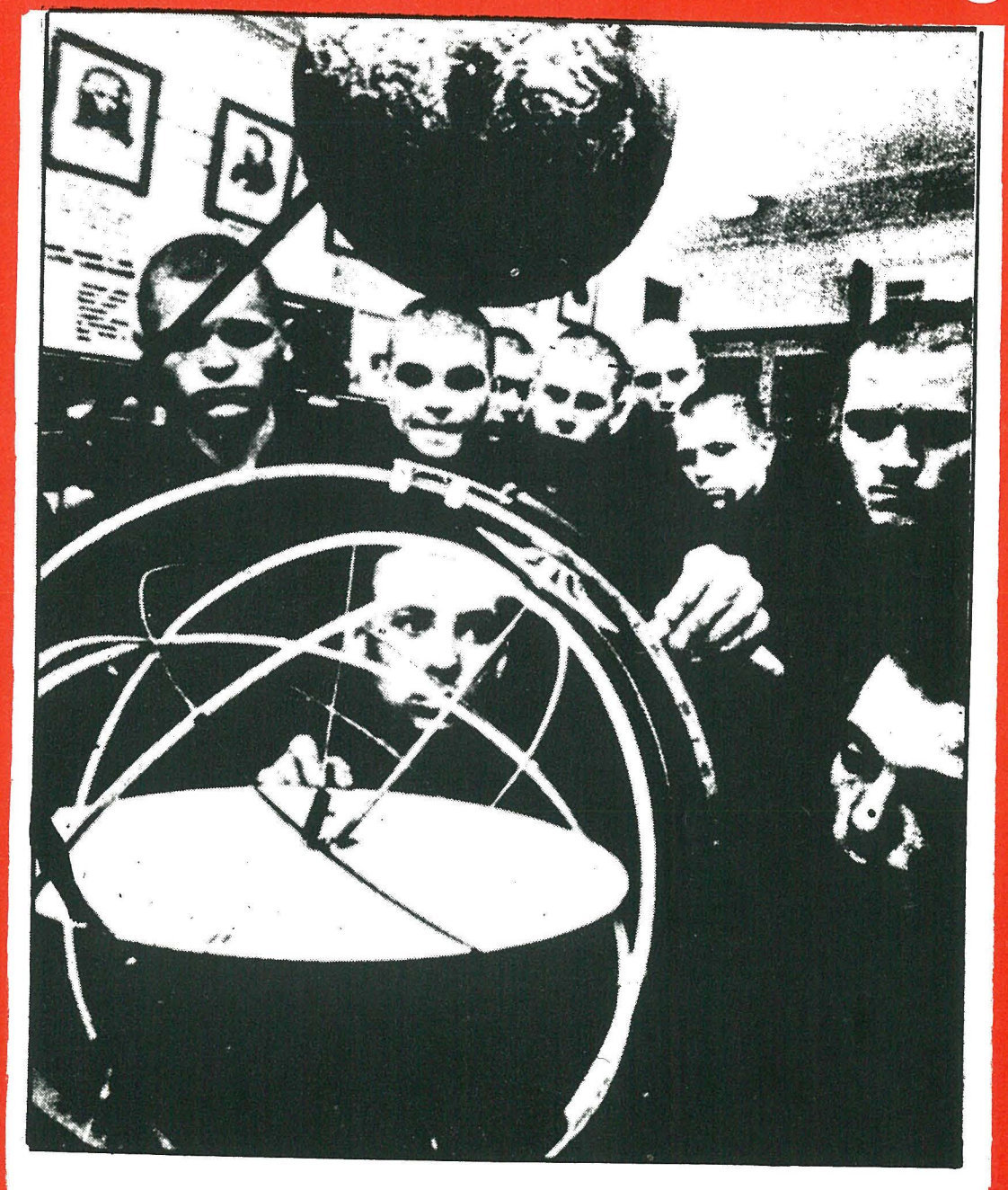
Here & Now

No.1
(1985)

A Magazine of radical ideas.

50p



BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION....

