

SOLIDARITY

A Journal of Libertarian Socialism. Issue 13. Winter 86-87. 80 Pence

That Inevitable Crisis

Will socialism collapse before capitalism?

Reason and Treason

Disaffection amongst Cromwell's model troops

Better Dead than Read

We interview Class War



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Solidarity is also the imprint of a series of pamphlets and books which now numbers more than sixty titles; and which have been variously translated into fifteen foreign languages. A list of those titles currently in print will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Publishing history. The present Solidarity Journal is the latest in a line of magazines produced by the Solidarity Group and stretching back to the early sixties. Solidarity for Workers Power, first in this sequence, was founded in 1960 and ran to 89 issues. This was succeeded by the nationally produced Solidarity for Social Revolution which ran to 16 issues and was in turn succeeded by the current journal. Our publishing history is complicated further by the existence in the sixties and early seventies of six or seven regional Solidarity magazines, among them those produced by the Scottish, South Wales, and North Western Solidarity groups; and by the publication of the shortlived, nationally produced, Solidarity for Self Management.

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COVER PICTURE: A Class War contingent somewhat nonplussed last September as its sortie into Hampstead, in search of rich to bash, is brought to a halt by police. Photo: Paul Mattson / Frame

Solidarity and Class War meet uptown

On the face of it, the arrival of a new anarchist group with a newspaper which outsells other libertarian papers several times over is a promising thing. But Class War's other tactics include organising 'Bash the Rich' outings and disrupting CND meetings. While Fleet Street brands them 'political nutters', some sections of the Left have reproved their behaviour as 'fascist'. What is their own view?

ANDY BROWN talked to three of the most active members of the London group. Two want only to be identified here as 'Janet' and 'John'. The third, Ian Bone, was also later coaxed into talking frankly about his personal history and convictions for a second interview, which starts on page 10. Here is what they have to say.

SOLIDARITY INTERVIEW

Why did you get involved with Class War in the first place and why do you think it has grown so rapidly?

IAN: Basically because most working class people have anarchist ideas or are receptive to anarchist ideas though they wouldn't necessarily

associate them with being anarchist ideas. For instance, they're anti-boss so they steal from the boss and they've got a sense of working class solidarity and community. All the existing anarchist papers at

the time that Class War started, like Freedom and Black Flag, to working class people they might as well have been from another planet. The idea behind Class War was to produce an anarchist magazine which ordinary working class people could make sense of, and they would feel had some relevance to them. We also wanted it to be a good laugh as well, as I think humour is very important. So, basically, I feel there was a big gap in the market and Class War was meant to fill that.

Do you think you've been successful?

IAN: To an extent yes; to the extent that we've established a good populist anarchist paper. It's got a large sale (12,000 are currently printed) and lots of

people want to read it, but the problem now is where we go from here. We've cornered a small market, and since we're big in a small market, what we've got to do is find ways of selling more and more. We've got to decide whether we are going to hang about in the anarchist milieu or whether we are going to go more popular, and personally I would like to see more stories in Class War about Dirty Den and Ian Botham rather than the kind of articles which have been in there lately.

Have you experienced any problems in moving from propaganda to action?

JANET: Class War started as a propaganda group but we felt, particularly bearing in mind some of the wild rhetoric in Class War, that we had to do something more than just produce the propaganda. We felt that we needed something to back it up, otherwise we were going to appear to be like a lot of people just mouthing off and not doing anything about it ourselves. When we were trying to set up some kind of actions, we also felt that it was important to get other people involved so that they could do things on their own and develop their own activities. That was the original idea behind the 'Bash the Rich' thing. Looking back, it seems not totally successful, but the objective was to get people involved, and to build up people's confidence and to get publicity.

Some people have said in response to the 'Bash the Rich' marches that the idea was a bit macho. Do you think that's a fair accusation?

JOHN: As soon as you do anything in that way you get accused of being macho; we get this accusation just because of the type of paper we put out. Other organisations which don't share our style don't do any better. They don't have any more women in their groups.

JANET: The other thing about that is that we think that's very sexist

because the accusation is based on the assumption that violence or anything associated with it, such as aggression or militant action, is a male thing, and the direct inference of that is that women are peaceful 'nice' people who just want to sit down in the road on demonstrations. We feel that this accusation is just a misnomer which arose from a lot of dubious ideas coming from Greenham Common.

Do you then intend to continue with the 'Bash the Rich' marches?

IAN: I think most people in Class War would acknowledge that the 'Bash the Rich' marches were unsuccessful. They were a failure because we were totally ghettoised. All we had was a lot of anarchists marching through Kensington or Hampstead or Bristol and it didn't break out of the anarchist ghetto and we were just isolated and surrounded. The possible exception is Henley regatta, where a lot of people who weren't anarchists did turn up to have a laugh at the toffs. As regards marches the 'Bash the Rich' campaign is at an end, but the basic strategy of class hatred, of having a go at the rich wherever you can get at them, is still valid. We've obviously made a mistake in attaching to that a load of old tactics which were outdated, and I think we've learnt from that.

Does it worry you that a lot of people got arrested on those marches and got bashed by the rich?

JOHN [who had recently been charged himself]: Not that many got arrested, and the majority of those who were arrested were released without charge. It was only a small minority who got heavy fines and we do operate a bust fund which was started because of things like that.

IAN: There weren't that many arrested. The biggest number of arrests was probably at Henley Regatta where forty-five to fifty people were arrested and no-one was sent to prison. Most of the people

got off with fines and the worst fine was something like £150. It's obvious that any kind of marches of that type are a total failure. The police have got their tactics so worked out; not just for the 'Bash the Rich' marches, but 'Stop the City' events, the campaign against police repression, all those type of marches are a dead loss. We do want to pursue the 'Bash the Rich' idea but not in that kind of way.

