

solidarity

FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION

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15p



ABOUT OURSELVES

Solidarity for Social Revolution is the national magazine of Solidarity. It is produced about every two months by geographically separated editorial groups. Issue no.1 was produced in Aberdeen, 2, 4 and 7 in London, 3 in Oxford, 5 jointly by Scottish groups and 6 jointly by Leeds and Manchester. This issue was produced in the Midlands by comrades from Coventry, Oxford and Birmingham. The next issue is to be produced in Scotland. Send contributions to the Aberdeen group before the end of June.

While the contents of Solidarity generally reflect the politics of the group as a whole, articles signed by individuals don't necessarily represent the views of all members.

Solidarity is an organisation of activists with new and revolutionary views. Our function is to help and support members and others who are in conflict with the present authoritarian society. We aim to develop and spread ideas about what is wrong with all aspects and conditions of our lives, and to suggest how they could be transformed. We do not see ourselves as another leadership, but merely as part of a wider struggle.

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LETTERS

Dear solidarity,

I thought M.B.'s piece on Jonestown was brilliant. The left needs to look far more closely at the psychological and biological needs which motivate people and at times lead them through chronic lack of fulfilment, to abandon all reason.

Closer to home I survived a watered down version of Jonestown, being ripped-off once and beaten up twice for refusing to rejoin the group. This was after the paranoid fear technique had failed with me, eg. "you'll become a living corpse, a robot and a zombie if you leave". I was told that they "knew what was going on in me" and that I had no idea. That I was mad. That all my criticisms of the set-up were projections. Others were told they'd never be able to form meaningful relationships again.

I saw this kind of nonsense spouted by apparently intelligent people who, in turn, found the place too much or got kicked out, having the same insane garbage heaped on them. No-one in the group appeared to notice this contradiction. Everyone who left was seen as beneath contempt, a weakling, while, of course, those who stayed were strong, and much 'truer to the cause' by comparison.

What the place did provide was, like Jonestown, a sense of belonging to a large group which had 'the answer' ie. support against a repressive and inhuman society, allied to a feeling of power and superiority through having all the answers. Self-righteousness was rampant, but there was also a sense of purpose - we were developing new ways of relating and living together communally.

There was a leader, but unlike Jonestown, no-one acknowledged there was a leader. It was supposed to be an anarchist set-up but in fact, everything revolved round one person. I find this even more scary than cults where the leader is worshipped. People would, in fact, be abject followers while violently denying that they followed anybody, often repeating the leader's words verbatim as if they were their own and going into furies when this was pointed out to them.

IN THIS ISSUE:

STATE OF EMERGENCY - LIFE UNDER MILITARY RULE: Recent events in Ghana.

p 4

LOW PAY DISPUTES: NUPE strike in Oxford.

p 9

CULTURE IN POLITICS: Room for a Renaissance in Iran?

p10

FEMINISM OR MORAL INDIGNATION: Whither the women's movement?

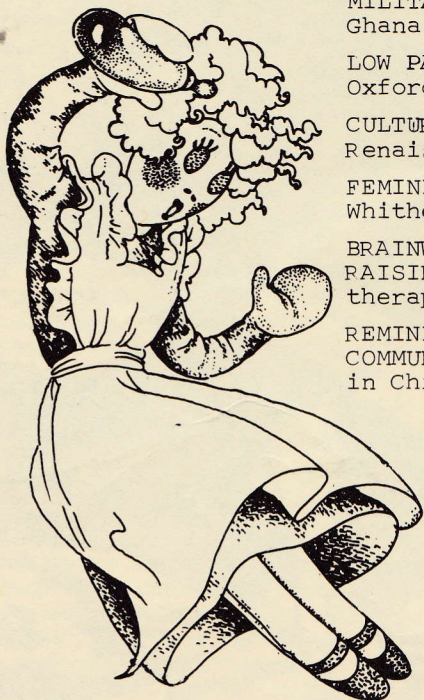
p12

BRAINWASHING AND CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING: Fiendish torture in therapy groups - Shock! Horror!

p14

REMINISCENCES OF A CHINESE COMMUNE: The social personality in Chinese Communist society.

p17



Since leaving, however, I find that I've largely had to go back to the way I lived before - relying on myself most of the time, getting very little support and feeling socially isolated and very lonely. This is the crux of the matter: unless we can establish alternative structures which give people a sense of being valued, a sense of social support and a sense of purpose, places like Jonestown and the one I was in will attract lots of lonely, desperate people with pretty vicious results.

Martin Ringer.

JONESTOWN AND LENINISM

The politics of 'personal feeling' and 'self-finding' are the emotional side of the politics of intellectual 'reductionism'. An attempt to remove all historically accrued social meaning and consciousness from a complicated world in order to make it more understandable and therefore less frightening. (Unfortunately when one keeps pulling at the thread, the jersey eventually disappears.) It leads either to 'behaviour modification' and adjustment, or to that system of ideas which reduces all human activity to motivation determined by objective economic laws; ie to Jonestown or Leninism.

Jones pulled up the drawbridge and imposed a siege mentality. The trotskyists were in a temporary encampment on the way to the final battle. Jonestown ignored the realities of class power. Leninism centres them on the capture of the state.

The Jonestown philosophy, imprisoned in the jungles of Guyana, is no threat, not even to the mosquitoes. When it expresses itself in aspects of alternative socialism and swampy libertarianism it is dangerous. To pretend, as many alternative freaks and co-counselling therapists do, that the problem of class power does not exist, gives Bolsheviks another lease of credibility.

It is for Solidarity to drive a wedge between itself and the false alternatives of Bolshevism and Jonestown. The way should not be made easier for the Leninists by those who advocate non-contestation in class politics, and practice a withdrawal into the self-made physical and mental prisons of cults, co-ops and collectives.

G.W. (Leeds)

EDITORIAL: elections



Every election exposes the schizophrenic nature of the British Left, as they emerge from the swamp to take part in the carnival. This latest election has proved no exception. Leftists voting Labour 'without illusions', feminists horse-trading women's rights with bourgeois politicians, anti-Nazis herding the racial minorities into the Labour camp, self-satisfied eco-freaks sponsoring economic stagnation and class fossilisation, Trotskyists storming parliament by proxy, while alternative capitalists/socialists sell their votes to the party offering most grant aid/ tax relief.

All this motley crew fought the election on terms and rules of play defined by bureaucratic capitalism. Any government will claim their actions are determined by the 'realities' of power. What constitutes a 'realistic' policy depends very much on whose reality you're living in. In a day to day sense, real power lies in the hands of top management, state officials and union bureaucrats, and they call the shots.

The danger of strikes and other forms of direct political action means that a government can't wholly ignore the rest of us either. Economic policy is reduced to trying to maintain profits and extend social control; taxes etc are raised or lowered by this criterion, not according to politicians' personal preferences. Elections are the terrain of the propagandist and the politician; we can only beat them by fighting on our own ground.

3rd world

In 1971 Solidarity published an article called 'Third Worldism or Socialism' which showed 'national liberation movements' for what they were: scabby class collaboration. To be sure, nationalism will continue to be an important source of mystification both in countries yet to be 'liberated' and in 'independent' countries (whether 'socialist' or 'capitalist'), but the ground has

shifted since then. Now the vast majority of the world's population are ruled by 'their own' authoritarian, bureaucratic regime under a greater or lesser measure of control by international capital. The Left has turned its attention to characterising 'neo-colonialism' or, more precisely, the process of 'underdevelopment'. This has taken the form of an analysis of world capitalism at a very general level - nice and safe politically. We are not denying the importance of this, but although underdevelopment moulds the conditions of everyday life in the 'Third World', there is little discussion, beyond nebulous slogans, of how peoples daily lives are affected, and how they struggle.

Moreover, the Left shies away from discussing, for example, Africans' exploitation of Africans. It is racist to ignore such exploitation. Meanwhile, swamp libertarians and Third Worlders continue to eulogise pre-capitalist village idylls that never existed, talk about 'rich countries' and 'poor countries', and see 'Alternative' or 'Appropriate' Technology as a panacea for all problems. A.T. under the present organisation of production means extreme exploitation - long hours, low wages, hard and tedious work for workers, who are servicing the needs of the 'advanced' sectors of the economy (cheap clothing and food for its workforce for example, cheap transport and raw materials). A.T. is now the basis of most aid programmes.

Of course we need information on the machinations of Multinational Corporations and so on. But these institutions are not All-Powerful. Such assumptions breed fatalism and passivity. In fact people struggle successfully against them. What is needed is more information on such struggles in the increasingly authoritarian regimes that characterise much of the 'Third World', the ways in which people are conditioned to accept their oppression, the extent to which 'traditions' are breaking down, and the form resistance takes, even if seeming 'reactionary' in Western eyes. The articles in this issue make a tentative start.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

STUDENTS

Ghana was well known in the early sixties as the first African country to get independence (in 1957). Nkrumah attempted a massive industrialisation and 'socialisation' of agriculture by virtually militarising labour, and appealing for self-sacrifice, discipline etc 'for the revolution'. The Left greeted this with euphoria as a model of socialist development in Africa. Alongside Russian and Eastern bloc aid, he had the tentative support of some multinational capital that saw that it could function just the same in a 'socialist state' (a view now commonplace for multinational corporations), despite the anti-imperialist rhetoric.

The attempt was a disaster. Workers opposition, in particular a wave of strikes (illegal since 1958) against an 'austerity budget' in 1961, was suppressed by Emergency Powers and Preventive Detention. The workers and peasants then turned to passive resistance, such as low productivity, lateness, absenteeism and theft.

After Nkrumah was ousted by a military coup in 1966 these facts, and the massive corruption of the regime, penetrated the Left's blinkered, sycophantic vision. But the failure of socialism was blamed on the domination of 'revolutionary elements' in the ruling party by 'reactionary, petty bourgeois factions', and not sought in the nature of the authoritarian regime itself.

This military regime was replaced by a civilian one in 1969, which was, in turn, ousted by the military in 1972 following another series of strikes against a National Development Levy. Ghana is now an obscure corner ruled by this same military outfit, like so many other African and Third World states.