WE FEEL it necessary to give some account of our origins and intentions. HERE AND NOW **is produced by a collective whose members have past or present involvement with the** Clydeside Anarchists **group. It is the successor to** 'Clydeside Anarchist' **journal. This was originally intended as a means of developing the political views of the group at greater length and in greater depth than was afforded by the group's usual publications. The project was quickly deserted by all but three people, and met with both indifference, and sometimes mild opposition, from the rest of the group. Rather than abandon it completely, this nucleus decided to make the journal an independent project, and to invite ex-members of the** Clydeside Anarchists **group who were known to be sympathetic, to participate. The result is HERE AND NOW.**

In our experience, anarchist groups provide shelter to many different tendencies which are not at first sight compatible. The unending tolerance of the anarchist group produces an uneasy alliance ofchristians, syndicalists, animal liberationists. Bhuddists, pornographers, music fans, Irish republicans, acidheads, windmill builders, Baader-Meinhof freaks, leftists, pacifists, and primal screamers...**It is for this reason that we find it perplexing that the one eccentricity seemingly not tolerated is a desire to analyse the world we find ourselves in and to organise our ideas and activities into something like a coherent approach.**

We do not accept the false opposition of the 'practical' and the 'theoretical'. **Those who talk most loudly of down-to-earth realism are precisely those most likely to be trapped in the ineffectual charade of marginalised political activity. We wish to re-examine the assumptions at the root of what is taken for** 'activity' by revolutionary minorities. **The only practical realism is that which faces up to the ineffectiveness of most of our activity and which makes a serious attempt to understand the social forces at work** HERE AND NOW. **We reject hand-me-down politics of any label and insist on the need to understand what is unique to our time.**

It is our aim then to identify and examine dynamics operating, both in our own society and others. We wish to understand WHY things happen and why certain other things do NOT happen. And in the light of this we wish to ask - "WHAT MIGHT REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY BE TODAY ?"

Composed by and agreed to, by 7 collective members, December 1984.

Here & Now

A NOTE ON EDITORIAL POLICY

The first issue of **Here & Now** covers subjects as diverse as the political ideas underpinning the Kampuchean atrocity, the political personality, and the ambiguities of the social position of striking teachers. Yet at the same time the articles are predominantly discursive in style, compatible (if not identical) in politics, and a bit on the long side. This need not always be so.

We would like to receive contributions from readers and would welcome reviews, short articles, features based on direct experience, as well as theoretical articles, which contribute to a debate about the nature of contemporary society and the possibilities of a libertarian communist opposition to it. There is no overall editorial line and although the collective have remarkably similar political views, we have not worked out a unanimous stance on any particular issue. We are interested in articles which are broadly in sympathy with the politics revealed in the contents of this issue but would be prepared to publish articles critical of any view expressed herein.

That said, we do not undertake to publish an article just because you send it to us. If you want what you write to be sent back, enclose a stamped addressed envelope with it.

Miners under Seige.

THE RIGHT TO MANAGE has been adopted by the Tory Government and their N.C.B. stooges and added to the arsenal of propaganda used in the 'battle of ideas' surrounding the 1984-5 Miners dispute.

Scargill disperses NUM funds to foreign banks rather than direct to Strike Centres where they could be used to strengthen picketing & resistance.

This 'right' is a reassertion of managerial authority. The consultative-liason approach involving the role of the Unions to police workers grievances and utilise established channels to defsuse and personalise issues around their right to 'arbitrate' has been dropped as the DOMINANT approach in industrial relations.

The approach of Edwardes in Leyland, MacGregor in Steel, and now the same hatchet figure in Coal is intended to 'roll back' the demands for participation raised during the last Labour Government and to prevent the adoption of co-management 'workers control' of certain sectors of industry as practised in much of Western Europe.

That hatcher is doing a 'Jaruzelski' in the coalields is an indication of how far the Ridley Plans of 1978 have progressed. It is a precarious strategy of course, setting the most class conscious[in a traditional sense] of workers against a frontal attack of a State geered up to CIVIL WAR. However, the most combative sectors of industry have been either subjected to a series of defeats[motor vehicles, steel etc] or skillfully isolated and to a certain extent 'bought off'[powerworkers, railways etc].

The climate whereby a more dictatorial position of managerial control could be put into operation, has capitalised on the stimulation of unemployment and runs parallel to another major objective. How often today do you hear of the "revolt against work" Informal methods of workers resistance such as go-slows, sabotage and absenteeism are less commonplace, due to the threat of unemployment, the reluctance of other workers to down tools on bchalf of an 'offending' colleague and the direct linkage of pay increases with the increased rate of exploitation among workers.

Without economic motives, for solidarity actions and with successive legislation 'outlawing' WILDCAT or sympathy action the groundwork had been prepared whereby all the courage, capacity for self-organisation and determination of the mining communities can be reasonably expected to fail to engender an ACTIVE participation in the struggle from other workers[other than simply passive collections, vital as they are], and even the dock workers intentions have been frustrated.

