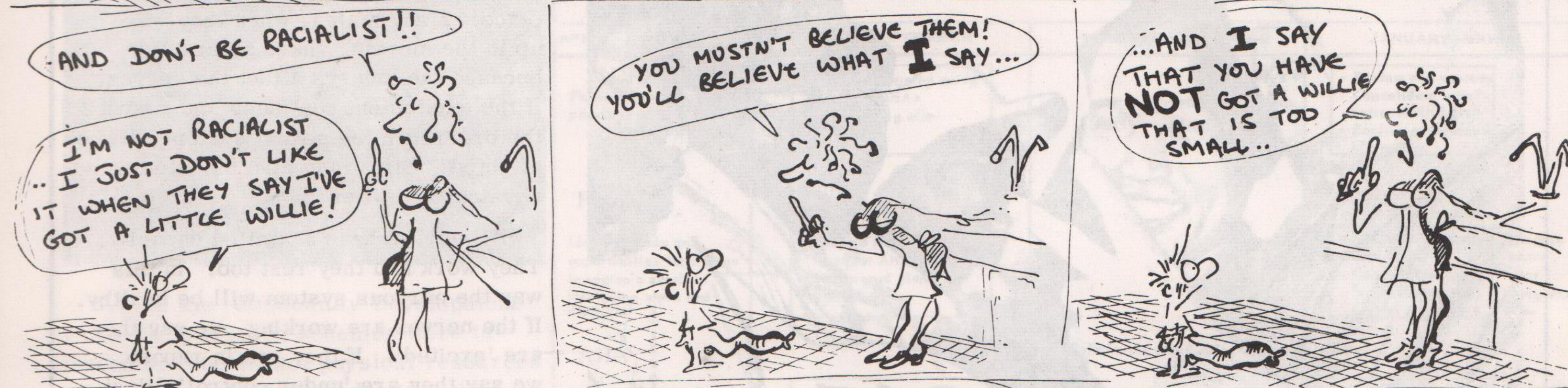
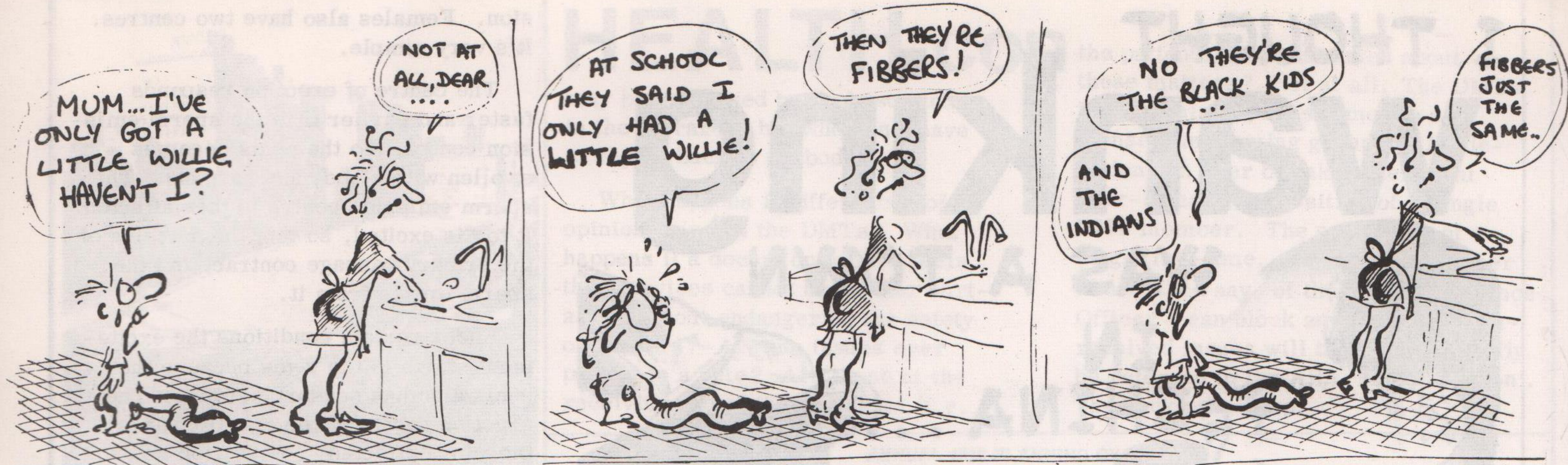
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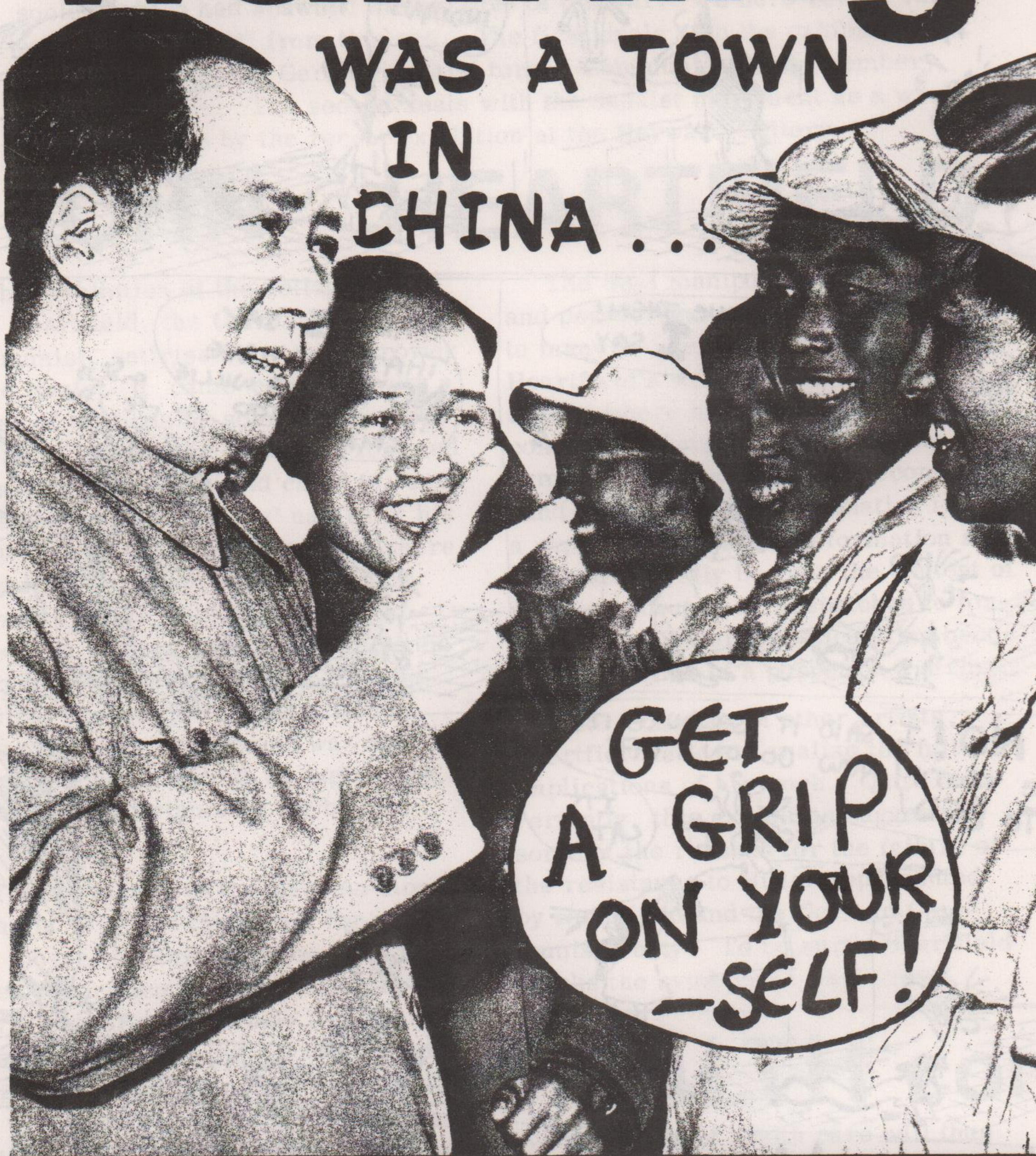
REDEFINING REVOLUTION by Paul Cardan. A new look at contemporary society and at the struggles within it. To remain revolutionaries ... or to remain marxists? 20p.

SPONTANEITY AND ORGANISATION by Murray Bookchin. First published in Liberation and Anarchos magazines in 1972. 'The tragedy of the socialist movement is that it opposes organisation to spontaneity and tries to assimilate the social process to political and organisational instrumentalism'. 10p.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF MARX by John Crump. A joint Solidarity (London) and Social Revolution (London) pamphlet. '...the communist ideology was precisely what Marx himself meant by the term "ideology" - a set of ideas which (even when intrinsically correct) mask rather than reveal the real problem...' 10p.



I THOUGHT wanking WAS A TOWN IN CHINA



Conditioning (by parents and teachers) helps mould a personality structure which accepts authority and is incapable of independent thinking and living. Repressive attitudes to childhood sexuality are an integral part of this process of conditioning.

How different are things in 'revolutionary' China in this respect? We here publish extracts from a book *Adolescence and Hygiene* by Tsai Pak Chung (Peking People's Publishing House, Catalogue No. 14071.6, Second Edition Feb. 1975. Price 0.25 Renminbi. Pp. 93-96).

The extremely mechanistic concepts of how the human nervous system functions, the generally Victorian attitudes to sex and the embarrassed silence concerning female masturbation give us real insights into their thinking.

Masturbation can be done by hand or with other instruments. Both sexes can masturbate, women usually less than men because of physical differences. It is very common in puberty.

How do we define the sexual system?

The sexual organ has many functions. For example sexual activities are controlled by the nerves and by the brain. Sexual intercourse between men and women is normal. Otherwise there are

problems. Masturbation is one of these problems.

How do the nerves and the brain control all these things? They control all these things completely. Inside our brain there is a special administrative office for these things. We call this the 'sexual centre'. When it is affected the excitement will spread and will transmit orders through the spinal cord. This, for males, will have two centres. One of them is the centre of erection. The other is the centre of sperm emis-

sion. Females also have two centres. It's very simple.

The centre of erection responds faster and earlier than the sperm emission centre. So the penis becomes swollen with blood, and hardens. The sperm emission centre is then affected. It too is excited, so that the muscles of the urinary passage contract and the sperm erupts from it.

Under certain conditions the excitement starts in the penis because the penis also has sensory nerves. The erection centre of the spinal cord is therefore affected, so erection takes place. Many males, when they wake up in the morning, have an erection - because the kidneys affect the nerves. If the excitement continues and reaches the brain then the sexual system will be affected. Girls may also have the same physical activities.

All nerves have a limited capacity. They work and they rest too. In this way the nervous system will be healthy. If the nerves are working, we say they are 'excited'. If they are in repose, we say they are 'under control'. 'Excitement' and 'control' must be balanced. If there is too much of one, we will have problems ...

Young people who are growing up must absolutely not let their sexual system function too much. In fact the sexual system is under the control of the whole brain; if we put all our energies into working, studying and cultural and sports activities, the sexual system will be in a state of being under control. It won't function too much.

harmful effects

Masturbation harms our bodies, because it overexcites our nervous system and also debilitates it ... Sometimes if you wear clothes which are too warm or blankets that are too heavy or wear trousers that are too tight - that will give you an erection. Our sexual system will be excited. As an effect of this excitement the centre of erection will be burdened. It will become debilitated, so that when you marry you might be impotent. The centre of erection will also affect the centre of sperm emission, making it function abnormally, so after you marry you might ejaculate too soon.

If a girl does it, her menstruations might be irregular or painful.

Both for men and women, masturbation will affect the brain and will continually extend the excitement. Individuals will think about their sexual needs all the time. This will cause excessive nocturnal emissions. In the daytime the centre of erection will also

be affected and slippery sperm will happen involuntarily (i.e. they will wet their trousers with sperm). Frequent masturbation will put the brain into a condition of high excitement. As a result the brain will get tired and debilitated. People will get nervous depressions and the memory will worsen. They will feel dizzy, will get insomnia, and their work and studies will suffer.