It is a small country in West Africa of around 10 million people. Like all colonies its economy was developed to supply the industrial nations (in this case Britain) with raw materials: here these are most importantly cocoa (cultivated by small African capitalists), and gold and timber (exploited by expatriate concerns). These extractive industries are concentrated in the south, which is supplied with cheap migrant labour and food by the underdeveloped north. The north is predominantly muslim and the south christian. This is basically still the structure today, although now there is more industry in the south, and (subject to the limitations imposed by international capital) Ghanaians manage the economy through a vast number of state boards and corporations. The mass of the population is rural, subsistence farmers producing some cash crops, although there is now a substantial working class employed chiefly in the government departments, mines, railways, ports and agriculture, and a rapidly growing number of unemployed young people trying to hustle a living in the cities.

The writer has recently returned from the country and reports on the growing crisis of authority there, suggesting that Solidarity's analysis of advanced capitalism is at least partly applicable in the underdeveloped world.

On January 13 1978, the anniversary of the 1972 coup, students at the University of Ghana staged a demonstration at which they burnt an effigy of General Acheampong, the head of the ruling Supreme Military Council (SMC). In 1977 they had burned the car of a military spy on campus, and this time the state's reply was already well prepared. Several hundred armed police in brand-new, blue painted armoured cars (no expense spared on the machinery of repression) moved on to the campus, on the pretext that a policeman and rifle had been kidnapped. Students, staff and workers were thoroughly beaten up, chased in and out of their halls, women students stripped, rooms smashed up and many arrested for another beating at the police station. Soldiers (popularly known as 'zombies') later spent hours dredging ponds for the missing gun, much to everyone's amusement. 1978 was particularly rough at the universities, though police and soldiers had often duffed up students during this and previous regimes. The students left the campuses which were closed down for several months and the year rescheduled.

Lack of discipline in society as a whole, but among youth and at work in particular, is the subject of constant tirades by the rulers. Resistance at schools and teacher training colleges has also increased markedly over the last few years. Secondary school students regularly riot, loot and burn their schools. Schoolkids of a secondary school in the second city jeered Acheampong as he returned from a tour of the North. Police beat them up, together with their teachers, after which fitters in the city marched into the centre to sort out the police with their tyre-levers and spanners. Fighting was averted on this



...LIFE UNDER MILITARY RULE

occasion by the intervention of a cool army officer. At the largest secondary school in the country, police beat up students that demanded the dismissal of the headmaster and presented the administration with a carefully researched list of complaints of mis-management and evidence of corruption.

Protest is rarely about the nature of education itself, or explicitly on the issue of authority, but rather about bread and butter issues - like bread and butter. Food is lousy and meagre. Most of the kids come from rural backgrounds, at great expense to their parents, and want to 'get on', to a cushy white collar job (and I for one don't blame them). Yet they still resist. A friend of mine recently had his kneecap broken when the headmaster called the police in to quell a protest.

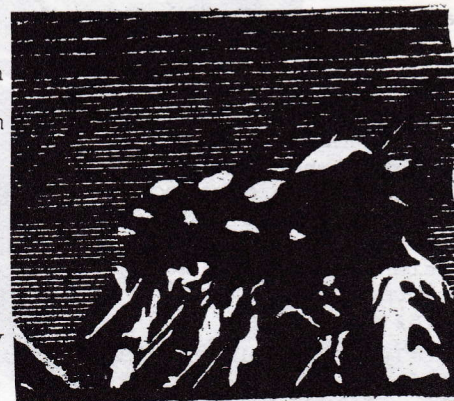
In May 1977 students at the three universities attempted to march into their respective towns, to widen the struggle by 'mobilising' the workers. (They are full of such Leninist crap of course, by default, with the large quantities of Marx-Lenin-Mao available). Some workers had, in fact, invaded the main market in Accra to force down prices earlier that year. Students did not try to link with workers in 1978, but the SMC feared that mass protest, particularly at inflation, might be galvanised by the students, or by the middle-class opposition which had emerged in the form of a professionals' strike following the student unrest of mid-1977. This consisted of the Bar Association and the Professional Bodies Association, mainly doctors and lawyers who had been left out in the cold when the regime dished out patronage.



"POLITICS"

The middle-class opposition grouped itself under the 'People's Movement for Freedom and Justice', an unholy alliance of previously antagonistic politicians and out of favour military men from all the previous regimes. It included politicians of the 'extreme left', Nkrumahists, liberal 'democrats' and ex-soldiers. Students 'critically supported' it as the only viable opposition and put a lot of energy into its campaigns. Some accurately perceived that a return to party politics would give them a little more room to manoeuvre. But they were supporting the very soldiers and politicians that had beaten them up in previous years. There is no evidence that workers supported the PMFJ.

The place seemed about to blow up during the aftermath of the 'Union Government Referendum', a crass attempt by the SMC to legitimise their rule through introducing a bogus 'democratic' form of military rule. 'Union Government' was a concept revealed to General Acheampong by God (no-one else ever knew what it was meant to be), and it produced some most fascinatingly bizarre government propaganda. Acheampong imported a wierd evangelist, Claire Prophet of the Great White Brotherhood (sic), who toured the country propounding a new secular trinity of army, common people and intellectuals, all pulling together for 'Union Government'. Huge billboards appeared, couched in the debased language of state socialism the government used, calling for 'Revolutionary Discipline' and 'The Complete Mobilisation of Intellectual, Spiritual and Manpower Resources' etc. A vast array of phoney front organisations sprang up, like the 'Peace and Solidarity Council' (which was affiliated to an international peace organisation based in the Eastern bloc), a band of highly-paid pro-government thugs who very ably smashed up the meetings of the PMFJ (which was refused permission to hold them anyway).



The groundswell of opposition to the government went deeper than the party politics appeal of the PMFJ scoundrels; those who voted against the government or abstained in the referendum did not necessarily support the PMFJ. There was, in fact, a widespread feeling that neither side was any good, but little idea of an alternative, except for the predictable leninist ideas of some students.

Acheampong announced a massive endorsement of his 'Unigov' following some blatant doctoring of the results (there were at least 5 versions of them), intimidation (the Electoral Commissioner 'disappeared' on referendum day) and ballot rigging (the first result was a massive 'Yes' from the remote NE of the country, where newspapers normally take two days to arrive - I later learnt that the people had protested against the manipulation of this result).

The atmosphere after this farce was electric. The disgust was so widespread. But the days slipped by and nothing happened. Perhaps everyone was paralysed with outrage, or the students were still licking their wounds after January 13th, or the workers and peasants were busy coping with the huge inflation, or maybe doing things that no-one heard about. People were waiting for something to happen, for someone else to start something. The referendum success fully defused discontent, and people slipped back into grumbling, hopelessness and looking after themselves.

WORKERS

The town where I was staying, in the underdeveloped north, rural based and never 'militant' in the conventional sense, was affected by three strikes at this time.

In March the civil servants struck. I wandered with a friend, a good militant, around various offices as he patiently and clearly explained the situation to his fellow workers. He is an ardent member of a spiritualist church, a big boozier, smokes a lot of grass, and has lost a lot of money on the national lottery, using juju to predict the winning numbers.

In April nurses staged a national strike for the first time. In town they wanted a decent bus to go to work in, as well as more pay. The government tried to discredit them by saying that they were claiming a 'maidservant's allowance'.

In May, while soldiers were having a party in the barracks, there was a power cut---a regular occurrence for the townspeople because the power plant is too decrepit to supply the expanding town. With the approval of their officers the soldiers rushed down to beat up the electricity workers and the manager (who was having drinks with some Big Men at the time), bundled workers into a truck, took them to the barracks and drilled them. (Drilling might mean being forced to crawl along the ground on your stomach while being kicked or pissed on by soldiers. At best you might get away with a beating). Next morning the workers downed tools, leaving the town blacked out and without water. The Regional Commissioner tried to persuade them to return to work and received a shower of abuse in reply. The workers then marched into town where they dispersed into smaller groups to tour the bars, chanting, singing and having a good time. One of them told me "We pay for the khaki they wear, they are wearing khaki and they think they are special. We are paying taxes for them to come and beat us up". Another said, "We voted for them (ie voted 'Yes' in the referendum) for this?" A broadcasting worker told me the soldiers would never do it to them, "The SMC fears

us. We just threaten to strike and they give in." I ask him then why they don't stop the government broadcasting its lies. Next day the power workers returned to work 'for Humanitarian reasons', but they had widespread support against the outrageous action of the soldiers despite the suffering caused in the town. There were at least two similar incidents in other towns.

Meanwhile the PMFJ continued to agitate although it had been banned. The government controlled papers churned out the most crass rubbish and people stopped reading them. The economy lurched from bad to worse and rumours of corruption on a vast scale were rife. The government announced that no foreign exchange reserves were left, yet the Cocoa Marketing Board awarded Acheampong a golden chain, stretching from his neck to his feet, and a personal 'presidential' jet was imported for him and his entourage. It was rumoured, particularly during the referendum campaign, that he had a room full of cash to lavish on his cronies, not to mention vast amounts of foreign exchange banked abroad by him and his fellow officers. It later emerged that the commander in charge of the Cocoa Marketing Board had spent £½ million on drinks. People said it couldn't get any worse, but it did. Officially inflation was running at 150%, but on some foodstuffs it was closer to 500%, a loaf of bread costing half a day's wages. There were shortages of everything---from petrol to soap, from tyres to sugar, from beer to milk, all of which would fetch fantastic black market prices, even if you knew where to buy them. Inflation is blamed on the oil price crisis of 1973, but foreign

exchange reserves, relatively healthy at the end of the fifties, have been squandered by successive regimes on prestigious 'development' projects, and, of course, on massive military spending.

In June Acheampong was ousted by other members of the SMC. This was basically a means of survival for them---Acheampong had become too much of a liability. They feared that if the situation blew up their 'assets' would be probed, so they hoped to make a deal with the middle-class opposition. A lot of detainees were released and some of them offered government posts. Acheampong himself was detained and elections promised for the next year. But in the street people were saying "Only the driver has changed...."