A lot of people seem to confuse Class War with 'Stop the City'; what was your involvement with that?

JOHN: We just went along like everyone else. Individuals in Class War might have taken a small part in organising it but as a group Class War took absolutely no part in organising it and we didn't attend as a group. Individuals went along.

Was your experience on those types of events part of the reason why you moved towards a more structured organisation?

JANET: Well, there are several reasons why we have moved to a more structured organisation, one of which is that Class War as a paper is sold by people all over the country and they do just as much if not more work than the London group in selling the paper, but they were having no say or very little say in what went into the paper and its general strategy. Another reason was that we felt we could achieve a lot more by being better organised and setting up better communications and better relations all over the country.

JOHN: We were getting a lot of letters from people all over the country in isolated places saying "How can I get involved?" or "What can I do?" and all we could tell them was "You could sell some papers for us". So another reason was that if we could get groups going all over the country then it would be easier for people to get involved.

IAN: I think that's important. We didn't want to be a group in London producing a paper which other people up and down the country sold without a say in what went in the paper. I could refer here back to my experience in Solidarity in the early seventies. When I first came into contact with Solidarity and was really enthusiastic about its ideas I wanted to be part of that paper's production. Basically it turned out to be pretty difficult to get involved, because I think that most of the people who were involved in Solidarity at the time didn't really want it, and the paper was being produced by a small group up in London. I got the impression that people were being allowed in on sufferance, and rather than tell new people to fuck off they were told to go and form their own Solidarity group.

JANET: We felt that if we were better organised then we could help individuals and small groups to build up their own confidence to do things on their own and to be autonomous. We could offer them support with things such as public speaking and printing and help them build up their skills.

IAN: Also, I'm fed up with the anarchist movement just being a total shambles, just from the aspect of there being a lack of any co-ordination or coherence. What we wanted was to get together some people who had some coherent ideas and could act on them to develop a strategy to change things.

So how, at the moment, would a local group go about getting its ideas across in the paper? Do they have any editorial control at the moment?

JOHN: The paper is rotated between any group which has a reasonable number of people and they take turns in producing it. The last three issues have been done in totally different places each time. Whichever group does it has total editorial control over what goes in but when the paper is all laid out

and ready there's a meeting of all the delegates from the different groups who check it and if there's anything they really object to (which is quite rare, fortunately), then it's dropped or whatever. It's basically down to the group which produces the paper.

There were reports in one or two of the papers, particularly 'City Limits', that the move towards more organisation was strongly opposed. Is there any truth in this?

JANET: The article in City Limits was totally inaccurate, but there was some opposition to the changes. City Limits gave the impression that anarchists are opposed to all forms of organisation and that those who left were the anarchist element, which wasn't really accurate.

JOHN: There was strong opposition, but it was from a small minority, and the reports going around at the time were true to the extent that about three people had left, but out of a London group of twenty to twenty-five people it didn't really mean that much.

IAN: I think basically practically everyone outside London was in favour of the federation, it was a small number of people in the London group who opposed it and left.

How do you feel you can ensure that your organisation doesn't degenerate into yet another trotskyist workers' party?

JOHN: Because we are structured in a totally different way. We are not a party, we haven't got membership, we don't want to be the vanguard of anything, we just want to play our part in agitating towards a revolution or whatever. We never had any ideals to become the leadership or anything like that. We just felt we could operate better if we were organised that in way.

IAN: Also, the first conference

drew up an 'Aims and Principles' which basically enabled people to agree about whether they wanted to be part of the federation or not. It says things like class struggle is important and that we believe in violence to overthrow capitalism. Within that basic agreement there is room for a wide measure of disagreement in the federation. For instance, we haven't got a line on Ireland or animal rights. There is room in the federation for a very wide range of opinions, and we are not trying to create a party with a view on everything.

So if a local groups disagreed with the views of the group which was doing the paper, would their views be printed?

IAN: If it came to the crunch and a local group disagreed very strongly with something which was in the paper then presumably they would just refuse to sell it. There have been cases where individuals in the London group have not liked particular articles in the paper and have just refused to sell it.

Would you expect a group to censor sexist material, for instance?

JOHN: Yes. We've got in the 'Aims and Principles' that we are totally opposed to sexist material so the groups aren't stupid enough to put anything like that in, anyway.

And the same for racist material?

JANET: Again, this is covered in the 'Aims and Principles'.

IAN Yes. We are not a bunch of liberals like Freedom who will just publish anything. Lots of articles are just chucked out because we don't like them or don't agree with them.

Having said that, would you like to comment on the bizarre allegations of racism in Class War?

JOHN: To cut a long story short, you could say that they have all been totally disproved now. We have



HOORAY HENLEYS: Local public schoolboys chatting with people from Class War during last July's regatta. The police were not so amiable; over forty people were arrested.

been re-admitted to the AFA [Anti-Fascist Action] and there was an article in the Guardian saying it was all total rubbish. One of the reasons the allegations might have arisen is, because a lot of people don't really like Class War, so they thought that an easy way to get rid of us might be to call us fascists.

IAN: We've been very unpopular on the Left, and the allegations basically came from a couple of sources, Gerry Gable of Searchlight and David Rose in the Guardian, who just repeated his allegations. Gable himself has talked of a 'good tradition of anarchists' and referred affectionately to Freedom people, saying that anarchists who are part of the socialist tradition he welcomes. But us, all of a sudden, because we believe in

violence and try to break out of the anarchist ghetto, and because we heckle CND rallies, we heckle Kinnock, we heckle Ted Knight and we heckle all these sorts of people, we get up their noses. One of Gable's main things was that we heckle Ted Knight and Tony Benn, and this was positive proof that we were fascists! They just can't understand it, they don't mind a few idiots waving a few black flags but they just could not understand where we were coming from. A lot of anarchists also called us fascists. A lot of pacifists called us fascists. Freedom at one stage called us fascists because we believe in enforcing class power. We are not a bunch of liberals who believe in freedom of speech; the idea that freedom of speech is an anarchist thing is a load of shit.