怎么办

(WHAT IS TO BE DONE?)

Masturbation will harm the body and affect your revolutionary will too, so it is necessary to control it. First we have to build the world-view of the proletariat and study hard Marxism-Leninism-Mao tse tung thought. If you have already built the world-view of the proletariat, if you have a correct understanding, you can stop all these bad habits. You can build a basis for your thoughts.

Frequent masturbators should participate in gymnastics. Before you go to bed take an hour or half-an-hour doing long runs. That way you will go to sleep at once. This is very necessary. When you wake up in the morning as soon as your eyes are open, don't stay in bed. Don't think about sleeping any longer. This too is very important. Don't sleep on your side, and don't use a blanket that is too thick or heavy. Don't wear underwear that is too tight. Keep your penis clean. Clean it often with warm water and dry it with a clean towel. Don't use a dirty towel. Clean your foreskin, if it's too long ask a doctor to cut it. Women with menstruations should be clean.

You can cure masturbation or excessive nocturnal emissions, or other problems, with Tai-Chi exercises. With acupuncture you'll also get results.

ARGENTINA

sabotage

Faced with militarist repression and infiltration of unions, workers' resistance is now based on the creativity of each worker in each factory, on anonymous sabotage. Despite penalties of up to 10 years in prison for anyone taking part in a strike (or doing anything to disrupt production) working to rule and various forms of sabotage are replacing strikes as forms of struggle for better pay and as a response to sackings.

In 1976, 225 railway engines were accidentally burned, 109 diesel passenger vehicles and 206 commercial lorries destroyed by workers' 'negligence', 69,092 seats and 145,882 windows destroyed by the public.

With wages frozen, prices rising, strikes forbidden as equivalent to mutiny, and capitalist profits increasing, sabotage is the only effective outlet for a militant working class which dictatorship has not been able to reduce to blind obedience.

In steel works, railways, light and power plants among others, anti-capitalist actions have included go-slows, exploding mixtures, self-loosening screws, cracking paint, occupations when there are sackings, and total strike when the army (tanks and all) goes into the factories. Sit-ins by dozens of workers in the same shop at the same time make nonsense of the ban on strikes.

In November 1977, faced with strikes of railways, urban transport, electricity, communications, and other state industries, the government was forced to concede wage increases of between 40 and 100%.

The Junta's economic policy is unworkable; 'reluctant workers' are sabotaging the dictatorship.

From *Bicicleta*, no.3, Jan. 1978.
Edited and translated by Liz Willis

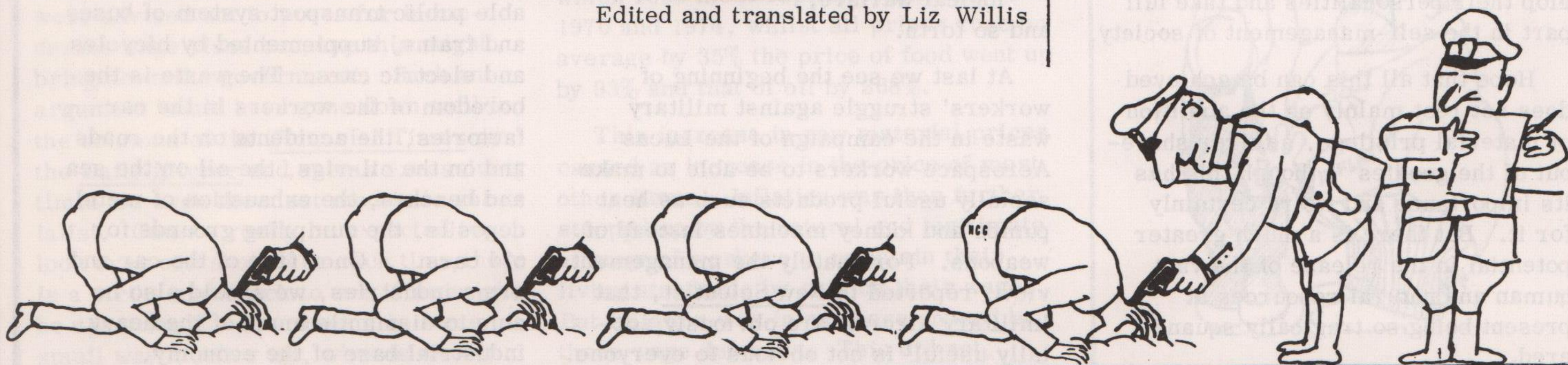
car workers' action

Conflict recently broke out in the Cordoba factory of IKA-Renault (6000 workers) when canteen prices went up. Threats, 'raking' operations to pick out militants, and other sanctions could not contain the workers' resistance. Production, thanks to go-slow and sabotage, was reduced to a minimum. In the testing area, motors crashed. The inside walls were covered in notices calling for struggle and mobilisation on wage demands, against sackings, and for the release of arrested union members and leaders: 'We are hungry'. 'Military murderers out'. 'Resist exploitation by sabotage'.

In the end troops were sent in. This was enough to stop work completely. The lieutenant in command threatened repression; the reply was a chorus of protests and whistles. 'You understand the situation, we are going to throw some of you out', replied the infuriated officer. The majority of the workers (as in Fuenteovejuna) stated: 'There is nothing you can do but put all 6000 of us in prison'.

The lieutenant gave an order to the soldiers. When repression seemed imminent, the workers began to collect hammers, stout steel girders, hatchets ... The troops marched out.

Bicicleta, no.3, Jan.'78, reprinted from *Argentina: genocidio y resistencia*, Cuaderno Aesla 1, Madrid, ZYX, 1977.





WORLD OF WASTE

I remember as a child being confused and outraged by the weird and wasteful way things were arranged. Why this crazy business of fiddling about with money, or this ridiculous idea of having 'countries' with their governments and armies? Wouldn't it make more sense for people just to get together to grow food and make directly for one another what they need? Later I realised that this senseless world did in fact make a perverse kind of sense, at least in terms of the scramble for profit and power. Human happiness does not figure among the motives of those who control our lives.

Libertarian socialists want a world community in which all people will cooperate to fulfil their desires on a basis of freedom and equality. Production and other important collective activities would be under democratic control. Once efforts are directed to humane ends, we think humanity can find the knowledge, creativity and resources to eradicate deprivation and toil, and to salvage the poisoned face of our planet. It will be possible to minimise boring work, while at the same time providing everyone with modern plumbing and the other conveniences of a comfortable life. People would then have the leisure and security to develop their personalities and take full part in the self-management of society.

Hope that all this can be achieved does not rest mainly on the abolition of material privilege, a fairer share-out of the goodies - though this has its importance and we're certainly for it. But there is a much greater potential in the release of the vast human and natural resources at present being so tragically squandered.

rubbish dumps

This waste is of people's time, effort and creative powers; of land, energy and raw materials; of the lives of both human and non-human animals; of the soil and seas, turned into big rubbish dumps. I want to give some idea of the magnitude of the waste by looking at several fields of activity - military, commercial, productive, housework. Although I shall not trace out the full ramifications, each field involves many kinds of waste.

For example, war preparations (in which the space race must be included) - euphemistically called 'defence' - entail, apart from the eventual massive destruction and suffering of war itself, the waste of:

- * the working time of all in the armed forces, military research labs, armament factories, uniform making firms, etc.;
 - * precious reserves of metals, used for tanks, guns, H-bombs, etc.;
 - * scientific knowledge kept under military secrecy;
 - * computing capacity used to guide missiles and satellites;
 - * islands poisoned for ever by experiments in nuclear and bacteriological warfare;
- and so forth.

At last we see the beginning of workers' struggle against military waste in the campaign of the Lucas Aerospace workers to be able to make socially useful products such as heat pumps and kidney machines instead of weapons. Fortunately the management view, reported in *New Scientist*, that 'military aircraft are obviously socially useful' is not obvious to everyone.



Besides the millions of working lives wasted in military activity are the millions wasted in all those unproductive activities which are only necessary in a society of property relationships. Buying and selling, banking, insurance, accounting, law, advertising, taxation, tax evasion, administration of Social Security, protection of property, police, production of ticket machines - the tasks surrounding ownership and money are countless. I estimate from official figures (details on request) that over 35% of the workforce in Britain (over 40% in the USA) are engaged in military, repressive or monetary work. In the Civil Service the proportion exceeds 75%. I do not necessarily imply that the remainder do anything useful!

juggernaut

The private transport complex, based on the hordes of petrol-driven motor cars, includes the oil, car and road-building industries which have great power in the highly industrialised economies. This juggernaut entails enormous waste in comparison with the alternative of a reliable and comfortable public transport system of buses and trains, supplemented by bicycles and electric cars. The waste is the boredom of the workers in the car factories, the accidents on the roads and on the oil-rigs, the oil on the sea and beaches, the exhaustion of metal deposits, the dumping grounds for old cars... Once free of the car and arms industries, we should also be able to dismantle much of the heavy industrial base of the economy.

A particularly revolting form of waste, in a world of malnutrition, is the destruction of food which cannot be sold at profit (see the article 'Grapes of Wrath' in *Social Revolution* 4). For houses are not built to give people somewhere to live, nor food grown so that people can eat. Without the prospect of making money, fruit is left to rot in the orchards, crops are burned in the fields, eggs are smashed, milk fed to pigs or poured down the drain.

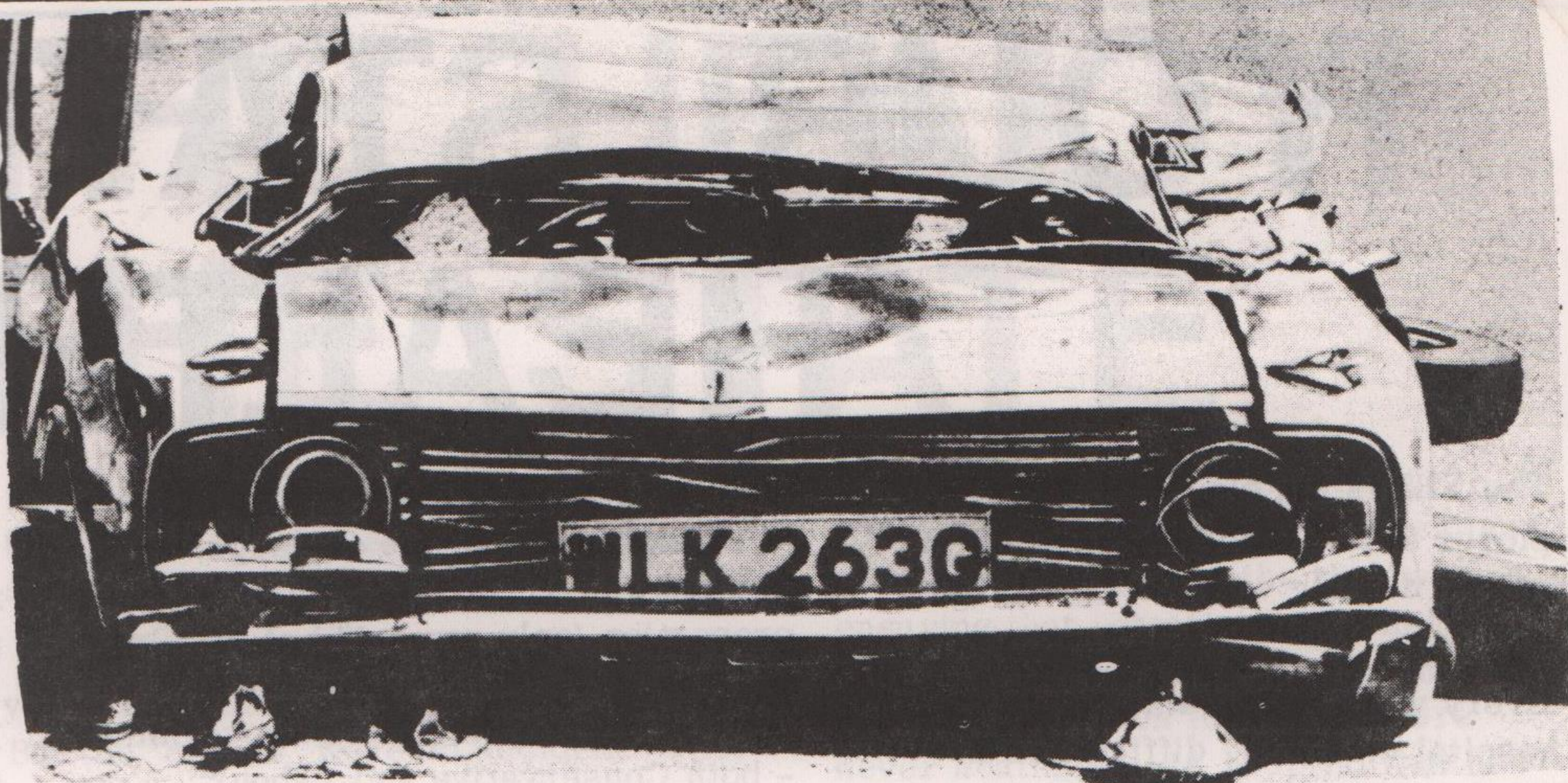
Even when we consider the production of things that seem to be of use, most of the effort and materials expended are sheer waste:

There is the unnecessary packaging, the mountains of non-returnable plastic bottles and aluminium tins.