Far from defusing the situation, the relative liberalisation released pent up anger and a massive strike wave began to build up. Council workers went on strike in capital, and the classic headline 'Accra is stinking' appeared. Workers marched on a Lebanese soap factory, demanding to know why they hadn't seen soap for nearly two years when there is a factory next door. Workers of the state Industrial Holding Company were drilled for lateness and lack of enthusiasm. Tractor drivers at two agricultural companies, and forty Cotton Board field assistants were sacked for low productivity and lack of interest in the job.

Post Office workers stopped work briefly, followed by workers at the four breweries (including Guinness), who went on the rampage, drinking beer and smashing bottles. At Accra Brewery they locked the main gate and threatened the plant manager with a wooden gun. Management and security staff



were mobbed and workers locked one of the managers in the toilet by stacking palettes against the door. The SMC were scared by the violence and immediately set up a committee of enquiry. At another brewery workers threatened to set fire to a personnel managers car. In all 123 workers were dismissed and told to reapply for their jobs. The employers formed themselves into the 'Management Action Brewery Group' and the union gave in to three of their four demands, namely: no pay during the strike, the union to pay for damage and to discipline guilty parties, but workers didn't have to reapply. The breweries were then shut down to prevent 'further damage to life and property'. The strike got a lot of publicity, not least because it strangled the already scarce supply of beer; it was adverse publicity of course, but it may have given confidence to other workers.

In the north, where capitalist agriculture has been developing with massive state and foreign aid in the form of subsidised materials and services, the peasants resisted incorporation into the wage labour force by concentrating on their own food farms, outwitting attempts by state bodies to manage them. Farm workers resisted by theft, going home early, and poor work, and villagers whose land had been commandeered set fire to crops. Many of the farmers are high ranking soldiers and bureaucrats.

In the meantime, the students had regained their confidence. When it was discovered that a large quantity of meat was allowed to rot because of management ineptitude, students burst into the kitchens to see for themselves, and looted cartons of precious tinned food and drinks, including whisky.

In October the strike wave gained momentum with a crippling action by the state run oil refinery workers. The TUC appealed for them to return to work, but instead other workers in fuel distribution (Texaco, Shell, Mobil) and Ghana Airways junior staff came out in sympathy. The oil workers resumed work, having won their demands, but continued to go slow, drying up the already scarce supply of petrol. Journalists then struck over salaries and press freedom.

At the beginning of November, workers at a French based trading company struck and post office workers besieged a police station for two hours after police had beaten up three of their colleagues for 'insulting behaviour'. Electricity Corporation workers blacked out the capital for a weekend, and there was no water and plenty of chaos. The new chairman of the SMC, Akuffo, was shouted at and had stones thrown at his car by an angry crowd in a petrol queue.

Doctors were to go on strike the following Monday, followed by Passport Office workers and then the rest of the civil service.

The strikes were economic, at least on the surface: for a cost of living allowance, a housing allowance, bonuses and tax concessions to boost meagre earnings against inflation: but striking brought the workers into conflict with the state in its most naked and vicious forms.

There was tension in the air, hysteria. I wondered if it was happening at last, had it reached the boiling point, the breaking point. But next day Akuffo declared a State of Emergency. There had been more than 80 strikes in the past months involving 70,000 workers, unionised and non-unionised, and at all levels.

Strikes were now made illegal. The electricity workers were berated for sabotage and threatened with criminal proceedings for damage to installations. All civil servants who did not report for work were to be sacked. All leave was cancelled for army, police and prison guards, and police were out in force at night. A prison guard told me he had been ordered to report in but wouldn't go, "The pay is too small, they can sack me if they want to and give me three months salary." Civil servants defied the State of Emergency, immigrat-

In the recent past the industrial calm of this country has been threatened by not less than 80 strikes and lockouts involving over 70,000 workers of various sectors leading to the loss of several millions of cedis and more disturbingly, loss to life and property.

normal channels. As if in a stampede, these workers just decided, group after group, to set aside the law, the ethics and all the known requirements of normal industrial relations, and to lay down their tools.

They wantonly damaged and destroyed their employers' property; they tampered with sensitive installations and employed their technical skills to sabotage the means for restoring services.

A state of emergency was last declared in Ghana in the early 1960's when there was a spate of bomb throwing to force the regime of the late Dr Kwame Nkrumah to resign.



• Lieutenant-General Fred Williams Kwasi Akuffo, Head of State and Chairman of the Supreme Military Council, speaking to the nation yesterday evening.

China promises
Polish
Lonrho dips in
West Africa

**GOLD
GOLD
GOLD**

JAPAN

US aid ...



CADBURY

Mercedes-Benz

IMF special
fund loans

Elder Dempster Lines Limited,
Guinness
improves

Barclays Bank of Ghana Limited

UNILEVER

Cocoa still
sliding

Paterson, Zochonis
and Company Ltd.

ion officers stopped international flights, and in town workers went in strike at the Ministry of Agriculture and the Regional Office.

Two days later most were still out, soldiers stood guard at the offices 'to protect property' and office workers were drilled for being late. There was an effective curfew in the capital as soldiers went on the rampage, stopping people in the street and in cars and looting them. The SMC carried out its threat and sacked 2100 striking civil servants, inviting applicants to assemble in the Sports Stadium for the vacant jobs. Several thousand unemployed, hustlers and thieves turned up and 150 were taken on.

The soldiers were given free reign (many of the rank and file were suffering just like the rest of the public from the shortages and inflation), as the SMC mounted 'The Operation'. They raided stores and seized goods being sold at black market prices, profiteering beer bars were closed down and some big men in business and state corporations were arrested and had their heads shaved (with a razor if lucky, with a broken bottle if not).

This was a populist diversionary tactic to take the pressure off, and a campaign of intimidation by example: this could happen to you! People stopped smoking cigarettes in the streets, to avoid being beaten up by soldiers asking where you got them from (you could only have bought them on the black market). There was a swoop on black market currency dealers but the big fish continued to operate.

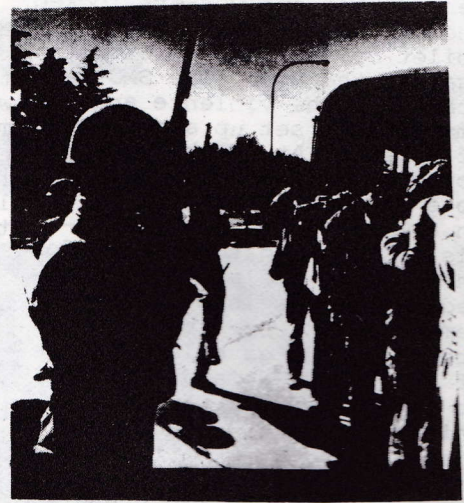
'POLITICS' AGAIN

The mix of intimidation and populist measures seemed to calm things down for the government. It was at this point that I left the country. The State of Emergency was lifted on January 1st, as was the ban on political parties and elections are to be held in July. The PMFJ completely disintegrated as the politicians went their separate ways: there are now around 17 parties 'left', 'right' and weird, which regularly split and ally with each other. Attention on them may save the toppling regime by diverting popular unrest, but latest reports indicate a healthy contempt for the politicians as 'money choppers': someone said

"Democracy is a capital intensive business". The trouble is people are too bound up with personal survival to oppose them. But the strikes still continue. To my knowledge there has been a strike of port workers, 150 were sacked for demanding a 65% wage rise, an ambulance and the reinstatement of their branch secretary. There was also a 15 day rail strike, the workers defied the railway union and chased away those who tried to return to work under police protection. When the strike was over, angry workers stoned an overnight train in protest. A building contractor was beaten up in February for not paying his workers.

BARBARISM - CHEAT TO LIVE, OR GET OUT

However the collective struggle of the strike wave obscure a more fundamental and depressing individualism in everyday life; alienation, cynicism and despair. There is certainly a breakdown of authority and values (the police are too busy chopping bribes to enforce laws), but in a negative direction, away from the collective self-activity of order takers against order givers, whoever they may be: capitalist bosses, bureaucratic bosses, or union bosses. The fantastic inflation, the cynical corruption, the shortages and the black market make it essential for people to cheat to live, or if they can afford it, leave the country (hundreds of teachers, but also skilled and unskilled workers have hustled to leave). People not only cheat the bosses, stealing from work, being late, lazy and so on, they rip off each other. This cheating is known as 'kalabule', getting the maximum profit from buying and selling scarce goods, wheeling, dealing and collecting bribes for services rendered, even swindling your own friends. You can make much more of a living from this 'trade' than from wage earning in such an inflationary situation, so almost everyone is into it. It's not a class based thing but pervades all levels of society, nor is it in itself new, but in the last few years has reached epidemic proportions. Someone told me he thought that social life had all but broken down.



I suppose the Traditional Left would point to the lack of 'The Party' to capitalise on the strike wave, or they would talk of a leadership vacuum after the referendum, when the atmosphere was electric. They would explain the predominance of 'kalabule' in a similar way; nobody waiting in the wings to lead the masses to proletarian dictatorship. The truth is, this mentality of wait and see, wait for somebody else to start something, a leader or saviour, instead of acting yourself, is part of the problem. There is a strong tradition of direct democracy and active participation in Ghana, but also a great emphasis on status and hierarchy, the cult of the Big Men. What is lacking are autonomous workers and peasants organisations outside the state and union structures. There are signs of such movements in a few sections of the working class, for example, among the gold miners who have violently rejected 'their' leaders, formed alternative democratic unions and organisations and waged struggles under their own control and won. Yet the possibility of such movements is stifled much more by 'kalabule' and the diversion of party politics than by even the most vicious state repression.

POSTSCRIPT: In March the bankrupt currency was withdrawn, the capital is totally without water and food prices are even more fantastic. Cholera is spreading and the borders have been closed for a fortnight. Four people died in huge queues at banks trying to change their savings into the new currency.