JOHN: We were becoming a threat so they were worried.

IAN: A lot of people were very pre-disposed to welcome these allegations; not just people on the Left, but also people in the anarchist movement, because it 'proved' what they'd been saying all the time. The good thing about it was that we didn't knuckle under to the particular accusations of Gable and co. and we've come through it, and now it's Searchlight who are discredited. However, I think that as soon as the fascist thing vanishes something else will crop up. I've heard all sorts of stories, including one that we were funded by BOSS. No doubt someone will soon be saying that we're funded by MI5 or the CIA! I take it as a sign that we've been successful.

I noticed that in one of your denials you went so far as to say that no member of Class War had ever had anything to do with a fascist group. Do you then refuse admission to people who are ex-fascists or ex-racists?

JANET: It's difficult. Someone is not born a fascist and people sometimes go through a phase of being racist or actively fascist when they are fifteen or sixteen. If they've genuinely changed then it's very difficult to hold it against them for the rest of their lives. Obviously we would be dubious and if someone like that got involved we would check them out.

IAN: People are full of shitty ideas. We want to change things and if we can persuade someone out of racism we'd welcome it.

Another allegation made against Class War is that in a country where sixty per cent of homes are owned privately your type of anarchism is always doomed to be the voice of a minority.

IAN: That's like saying that there's no working class any more

because they own their own homes, they've got videos, they go on holiday to Spain and so on. Though the working class have got an improved standard of living, they are still just as class conscious and they are still selling their labour power for their entire lives, and I think there's as much of a chance of a revolutionary movement developing in the society we live in now as ever there was.

What evidence do you see of this class consciousness developing?

IAN: Well, I don't see any signs that extra class consciousness is developing today, I simply think that the working class is class conscious in the kind of ways that Solidarity has held so dear over the years; such as stealing at work, stealing time from the bosses, clocking in for other people, buying stolen goods, the black economy. People don't consider those things crimes; even though the state tells them that they are terrible they don't believe it. It's remarkable how the working class has managed to preserve its basic class consciousness given the stuff in the press and on the television, but I think it's just as much there as ever it was.

So how do you see the movement developing at the moment and how would you see a change in the way things are organised coming about?

IAN: Firstly, as regards Class War I would look back to As We See It by Solidarity, where it defines the kind of things which should be encouraged in the working class, like anti-hierarchical struggles, opposition to differentiation, support for autonomy, and support and co-operation. I think that all the working class needs is a shove in the right direction and we've just got to put our shoulders to the wheel wherever working class struggle is most intense and try and push it further. We ourselves can't conjure things out of nothing, we can't go and cause

riots, we can't act as a vanguard and go round and lead this that and the other struggle.

When you mention riots, the popular papers seem to have this image that it is all caused by outside agitators, like the famous man in the balaclava helmet who was supposed to have started three riots in one weekend in completely different parts of the country. Just as a simple matter of clearing up facts, could you tell us whether any member of Class War at any time had played any part in starting any riot?

JANET: That's clearly the nicest thing for the media to believe, isn't it? It's less threatening than the idea of a load of people spontaneously rioting. Class War has always supported what has happened, whilst being critical of some aspects of what has taken place on riots, for example, rapes and muggings and things like that. We are very critical of that and think it's very important not to get carried away in the adrenalin of the moment, and to remember the less positive aspects of the riots, and to try to deal with that as well and to influence that.

If there were to be a fundamental change in the social system, how would you like to see things organised? Could you, for instance, give us an idea of how you would like to see something like health care operating in a completely free society? [This question caused some confusion and there was a lengthy pause and a couple of false starts before it was answered].

IAN: You can't draw up plans for the anarchist utopia. When it comes to the working class changing society then in all previous upheavals they have proved themselves totally capable of creating new forms of organising things. I don't think it's our job to come up with blueprints, I think it would be a total waste of time.

You don't think that one of the

reasons why the trotskyists are more successful at organising than we are might be that they give people clear ideas about the sort of changes they are looking for?

IAN: I don't think that's true. I don't think they are any more worked out than us, and some of the blueprints we do produce are just a joke. I remember a Solidarity pamphlet called Workers' Councils and the Economics of a Self-Managed Society where there were lots of little diagrams and arrows going round showing how this assembly would elect people to that assembly. That was just worthless.

JANET: Nevertheless we do have some ideas about health. We would like to see it run by the people who actually work in it, but also it would actually involve the patients and potential patients, who would have a say in it. I would want to see a totally different approach to preventative health care, and a system where a patient got a say in what was happening and there was much more co-operation between the people who have the misfortune to be patients and those who are working to cure them, which is sadly missing from the health service at the moment.

IAN: What we have got to offer is concrete solutions to people's problems now. I'm really fed up with reading that in an anarchist society there won't be any crime. Even if that is true, what good is it to someone living up an estate when they get mugged? Let's face it, who wouldn't believe in anarchy? It's like heaven on earth. I also believe in sunshine every day, and everyone would put their hand up in agreement, but so what? We need to be more practical.

Your latest project is the Class War single, which I'm told is heading up the independent record chart. At the risk of giving your dubious musical efforts a plug, could you explain what the idea is behind this?

JANET: We think that we should use lots of different means of communication and be more imaginative, so we're interested in using any means: records, videos, holograms, anything which will get our politics across.

JOHN: We also wanted to prove that if you put an anarchist record out it doesn't have to be a hundred mile an hour punk thrash.

Is there anything you'd like to add in order to make your own brand of anarchism clearer to people?