There is the built-in obsolescence, appliances made deliberately to break down and require rapid replacement, spare parts of course not being available. Stockings that do not ladder, record-player needles and light bulbs that last indefinitely, were invented long ago: the firms selling the junk products own the patents! And I wonder if it is accidental that sandals always break in the same place!

There is the continual wasteful introduction of 'new' models, scarcely different from the old ones, to promote sales. For example, most of the research of the drug companies is futile: 'Important new chemical entities represent only 10 to 20% of all new products introduced each year, and the remainder consist merely of minor modifications or combinations of old products'. (Report of the US Task Force on Prescription Drugs, 1966).

There is the waste of unemployment, of stress-induced mental illness, of avoidable domestic and industrial accidents, the waste of people's creative abilities by authoritarian structures. And the defensive struggles of workers - strikes, sabotage, restrictive practices - also contribute to the waste of human efforts, however necessary they may be in this society.



The last area of waste we consider is housework. Lee Comer, in her book *Wedlocked Women* (Feminist Books, 1974, pp. 261-3), brings home the situation:



end of housework

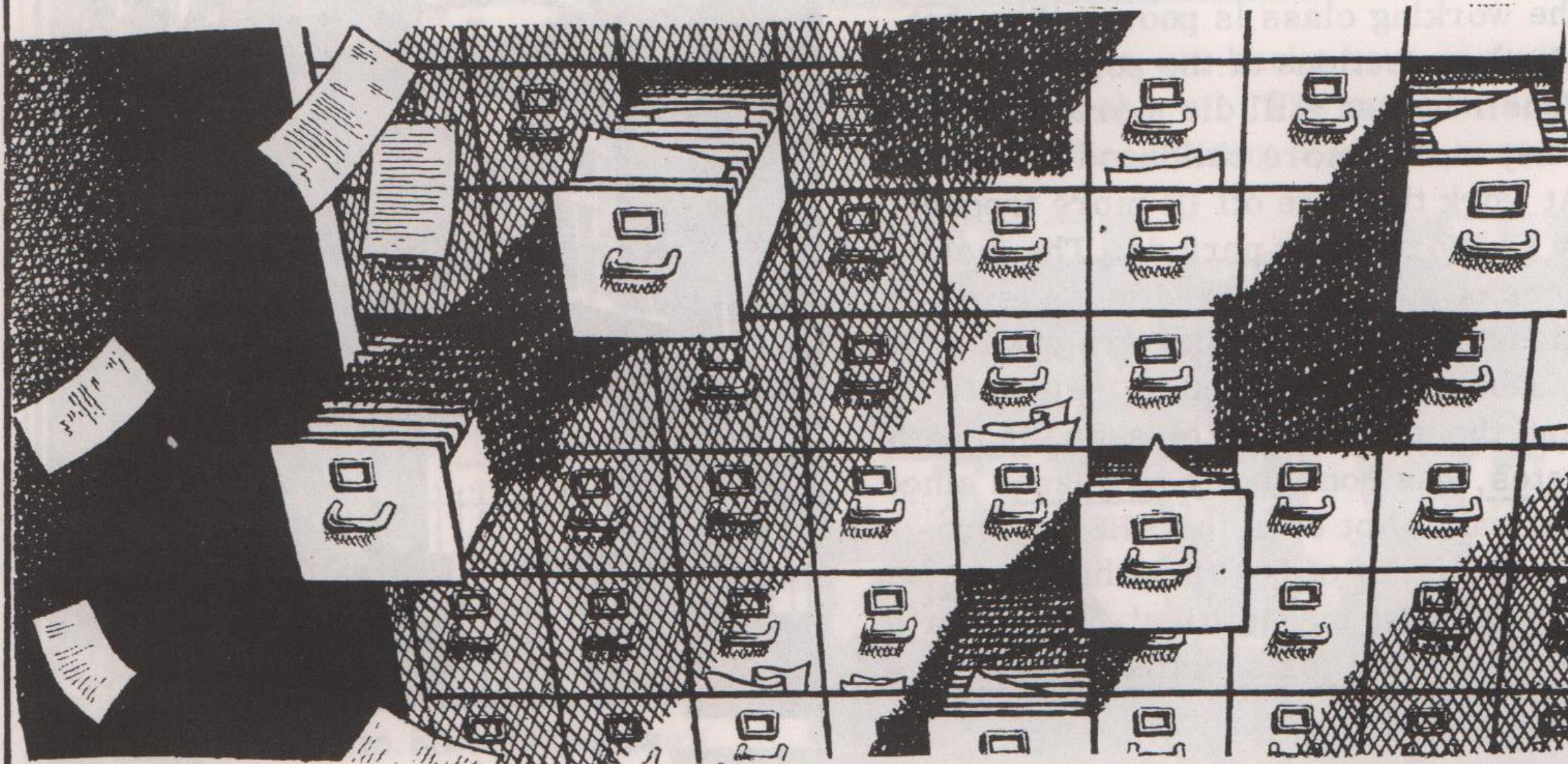
'Look at a tower block of council flats with 80 homes, each one of which has its washing machine, Hoover, television, radio, iron, ironing board, private kitchen with assorted gadgets, etc. Now we have the technology to collectivise and eradicate most of the menial tasks which each woman in each flat performs in isolation from every other. We have the technology for a chute in each flat which would carry everyone's dirty washing to a central automated area in the basement which would wash, dry, air and iron those clothes and return them...

'We also have the technology for automated cleaning. Some far-sighted (but naive) people in America devised a system whereby each home could be equipped with a suction device - not unlike air conditioning - which would suck out dust and dirt automatically, eliminating the need for hoovers, dusters, mops, polishers and the whole ridiculous array of highly priced, but dangerous and ineffective detergents'. (The need for the work to produce them, as well as the need for the work to use them - Stefan). 'The suction device was cheap and very easily built into each home, and yet the plan never got off the drawing board, for there was too much pressure from existing manufacturers, who had their own ideas about the "wonders of technology".'

'... In 1970 a Yorkshire firm of builders discovered a new building material which would revolutionise house construction. Not only was it very cheap, halving the cost of present house construction, but its insulation properties were eight times more effective than any known building material, making central heating unnecessary. When these builders announced their discovery to the trade, they suffered an onslaught of pressure from heating engineers, the Coal Board, building societies, central heating merchants and brick manufacturers - all of whom saw their profits wiped out - and their discovery was suppressed. The company was effectively bought off, and now produces conventional kitchen and bathroom units.

'... We could have community rooms, shared washing and utility rooms, play centres, workshops, moveable walls, community kitchens, restaurants, nurseries, gardens or anything else, but such living arrangements would be anathema to a society which depends, for its life blood, on the small privatised nuclear family'.

Stefan



YOUR STATE OF HEALTH

The NHS is the biggest, sickest employer in the country today, an employer dealing with over a million people.

Every week the media carry reports of hospital closures, difficulties in maintaining standards, long waiting lists, ill-treatment of the mentally ill, of scandals due to inadequate staffing and of rampant dissatisfaction (both among those working for the NHS and among those for whom it was designed). Have you ever tried to 'get through' to your GP, in the course of a 5-minute surgery consultation? Have you ever tried to get minor surgery carried out on a child, in a hospital, on a Sunday afternoon? If you have, you will know exactly what I am talking about.

The NHS crisis is developing against a background where - despite substantial improvements in health standards since 1948 - there are still gross inequalities. These involve both the social distribution of disease (1) and the distribution of facilities for coping with it. A general practitioner has even written of an Inverse Care Law (2) whereby the availability of good medical care tends to vary inversely with the need for it. The cut-backs in the NHS are widely - and rightly perceived - as an attack on the social wage.

Confronted with these truths, the

average radical talks about 'the crisis of capitalism' and 'the onslaught on the working class'. He bemoans the small proportion (only some 5%) of the Gross National Product devoted to health care, and the wrong priorities of governments - both Conservative and Labour.

I don't propose to deal here with this wider perspective - not because it is irrelevant but because I want to focus attention on another aspect of the crisis: the bureaucratisation of the NHS. This is part of a trend which started long before the last few years. Inflation and recession have certainly accelerated the trend. But 'administrative' reflexes and attitudes, widespread on the left, have also reinforced it, thereby creating further problems.

Growth of the Bureaucracy

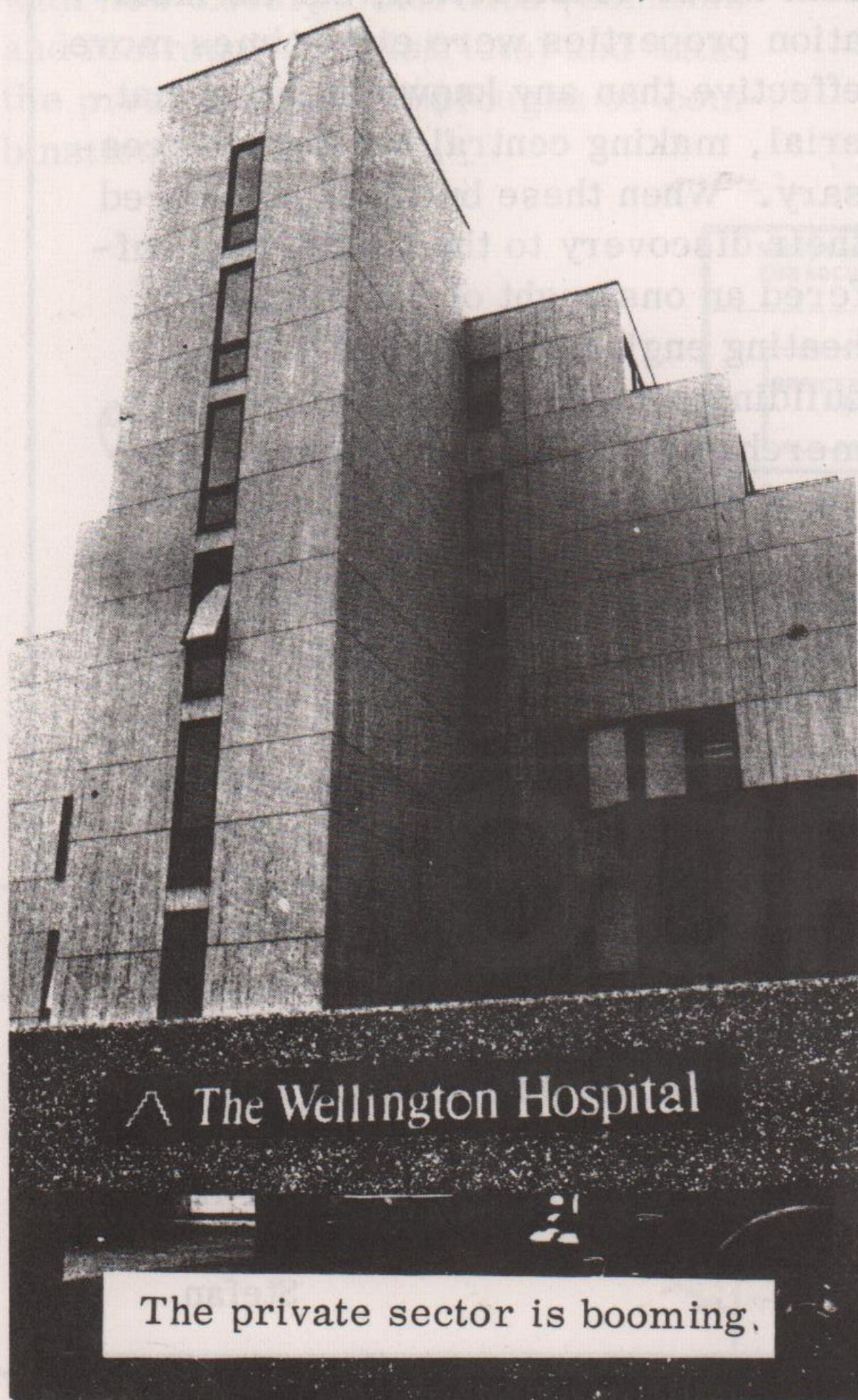
If we think of a bureaucracy as a group of people primarily concerned with 'the direction and management of the work of others' (and with the perpetuation, while at it, of their own privileges), then the NHS has witnessed an undoubted growth of bureaucracy over the last couple of decades. Anyone working in a British hospital - through the 1960's and 1970's - will have seen the remorseless forward creep of areas allocated to administration. Areas devoted to patient care have meanwhile grown little or not at all; sometimes they have actually shrunk.