Capitalist barbarism rampant in an underdeveloped country.....

Fuseini Abubukari

LOW PAY DISPUTES

As a Solidarity reader involved in the recent 'low pay' disputes, I felt it would be worthwhile to write about it, particularly if no one else does.

Division is the key note everywhere. The unions managed to synchronise some public sector claims, but in my area, Oxford, there was no stewards committee to keep these claims together. They all settled separately, even the different sections of NUPE - then the nurses were offered a little more, the Post Office and the civil servants a little more than that - guaranteed to make us hate each others guts.

Not that the public sector has ever been united before, at least the trend is in the right direction. Lorry drivers, having just won their full claim, were usually very co-operative in turning away from picket lines. One driver came 200 miles, drew up and saw the picket, waved and went straight home without stopping.

But within the area hospitals branch there was next to no unity - a stewards committee exists, but not much info got across, and within any one hospital the division is very deep.

Throughout the hospital there is a sexual division of labour; male nurses and female porters are one in a million - male domestics are few, in catering the women have separate roles from men, women doctors are struggling to exist, and in management and as technicians women get junior roles, clerical, sterile supply, sewing and uniforms are other women's jobs. Maintenance is male, physiotherapists and dieticians are female - the list is endless.

Then there are class divisions - particularly as my hospital is a teaching hospital attached to Oxford University - but the worst divisions are between rival sections of ancillary workers. In NUPE, the porters and catering don't get on too well, that is in our hospital, as the kitchens have a fat bonus earned by past militancy, putting them in the £60 bracket as a basic (which we were fighting for) and also, after overtime, as a take home pay.

The general picture was that the catering were scornful of one-day strikes, but the porters felt that if they couldn't get an all-out strike they had to do something - due to their poverty their need was more urgent. If porters and catering had been unified, domestics might have followed, but in the event they were reluctant to strike at all. Domestics tend to be older married women - apart from sociological statistics showing older women to be the main source of working class Tory votes, they are less directly affected by their wages ('pin money') and in their job they come into contact with patients and nurses more than other ancillaries do.

The catering steward was in the middle of an appeal against an unfair sacking, and the domestics' steward resigned during the dispute. We were in many ways weakened and divided.

Some of us tried, and caused a few headaches for management - piles of rubbish, post etc. People were out for a day here, a week there, never everyone at once. We came up against the worst problem for hospital strikes - where to draw the line, what is an emergency? As the dispute dragged on we were inclined to get harder - but it was too late.

Many people say if the union had called us all out indefinitely from the start we would have won something worthwhile. But the union said, even if it sold all its offices, it only had £10 assets per member (that's a year's subscription) and we weren't prepared for a long strike. In the event, those chosen for selective actions got up to £30 a week, but those who took strike action off their own bat got £1 per day, NUPE standard strike pay.



I don't think any NUPE member in our hospital has a good word to say for the union although members of unions like COHSE often envy our 'militant' reputation. Ha, ha! What I hope for is all low-paid public sector workers to fight together for a minimum wage. Some people say if the Tories get back in it'll be easier to unite people for a fight. I don't think we can expect much help from moderately-paid workers with industrial muscle, but if we get it, so much the better.

Meanwhile cuts will go on, most of them in really insidious and invisible ways. They want to abolish my kitchen, the diet kitchen, when they move to a new hospital this summer - so they're reducing our workload in the hope of driving us scatty with boredom! You still have to be there to get paid, it's just as bad as working too hard.

It's one thing being a factory worker slaving only for someone's profit, but looking after the workers' health puts us in a hard position when it comes to wage demands. Those who call for 'more imaginative tactics' ought to come down on to the floor and try.

Ed Pope.



culture in politics

Several centuries ago, European civilisation underwent a cultural revolution (the Renaissance - or Rebirth) which provided the foundation of its subsequent political and technological revolutions (in that order). This cultural revolution engendered many assumptions shared by capitalism and socialism alike. Religion was confronted by rationalism - and lost. Material affluence - and not submission to God's will - became the dominant value, accepted and desired by the vast majority. The main thrust of the socialist argument against capitalism was that it failed to provide material affluence to society as a whole. Instead, capitalism generated economic misery, wars and oppression. The socialist movement, deeply embedded in the matrix of bourgeois rationalism, assumed that its own values were universal, and that all civilisations (ie cultures) would accept the new values of European civilisation as self-evidently superior.

Material affluence is preferable to material misery, and well being preferable to ill-being. But both conditions assume 'being'. And this, for humans, is not merely 'physiological being' but cultural and psychological sentience. There are many examples of cultures and individuals who are physically fit but whose sense of cultural and personal identity have been shattered. Individuals, communities or civilisations in such a situation suffer a mental misery which cannot be eliminated by material affluence. Those who do not know what they are, or whether they are at all, are in no position to care about their material condition. They want, first and foremost, to regain their identity: cultural - for communities, and personal - for individuals.

As far as civilisations and cultures are concerned it is, in fact, often the European culture of material affluence that destroys traditional cultural identities. This has happened to most 'Third World' cultures and has generated an on-going crisis of identity and values there which is a major political force. The significance of this has been demonstrated

in Iran, where Shi-ite Islam - NOT the Left - raised the banner of regaining cultural identity, and won massive support. It is true that the despotism and corruption of the Shah's regime would have generated a revolt anyway, but the fact that in the actual upheaval it was the religious leaders - emphasising the cultural opposition to the regime - who proved dominant, illustrates the political significance of the cultural crisis.

The revolutionary Left is, unfortunately, insensitive to cultural forces. But even if it had been aware and concerned about them, what could it have done? Apart from the New Left critique of the 'consumer culture' in the late 1960's, the entire socialist movement has little of significance to say about cultural crisis. It dismisses the religious manifestation of the cultural crisis as false consciousness on a massive scale. To reintroduce cultural factors (with all their psychological aspects) into revolutionary socialist theory would amount to nothing less than a cultural revolution...within socialist thinking.

The overthrow of the Shah's regime followed a prolonged and massive upheaval under religious leadership. It came as a surprise to most people. Even the CIA, with all its expertise and special

involvement in Iran, underestimated the force of the combined political and cultural fury that swept away the most powerful dictatorship in the Middle East. Watching events on TV one saw demonstrations which did not disperse even when shot at by the police and army. One could sense the intensity of the anti-Shah feeling. When people march again and again, in full knowledge that they will be attacked by gunfire, and possibly killed or wounded, and when they keep at it in massive numbers, the days of any regime are numbered.

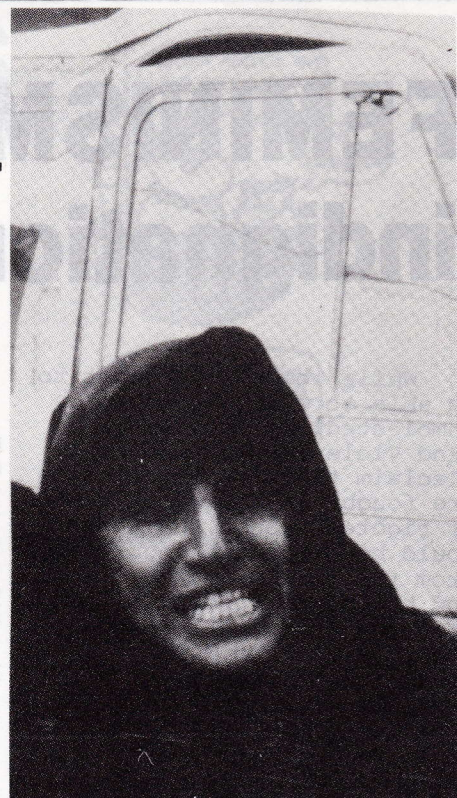
The Left had a much better assessment of the strength of the anti-Shah feeling than the CIA, with all its electronic gadgetry and 'Think Tanks'. But it too was baffled by the dominant role of the religious element in this political upheaval. Yet there were many signs that Islam was still a powerful political force. The Left ignored or misread them. The reason for this myopia is the strong economic and sociological bias in the Left's interpretation of political upheavals. The cultural component is missing in such analyses, whether applied to Iran or to the working class in various industrial countries. There are indications that cultural frustrations play an increasing role in politics, even in the West itself.



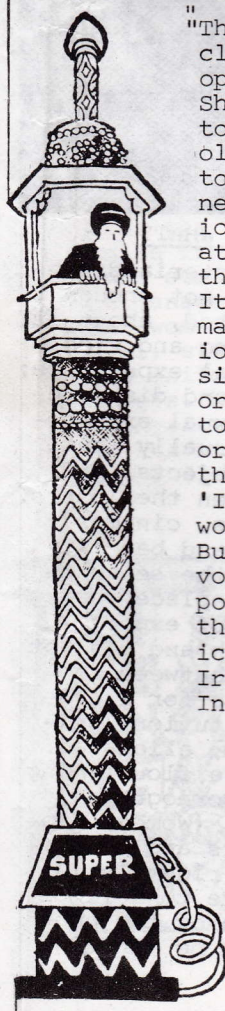
The Iranian upheaval itself is a momentous event. Its economic and political repercussions on the West are easy to discern. Less obvious are its massive implications for Islamic civilisation. The 'Islamic Republic' endorsed by the majority in the referendum is the first time in history that a theocracy has to confront the problems of TV, trade unions, birth control, women demanding equality, economic policy, etc. The Islamic religious law will have to be adapted to the new social and political realities. This will cause a schism between traditionalists and modernists within the religious establishment. And it will generate growing resentment among non-believers. Sooner or later Islam itself will face a cultural revolution, in its own constituency. Only after such a revolution will the road be open for original cultural, social and political creativity in that civilisation. The critique of Islam is long overdue in the Arab world.