JANET: One thing which I think is important to say is that although Class War is an anarchist organisation, not everyone in the federation is an anarchist. Some people view themselves as libertarian socialists and we come from a lot of different backgrounds.

Finally, could you clear up one confusion. A lot of the popular press writes of you as if you were terrorists. Do you actually believe

that terrorism can be a useful tactic?

IAN: So far as I'm concerned, terrorism is a form of arrogance. It's usually carried out by people who want to act on behalf of the working class rather than work with them.

● EDITORS' NOTE: The views expressed here are, of course, those of members of Class War, and not Solidarity's. Nevertheless, Solidarity publishes them as part of its longstanding policy of attempting to provide reliable information on subjects which the rest of the Left either ignores or distorts. Unlike virtually every other report on the activities of Class War, we have made every effort to ensure that this interview accurately reflects the views of members of this group, and both transcripts have been checked for errors by the people spoken to. Class War asked us to print their address, which is PO Box 467, London E5 8BE.

POLITICAL SECTS 2

Sound and fury

Today Ian Bone is a leading activist of Class War, the group he helped to found. But surprisingly, or not, he was once a member of Swansea Solidarity. ANDY BROWN gets the man the 'Sunday People' says has 'a degree in sociology... and a heart overflowing with hate' to tell the story of what happened in between.

Could you tell us how you first became an anarchist, socialist or whatever label you would apply to yourself? How did you become politicised?

IAN: All sorts of reasons. My old man was a socialist and he was a butler, and I inherited my class hatred from seeing the way the upper class lives. But as regards

why I became an anarchist I don't know really.

How did you first come into contact with anarchist ideas?

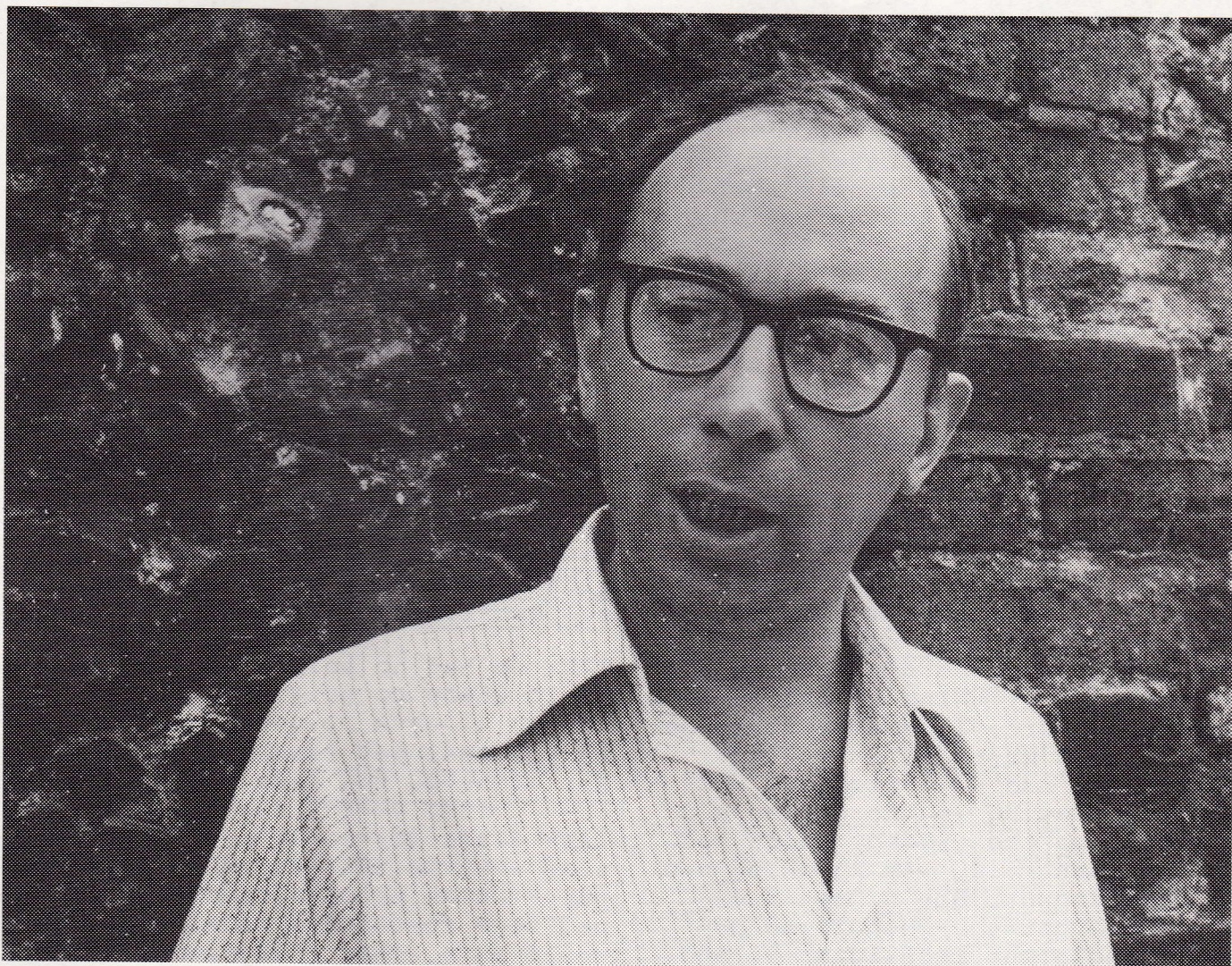
IAN: Funnily enough I went on a CND demonstration when I was about fourteen. It was the last phase of the first wave of CND, this would be about 1962. I was living in a

small town in Hampshire and I went up with the local Quakers to the Aldermaston march. On the second day of the march, whilst we were having a really boring time marching along singing 'peace' songs and being ever so wholesome, about forty people waving red and black flags raced past and started fucking the police about, holding things up and generally messing CND about. I remember asking the famous question "Who are those guys?" and the Quakers told me they were anarchists. So then when I got back home I looked up anarchy in the dictionary and decided I was an anarchist because at the time I actually did think that I believed in chaos. Then by sheer chance I found Freedom's address in a copy of Punch in a dentist's waiting room and wrote off to them and they

sent me back a copy of Anarchy which was a special issue on some American educationalist called Homer Lane. It was totally incomprehensible to a fourteen year old! Eventually they sent me a copy of Freedom as well and then I think I got into anarchism through that and started calling myself an anarchist.