(1) From birth to death, the health of the working class is poorer than that of other sections of the population. 'Their babies still die more frequently. They suffer more childhood illness. At work they are off ill more frequently and for longer periods. The incidence of severe mental illness is much higher. In old age they are more often disabled or restricted in their activity. And the gap between classes, in death rates, has continually increased since the war. Not even the NHS can provide equality of health within a context of capitalist inequalities'. (NHS: a suitable case for socialist treatment - IMG.)

(2) J. T. Hart, Lancet (1971), I, 405.

New blocks go up, noisily and dustily, near the seriously ill. New Committee rooms are built, where planners plan and administrators administrate. New furniture is ordered and delivered. Men carrying carpets or delivering filing cabinets suddenly appear in cluttered hospital corridors, among the trolleys carrying patients. The alienation due to the growth of specialisation (where doctors in one specialty can hardly understand what those in another are talking about) is now compounded by another alienation, where no one understands what the administrators are talking about. New memos, new regulations, new rules, a new vocabulary. The phones can hardly cope with surging tide of administrative yap. Tempers fray. Patients cannot get through to doctors. Doctors can't get through to the lab, or to other hospitals. Both swear at the telephonists, who return it ... with interest.

In 1964 there were 52,085 doctors and dentists in the NHS. A decade later there were 63,110 (an increase of about 20%). Over the same decade the number of administrators and clerical staff had increased from 48,016 to 79,114 (i.e. by nearly 65%). (Written reply, House of Commons, Oct. 29, 1975.) By 1975 the administrative staff had swollen to 86,707.



△ The Wellington Hospital

The private sector is booming.



while the NHS crumbles

AND THE HEALTH OF THE STATE

The cost of this vast bureaucratic superstructure (and its relation to expenditure on medical care) can be seen in the following figures:

Hospital expenditure (UK) 1974-75

Administration	£ 107 930 991
Medical Care	£ 167 118 413

(Source: Written answer, House of Commons, February 10, 1976.)

In other words, the administration of the NHS consumes nearly 2/3 as much as the provision of medical care.

The basic facts can be put in a different way. A decade ago there was one administrator for every 9.5 hospital beds. Today the figure is one to every 4.8 hospital beds (Evening Standard, Jan. 24, 1977). This is undoubtedly a change in the organic composition of the Health Service. 'Dead labour' in the offices is clearly dominating 'living labour' in the wards.

Unfortunately few on the 'official' left are prepared to campaign on such issues. Their cult of a certain (bourgeois) type of efficiency and their endorsement of hierarchy in so many aspects of their lives - not least in their own organisations - renders them rather impervious to facts of this kind. It was left to rank and file workers at the Westminster Hospital to point out that 'senior management ... are provided with flats and offices furnished with expensive and unnecessary desks and equipment, while the cleaning budgets have been cut, allowing mice and cockroaches into wards and kitchens' (Evening Standard, Jan. 24, 1977)

The Question of Priorities

This is not the place to discuss the growth of social services or of the ideology of 'welfare' in the 20th century. They were the result of a developing awareness among those who ruled society: those who made it function had to be kept in a reasonable state of health.

When Aneurin Bevan spoke of the NHS as inaugurating an era when 'poverty would not be a disability, and wealth not an advantage', he was speaking through his hat. He had himself described politics as 'the language of

priorities'. Those of a social structure that had only been tampered with were soon to assert themselves.

That NHS priorities over the last 30 years have been 'wrong' is certain. But the 'errors' were no accident. They were an essential feature of how bureaucratic societies function. They show the sort of issues such societies can sweep under the carpet, the sort of pressures they respond to, even the nature of their responses. People like health. They get angry when health facilities are cut back. The bureaucrat reasons that people won't miss what they haven't had. The lower limits of expenditure on health are therefore always determined by fears of political backlashes (i.e. lost votes).

Between 1953 and 1973 the annual expenditure on the NHS has only increased, in real terms, by 141%. During this 20 year period government spending on education increased by 274%, and on personal social services

by 506% (World Medicine, Nov. 17, 1976). The NHS bureaucracy realised, at an early date, that the best way of ensuring that potentially expensive 'demand' did not arise was to ensure that the resources to meet it were never available. 'A hospital that has not been built, a bed that has not been put in place, a specialist who has not been trained, a complex piece of equipment that has not been bought, all of these cannot be used. The secret of saving in the Health Service was quickly understood to be the non-provision of resources. Here was the origin of the waiting lists that are so characteristic of the Health Service today'. (ibid) From the government's point of view there was and is no cost attached to the wretchedness and misery of a patient who must wait a month, a year, or several years, to get his 'elective' (i.e. non-urgent) problem handled; the patient's pain, discomfort and mental turmoil do not have to be entered in the books.



Reactions to the cut-backs have included a renewed campaign against private practice (see above). The medical establishment exploits, in the interests of private practice, young doctors' resentment of political manipulation (see below).



HEALTH con. Organising ... for Chaos

In 1968 the Labour Government published a Green Paper on the Reorganisation of the NHS. McKinsey & Co., an American-based firm of management consultant, had offered expensive advice, much of which was accepted. In 1972, after further talks with the select few, the DHSS (now under a Tory administration) published its famous Grey Book (Management Arrangements for the Reorganised Health Service). The pregnancy had been long and difficult: no fewer than 6 members of the Steering Committee producing the document had resigned between Sept. 1971 and June 1972. The opening words were prophetic: 'the way in which the National Health Service is organised, and the processes used in directing resources, can help or hinder the people who play the primary part'. In 1974 the Act became law. The hindrance really got going.

It is said that a camel is a mammal designed by a committee. The main principles of the new Act could only have been conceived by a Committee of bureaucrats, sitting in an office. There would be 'three levels of statutory authority: Area Health Authorities (AHAs) accountable to Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) accountable to the Secretary of State. Authority would flow downwards, accountability upwards. This was stated in so many words. To make things nice and tidy the AHAs were to be co-determinous geographically with new Local Authorities (Counties and Metropolitan Districts) and with the present London Boroughs or combinations of boroughs.

It was conceded that the odd problem might arise. 'For example, although Henley-on-Thames will be in the Oxfordshire Area over 90% of Henley residents requiring in-patient treatment will receive it in Reading, which is in the Berkshire area'. The 'overlap' problem would, it was admitted, arise 'in many places'. But who cared? A whole new group of office staff would be devoted to 'defining District boundaries'. The basic operational unit of the new Scheme had to be the 'District' - defined as a population (usually about 200,000 - 300,000 people) supported by the specialist services of a District General Hospital. And that was that!

The Scheme sought to ensure the participation of those concerned 'as a systematic part of the service'. The participation (its limits clearly defined) was imposed from above. There was precious little discussion among working nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, radiographers, laboratory technicians and all the others involved in the functioning of a modern hospital.

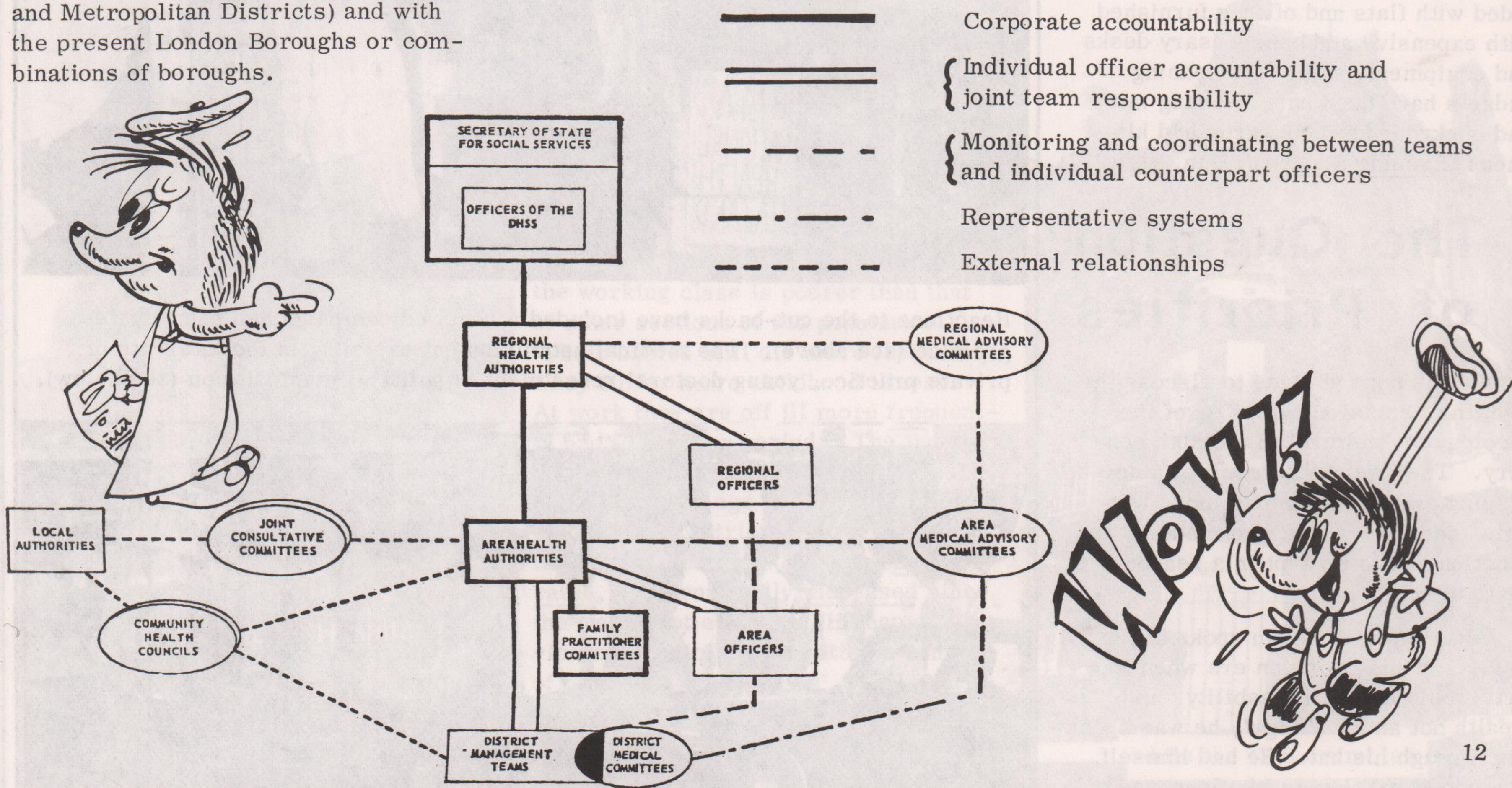
Great emphasis was placed on 'integration (with other social services) at District level'. This was to be carried out by District Management Teams (DMTs) whose members 'would be responsible for managing and co-ordinating most of the operational services of the NHS'. The 'operational services of the NHS' didn't just mean seeing to dirty corridors, broken windows, unremoved garbage and peeling wallpaper. It meant decisions such as the freezing of vacant posts (increasing the work load on those remaining), the shutting down of conva-

lescent homes (which means patients being discharged before they are really fit), of casualty departments or of whole wards (which slows down admissions and increases waiting lists). It means the curtailing of training programmes for nurses and the constant pushing around (in attempts at rationalisation) of all domestic and ancillary staff. It is at the level of DMT decisions that the average person comes up most sharply against the crisis in the Health Service.