The use of the strike to the Government - apart from a limited test run of their civil war scenario in the industrial pit villages -has been also to perfect 'new' DIVIDE AND RULE tactics utilising the spectre of ballots and 'back to work' stooges.If the strike is to be 'won' it requires as a minimum the generalisation of the dispute on a SOLIDARITY level. But more fundamentally, this necessitates a 'going beyond' current trade union & traditional attitides if any subsequent 'victory' isn't rapidly turned into a new stabilisation of the political economy.

WHICH CLASS ARE YOU IN?

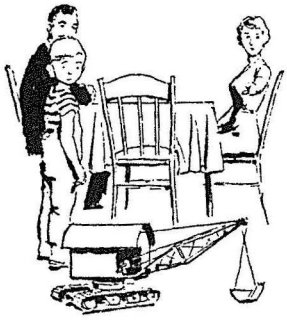
Teachers, Class and Bureaucracy

If we see society as consisting of two monolithic classes facing off against one another over an unbridgable divide, we are likely to run across numerous groups that do not fit easily on either side of our barrier. Take for example teachers. Clearly they neither own the means of production, nor do they produce in any concrete sense.

On the one hand they are wage-earners (they sell their labour-power) whose earnings do not put them in an economic bracket above that of many manual workers and whose status is low; on the other hand they have real power over the lives of children and are functionaries in an institution which serves to transmit authoritarian and hierachical values and to prepare the child for the disciplines of working life.

There are three types of attitude to schooling and teachers which might be characterised as libertarian. The first is the promotion of non-authoritarian schooling: Ferrer, Neill, and the Free Schools of the sixties and seventies. The second, perhaps more radical view sees schools as being unreformable and advocates the abolition of schools: deschooling. Neither of these views specifically concerns itself with the class status of teachers, although it is obvious that the former, by retaining schools, does not see the teacher's role as being **inherently** a reactionary one. The third attitude concerns itself specifically with the status of the teacher. Here the teacher is equated with the policeman, albeit as a "soft" cop: the role of the teacher is purely to control, discipline and mystify; teachers are clearly and simply class enemies.

"You'll have to do this problem over."



"Pick up your toys before you eat."

"You'll have to work overtime."

This last view seems to have underpinning it the very notion we began with: that of two opposing classes, complete and indivisible. We simply slot people in. But such a view is in danger of oversimplifying social forces and opening up a radical break between what revolutionaries understand by words and commonly accepted usages. To police is to control, but to teach is not always so. There is a potential tension between the policing role of the school functionary and what is still probably seen as the core meaning of the verb "to teach": to stimulate and help the learning of others. Within this meaning there is also the possibility of a radical understanding of what teaching could be, and indeed there is a long tradition of seeing education as a force for change (a tradition which ignores the institutional effect of schools). Whatever, there is a contradiction between what might be seen as the essence of teaching and the actual role of the school teacher.

Moreover, actual developments in the relative numeric strengths of different groups of workers mean that it is becoming less easy to clearly slot people into appropriate social groups. As early as 1956, white-collar workers outnumbered blue-collared workers in the USA. (Here, white-collar indicates those in technical, clerical and managerial jobs.) The greatest growth area is in the sector of the American economy which is sometimes called **informational:**

> "By the late 1960s the primary information sector of the economy - computer manufacturing, telecommunications, mass media, advertising, publishing, accounting, education, research & development, as well well as risk management in finance, banking and insurance - produced 25.1% of the national income. In turn, the secondary information sector - the work performed by information workers in government, goods-producing and service-producing firms...produced 21.1% of the national income. Already by the late 1960s...informational activities alone produced 46% of America's national income and earned 53% of the total national wages. By the mid-1970s, the primary information sector's overall share of national income production surpassed non-information workers in numbers." (1)

This picture is not of course confined to the USA but represents the developing trend in all the advanced "Western" countries. Clearly, old stereotypes concerning the nature of the wage-earning class must be abandoned. If more and more people are involved in the production not of material goods, but of "information", a major proportion of which is the production of society's own representation of itself, then these people could be seen in a sense to be engaged in labour which has as its product mystification. Teachers can be seen not as a special case but as part of a larger and growing sector. This sector not only suffers clasically as wage-earners but, by their labour, actively reinforce the system.