Most of the Left there has avoided it. Various CPs even tried to legitimise themselves through the Koran. The Iranian CP (Tudeh) even called its members and sympathisers to vote for the 'Islamic Republic' in the referendum - probably the first time that a Communist Party has supported the creation of a theocracy. Such opportunism is not the quality that will generate and sustain a new cultural revolution. The declaration of an 'Islamic Republic' means the explicit assumption of power and responsibility by the religious establishment. It implies a courageous readiness to face the challenge of modern life. When the inevitable failure comes there will be no way to put the blame on 'traitors', 'foreigners', 'infidels', etc. in an attempt to cover up for the failure of the faith itself. And when the religious fetters crumble the civilisation will start to move.

Aki.



For an example of a purely political interpretation of the role of the Shi'ite leadership, consider two excerpts from the IMG's pamphlet: 'Iran, the unfolding revolution', December 1978.



"The Iranian regime claimed that the opposition of the Shi'ite hierarchy to the 'White Revolution' was due to their backwardness and opposition to the liberation of women and the land reforms. It is true that many of the religious leaders considered these reforms as a threat to their own authority and thought that through them 'Islamic values' would be eroded. But they were most vocal in their opposition to what they saw as a policy of selling out Iran's interests. In any case, as

as far as the masses are concerned the reasons behind the Shi'ite opposition in the early 60s is immaterial. Now that, after 15 years, the devastating results of these reforms have become obvious to everyone, what people remember is not why Khomeini and his followers opposed the Shah's reforms but the fact that they were the only significant group which did oppose them right from the start."

This interpretation imputes a specific selectivity to 'what people remember.' A few lines earlier the same author had stated (about the overthrow of Mossadeq in 1953) 'the memory of this defeat stays fresh in the minds of the masses.' So the same people, who are supposed to have forgotten why Khomeini opposed the Shah in 1963, are supposed to remember well the CIA coup of 1953. This is obviously a patchy interpretation of an intangible like 'what people remember'.

An interpretation like this, which is insensitive to the new, or unique, features of historical phenomena, contributes nothing to the revolutionary process. All that it says has been said before. Isn't a revolution led - in 1978/9 - by a religious leadership, sufficiently unique to make people stop and think before they apply the standard,

purely political and economic interpretation? Apparently not! The author is convinced that the majority of the population will not endorse an 'Islamic State':

"Of course, the religious opposition, even in its most radical form, is still expressed through a convoluted religious ideology. But the growing predominance and the popularity of the leaders of this religious opposition within the mass movement does not signify a religious renaissance. Despite the declarations of the religious leaders and despite the propaganda of the imperialist press, Islam or an 'Islamic state' is not the goal of the masses."

This sounds rather hollow after the massive turnout and support in the referendum for the creation of an 'Islamic Republic'. Whatever the criticism about the way in which the referendum was conducted, there can be little doubt that even had it been conducted in a genuinely democratic way, the Islamic Republic would still have been endorsed by the vast majority of the population. In any case 'a rising level of consciousness' cannot follow a falling rate of memory, as implied above. To overthrow Khomeini people will have to remember why he opposed the Shah, not only that he opposed him.

FEMINISM or moral indignation

While women must fight to be able to walk the streets unmolested; if the feminist 'End Violence on Women' and 'Reclaim the Night' campaigns are fought in the moral vacuum of righteousness, then they could become indistinguishable from the 'clean up the streets and ban pornography' call of the Mary Whitehouse brigade. The puritans complain of lack of religious commitment as their appeals to decency and conscience are ignored, while some feminists reduce the problems to mens failings and culpability, backed up with demands on the state (1) to bring reforms and sanctions. But those who suckle at the state's breasts will find little of the milk of human kindness. They may discover that the violence perpetrated by its institutions is usually based on class not sex discrimination.



MRS. LANE TOLD THEM ALL THAT IT WAS A SCANDAL AND A CONSPIRACY.

JOBS FOR THE GIRLS

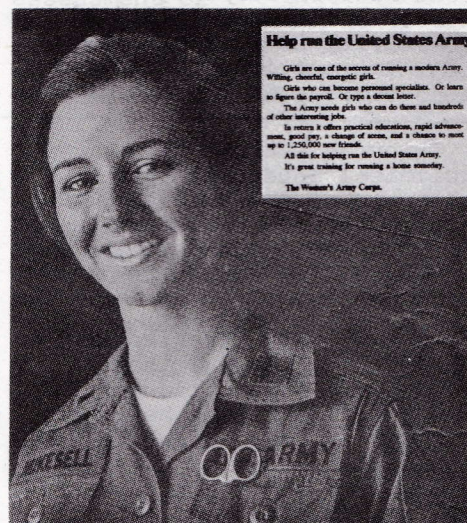
If, as the women's movement correctly points out, a major factor in male violence towards women is the perception of her as an object to be owned and possessed (and expected to sacrifice herself in his pursuit of social status and acceptable image), then surely the concepts of objectification property and hierarchy must be investigated in all relations in society, and not isolated to those between ill-defined 'men' and 'women' abstracted from the complexity of social and class background. Such a pertinent political analysis might draw out that sacrificial element in feminism which, usually unstated, means; 'don't let men own you, give yourself to the women's movement.' This trend can sometimes lead to a further surrender of individuality (what's left of it) to the detriment of the struggle for the self-actualised autonomous person. Careers of some feminist writers, artists, fashion pundits and academics, and profits from women's bookshops and craft studios are being made on the commitment (and self-denial?) of the majority in the movement. Watch all predators! Don't sacrifice yourself for men or women.

VIOLENCE - MALE AND FEMALE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL

Will the call for an end to violence on women exclude the use of revolutionary political violence against Liz Windsor, Thatcher, Shirley Williams and reactionary feminists. Or will this issue of class politics be censored by the thought police and stormtroopers of female emancipation, using the smokescreen of 'male chauvinism' to cover up their middle-class bias and elitism. Or can the violently inclined 'liberated' women join the U.S. army (2) (Observer C/S 18 March 79) or the police or the prison service. Or the authoritarian type make it as a solicitor, magistrate or judge, helping send rapists down for a sorting out by women warders and women probation officers. And what about women priests?(3)

Among the arbiters of how and what to think, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours spouse' could become 'Thou shalt not have any sexist thoughts'.

It's not enough to respond by saying 'it's a man's world'. Much more pertinent is the fact that it is a class dominated world. And 'women's lib' to those who rule means the recruitment of women to those areas which will best ensure the continuance of their rule.



Help run the United States Army.

Girls are one of the secrets of running a modern Army. Writing, clerical, energetic girls. Girls who can become personal specialists. Or learn to figure the payroll. Or type a threat letter. The Army needs girls who can do these and hundreds of other interesting jobs. In return it offers practical education, rapid advancement, good pay, a change of scene, and a chance to meet up to 1,250,000 new friends. All this for helping run the United States Army. It's great training for running a home country. The Women's Army Corps.

AFTER PORN: WHAT?

Amidst the hysteria directed against porn, not enough is said, and repeated, about it being an alienating and vicarious area of sexual experience; a substitute for and displacement of better sexual expression; with women usually (but not always) the objects, and the majority of men the losers. To close bookshops, cinemas and strip joints and ban literature, and, as the separatists would, not replace them with new methods of experimentation, approach and contact at the interface between the sexes, is a recipe for increased rape, prostitution, privatised fetishism, alienated masturbation and a flourishing black market in pornography, among both sexes. (Women, especially as workers and consumers in their own right, sex-starved and unable to fulfill desires played on by the publicity media, can be mental rapists too.)

Sexual thoughts, already denied a diet of sexual satisfaction, are not exorcised, when the menu is withdrawn. They are simply further repressed.

Increasingly, women have their sexual desires diverted to the pages of the male nude glossy mags, or reduced to screaming at wrestling matches and panty wetting at Tom Jones concerts.



CLASS STRUGGLE OR CHAUVINISM

It is wrong to confuse male competitiveness (are women not competitive?) with contestation in class struggle, and conflict. Therapists and co-counsellors of the Men Against Sexism groups, in attempting to eliminate so-called sexism and chauvinism by highlighting men's hidden weaknesses (Achilles Heel!) will generate more submissiveness at the expense of that little confidence and assertion they still have. This is not vacuous talk. There is a revolution to be fought for and it requires autonomous, self-managed people, not the guilt laden, the sycophantic and the deferential. The fight cannot be fought on the divisive basis of each sex's sectional and separatist interests. Rather it must be fought for on the understanding that sexual potential can only be realised by changing social relations, beyond and within the sexes, as well as between them.

To fight for state reforms will only result in the adjustment of personnel within the ruling hierarchy, with some women continuing to enter the area of privilege, status and domination, and the majority of women (and men) excluded. To attempt the reforms at a grass roots level by spreading the misery and drudgery around; that is by men staying at home and women going out to work, without a perspective for challenging our incarceration in the home and workplace, is self-administered submission. It is simply to create interchangeable units at the disposal of an external ruling force.

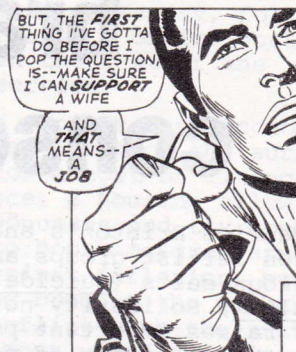
Eliminating privileges and opportunities which men have at the expense of women will go on, but to continually to call for 'equal opportunity' is to reinforce a reactionary myth embedded in the idea of 'success' in a careerist, competitive, scarcity-ridden society.

TOWARDS A NEW SEXUALITY

The construction of a new feminine (and masculine) sexuality is a revolutionary activity, only if it challenges the existing class relations and cannot be accommodated within them. Our surroundings can only be eroticised when all external authorities, which construct our sexuality in their interest, are removed. Men and women must therefore be the conscious subject not the manipulated object of the sexual revolution. At the very least it must be realised on the basis of the interaction, not the separation, of the sexes if that foundation stone of society, privatised sectional interest, is to be demolished. Reformist demands, guilt inducement, separatism, is surrender; penitent and divisive.

To only categorise people by biology and social gendering is to pretend that the complicated interweave of class differences amongst the sexes is unimportant. The women's liberation movement is mainly a middle class preserve. Middle class women have middle class expectations and motivations. Their involvement with working class women is often on the basis of condescending do-goodism (battered wives hostels, social security entitlements etc.). The middle classes have espoused radical causes in the past (social democracy, the Labour Party) using them as a vehicle for their own ends. The signs are that the women's movement could go the same way.