Who then sits on these DMTs? The DMTs consist of six members. Two are elected, four appointed. The elected members come from the most privileged (i.e. from the medical) constituencies. Each District Medical Committee is entitled to elect its Chairman and Vice Chairman to the local DMT. One of these worthies is a consultant, the other a general practitioner. But democracy must not go too far. 'As full members of the DMT they (the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the local DMC) will act as representatives, not delegates, of their medical colleagues'.

As far as the other members of the DMT are concerned there is not even a pretence of democracy. They are not elected. Their relationship to the DMT, as the Grey Book delicately put it, is a 'managerial one'. Who are these people? They are the District Community Physician, the District Nursing Officer, the District Finance Officer and the District Administrator. These are all full-time posts, tenable indefinitely. They are usually held by people with little contact with the local community, who

continued p. 15



LETTERS

first the good news

Comrades,

...Good idea to combine with Social Revolution. One less magazine to buy! First issue was very good.

Richard A.

and then...

Sorry, but I don't like the merger. Nor do I like the new style magazine. Although on paper nothing seems to have changed, the underlying trend seems to be towards just the kind of organisation and politics I have sought to escape, and that was current in anarchist circles some four or five years ago. Please cancel subscription forthwith.

Martin B.

LETTERS

In the last issue there was a letter from John Cowan in which he stated that he 'did not see the (firemen's) strike as a struggle which a socialist organisation should have supported'. He argued a) that the firemen's 30% wage claim would have wrecked the government's Income Policy; b) that the social democratic system of government was unlikely to survive uncontrolled inflation; c) that the collapse of the present social system would lead to the establishment of an authoritarian state, and d) that any attempt to break the government's Income Policy would therefore be highly dangerous and shouldn't be encouraged.

I strongly disagree with the whole tone of the letter. In it the firemen were advised not to press for moderate wage rises because this might bring down the government. Such an argument would have gone down well in the columns of the Financial Times or the Daily Mirror and seems excessively timid for even the most moderate socialist. Can we really be expected to look over our shoulders each time there is a strike and check to see if we might be upsetting the government in some small way? After all, what is wrong

with bringing down the Labour Government? It's never done anything for us.

What I find particularly objectionable about John's letter is that he seems to take it for granted that excessive wage rises are the cause of inflation. Wage rises may play a part in bringing about inflation. But they are not, in my opinion, the major cause of price rises. Consider for instance the rapid inflation of the German mark during and after the First World War:

1914: 20 marks = £1

1923: 16,000,000,000,000 marks = £1

The causes of this rapid inflation were complex but a central cause was the deliberate printing of large numbers of marks by the German Government with the aim of easing reparation payments. No doubt John would have advised the workers of Germany not to push for wage rises during this inflation because of the fragility of their government.

Prices can and do rise as a result of a number of factors such as increased costs of raw materials (e.g. oil); falls in the value of the £1; wage rises which are not clawed back by increasing productivity; and excessive printing of new money by various governments.

To blame price rises primarily on wage rises is to ignore the fact that inflation only became a serious problem in the 1970's when a shortage of raw materials (particularly oil) enabled producers to put up prices consistently. In the 1960's prices rarely rose at more than 4% per year and inflation was not a serious problem in Britain. In fact, from 1963 to 1970 prices rose by only 35% - wages by 54%. In the 70's, however, the situation changed and it was the prices of food and raw materials which rose most rapidly of all. Between 1970 and 1974, whilst all prices rose on average by 35% the price of food went up by 93% and that of oil by 368%.

This increase in raw material prices caused an increase in the price of most other items. Inflation was then further stepped up by the natural and legitimate attempt of workers to maintain their living standards by raising their wages. But inflation was in no sense caused by these wage demands. This did not,

however, prevent the government (no doubt cheered on from the sidelines by John Cowan) from trying to cure inflation by curbing wage rises.

The government's policy has had a noticeable impact on the rate of inflation but this was only to be expected. Since wages do play a part in the inflationary spiral it stands to reason that if you hold wages down you can reduce the rate of inflation. But you can do so only at the cost of a reduction of real living standards. Whilst you hold wages steady the prices of raw materials, and consequently of most things we buy, will continue to rise.

The result of the social contract has been precisely this. From October 1976 to October 1977 wages rose by 8.8% in Britain, whilst prices rose by 14.1%. This represented a substantial reduction in our living standards.

Can John Cowan seriously expect any section of workers to accept cuts in their living standard of this order simply because a wage rise might somehow usher in an authoritarian government? If he does then he should join the Conservative Party and be done with it.

The firemen were not a special case. They had been conned like many others by talk of social contracts and the need to make sacrifices. When they struck back they both needed and deserved our help and encouragement instead of warnings from timid 'socialists' about the fragile nature of democracy in Britain.

Andy Brown

LETTERS

The figures in this article were obtained from very basic Western economic textbooks. See G.F. Stanlake, Introductory Economics (London, 1971), p.250; P. Donaldson, Illustrated Economics (London, 1975), p.13 and p.30.



GILDING THE GHETTO



The 'Urban Crisis' is again the focus of attention in the media following speeches by Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Environment and his colleagues on the 'opposition' benches. It is presented as a new and urgent problem and yet ever since the industrial revolution the city has been in crisis.

Peter Shore proposes a 'top level ministerial committee' to establish a whole new policy for the cities. One wonders what became of all the various enquiries and experiments which the government carried out in the late 60's and early 70's following a similar hue and cry about the poverty of inner-city life. These experiments followed a series of reports which looked into specific 'problem' areas: London's housing (Milner-Holland), children and young persons (Ingleby), primary education (Plowden), personal social services (Seeborn) and others. Their conclusions were very similar:

'Some of these neighbourhoods have for generations been starved of new schools, new houses and new investment of every kind. Everyone knows this; but for year after year priority has been given to the New Towns and New Suburbs...'

The Plowden Report, 1966.

'We are convinced that designated areas of social need should receive extra resources, comprehensively planned...'

The Seeborn Report, 1968.

Thus followed the 'Urban Aid' program, 'Educational Priority Areas', 'Community Development Projects', and so forth.

the homeless office

Although different government departments played a part in these and other projects, it was the Home Office, significantly, which was to play the dominant role.

In terms of combatting 'urban deprivation' and the poverty of workers living in the inner-city areas these schemes have been one big flop. Take Merseyside as an example. In 1968 when the poverty initiative came to town, 25,000 people were registered as out of work. Four years later their numbers had more than doubled with 52,000 people unemployed. Today,

85,000 men and women (11.3% of Merseyside's population) are out of work. Even these telling city-wide figures cover up the real story of the inner-city areas. There the predicament of would-be workers is even worse with up to 20% unemployed (up to 30% among younger people). Since 1969 Liverpool has built no new nursery schools. Between 1972 and 1975 new council house completions fell from 2,500 p.a. to 1845 p.a. Improvement grants allocated fell from 9,800 p.a. to 2,280 p.a. and so on.

Nationally the situation is of course a little better. This is partly because, although the original idea was for the 'designated areas' to get extra resources, in practice they were used as experiments in re-allocating existing (or, in real terms, less) resources to get a better return. The government certainly never intended to keep pouring money into the 'bottomless pit' of the 'designated areas' as they were described.

urban crisis

The problems of the inner-city areas - poverty, bad housing, poor schools, lack of social facilities, etc. - are perceived differently by the workers who suffer them and by the politicians, state bureaucrats and employers who tell us they can solve them. These problems are important for them, mainly to the extent they are likely to prompt workers into uncontrollable acts of revenge, destruction of private property, disruption of production or subversive politics. This is how it is explained by David Eversley in 'Urban Problems in Britain Today' (1972):

'There is now a large group of people whose incomes are not sufficient to maintain life without substantial special help. These people depend on means-tested benefits of one kind or another ... ever increasing tracts of our older cities could be inhabited by such people ... But if

we do allow such a new urban underclass to emerge the consequences will be severe. There could be a permanent housing problem, nomadism, an unstable family life. There could be increased tension, especially on an ethnic basis'.

concern from the gentry

The signs were there in the cities of the USA and, closer to home, in the Notting Hill race riots and in the growing tension in Northern Ireland. The attitude of the government as formulated by a Robert Carr or a James Callaghan wasn't really so different in principle from that of the government in the 1880's, as expressed by Sir John Gorst:

'Modern civilisation has crowded the destitute classes together in the cities making their existence thereby more conspicuous and more dangerous. These already form a substantial part of the population, and possess even now, though they are still ignorant of their full power, great political importance... Almost every winter in London there is a panic lest the condition of the poor should become intolerable. The richer classes awake for a moment from their apathy, and salve their consciences by a subscription of money... The annual alarm may some day prove a reality, and the destitute classes may swell to such a proportion as to render continuance of our present social order impossible'.

police in denim

Today the problem of keeping poverty within bounds and maintaining social control is tackled directly by the state, not just with the police force, but with a whole range of state 'welfare' agencies. The inner-city areas have however stretched the capabilities of these agencies to their limits.

HEALTH con

may be criticised by their superiors in the hierarchy but who don't have to report back to anybody.