At Swansea you began a magazine called 'Alarm'. Could you tell us something about it and why it was successful?

IAN: It was just a local paper but I think it was successful because it basically dealt with council corruption and it named names. In other words, it didn't just say that Swansea Council was corrupt, it said Gerald Murphy (the then



IAN BONE: 'We have had to have a good rethink of our politics lately'.

council chairman) is corrupt and he took a backhander of £200 in the Townsman Club last night, and it came out every week with similar allegations. People were astounded; they knew a lot of this stuff but they were astonished to see it written down. It was a paper which working class people wanted to read because it dealt with their everyday lives and also it was funny. It sold five thousand copies a week, so that ten to fifteen thousand people were reading it in a city of 180,000 people.

What eventually happened to Murphy?

IAN: Murphy went to jail for a couple of years as did the next council leader in Swansea, but I don't think that's particularly important. We weren't saying that what we want is a load of non-corrupt Labour councillors, we were basically saying that the whole practice of business and the way councils are run is corrupt.

In the end we did have problems with Alarm, because people agreed with what we were saying but where did we go from there? We had big problems and we ended up standing for the council ourselves, which I think was a mistake. We got so far and then we didn't have the answers as to where to go with that amount of popular support. I think we can learn from that mistake.

What would you do now if you were in similar circumstances?

IAN: We should have been exploring ways of by-passing the council and getting communities running things for themselves. To give an example of the kind of thing we should have developed more, I remember that one day a woman wrote us a letter saying she had a handicapped kid who was playing in the garden and the wall of the garden, which led onto a main road, was knocked down in an accident. She'd been ages trying to get the council to do something about rebuilding it and we simply made contact with some people involved in Alarm who worked

Price hike

Please note that we have reluctantly had to increase our cover price with this issue.

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

for the council's direct-labour organisation and the following week the first thing on their job sheet was to go up there and build the wall. We'd achieved direct contact between what needs to be done and the workforce.

What was the result when the 'Alarm' candidates stood for the council?

IAN: The four Alarm candidates who stood polled an average of 28 per cent of the vote in the wards where we stood, which, when you consider that the usual poll by lefty groups is minimal, was pretty high. I actually received the lowest vote of the four. In one of the wards, Mayhill, which is a big working class ward, the Labour councillor got 1200 votes. The Alarm candidate got 850, and the Tories, Plaid Cymru and the Liberals were all in the region of 300 votes. So basically the popular support was there but we didn't know what to do with it, and standing for the council was the wrong thing.

Do you think the fact that you didn't know what to do with that support is why 'Alarm' fell away?

IAN: We had no political solutions as to where to go.

Do you feel any danger that Class War might go the same way?

IAN: Class War could have gone the same way, in that we had a popular paper which people liked, and if we had been content to do that then it would have. That's why we've had to have a good rethink of our politics lately. As opposed to just putting

our ideas over to estates and local communities, we should be trying to help those estates and communities to run things for themselves. In our latest issue there's an article about what's been happening on the Woodberry Down estate in Hackney, where again the tenants and the direct-labour organisation got together and started running repairs for themselves. We've got to start seizing control of territory and start running that territory for ourselves. I don't mean a bunch of anarchists should be doing this, but the working class people in that community.

While you were in Swansea you were also involved in a project called 'Dole Express'. Could you tell us something about that?

IAN: Dole Express was a Claimants' Union broadsheet which was given away outside the local dole office and people simply made voluntary contributions. I think we used to ask for one old penny, and quite frequently got more, so that money was never a problem. It used to deal with what happened at Box 7 Seven last week, and how long people had to wait. It was really popular, and we used to get rid of a thousand of those each week.

Do you think that's generally what was wrong with Claimants' Unions?

IAN: I think most Claimants' Unions, whether they wanted to or not, ended up as a form of alternative social work. You got people's claim for them, which was fine, because after all it's better to have your giro than not having it, but that was the limit to it. As regards raising generalised class consciousness rather than a particular issue it's a dead end.

After 'Alarm' I believe you got involved in Welsh nationalism, even going so far as to translate your name into Welsh. Do you still have any faith in nationalist movements?

IAN: I was involved in something called the Welsh Socialist

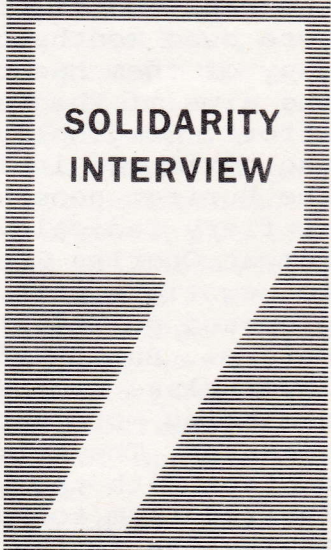
Republican Movement, because I was living in Swansea at the time and there was nothing else going on, and I knew a lot of people in it who were revolutionary socialists. I don't think I had any faith in nationalism at the time, I was in the anarchist wing of the WSR. It was not something I would involve myself in again.

You were also involved in a band called Page Three. Could you tell us the story behind that?