G.W., (Leeds)



(1) A major element in the new ruling class as defined by Solidarity is the governmental bureaucracy at national and local level. It is therefore inconsistent for us to support movements which, by making demands on it, strengthen this bureaucracy's credibility as the political parentage of our time.

(2) Combat duty, alongside men, is likely in the future, as a concession to 'equality'. To prove that they can be as violent and tough as men, women will be given the dubious privilege (available to men for centuries) of dying for their country.

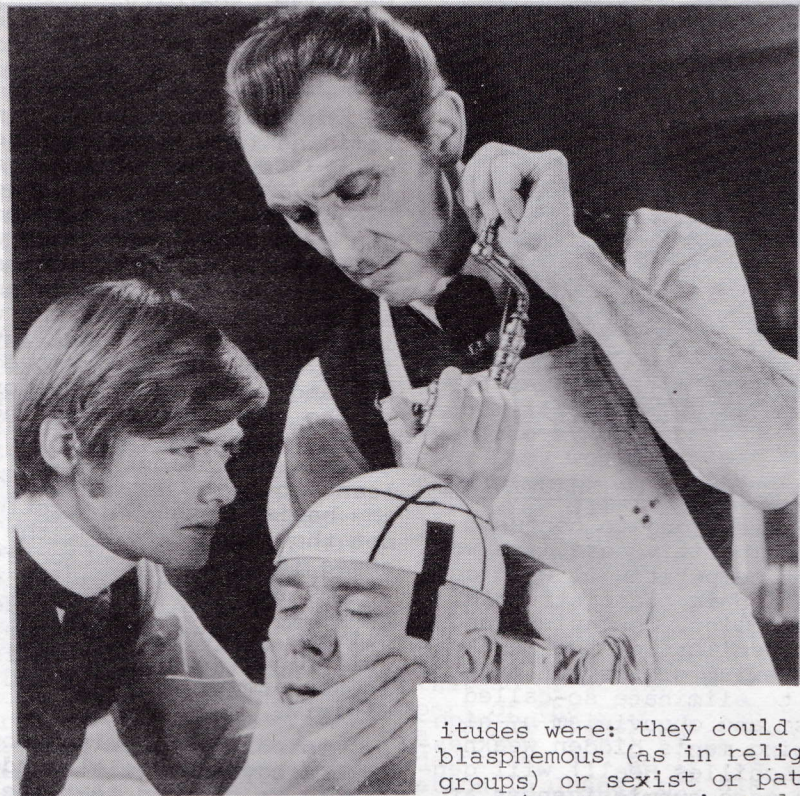
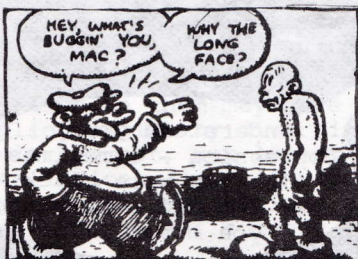
(3) Openings are occurring in the areas of social and political policing. To those mentioned above could be added journalism, education, psychology, sociology and social work. A growing police force fueled by the ideology of feminism.



brainwashing and consciousness-raising

Maurice Brinton's analogy between leftist groups and religious cults (Suicide for Socialism, Solidarity no.7, 1979) raises important points about the mechanics of psychic manipulation within authoritarian movements. In what follows the mechanics of domination practiced on American P.O.W's by their Chinese captors in the Korean war will be compared with similar 'brainwashing' tendencies found in the practice of consciousness-raising and 'psychic support' groups which flourish in the murky swamplands of the sentimental left.

Shortly after the end of the Korean war United States Intelligence set up a project to discover the relative ease with which the Chinese 'had controlled over 7,000 recalcitrant Americans who, in previous wars, had the general reputation of being the most difficult prisoners to keep in any camp any place'. What follows is based on a transcript of a talk by the army psychiatrist in charge of the Special Intelligence Project on Korean P.O.W.'s. It is of interest to libertarians because it reveals the manipulative potential of self-criticism groups and various kinds of psychic support groups, advocated by a large number of libertarians. Using nothing more than these support groups the Chinese were able to assert absolute control over their own troops and win over the hearts and minds of their American captives. At the time this was attributed to a process of brainwashing, described in horrific details of physical torture, of mutilation and 'exquisite oriental abuses'. Yet, as the US forces were later to concede, few of the brainwashed victims had suffered such abuses. How was it done?



The answer lay in the way in which prisoners were segregated and organised into small informal groups, small enough for every member to have his say. Now the existence of such groups were to be found in every unit of the Chinese army, which gave the appearance of mass participation and self-management. The US prisoners were asked to do no more than their captors, and since the groups were composed of fellow G.I.'s, and everyone could speak freely about everything, it seemed harmless, so they went along with it. The group functioned in much the same way as a religious confession, where each member is invited to speak in turn and examine every attitude. Like a confessional group its members were encouraged to confess to 'bad' attitudes and sometimes to minor breaches of the rules laid down by the group, like stealing a turnip or a couple of cigarettes from a comrade. None of these crimes were ever punished. Having confessed there was a sense of having expiated your guilt, and a rewarding feeling of being accepted by the group. It mattered little what the 'bad' att-

itudes were: they could be blasphemous (as in religious groups) or sexist or patriarchal (as in women's and men's groups) or just plain reactionary. Sometimes one might be encouraged to seek the group's help over certain 'hang-ups' such as missing one's family or friends. But it was getting it off your chest in free and comradely atmosphere that mattered, and this is what gave them a strong identity with the group. Now these 'harmless' chat sessions were a long way from the finger-nail pulling they had expected and has since been associated with brainwashing, yet there is an important sense in which they planted the seeds of fanatical obedience. After a couple of weeks of group meetings something very peculiar began to happen to the prisoners. Whilst noticing the extent to which other members of the group listened, each individual became aware that he had talked too much. This is what Army Intelligence said:

"Once you begin to talk, you become vulnerable and exposed, and you back off from other people. You see this in group psycho-therapy, unless it is skillfully managed and carefully controlled. We see this more among

women in our society than among men....but then women handle it better than men. They do exactly what the soldier does when they feel they have gone too far and exposed too much of themselves, they set about immediately to collect an equivalent amount of intelligence about their listener. And this is exactly what the 19 or 20 year old GI did. They all came back with a fabulous amount of information about other prisoners, but they wouldn't talk to them walking around the compound, or in hospital, and they would not get together with them because you could not be sure of these people."

The extent to which one becomes dependent upon the group is not only measured by the extent to which one has delivered his/her soul to the group. It can also be measured by an encouraged distrust of outsiders, whilst the internal bonds of the group are cemented by the surrender of everything private to the collective consciousness. We find similar effects in consciousness-raising groups within the women's movement. Not intended as a therapy for the sick, neurotic or dumb, one woman has described them as an 'attempt to unsee what we have been taught to see for years'. Equally typical is the group's intention to 'examine everything we had been believing as if we were suddenly reborn'.



(June Arnold, 'Consciousness-raising', *Women's Liberation* New York, 1970, p.156) Now these remarks are typical of converts to the movement, and equally typical are accounts of how women, who had never spoken in a 'male dominated group', were suddenly reborn, discovering a new self-confidence, measured in their ability to 'open up' at these meetings. But note here the religious metaphors of 're-birth' of baptism, of starting with a clean slate, possessed with the gift of tongues, purged of false doctrine and sin, ready to inflict guilt upon the unconverted. To achieve this the group must provide comfort and strength, and refuge from the hostile world of unbelievers, provide a recognition of wrong and a redirection of anger.

Such groups do not have to employ physical force to hold themselves together, since oppression is located on the outside. Consciousness is measured by loyalty to the group, by full and frank confessions, and by hostility to the outside. Then comes the higher levels of insight into the condition of the oppressed; the strategy, authority, precise definitions of problem areas, slogans, formal and informal hierarchies, and strict (though informal) rules concerning the structure and programme of the group - even down to precise directions concerning seating arrangements. (Seats must always be arranged in a circle!)

In the Korean camps, once trust in the group was established - after all it consisted of fellow GI's with common interests - it was not diffi-



cult to isolate members from their source of emotional support. Bourgeois emotional ties, like the family, were cut by means of censorship and selected information. Only 'Dear John's' got through. Soon they turned to their Chinese 'advisors' for emotional support. So successful was this redirection of commitments that when released from the camps and offered free phone calls to their US families, more than half the soldiers flatly refused. I have drawn attention to this because it reveals a striking parallel with religious sects and psychic support groups who wish to cut all emotional dependencies upon 'anachronisms' such as the family, or relationships prior to conversion or membership of the group.

The success of the Chinese 'brainwashing' programmes was quite startling and naturally disturbing to the US authorities. Seven thousand troops were completely immobilised at minimum cost without physical force - no machine-gun towers, no searchlights, no electrical barbed wire fences, no vicious Doberman Pinchers, 'yet not one American ever escaped from an organised prison camp in Korea', concluded the Intelligence report. In none of these camps was any 'effective, sustained organised resistance of any kind'. The transcript continues:



"conditions of captivity were...infinitely better than those in Japanese POW camps in World War II, and were better than most of the German P.O.W. camps, and yet the men died, and they died in large numbers. They died as a matter of fact in the ratio of four out of every ten Americans captured, 38% to be absolutely accurate. That is the highest death rate of Americans in any prison camp in any war, at any time in our history, since the American revolution.

The analogy between Jonestown and the Korean camps is quite apparent. In both cases a total dependence upon the group was maintained, even to the point of physical annihilation. But the lessons of how to completely dominate large groups of possible recalcitrants has been learned by the authorities in penal institutions in both East and West. In most of the so called 'progressive' prisons in the US and Britain, psychic support groups are an essential means of ensuring complete control.