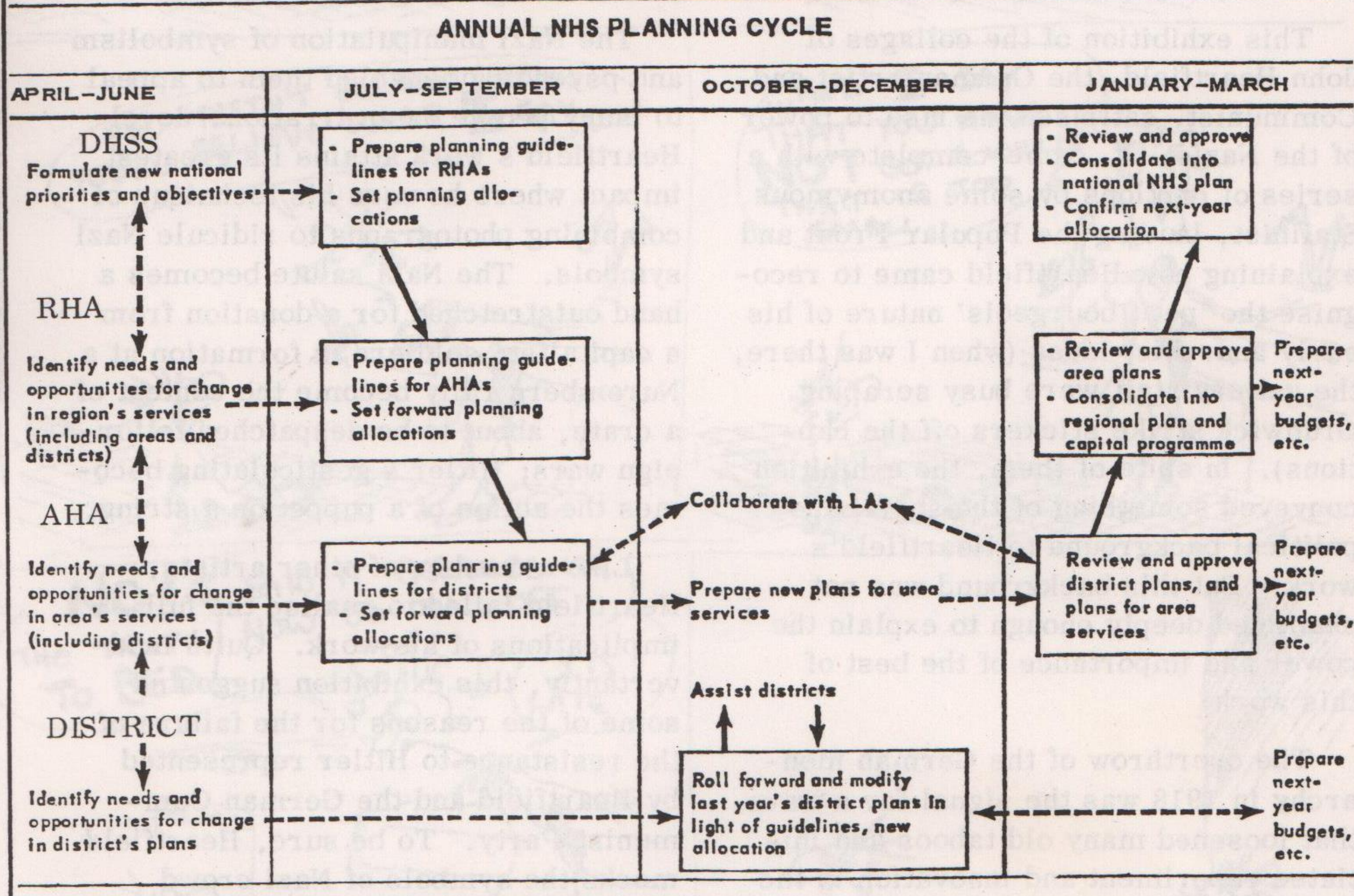
What happens if differences of opinion arise on the DMTs? What happens if a doctor on a DMT feels that services cannot be further curtailed without endangering the safety of patients? Are the issues ever pushed to a vote? Are those at the receiving end of the decisions (i.e.

the patients) ever informed about these matters? Not at all. The DMTs it is stipulated, must function as 'consensus forming groups'. No decision can ever be taken there that over-rides the opposition of a single DMT member. The opposition of a single full-time, non-elected member of a DMT - say, of the District Finance Officer - can block any decision. Unresolved issues will then automatically be referred to the AHA 'for resolution'. The buck passes up.



Whilst the 'Community Development Projects' and other schemes were intended to concentrate physical resources on the areas of greatest danger, they also fulfilled an ideological function. In relation to the rest of the country's workers, they were the government's response to accusations that they were doing nothing about 'poverty'. They also served to convince other workers that the troubles facing workers in the selected areas were 'special' and unconnected with their own problems.

The projects were also genuine experiments aimed at finding methods of social control which relied less on state agencies and were less expensive. Various forms of 'self-help' were to be encouraged - tenants' associations, community groups, play-schools and so forth, under the supervision of the state agencies. If this was to work, the CDP workers themselves had to feel they were giving genuine help to their 'clients' in the neighbourhoods. They had to believe in the projects. Many of the CDP workers were in fact radicals of various hues. Some were simply used as agents of social control without really realising it. Others, however, went beyond their allocated role and actually promoted radical organised opposition to establishment organisation and policies. These people have got together to write a particularly good pamphlet (*Gilding the Ghetto* - The State and the Poverty Experiments. CDP pamphlet, 60p). Inevitably the more radicalised CDP workers became, the less enthusiastic their employers in central and local government became about them. Eventually a lot of the schemes were abandoned. Perhaps now Peter Shore & Co. are going to have another go. You can be sure they will keep a tighter



rein this time.

The fate of the CDP and similar schemes highlights a continuing dilemma for the government and employers. They need the participation of workers in the system to make it viable but too much participation gives the workers ideas above their station. Government and employers' plans to deal with this have a long record and have developed much further in industry. Their successes and failures in co-opting the shop stewards system and the various schemes for joint management-worker committees, worker-directors, etc., are better known to us. We should be prepared for similar strategies in the community.

Mike Ballard.

See also: 'Housing Cuts - What are we Defending?' in *Social Revolution* no. 4.

Urban Devastation - the planning of incarceration'. *Solidarity* pamphlet reviewed in SR no. 5.

'The Urban Crisis as an Arena for Class Mobilisation' in *Radical America* Jan-Feb. 1977.

'The Local State-Management of Cities and People' by Cynthia Cockburn, Pluto Press, £2.95.

The whole structure is firmly in the hands of a permanent bureaucracy. The elected representatives are just the gilt. The DMT, it is stipulated, need meet 'no more frequently than once a week'. Some only meet once a month. Under these circumstances the role of the full-time administrator becomes paramount. As the Grey Book puts it the role of Chairman 'if not falling to an administrator, will need to be exercised in close cooperation with him'. These full-time officials know who pays the piper. They know which side their bread is buttered. They know they are there to implement government decisions, not to challenge them. They ensure that economies never start with the administration itself. In the upper echelons of the hierarchy they are past masters at 'losing' a request or a decision. Meanwhile, at DMT level - and even more in hospital wards or corridors - the issues have become stale, or have suppurated. Those concerned may have left in disgust.

The thinking behind the 'reorganisation' is bureaucratic through and through. According to the Grey Book the non-medical members of the DMTs 'can suitably be organised in managerial hierarchies and the effect-

reviews

During and after World War I a number of 'artists' virulently attacked the society which had spawned the horrors of the war. We here review two exhibitions of 'art' from this era. The first deals with the exhibition last year of work by the German dadaist turned Communist Party member, John Heartfield. The second deals with the dadaist movement as a whole, as represented by the recent exhibition at the Hayward Gallery.

JOHN HEARTFIELD

This exhibition of the collages of John Heartfield, the German artist and Communist, satirised the rise to power of the Nazis. It came complete with a series of captions by some anonymous Stalinist, lauding the Popular Front and explaining how Heartfield came to recognise the 'petit bourgeois' nature of his early anarchist ideas (when I was there, the gallery staff were busy scraping Grunwick strike stickers off the captions). In spite of them, the exhibition conveyed something of the social and political background to Heartfield's work. But this background was not examined deeply enough to explain the power and importance of the best of this work.

The overthrow of the German monarchy in 1918 was the signal for a wave that loosened many old taboos and initiated experiment and innovation in the arts. But for many people little had changed. Although the Kaiser had gone, the generals and financiers remained, and with them the whole authoritarian structure of everyday life with its discipline in schools, factories, offices and families. The Nazis easily capitalised on this situation. To those whose upbringing and everyday life had left unprepared for (and indeed frightened of) their new-found freedom, the Nazis offered a society in which they would once again have a strong leader to dominate them, and a secure place in a hierarchy. The apparently irrational features of Nazism, such as its grandiose rituals, were in fact deliberately and knowingly planned. Hitler once described the purpose of his mass rallies as having to 'burn into the average man the idea that, though he is a little worm, he is part of a great dragon'. Our contemporary would-be Hitlers understand this well. John Tyndall of the National Front has said: 'I believe most people are won to our movement by a deep personal compulsion to be involved in our work. This may be influenced by duty or self-interest, but is mainly stimulated by some mystical emotive power within us, which compels allegiance by an appeal to forces within the human character which defy rational analysis'.

The Nazi manipulation of symbolism and psychology enabled them to appeal to many people on an irrational level. Heartfield's work attains its greatest impact where he uses his technique of combining photographs to ridicule Nazi symbols. The Nazi salute becomes a hand outstretched for a donation from a capitalist; soldiers in formation at a Nuremberg rally become the content of a crate, about to be despatched to foreign wars; Hitler's gesticulating becomes the action of a puppet on a string.

Like a number of other artists, Heartfield failed to realise the full implications of his work. Quite inadvertently, this exhibition suggested some of the reasons for the failure of the resistance to Hitler represented by Heartfield and the German Communist Party. To be sure, Heartfield mocks the symbols of Nazi crowd

manipulation and irrationality. But (when, for instance, he makes propaganda for the Popular Front) he uses almost identical symbols: massed crowds, raised fists and rifles, fresh-faced blond workers (nearly all male). Furthermore, in spite of the insights into Nazism his work suggests, Heartfield follows the CP line of seeing Nazism as simply the puppet of high finance.

Wilhelm Reich was meanwhile arguing with the German CP that if the left was meaningfully to oppose Hitler it must offer a total critique of the everyday experience of work, school, family and sexual life: experiences that together were creating a personality structure amenable to Nazi propaganda. The CP expelled Reich. The CP line, as conveyed by Heartfield, nowhere attacks such aspects of Nazism as its attempts to restrict the newly-found and still only partial emancipation of German women, or the anti-Semitic campaign, with all its sadism and repressed sexual fantasy.

Among the background material in this exhibition were some of the drawings and paintings of Heartfield's friend, Georg Grosz. They fiercely depict the ugliness and hopelessness of everyday life in pre-Hitler Germany and are an eloquent testimony to what is missing from Heartfield's work.

Roger S.

HEALTH con

ive provision of health care will thus depend to a considerable extent on the effectiveness of many thousands of managers'. Incidentally the minutes of DMT meetings are secret. There can be few other instances where an overwhelmingly non-elected body has such power and need give so little account of how it uses it.

The provisions of the Act have now been in operation for nearly 4 years. They seek to define not only the functions of the DMTs but also, in ridiculous detail, those of the RHAs and AHAs. Every conceivable relationship between these bodies, and between these bodies and the outside world, is envisaged, discussed, blue-printed - in the abstract. So abstract are some of the discussions that ridiculous (and often mutually incompatible) recommendations are made: for instance to 'increase throughput' in the wards - while cutting down on the number of radiologists or laboratory technicians necessary to ensure any 'throughput' at all! No one really understands how it works. No one really knows how or where decisions are taken, sometimes not even

the Administration itself. Recruiting a new typist becomes a major procedure.

Everybody's work is scrutinised from above, below and sideways: from ambulance drivers to laundry workers, from medical records officers to catering staff. Space prevents me from going deeper into all this here. Suffice it to say that dissatisfaction is widespread. Not only with salary structures, but with the strains and frustrations created by the incredible inefficiencies of the system. Seeking to organise everything and everybody from the outside, the system generates a colossal 'couldn't care less' attitude. People withdraw. And the chaos deepens.

This is the bedlam that is now the NHS. The structures and mechanisms have been endorsed by the politicians of both parties. No wonder that the firm of McKinsey & Co. have had to be called in again - at the cost of further millions - to offer further advice. In their submission to the Royal Commission on the NHS, McKinsey & Co. now describe the 1974 'reorganisation' as 'bureaucratic, overelaborate and cumbersome'. They should know. They played the key role in setting it up!

M.B.

DADA

The dada movement had only one unifying strand: the desire to attack and shock the existing society. In this it undoubtedly succeeded.

The fundamental attack they launched was on the very idea that there could be such a thing as art in a crude world. One dadaist, Marcel Duchamp, chose an ordinary bottle-rack and without altering it in any way declared it to be an artistic work. His purpose was to remove the mystique of art, to take away its charisma and leave it on a par with mass-produced objects.

A similar attack was launched on the written arts. As an assault on comfortable poetry, Tristan Tzara resorted to constructing poems on the basis of pure chance. To make a poem he simply selected a newspaper article, cut out each word, and then picked up the words at random. The result was of course gibberish, but the idea was to discredit art not to supplement it.

The dadaists also launched an attack on the idea of the permanence of a work of art. They were often quite content to smash their work before the eyes of the audience - or to set it on fire if it added to the outrage which the work created.

Their efforts were not, however, restricted to a critique of art. Some dadaists attacked other aspects of their society, particularly sexual attitudes. In the paintings of Francis Picabia, for instance, there is a very direct portrayal of sex and love as a purely mechanical operation. His painting 'Parade amoureuse' is of pistons, pendulums and wheels, not of men and women. It is the painting of someone alienated from love itself, and hence alienated from one of the major ideals of our society.