IAN: I put my musical career down to the folly of youth, but the Sun treated it seriously and took us to court for using the name Page Three. Apparently we brought their name into disrepute. The judge found that we infringed the Sun's copyright but didn't make any award against us, presumably because he didn't think much of the Sun either. We ended up having to pay our own costs, which were minimal, while the Sun got landed with expensive legal fees.

Actually that leads me to the final question. How would you respond to those who would say that Class War is a good joke, but not to be taken seriously?

IAN: Maybe they're right, maybe not, we'll have to wait and see, but I believe that the fundamental problem with the British Left is that they've got a 'holier than thou' attitude. The Left believes that it's got all the right answers and that ordinary people are a bunch of mugs for not realising it. Working class people quite rightly resent that, and also being preached to about what they should be interested in rather than what they are interested in.



**SOLIDARITY
INTERVIEW**

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

Oliver's army

A S P Woodhouse (Editor)
Puritanism and Liberty: Being the
Army Debates (1647-49) from the
Clarke Manuscripts
 Everyman, £5.95

THREE HUNDRED and thirty-nine years is a long time to wait for a paperback edition, but, at last, here it is. The most important section of this work is a transcript of a conference which took place during October and November 1647 at Putney. Present were representatives of the New Model Army's officers (including Cromwell), delegates from the Army rank-and-file known as Agitators, and a handful of Leveller radicals. The conference had been arranged by the Army generals to head off the growing rebelliousness of their troops. From this point of view the conference was a failure: the Agitators presented their case with an unexpected force and clarity, and forced the officers into a series of tense debates which made the differences between the two sides yet more apparent.

Two principal issues motivated the rank-and-file: most of them were owed months of back-pay, and many of them had come to question the aims of the Parliamentary war effort. Originally, at the start of the civil war in 1642, Cromwell and the Puritan generals had appeared as fiery radicals: they wanted to defeat Charles I's army rather than to negotiate with him, and they proposed political and religious reforms. But by 1647 the lower-class common soldiers were demanding more substantial measures. The Agitators made contact with the Levellers and invited them to Putney to explain their case to the Army's officers.

There has been a long historical debate over the long-term significance of the Leveller movement. Many historians - of both left and right - have argued that the Levellers' essential demand was for the implementation of a liberal parliamentary regime based on a wide (but not universal) male franchise. But when one reads their contributions to the Putney Debates it becomes clear that another interpretation of their movement is possible. Their concept of government came close to a libertarian perspective, through which all forms of administration are seen as devices which the mass of the population should be able to use. Then governmental structures, rather than leading or managing the population, would serve as instruments for something approaching self-management. This accent on participatory democracy clearly distinguishes the Levellers from most later liberal and socialist thinkers.

Apart from the major section on the Putney Debates, this book also contains examples of Leveller manifestos, Puritan sermons, and correspondence between individual militants involved in the conflicts of the late 1640s. The language used by these writers is difficult to understand, particularly for readers who are not used to seventeenth-century phrasing. Woodhouse's edition (produced originally in 1938) has slightly modified and simplified the texts, and has attempted to fill in their many gaps, but his introduction and Ivan Root's prefaces leave a lot to be desired; for example, a text by Leveller women is introduced with the patronising and historically unjustified comment that "It is probable that this petition was not actually composed by the women". Solidarity readers would find better introductions to the Putney Debates and the radical social movements of the 1640s in Brian

THE Declaration and Standard

Of the Levellers of England;

Delivered in a Speech to his Excellency the Lord Gen. Fairfax, on Friday last at White-Hall, by Mr. Everard, a late Member of the Army, and his Prophecie in reference therunto; shewing what will befall the Nobility and Gentry of this Nation, by their submitting to a Community; With their invitation and promise unto the people, and their proceedings in Windsor Park, Oatlands Park, and severall other places; also, the Examination and confession of the said Mr. Everard before his Excellency, the manner of his deportment with his Haron, and his severall speeches and expressions, when he was commanded to put off his Cogswort with a List of the severall Regiments of Horse and Foot that have called Lots to goe for Ireland.



Imprinted at London, for G. Laurence, April 23. 1649.

A contemporary account of an examination of a Leveller soldier by General Fairfax, before whom he refused to take off his hat.

Manning's The English People and the English Revolution and Christopher Hill's The World Turned Upside Down.

Despite their age and the strangeness of their language, however, these texts are still worth reading. The Levellers and Agitators argued that 'Liberty' was a meaningless slogan while political power lay in the hands of the wealthy, and while the mass of the population was ruthlessly excluded from all participation in government. Such arguments provide proof of a long-established libertarian movement in England.

JOHN COBBETT

'FREEDOM'S' CENTENARY

More hard work than hot dinners

The Freedom Group (Editors)
Freedom: A Hundred Years 1886-1986
Freedom Press, £2

AMID ALL THE very enjoyable junketings of Freedom's centennial it is easy to forget how amazing its survival has been. Its whole history seems to have been one of staggering from one crisis to another; yet it has always arisen phoenix-like from the ashes while its contemporaries and rivals have gone the way of all flesh.

This ninety-page well-illustrated brochure is in two halves. The first is a valuable series of articles and biographies based on original research and personal experience, which deal with Freedom's history. The two people mainly responsible for this work are Nicholas Walter, who needs no introduction here, and Heiner Becker, who up to now many thought was a phantom haunting the bookshelves of the International Institute. He has now come out of the closet and begun to put down his considerable knowledge of and sympathy with the history of the libertarian movement into writing, a process I hope he will continue in spite of his legs.

The second half is a series of articles illustrating the range of anarchist ideas; one or two of these made my skin crawl, but that is the nature of the beast! I thoroughly recommend the book not simply as a document, but as an important source for the history of anarchism.

KEN WELLER

POLITICAL ECONOMY

Whither the world state?