Group fetishism, in either religious cults or the psychic support systems of prison camps or the swampy left, conceal vast possibilities of manipulative control, and flourish in moments of crisis in the old value systems. This was recognised by the US Intelligence Project on Korean Prisoners, which naturally sought a strengthening of the old values, attributing the success of brainwashing to a lack of 'moral fibre' and 'cynical attitudes towards authority, patriotism, church and school'. But the authorities have since learned that a similar use of psychic support systems can reinforce the old values and produce fanatics for any value system.

In drawing attention to the manipulative use made of psychic support groups it is possible to understand the mechanics of domination which led to the mass suicide at Jonestown, the Moscow purges, and the mindless support of the faithful for mass deception and abrupt reversals of the party line.

Over the past ten years I have been increasingly disturbed by the tendency, within leftist groups, to measure one's self-(or political) consciousness in terms of the ability to talk about anything and everything in group meetings; the tendency to make public and political every personal hang up and problem, to treat the political movement as a means of psychic support. I have usually dismissed these doubts on the grounds that such behaviour reflected nothing more than a middle class tendency towards introspectionism - 'to understand what the revolutionary movement means for me'. Normally those who enter a group with these illusions usually drift off to some other cult and Solidarity is free of them. But recently I have begun to think that the very emphasis on total immersion in a group and the equal emphasis upon group participation is a much deeper piece of mystification which has to be overcome.

Dave Lamb



INDIVIDUALLY, AND THUS TEMPORARILY, YOU MUST KNOW HOW TO DEVELOP ROLES WITHOUT EVER BECOMING CAUGHT UP IN THEM TO YOUR OWN DETRIMENT. PROTECT YOURSELF WITH THEM TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THEM.



DON'T TIRE YOURSELF; YOU ALWAYS LOSE A PRESTIGE BATTLE. NO POINTLESS QUARRELS, NO USELESS DISCUSSIONS, NO FORUMS, NO CONFERENCES, NO MARXIST THOUGHT WEEKS! WHEN YOU HAVE TO HIT OUT TO FREE YOURSELF, HIT TO KILL! WORDS DON'T KILL.

PEOPLE SURROUND YOU, AND WANT TO DISCUSS THINGS? THEY ADMIRE YOU? SPIT IN THEIR FACES. THEY MAKE FUN OF YOU? HELP THEM FIND THEMSELVES IN THEIR LAUGHTER. THE ROLE HAS ITS RIDICULOUS ASPECT. ARE THERE ONLY ROLES AROUND YOU? THEN THROW IN YOUR COMPLETE INDIFFERENCE, YOUR WIT, YOUR TRANQUILITY...



....PLAY CAT AND MOUSE WITH THEM; IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU WILL WAKE UP TO THEMSELVES UNDER THIS TREATMENT, AND DISCOVER WHAT THE DIALOGUE DEMANDS. IF YOU ALWAYS BEAR IN MIND THAT THE ONLY VALUABLE TREATMENT FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS IS CONSTANTLY TO INCREASE THE DOSE OF RADICALITY, YOU'LL NEITHER FOOL YOURSELF NOR GET LOST.

REMINISCENCES OF A CHINESE COMMUNE

THE SOCIAL PERSONALITY IN CHINESE COMMUNIST SOCIETY

The author of this article, Sau Choi, fled to Hong Kong in 1973. He had been a prominent Red Guard in the Canton area, during the Cultural Revolution.



China is a one-party state. A social personality has been moulded through political pressure to sustain the whole society. In modern societies, the social personality has internalised external needs. The peculiarity of Chinese communist society lies in the fact that within the one-party state, the social personality has been forcefully generated and moulded by the regime, whilst in other societies it evolved more often from internal dynamics. As a successor to Lenin, Mao has made tremendous contributions in this area. He seeks to change the social personality according to his personal view of the needs of society, so that it will correspond to the political and economic requirements of a dictatorial one-party state. The following are the characteristics of the social personality in communist China:

1. THE RELIGIOUS PERSONALITY.

Why is it essential for the rulers to develop religious attributes in the social personality? Religion makes one feel that one is carrying the cross; and with this spiritual support, people would accept the dehumanised society or even explain and beautify the situation in which they find themselves. At the same time, religion can divert people's anger and hatred for the rulers into self-examination.

Religion turns people into sinners. It turns the rebellious masses who have immense hatred for the rulers into dependent, worshipping slaves of the latter. The more authoritarian society is, the more successfully may a religious personality be moulded.

How is this religious social personality created out of people's life? The suffering masses, in their resistance and reaction to the miseries of their social life, come to a feeling of utter hopelessness in such an autocratic society, they feel they would rather depend on religion. When the Chinese communists first set up their regime, people thought that they would bring about an ideal society. But the Chinese communists never realised their promises, and the people felt that after all the bloodshed and struggles they had simply left one hell and plunged into another slightly better one. They are totally disappointed and feel that rebelling against the rulers provides no solution. The only way then is to embrace the controlled society, and in so doing they will have to rely on religion for support.

To the West, idealism means humanism and something that is desirable. People's experience gives them no idea of totalitarian idealism which can be characterised by the believer's passionlessness and dependence on the father figure. This kind of idealism defies the pursuit of will and refutes knowledge of self.

The religious personality is highly idealistic. It believes that the society is progressing to be a better world, but does not know what it is that it wants. All it has is faith in itself, and in sayings that 'Communism is heaven, socialism is Jacob's ladder', or that 'Chairman Mao waves and I come forward'. No-one really knows, or cares to find out, what true socialism is.

This was the situation of China, during the Mao Tse-tung era. In a spring Trade Fair, a man from another province saw a display of tomatoes in the Canton Market, and asked to buy a catty. The seller replied that the tomatoes, which 'acclaimed the glory of Chairman Mao and were the pride of the society', were not for sale. From this reply the blindness of the people under the great idealism is well demonstrated.

What have the people become? The reaction of the intellectual youth to this great idealism is blind fervour and blind sacrifice. Before the Cultural Revolution, they thought it was worthwhile and glorifying to suffer and make sacrifices for the motherland. They gave up their studentships, even after they had been admitted, to work in the rural community. But how did the peasants educate them? A 14-15 year old girl, having graduated from junior high, refused to attend senior school but decided to follow older youths to work in the countryside. She said her teacher had told her that going up the mountain and down to the countryside would be as courageous an act as the Red Guards who crossed the mountain in indomitable strength. In her enthusiasm, unswayed by her family's objection, she left for a small Hakka mountain village. The villagers all thought that she didn't understand the dialect: before long she had learnt it. She found out that the peasants, appearing to welcome her, actually resented her - a city dweller who had the best of everything, coming to the village to take a share of what little they had. The peasants did not intend to torture the girl, but that is how it turned out in real life. In



another instance, a group of young people from different backgrounds went to a village commune, with the intention of building up the village. They found that in introducing socialism to the villagers, the policies set by the regime could not meet their needs. They wanted to show the peasants a paradise, but they did not want it. The village community thought the young people were trouble-makers. They were cruelly beaten and were looked upon as counter-revolutionaries. Their conclusion was: in this society, even though idealism is advocated, the higher the ideal the greater the pressure exercised against it.



The numbness in the people did not exist when communism first took over the country. In recent years, many young intellectuals came forward to express their views on an ideal society. The people were prepared to seek and experiment. Mao Tse-tung, for the first time, utilised political power to create a totalitarian idealism. Those raising objections were looked upon as counter-revolutionaries. After numerous suppressions, the people became unfeeling. Idealism became a supportive slogan. Till now, Chinese people cannot even maintain their self-respect, to say nothing of personal ideals. Intellectuals like Kuo Muo-jo are held in contempt by the literary circles. Have they no ideals? It

is not that they have become so degraded that they have surrendered their self-respect, but that the society has not allowed them to keep it.

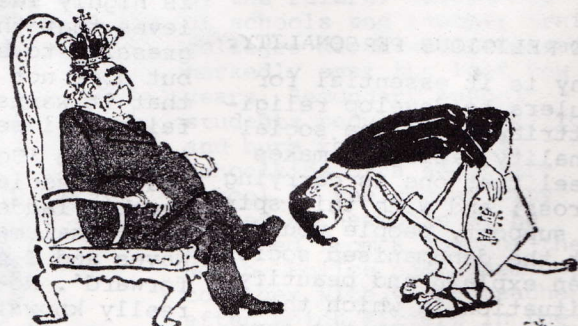
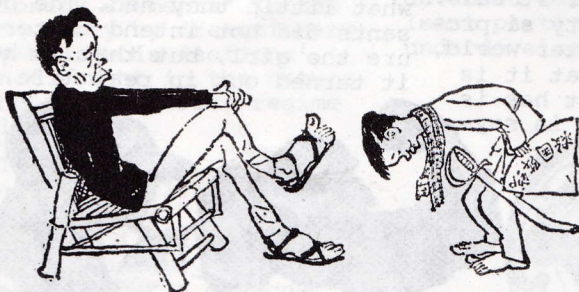
Those living outside China often adopt an attitude of objectivity and apathy when they criticise China. They refer to those youths who escaped to Hong Kong as 'scum'. It cannot be denied that some of them had bad habits. Yet should they be held responsible for this? In Hong Kong, the behaviour of the people is attributed to the influence of society, yet why is it that the so-called 'scum' of mainland China is held responsible for itself? When discussing the affairs of China or criticising its people, one should therefore speak from the point of view of a human being, instead of that of an apathetic spectator.

Another characteristic of the religious personality is hero-worship. If the basic structure of society is a collectivism in which the uniting force is power, it will shatter many people. It is this feeling of impotence that gives rise to hero-worship. Only hero-worship can give direction and support to people's lives. Under these circumstances, Mao Tse-tung, on his pedestal, very successfully became the god of the people.

A good example would be Mui Hsien-teh who, in carrying out his duties in Hainan, was badly injured. He could not recognise his parents, but he would cry out 'Long live Chairman Mao' when a portrait of Mao Tse-tung was brought near. On this account, Yeh Chin-ying paid him a visit, was impressed, and spread word around to tell people to learn from him. Every one praised him. Should not a free man, or Mao Tse-tung himself, hearing of such an incident from 7 billion people, feel ashamed? Is it not a tragic incident?