A revolutionary movement which addressed itself only to the classical industrial proletariat would be in danger of quickly finding itself addressing only a small minority:

> "By the early 1980s only about 15% of America's workers...were occupying traditional manufacturing jobs." (2)

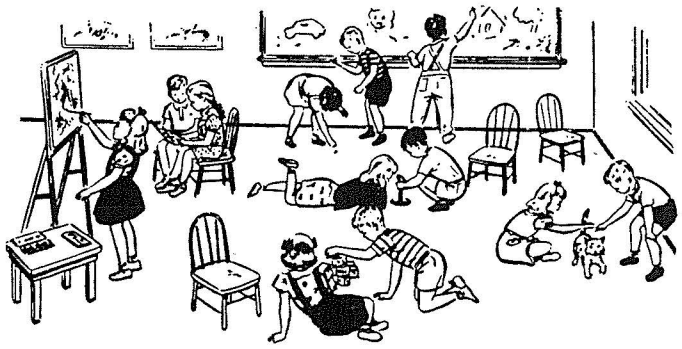
We must clearly take inot account the actual nature of the modern workforce. Paul Cardan's notion that modern society was essentially pyramidic and hierarchical provides us with a model where the majority of workers are neither pure order-givers **(direagants)** nor pure order-takers **(exigeants),** except at the opposite extremes of this hierarchical pyramid.

> Most people occupy a place in a gradually changing continuum between the powerful and the powerless.
> "...The revolutionary movement could no longer pretend to represent the immense majority of mankind if it did not address itself to **all** the catagories of the wage-earning population (including the small-minority of capitalists and ruling bureaucrats) and if it did not seek to associate with the strata of simple order-takers all the intermediate strata in the pyramid, which are nearly as important numerically speaking." (3)

From this point of view the position of teachers in society could be seen as ambiguous - low-level functionaries in a hierarchy which sucks everything into its maw, yet deriving little or no privilege from the small power that they have. Teachers might then be seen to

be subject to two sets of contradictions; that between the idealised essence of the activity of teaching and its actual manifestation and that between their subjection to a hierarchical system and their role as agents of that system.

These contradictions increasingly manifest themselves in a progressive deterioration in the working-conditions experienced by teachers: first of all in the increasing unruliness of the chief victims of the schooling racket - the children - with newspapers carrying scare stories of the unschoolability and violence of even modern infants; in the increasing workload and decreasing autonomy imposed by such educational changes as curricular reform. Schools are presently experienced, or at least being



threatened with, far-reaching changes both in the administration of learning, with massive changes in curriculum and assessment being planned, and in the administration of teachers, with radically different working conditions being proposed by central government.

The curricular reform envisaged has a patina of "progressiveness" in that it diminishes the emphasis on examinations while giving greater importance to non-academic abilities. It combines this with a vastly increased management of a child's school career via constant monitoring and assessment. In Keith Joseph's proposals for schools in England and Wales emphasis is placed on something called a "record of achievement", through which a picture of a child will be built up, and which, it is hoped, will be more "useful" to employers than mere exam results. The totalitarian potential of "progressive" reforms such as these make the exam system look libertarian. Pity the child followed throughout a school career (and perhaps beyond) by a record of "achievement" which records the minutae of his/her activities from the age of five. Such a change is a classic extension of administration into fresh aspects of our lives, using the time-honoured Taylorist methods of recording and controlling all elements of a process; in this case learning. The irony of the linking of an increase in administration to a "progressive" demand is even beginning to dawn on the "progressive" teachers themselves.

> "We strike a blow for freedom from exam domination, then discover that the new curriculum is all being boxed-up, measured, reductio ad absurdum." (3)

Yet, while mildly protesting at this, the writer goes on to suggest new areas for the school to invade. Among the "skills" with which the school should concern itself should be

> "...intellectual and cognitive, creative, practical, physical, aesthetic, apiritual and moral, people who are self-confident, capable, autonomous, as well as interdependent, able to take decisions, cope with uncertainty, solve problems, be flexible and resourceful."

The school becomes the vehicle for the administration of childrens' souls as well as their heads.

The curriculum reforms affect teachers too, both in the increased workload associated with individual planning and assessment, but also through the reduction of the autonomy of the individual school and teacher. A plethora of national, regional and area curricular bodies will take decisions about what is taught, in what way, to whom by whom, away from their traditional locus, the school and the classroom teacher. Within hierarchical society there is not only a tendency for the extension of administration to all aspects of experience, there is also a tendency towards centralisation of administration. The loss of power is resented by the teachers. In Scotland, where the "Munn and Dunning" reforms in secondary schools are beginning to be implemented, sporadic resistence to the reforms has broken out (more of which later). The Executive of the largest teaching union, the EIS, passed a motion on February 3rd worded thus:

> "The executive rejects any consortia and area curriculum planning group arrangement made by regional authorities that lead to the creation of a bureaucratic system which would undermine the professional independence of the imdividual agencies of the service."