Yet despite the strength of its attack on existing art and society, the dadaist movement was very quick to disintegrate. It was a movement which was anarchistic in the sense that governments use the word. Anarchistic in that it was wild and almost directionless. Anarchistic in that anything went. Anarchistic in that it was beyond the control of the participants themselves.

It was this that gave it its strength as well as its weaknesses. Such a movement produced an exceptionally free atmosphere in which painters and poets could produce highly adventurous work. It was this sense of adventure that gave the recent exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London its atmo-

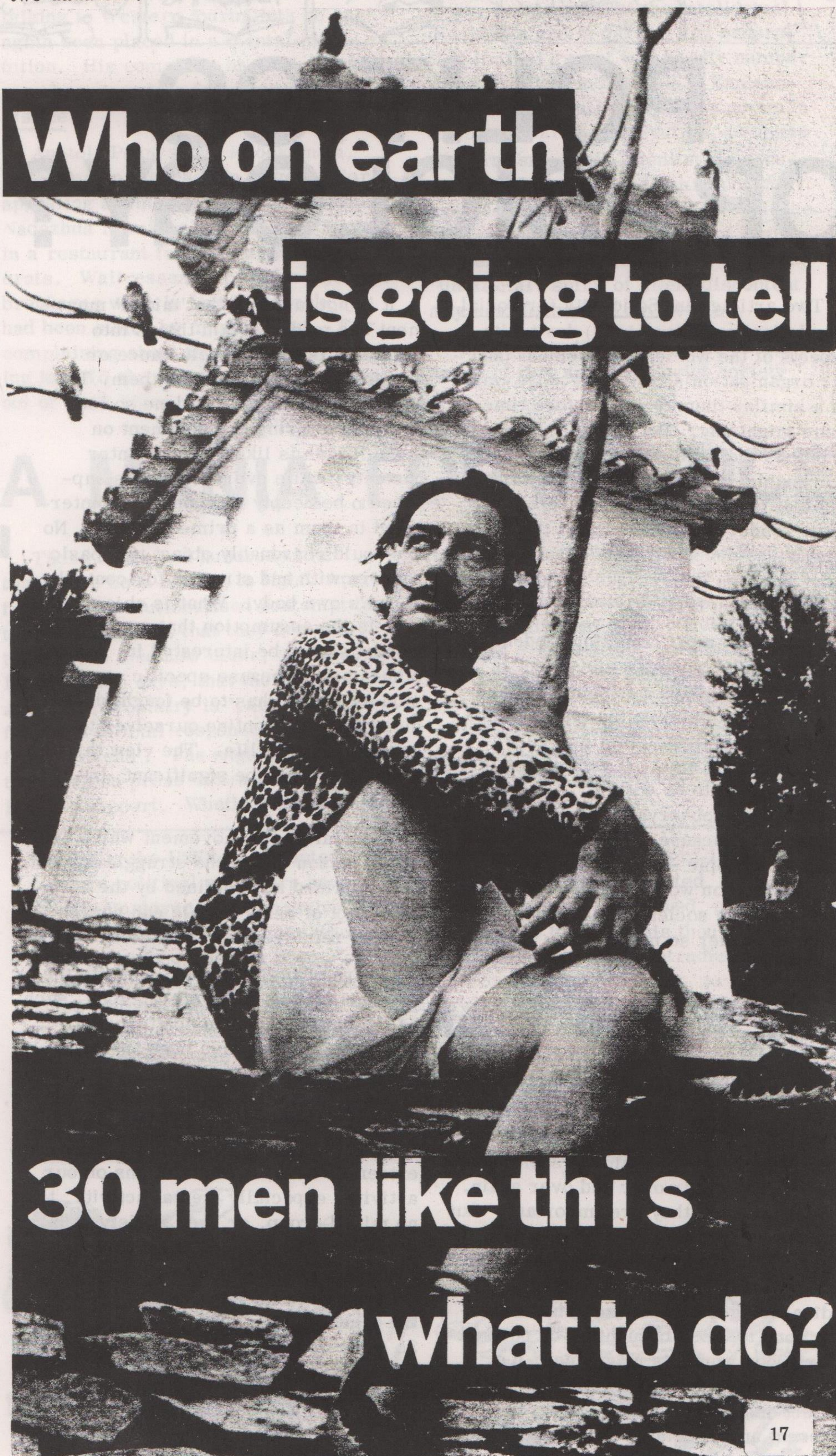
sphere of excitement. But euphoria is difficult to sustain... especially when it has a nihilistic edge to it. The dadaists had launched an attack on the whole of life, yet they rarely talked of creating a new life. Consequently, their attack was as powerless as that of the punks. When you don't know what you want it is difficult to launch an effective challenge or even to survive. This was well illustrated by a conversation between Breton and Rigaut, two dadaists:

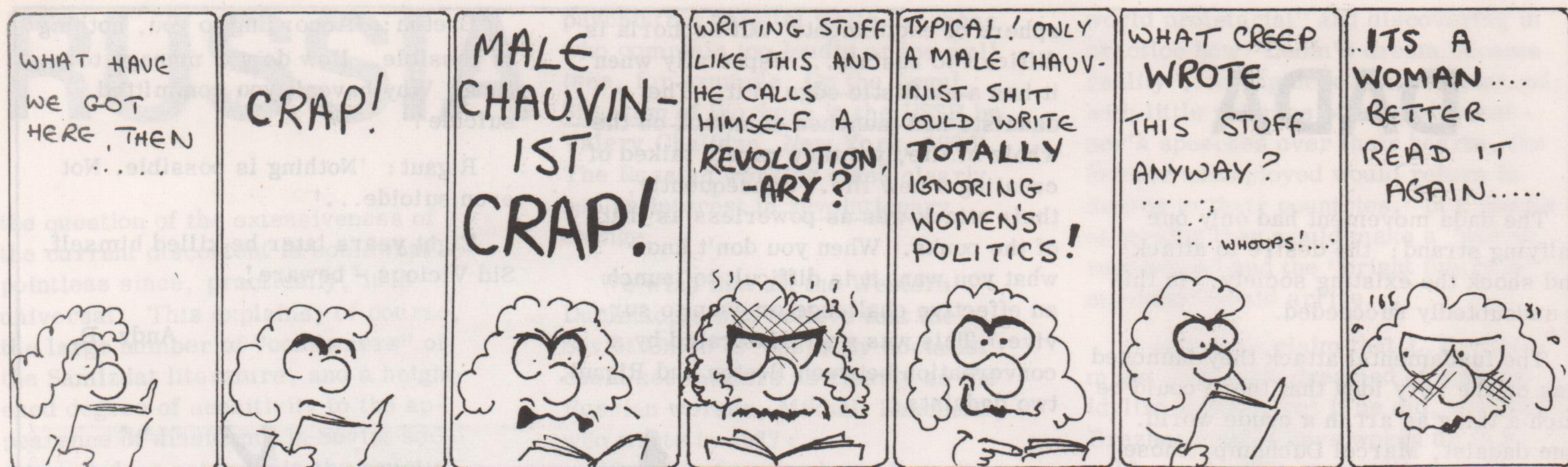
Breton: 'According to you, nothing is possible. How do you manage to live? Why haven't you committed suicide?'

Rigaut: 'Nothing is possible. Not even suicide...'

Eight years later he killed himself. Sid Vicious - beware!

Andy B.





POLITICS OR BIOLOGY?

Two articles in *'Solidarity for Social Revolution'* no. 1 (pp 11-13) dealt with aspects of the women's movement (and our organisation's last conference was on a similar theme) - not before time, some might say. But, while the contributors themselves sounded eminently reasonable, the same cannot be said of some of the phenomena they reported. Many readers may have found their misgivings deepened rather than dispelled. Perhaps the critique should be pushed a little further.

One of the most troubling tendencies current in the women's movement is that which assumes a fundamental and rigid division between the feminine and the masculine principle. And never the twain shall meet, if radical feminists have anything to do with it. Apart from contradicting observable reality, this is depressing because of the limitations it places on people - on men and women - but more so on women, given that male domination in society and culture is taken to render so many things taboo to females.

only women read

Other things are taken to be women's foremost, legitimate and exclusive concerns. Contraception, abortion, female sexuality, self-help health - such themes are OK, and recur over and over again. And, of course, they are important. But sometimes reading WL publications, especially the 'glossies' like *Spare Rib* but also many a bit-of-rough on the radical fringe, can produce similar reactions to those brought on by perusal of orthodox women's magazines, i.e. exasperated boredom with the same subject-matter (even if viewed from a different angle) related to female biology and emotions.

It is not just that the 'mixed' movement has made certain things into 'women's issues' by reluctance or antagonism to dealing with them. The women's movement has done so too. Any man offering any comment on these issues is likely to encounter hostility, while every woman is supposed to be deeply and constantly interested in them as a prime concern. No one could reasonably object to a basic concern with and struggle for control of one's own body. What is objectionable is the assumption that some things women should be interested in, and others not. Because specific oppression exists and has to be fought doesn't mean we must confine ourselves to certain areas of life. The view through a speculum may be significant, but it is distinctly narrow!

Ironically, the movement which had as its *raison d'être* the struggle against being defined and confined by the biological fact of being female can now be seen to reinforce that definition.

Fears of imitating men leads to the adoption of 'feminine' stereotypes, such as the emotional little scatterbrain, that some women have been trying to get away from for centuries. And awareness that abstractions like analysis, theory, knowledge and argument have been used to keep women down leads, in extreme cases, to restrictions on our activity, especially mental activity, that no mixed group, or even society at large, would seek or attempt to get away with. 'Analysis and theory are alien to women'; 'Women can't do logic, they haven't got the minds for it' - what's the difference? So stick to what you know best, don't try to escape the biology, don't even try to forget it for a while to get on with anything else you may be interested in...

Clearly, these self-imposed limita-

tions are not only unacceptable but, when extended logically, quite fantastic. The woman who denounces knowledge and argument uses knowledge at her disposal to reinforce her argument; women at WL conferences will compete with each other vehemently to assert the absence of competition, self-assertion and vehemence in feminine natures. If we foster a psychosomatic allergy to everything tainted with male associations, we must abhor just about everything since men, like women, are involved everywhere in life. We might as well go and commit suicide (oh, no, we can't - lots of men have done that - some may even have used it to get at women. Curses, foiled again!)

herstory is bunk

A minor phenomenon that can be mentioned here is the messing about with language that goes on, to try to expunge male associations, sometimes coincidental ones. There is a case for rejecting the old 'rule' that 'man embraces woman' and using words of common gender, e.g. people, when that is what we mean. But do we have to concoct weird forms like anarc-feminist and (much worse) abominations like 'herstory', which would still be linguistic nonsense even if we accept the premise of rewriting linguistic history?