Immanuel Wallerstein
The Politics of the World Economy
 Cambridge University Press

ANARCHISTS HAVE ALWAYS had a critical, if ambivalent, attitude towards marxism. In political terms the critique of marxism largely centres on strategy. It is the refusal of anarchists to accept that a future socialist society could ever be achieved through the seizure of state power. But this critique by no means implies that anarchism stands outside the socialist movement. Attempts to equate socialism with marxism are both historically incorrect and politically dubious.

Hesitation and ambivalence towards marxism have also been expressed with reference to its intellectual elitism. Paul Avrich indeed defines anarchism as an anti-intellectual current of thought. But again anarchists have been critical of the elitist and mystifying aspects of marxism. They have never been against the rational use of the intellect nor even against the underlying tenets of dialectical materialism. Yet because of the historical hiatus between the two there has been a lamentable tendency not only for marxists to ignore the very existence of anarchism (which is to be expected) but also for contemporary anarchists to shy away from marxist writings. This is a pity, for anarchists have much to learn from their radical critique of capitalism.

One contemporary marxist well worth reading is Immanuel Wallerstein. His writings are not written from a specifically

libertarian perspective; nor do they offer much guidance as to what political strategies are open to us. But Wallerstein does offer a historical overview of capitalism as a world system that is meaningful and helpful in situating ourselves within the broader current of events.

Wallerstein sees world history as having passed through three essential phases, as consisting of three basic forms of economy.

The earliest phase he describes as "reciprocal mini-systems". These are the small-scale tribal societies that existed before the advent of the state. In such communities the economy, polity and culture were essentially co-existent. Such systems were relatively egalitarian, and economic exchanges were governed by the rules of reciprocity. Wallerstein seems to feel that such communities disappeared several centuries ago and that we have no direct knowledge about them. But of course at the periphery of the capitalist system such communities still survive, although they continually face, as the work of Survival International attests, harassment and exploitation. Seemingly ignorant of anthropological studies Wallerstein erroneously describes life in such communities in Hobbesian terms - solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short - a description which better fits the lives of many people living under capitalism.

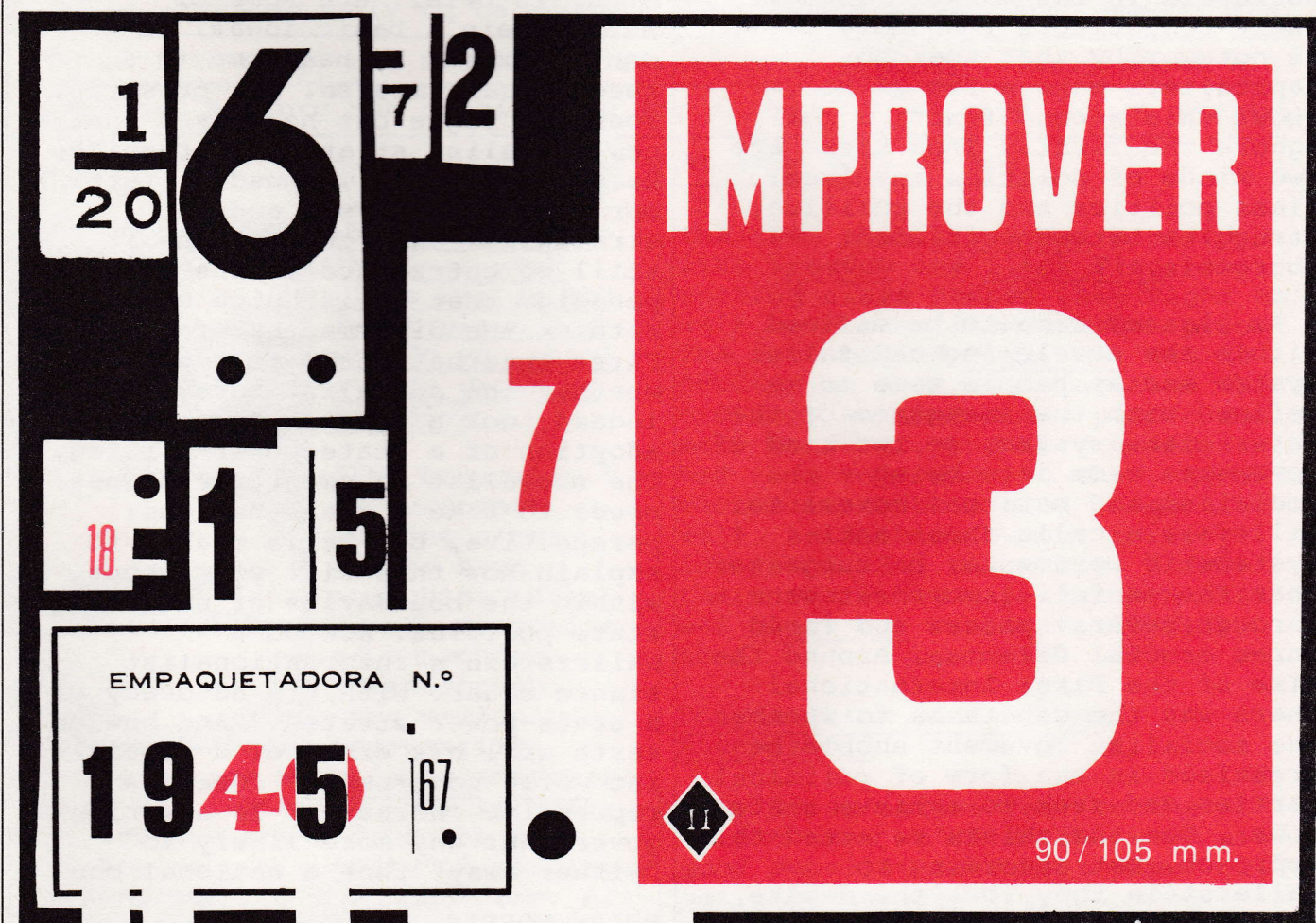
The second phase Wallerstein describes as "redistribution world empires" - one economy, one polity, but with many cultures incorporated within it. The classical civilizations of ancient Rome, China, Mexico, Byzantium and the Mughuls are examples of this mode of production. With a complex division of labour and a developed system of bureaucracy, such empires were focused around a single state system, surplus labour being extracted as tribute by coercive means. Over historical time such empires were continual expanding

and contracting - a process described by many historians.