The extension of the administration of learning in itself brings about an extension of the administration of teachers. The increased emphasis on the precise and detailed statements of objectives which a child will reach at the end of a unit of study measures not only the progress of the child but also the "effectiveness" of the tecaher. Additionally, the administration of teachers may be extended in a far more direct manner. A concerted effort is being made by employers to link pay rises to amjor changes in teachers' conditions of service. Increases in pay will be linked to assessment of "productivity". A new class of super-teachers will be created, who will have additional responsibility for promoting "correct" classroom practice, in a sense deskilling the classroom teacher by removing much of the responsibility concerning what and how to teach. The **Guardian** details the plans as follows:

> "Most teachers would be on a main professional grade of salary consisting of ten yearly increments. A senior teacher would assess performance, and poorly performing teachers would be denied their yearly pay increment of £300. Every three years, a £500 increment would be available, but only on passing a rigorous performance review, in which the local authority advisory service would take part."

Clearly this increases the power of the upper reaches of school hierarchies as well as local authorities themselves, to control what actually happens in classrooms. The teacher who won't toe the line won't get the money.

As with all such progress towards more efficient management of a process, the result is increased stress at the boot end of the hierarchy. A report from the Scottish Joint Negociating Committee on Teachers' Pay states that:

> "The working group is of the view that teachers are under greater stress than they have ever been before... and that the goodwill and committment of teachers is at present under unacceptably severe strain."

Such severe strain in fact that a naturally quiescent, indeed complicit workforce is showing signs of cracking. During the winter term of 1984, Scottish secondary schools have seen sporadic industrial unrest related to the new reforms. Predictably, the response of the teaching unions has been to subordinate disputes over working conditions to a pay claim.

A moratorium on cooperation on curricular and other changes was declared by the E.I.S., coupled with a refusal to take on work not considered to be part of a teacher's core teaching duties, e.g. attendance at in service courses. The point of these actions however was deemed to be a large pay rise not the contestation of the changes themselves. The discontent felt by the classroom teacher at the worsening of conditions experienced at work is channelled into the relatively 'safe' arena of a simple pay dispute.

This 'work-to-rule' lead to the blooding of the more militant (in a Trade Union sense) of the union's members in a series of strike actions in some Lanarkshire and Glasgow schools triggered by the aggressive attitude of Strathclyde Region. From August 10th to mid October 112 schools had been hit by industrial action. the unrest spread into other areas, notably over the provision of replacements for teachers on long-term absence, perhaps to the embarrassment of the E.I.S.

"It is a fairly open secret that the All Saints (Glasgow school in dispute over cover for absent teachers) dispute is not one that the E.I.S. headquarters would have chosen to go over the barricades over..." (T.E.S. Scotland 16.11.84.) It now seems certain that there will be all-out indefinite strikes on a localised basis from January, the issue being solely that of pay, the new conditions disappearing from the field of battle.

Meanwhile the English teaching unions have been busily negotiating a worsening in teachers' conditions in return for an increase in salary. As far back as February the N.A.S./U.W.T. was proclaiming its willingness not only to cooperate with the new assessment of teacher productivity, but to accept a **lowering** of pay for those teachers new to the job. The talks concerning these changes have now been abandoned after the largest teaching union, the N.U.T, walked out. he N.U.T. is now demanding a £1,200 pay rise across the board, a demand which seems certain to lead to industrial action in the near future.

Although dissatisfaction with worsening conditions may lead teachers to actions which mimic traditional trade union militancy, it seems unlikely to result in a situation where teachers begin to challenge their own role. 'Progessive' teachers challenges to schooling tend not to focus on the institution itself and their role in it so much as on the content and method of teaching. Typical demands are for more 'relevance', more individualised learning, and the reduction in importance of exams. These are precisely the kinds of reforms being introduced.

The demands of the 'progressives' can be seen to dovetail with the demands of the bureaucracy. The manner in which the bureaucracy acts upon teachers may well be challenged by an increase in a type of teacher militancy, but nowhere is there any sign of teachers challenging their own role in the extension of bureaucracy via the administration of learning.