There was another student who, in a high fever, recited the writings of Mao. He was admired by everyone and was looked upon as a model citizen. The hospital diagnosed him to be an acute case of schizophrenia. An analysis of his social background showed that he was born of an intellectual family. His parents were school teachers, which was slightly better than being landowners and capitalists. From the psychological point of view, he broke down under the pressure.

Another characteristic of the religious personality is 'selflessness'. Anything that suppresses the self, the id, is part of the core of Mao Tse-tung's standard of ethical values. This mode of ethics manifests itself in a 'selfless personality'. This is not the sublime state reached through 'religiousness' but a cruel suppression of desires brought about by force. Mao Tse-tung exemplifies it with 'firstly, fear not suffering; secondly, fear not death'. During the Cultural Revolution, a newsletter from a high school recorded the following: A pot of soup served at lunch had a small piece of meat floating in it. Students were attracted but all conscientiously avoided this little morsel when they filled their bowls. The officer from the Party Branch was watching the proceedings till one student unintentionally ladled the piece of meat into his bowl. The student instantly became pale with fear, while the officer glared at him. The student unavoidably became the object of attack. He was boycotted and later went into a stupor. The intention of the newsletter was to point out the officers lack of concern for people. Viewed from the present, it belied the spirit of the time. How shall the question of material needs be handled? The indulgence of the West undoubtedly merits crit-



“做主子时以一切别人为奴才，则有了主子，

Caricatures from the Peoples Daily (Peking): "When, as master, one sees others as slaves one is likely to see oneself as slave, if one happens to have a master."

icism. But similarly, suppression of desires for material needs, resulting in psychological abnormality then considered normal, is equally obnoxious, meriting criticism.

Formulation of emotional ties is a normal need in human interaction. In the existing Chinese society, all these emotional ties are suppressed except one, that between the people and the ruler, the people and the state. This tactic was not invented by Mao Tse-tung. Any dictator would use it. The more people are suppressed, the more they turn to hero-worship and to dependency upon their great leader. Mao Tse-tung has been very successful in strangling the emotions of the people. A model figure, Lu Feng, had said, 'My parents gave me a heart only, the light of the Party shines on it', and 'Chairman Mao waves and I come forward' etc. These examples show that the people had inhibited all emotions but that for the leader.

There was a very 'red' high school student who wrote an article entitled 'My Beloved Father'. But when the article was discovered, this student was criticised by 'big-character' posters. He fell



from his esteemed radical position to an ordinary one. It was because he displayed values unentertained by society - love of his parent while only the great ruler was considered worthy of such sentiments.

During the reign of Mao Tse-tung, China could be called a moral society. Suppression of sex seemed to be an answer. But on closer examination, are Chinese people special? Do they need the opposite sex? Or are they puritans or moralists, as claimed by Western society? The inhibition China has shown towards sex is as abnormal as the licentiousness of the West. The policies of a dictatorship have strangled the need for emotional interaction between the sexes. For a whole generation, sex has become a fearful and guilty feeling. A group of youths were assigned to work in a village in Hainan. One of them chanced to see the naked body of a girl when he passed the dormitory and was strangely excited. After this incident, unaware of what was happening

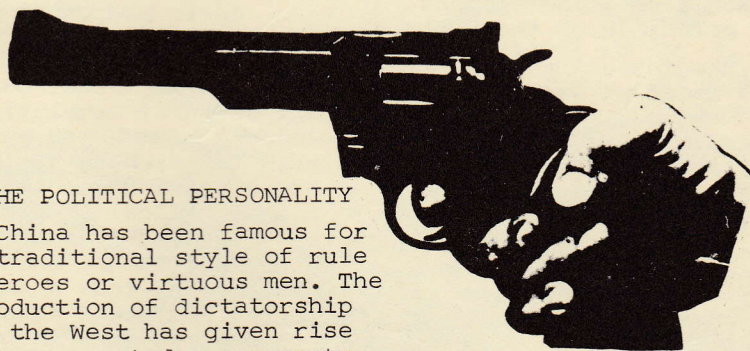
to him, he had sexual relations with the girl. She got pregnant and out of fear confessed to her supervisor and began to hate the young man. These incidents are very common. The sexual awakening that comes with maturity usually gives young people a feeling of guilt. Those with strong self-discipline usually become mentally disturbed, and in behaviour, become stupified; those who are of a nervous disposition become slaves of guilt feelings.

On the other hand, does society need to punish these 'amoralists'? The methods employed by the masses were as gross as they were unnecessary. There were two students from intellectual families. Both liked Western classical literature. They often talked to each other. As their thinking was more open, they were criticised by their classmates. They became the target of attack in a social struggle, and were paraded along the streets with black placards hung around their necks. The crowd was gleeful when the two were made to demonstrate their intimacy. The psychology of the masses showed that they condemned 'immoral' behaviour, yet their own behaviour was vulgar.

the family of a cadre. In her daily life she tried to hide the fact that she was well off by cutting up her new clothes, putting patches on them and piercing holes in new shoes. One day she noticed the hairstyle of one of the players at a table-tennis match. She thought it might be cool and cut a similar hairstyle. It happened that the Socialist Education Campaign was being launched, and she was greatly embarrassed. The result was that she was criticised severely and punished.

The journal Chinese Youth had recorded an incident in which a young man complained of a recurrent headache. He went to the secretary of the Party Branch to evaluate himself. The secretary, after hearing what he had to say, blew him up with: 'how could a young man catch a brain disease?' and 'isn't that a capitalist illness?' It can be seen that even illness had become political. Another young man suffered from psychosis to the stage of committing suicide. His brother found his diary, and thought he was poisoned by Western capitalistic values, and tried to help him by turning the diary over to the supervisor. What was not expected was that the sick brother was criticised, aggravating his illness. The above two examples

SWAMP



2. THE POLITICAL PERSONALITY

China has been famous for her traditional style of rule by heroes or virtuous men. The introduction of dictatorship from the West has given rise to the present day one-party rule in China. Chinese society lay emphasis on leadership, which controlled the thinking and running of the whole society including personal lives. The effect on society was the evolving of a type of personality termed the 'political personality'. The sense of right and wrong, and morality have been made political. A person's income, daily needs, interpersonal relationships etc., are evaluated by the views of those in the highest authority. To the common man, life itself is politics; those who are not proletarians are capitalists. Ethics means unceasing criticism and struggle against self and others.

There was a radical high school student who came from

les illustrate the outward manifestations of a political life, in which, following the teachings of Mao Tse-tung, politics covers almost anything.

The political personality is also internalised. One student was assigned to work in a village and during one mealtime he found a worm in his rice. After looking round, he did not notice anyone spitting out worms. He thought: why was it that no one but he had not seen any worms? He felt it was his feelings of class distinction involving his political standpoint. He therefore closed his eyes and swallowed the worm. The minds of the people are in this way controlled by politics.



Another example appeared in the People's Daily. A committee officer, who frequently visited the production team of a village, was invited to dine at a farmer's house. Although it was a show of customary Chinese friendliness, the officer did not touch his chopsticks. He had often thought that eating and taking from others weakens personal discipline. Should he fail to keep this principle he would be going against the principle of the Party.

The intention of publishing this incident was to praise the man, but it revealed a neurotic sensitivity towards politics. The formation of this sensitivity was brought about by numerous complex political struggles while at the same time the people were terrorized so that everyone was enveloped by a veil of fear.

A team captain once disclosed to his close friends that during the period of the 'four clean-ups' no one knew whether he was the target. No one spoke to anyone else, in case the other person might be found guilty of some crime against the Party. Everyone confessed to corruption, of having capitalistic thoughts whether it was true or false. The

team captain was then the leader of a small production team where they made just enough and there was nothing to take. But under the veil of fear, he made up enough falsehoods about himself to reach a point at which the work team would stop the

interrogation. He had to return all that he claimed to have taken, and it was a considerable sum. He could not make up the sum and in desperation tried to tear pieces off his house to be sold to pay the debt. It was the dead of winter and his family cried and pleaded. Only after some persuasion did he stop tearing down his house. It was not without a tremor that the peasants mention the 'four clean-ups'.

There are other examples illustrating the horror of excessive politicisation. Towards the latter part of the Cultural Revolution, the leaders of the Red Guards were tried, hung upside down and beaten. Under this pressure a less radical student who had been idealistic and 'free floating' in the Cultural Revolution, took a small rusted knife and plunged it several times into his own neck. He bled profusely but made not a sound. If not under intense terror why would a person behave as he did?

Another characteristic of the political personality is the spirit of struggle derived from Mao's own theory on class struggle. The dictator would create a society in which people went against their own family, against themselves, against other people. The independence of individuals is destroyed and in its place a reliance on the dictator is cultivated. In the Chinese communist society the person who goes against his or her family, the self, and other people is proclaimed the model citizen. Such a

mentality is moulded under a political model through terrorisation. In other words any person can be the victim of a political struggle. Only by adopting such a mentality can the people live up to this cruel phenomenon of the society, cover up their fear and acquire a sense of security. Naturally the people who live in mainland China are not aware of their own state of mind. They deceive themselves with heroic illusions like 'righteousness transcends filial relationships'. Concepts such as self respect and individual personality are alien to most people. Any slight emphasis on either of the above qualities by any person will bring forth contempt from others and from society.

How should a society be evaluated? The problems China faces are new to the world. What is the right attitude to take? One attitude is to look at Chinese people as human beings, not objects or experimental tools. Another is to employ the basic values that come from your own thinking. It is not a right attitude to use set values and a rigid mode of thinking in trying to understand.

Putting aside 'royalist journalists' and businessmen who in their position have to carry out propaganda for Chinese communists, if a person praises Chinese communists through his own limited understanding of the situation and later history proves him to be wrong, will he not feel guilty? The society of Chinese communists will come to be condemned by the whole world like the fascist society of Hitler. You would be speaking against your conscience should you, on shallow grounds, give praise.