Finally, in the sixteenth century a third kind of social system came into existence, the "capitalist world economy". Characterised by one economy, multiple states and diverse cultures, this system eventually expanded over the entire globe, eliminating in the process the remaining tribal communities and world empires. This capitalist system, Wallerstein suggests, lacks any single overarching political structure. It consists of a series of integrated commodity chains, based on the principle of capital accumulation. Capitalism is thus by definition a dynamic, expansive system, but it is a system with inherent contradictions. In a competitive market, to increase profits the individual entrepreneur has to cut costs, specifically reducing wages. As other enterprises do the same, the cumulative effect is to reduce the overall

demand for goods, thereby making it difficult for the collectivity of capitalists to realize profits. Hence the capitalist system is beset with a cyclical pattern of development, an alternating pattern of expansion and stagnation. During periods of contraction the economic crisis is resolved by capitalists in a number of ways: by the incorporation of new zones into the system; by the reduction of costs by lowering wages; by the re-allocation of industry into areas of cheap labour; by technological innovation. There are ultimate limits to this process of capitalist expansion; its very success, Wallerstein suggests, will bring about its demise.

Alongside this pattern, there is also a pattern in the rise and fall of hegemonic powers. Wallerstein suggests three phases: 1620-72, when after the defeat of the Hapsburgs in the Thirty Years War the Netherlands achieved hegemony;



1815-73, when after defeating France in the Napoleonic Wars Britain became the dominant capitalist nation; and 1945-67, when, after the defeat of German and Japan, the United States achieved political and economic hegemony within the capitalist system.

Both the world empires and capitalism, Wallerstein believes, have been highly exploitative and extremely destructive in terms of human life and ecological degradation.

With the rise of capitalism there also emerged the modern nation-state, defined in terms of an inter-state system which Wallerstein sees as the political counterpart of the capitalist world economy. This state has two basic functions: to enforce the appropriation of surplus value by the bourgeoisie from the workers, and to strengthen the position of some bourgeois in the market vis-a-vis their competitors (monopoly). (It is noteworthy that anarcho-capitalists make a lot of noise about this second function but ignore the first). Thus there are two kinds of politics involved: class politics and the political struggles between different bourgeois.

As classes came to be defined within the developing capitalist system and as people came to be defined with the emergence of the inter-state system, so two kind of movements came into being - the socialist and national movements. Wallerstein calls these anti-systematic movements. He suggests that the socialist movement went through several phases and faced three crucial dilemmas. Around the time of the First International there was the debate as to whether the socialist movement should be organised in the form of political parties and seek to achieve state power. The anarchists rejected this approach, but according to Wallerstein they lost the debate, and thus, like other marxist

historians, he despatches them to the dustbin of history. The anarchists, of course, were not against organisation per se; they were simply against the idea that anything could be achieved through authoritarian structures. In a second phase, that of the Second International, another debate revolved around whether the socialist movement (anarchists apart) could achieve state power through bourgeois parliamentary institutions (reformism) or through an insurrectionary party of professional revolutionaries (bolshevism). This, of course, blended into a third debate, namely that concerning the socialist attitude towards nationalism. Prior to the First World War most socialists followed the anarchists in adopting an internationalist programme - which as everyone knows fell apart at the seams in 1914. Since then state socialism has been the norm.

Such, in brief, are some of Wallerstein's basic ideas. Like many marxists he has come to a theoretical impasse. His prescriptions are vague but he senses that a new socialist strategy is required. He suggests that we need to rethink our mode of analysis and our strategies. Unfortunately he is still so entrenched in the marxist paradigm that he is quite unable to rethink the dilemma that faced the First International, to question whether the socialist movement indeed took a wrong turn in its adoption of a state-power strategy. The socialist movement, he argues, needs to take a trans-national perspective, but he is unable to explain how this will come about within the boundaries of national state politics. How does Wallerstein's internationalist stance square with his advocacy of a state-power strategy? And how on earth will his dream of a "socialist world government" lose its repressive character? Is a world government any more likely to "wither away" than a national one?

BRIAN MORRIS

CORRESPONDENCE

MANAGEMENT PSYCHOLOGY

Short and curly

From JOHN SLATER, London:

I thought the last issue was quite interesting, especially the article on management. I think this is an area that is vastly under-examined by radical groups. It's often the case that they think that politics is enough, and any examination of the way that they organise is not strictly relevant. Seeing as how anarchists/left communists are meant to be strong on power as opposed to economics, that seems a little strange. Have you read What A Way to Run a Railroad, an analysis of radical failure in the seventies? There're some very pertinent points raised in it regarding the way that radical groups sow the seeds of their own destruction and enjoy it all the way! I get the feeling that it is quite easy to make a few too many deductions from a couple of books. I'm sure that many management studies come to directly opposing conclusions. However, there is no doubt that in appropriate situations capital (for want of a better word) will employ whatever methods it needs to further its ends (unlike radical projects!) unless they directly contradict its *raison d'être*. It's noticeable that, with the coming of the 'information revolution', a lot of financial services, for example, are adopting organisational structures that are decentralised, partnership (co-operative?) based, etc. It would be good to see more thought being put into these areas. Come the Great Dawn things are going to have to be organised, but organised appropriately and democratically, or the Bolsheviks will have us by the goolies again.

Cheers.

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