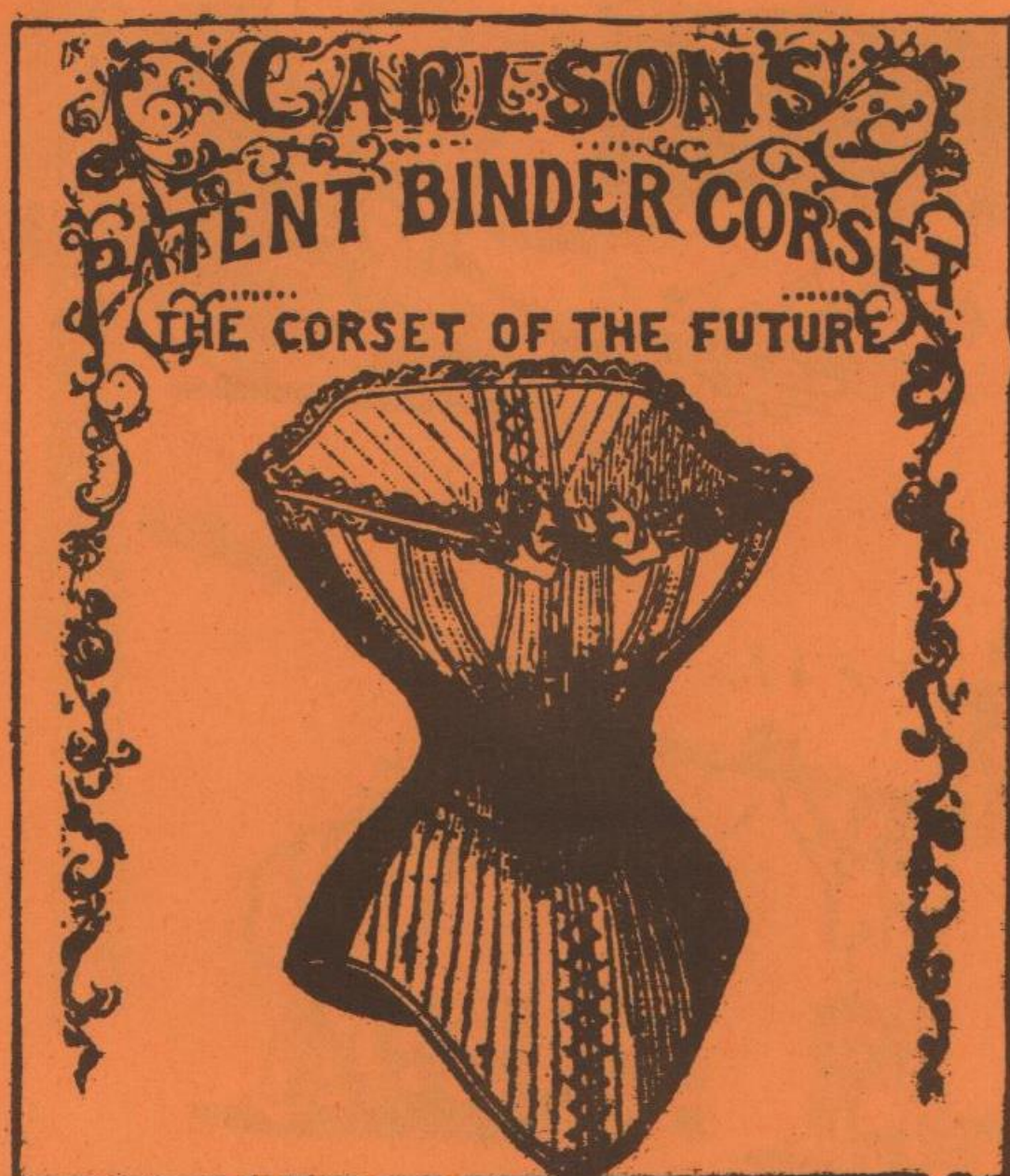
Detestation of maleness naturally means that men as such are not just excluded from the women's movement but also barred from any possibility of useful cooperation with the members of that movement. According to the 'separatists' they can never be anything but negative and useless, at best, and women have no right to waste time with them. Two striking manifestations of this apartheid mentality were brought to the attention of *Solidarity* readers in the last issue. One, the advertising of the *Anarchist Feminist Newsletter* as being available to women only puts men, poor sods, beyond the range even of accidentally benefiting by our pearls of wisdom (I know *Solidarity* may have suggested in the past that most daft ideas are reconcilable with anarchism, but isn't

this stretching it a bit?). The other was the 'hysterical attitude of some separatist women who objected to the presence of a male child in the disco' at the Scottish Women's Liberation Conference. Nina doesn't tell us whether they succeeded in imposing their view and so punishing whatever foolhardy individual accompanied the child - no doubt a just fate for anyone misguided enough to assume responsibility for a male infant, instead of - what? - exposing it on a hillside, or leaving it to some man to bring up in his own obnoxious image?

Anyway, this is the sort of thing which could easily lead to the conclusion that, whatever the difficulties of women working in mixed political groups, working in the feminist movement, for politically conscious libertarian women, becomes impossible.

I say 'feminist' deliberately. So far, I've been dealing with some of what we find in the movement; but in fact, many of the aspects I have criticised could perhaps have been deduced from the description 'feminist' itself. As I understand it, this word implies that the interests of women are taken to be of paramount importance, to the exclusion and eventual detriment of others. Combatting the oppression of a particular group is one thing; defining our perspectives in terms of upholding one group against others is something else again, and something I would have thought clashed with basic libertarianism. This is why I would question the current tendency of well-meaning libertarian groups to assume that feminism, as such, is to be supported.

Admittedly, words are not always taken to mean what they appear to say, and many who call themselves feminists might intend it quite otherwise. In any case, I would make a distinction between feminism and the women's movement in a much wider and less rigid sense, which we need and with which we remain involved. Libertarian women are part of the women's movement, willy-nilly (will-she, nill-she, I mean...). Liz W.



GREECE: a planned judicial murder

As readers of the libertarian press will know there has been a wave of arrests of Greek revolutionaries, particularly of anarchists. These followed the demonstrations and bombings of German property in Greece after the murder of the Red Army Fraction prisoners in Stamheim gaol. Partly as a result of international pressure only 3 of those originally arrested still remain in custody. Of these Yiannis Serifis is by far in the most danger.

He has been accused of the murder of another revolutionary, Christos Kasimis, who was by all accounts shot by the police during an attempt to bomb a factory of the German company AEG. The police evidence shows all the signs of a frame-up (and a most incompetent one at that). But this does not stop the police pushing on with the case, with great vigour.

The police seem to have picked on Yiannis Serifis as a sacrificial victim as a result of his long career of activism. The leaflet distributed by the defence group describes him as follows:

'Serifis was one of the hundreds of thousands (of) Greek immigrant workers in Germany. For 10 years he worked there for AEG and owing to his class activism he soon entered the black list of his employers. The effective action of his colleagues though prevented his dismissal or deportation. During the Greek military regime he was a member of the active organisation '20th October'. (He was on the wanted list but avoided arrest. The prosecutor in charge of that case is the same man who now prosecutes him on the trumped-up murder charge!)

The leaflet continues:

'When in July the democracy of capital took over the reins from the

dictatorship, Serifis returned to Greece and got a job in AEG.

During the Spring of 1977 he was an active participant in the strike mobilisation of AEG, which lasted for 70 days owing to the high degree of self-organisation in the struggle on the part of the workers themselves. He also contributed in the attempt at coordination of the autonomous factory unions and committees which had been formed during the struggles, outside the realms of the official trade union apparatus. Because of these activities he was fired from AEG in April 1977 and entered the black-list of the employers, which resulted in his being unable to find a job in a big factory.'

This provided an obvious hook for the police on which to hand their accusations against Serifis: that he was a member of a group trying to sabotage an AEG factory. The lack of a strong defensive mobilisation inside Greece in support of Serifis is blamed on 'the atmosphere of police terrorism' and 'the repression exercised ... since the strike mobilisations of 1977 by the employers and the official trade unions which resulted in the dispersal of the most militant elements (mainly through dismissals'.

The defence group appeals for publicity both on the shooting of Kasimis and the arrest of Serifis. They appeal for money. They also appeal for independent pathologists and ballistic experts to help in the case. Communications on these matters and requests for further information should be sent to Nikos Karamanlis, Akadimias 74, Athens, or Greek Information Service,

c/o Our Generation, 3934 St. Urbain, Montréal (Québec), Canada. Watch future issues for further news.

THE BOLSHEVIKS AND WORKERS' CONTROL 1917-1921 (The State and Counter-Revolution) by Maurice Brinton. 'Workers' Control' or workers' self-management. The story of the early oppositions. An analysis of the formative years of the Russian bureaucracy. £1.00

KRONSTADT 1921 by Victor Serge. An erstwhile supporter of the Bolsheviks re-examines the facts and draws disturbing conclusions. 10p.

FROM BOLSHEVISM TO THE BUREAUCRACY by Paul Cardan. Bolshevik theory and practice in relation to the management of production. An introduction to Alexandra Kollontai's 'The Workers' Opposition'. 10p.

POLAND - OPPOSITION GROWS

Recent political developments in Poland are most promising. The number of 'oppositional' groupings continues to increase, which is both an indication of increasing influence and of increasing political clarification.

The origins of this new movement lie in the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) set up to coordinate defence and aid for those arrested in the insurrectionary strikes against food price increases in 1976. In this immediate aim KOR was successful. Despite harassment and imprisonment of its members, none of them (and none of those arrested in connexion with the events of June 1976) remain in prison. The majority of those sacked have been reinstated.

In October 1977 KOR announced that the immediate campaign was almost finished. 'At the same time' they wrote 'in the course of its activities the Workers' Defence Committee has received appeals from many people who, for political reasons unconnected with the June events, have also been suffering repressions and who are seeking aid in the fight for their rights'. KOR therefore decided to become a permanent organisation, re-naming itself The Social Self-Defence Committee and seeking to promote 'an active solidarity of all citizens' against 'the constraints enforced by the authorities'.

In an article in *Le Monde* (Oct. 25) one of the ex-KOR activists, Adam Michnik, wrote: 'There are other openly oppositionist tendencies that have become active recently and that are fundamentally different from KOR. The movement for democratic self-management (the ex-KOR) is thus only one of the elements in this rich mosaic. But this element is so permanent and real in Polish political life that no one can ignore it or liquidate it'.

Some support for this latter statement had already appeared in *Der Spiegel* (Oct. 10): 'The secret police has not yet been able to stem the most recent wave of Samizdat (about 10,000 copies of such publications). Copying machines (which must be licensed in Poland) have been seized. But the oppositionists have found new ones. The Party has shrunk back from new arrests of authors and editors'.

In the *Le Monde* article something was spelled out of the 'democratic self-management' politics of the ex-KOR: 'The threat of uncontrolled explosions is a factor that completely blocks any possibilities for long-term changes in the national economy ... the only sensible road - not only for the opposition but for the authorities - is that of reforms to provide institutional channels for social pressure...' Later, Michnik writes: 'Any changes like the concessions we have seen this year, will not be the result of decisions made from above but the result ... of social pressure from below ... The thaw will be opened not by a liberal faction of the Party but by the increasing pressure of the democratic movement ... It is not an opposition movement either, in the traditional sense of the term, because its participants do not seek to take power. They defend civil and human rights and want to extend democratic rights'.

The 'reformist' tone should be read as an attempt to stay within the letter (if not the practice) of the law. In his statement to *Le Monde* Michnik described the ex-KOR as representing in general the current oriented toward developing direct workers' democracy.

It is in this context that we must see the announcement of November 22 describing the formation of a cell of the ex-KOR by a group of workers in Radom, the scene of heavy rioting in 1976. The cell pledged itself to fight for the rights of the working man independently of the official trade unions, which it described as 'dead' institutions

and to support the creation of other independent bodies to represent Polish workers. It said that 'it would attempt to convince workers that they should struggle for a greater voice in decisions concerning their pay, working hours, social conditions and housing ... The creation of this new group is significant in that it represents the first concrete evidence of institutionalised links between the workers and the intelligentsia, following their ad hoc cooperation in the successful struggle to free those imprisoned for activities connected with the price protests (in 1976). If the link is to be sustained, however, the momentum imparted by this first publicly announced step must grow to the point where an entire network of such cells is brought into existence'. (Polish Situation Report, 28).

Further news of interest is expected.

dud czech

Latest story from Czechoslovakia: A building worker, working on a new block overlooking the main government offices, is caught short and takes a crap in a corner. To his horror, the paper with which he wipes his arse is caught by a sudden gust of wind, swept into the air and flies in through the window of the room where Husak, the Leader, is working. Worse still, it lands on the desk by his elbow. The worker tells his mates. They all watch terrified, waiting for the almost inevitable official over-reaction. Nothing happens. After a while Husak gets up from his desk and leaves the room. Seizing their chance the workers put a ladder up to Husak's window. One of them runs up it, dives through the window, seizes the offending piece of paper and returns to his mates. But he looks puzzled. 'What's the matter?' they ask. 'You've got the right piece, haven't you?'. 'Of course I have' comes the reply. 'But the bugger has SIGNED it!'.