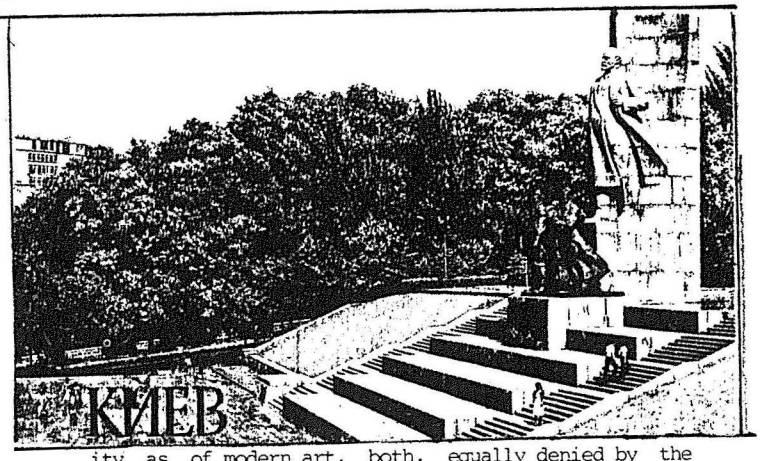
In schooling, as in all other spheres, the need of hierarchies to consolidate and extend their power leads to the growth of the administration of all aspects of experience. Processes not formerly labelled and boxed must be brought under control. This process affects not only the most powerless strata in society but the majority of people within it, most of whom are themselves functionaries of one sort or another within the hierarchical continuum which characterises bureaucratic society. Teachers are one example or a group who are both actors in a hierarchy and are acted on by it. They are both the victims of the bureaucratic dynamic and agents of that same dynamic.

A trade union response to the current predicament merely diverts attention from the focus of their discontent. The only way in which teachers might develop a response adequate to the situation they find themselves in is by challenging the discrepancy between the ideal essence of their job and their actual role as functionaries in a hierarchical institution. This must of necessity link the factors which suppress them with their own role in perpetuating an oppressive system. The point where teachers become revolutionaries is the point where they challenge the contradiction between their role as schoolers and what is implied in the activity of teaching.

T.D.

CRUEL FAILURE

A review of Granta 13: `After the Revolution´ Penguin £3.50



"After the Revolution" is a collection of pieces, some fictional, some not, about "actually existing socialism" in Czechoslovakia, Kampuchea, the USSR, East Germany, China and Cuba. Wider in its scope and less intent on proclaiming certainties than the specialist political writing generally found in the little magazines of the Left and Libertarian minorities, it manages to illuminate the nature of such societites more brightly and convey the feel of what it is like to live in them more completely than a thousand political tracts. It was, remember, Karl Marx who said that "more political and social truths than all the politicians, publicists, and novelists put together" could be found in the works of fiction writers such as Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, and Mrs. Gaskell. Would that his successors had remembered this observation and we had been spared the endless volumes of sociologese mass produced by the Marxist Academy.

Perhaps the key piece in the magazine is Milan Kundera´s "Paris or Prague?", an exposure of the falseness of the equation of events in France and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the essential difference between. which could best be summed up in Kundera´s contrast between Parisian ´revolutionary lyricism´ and Czech ´post-revolutionary scepticism´. It is this post-revolutionary scepticism which haunts the collection and lapses at times into near despair, as in the ending of Reinaldo Arenas´s short story "Coming Down from the Mountains". A young revolutionary couple find themselves moved to tears by the execution of a counter-revolutionary war criminal, but are unable to show this emotion for fear of being thought counter-revolutionary themselves: "And we cry. But very softly, so no one will here us."

The danger in such scepticism is a lapse into cynical apoliticism, a danger with which the two Czechs represented, Kundera and Josef Skvorecky, certainly flirt. The result is a sort of cultural nationalism, verging on downright xenophobia in their insistence in the alien nature of ´oriental´ Russian culture when contrasted to the decent liberal scepticism of the European Czechs.

"The Prague Spring was a passionate defence of the European cultural tradition in ther widest and most broad-minded sense -- as much a defence of Christianity as of modern art, both, equally denied by the authorities. We all struggled for our right to this tradition threatened by the Anti-Western messianism of Russian totalitarianism."

Skvorecky carries this idea to an offensive degree by personifying it in the bodies of a woman and her two children, trying to escape the oncoming Russian tanks:

"The sight of this perfect specimen of Czech womanhood awoke my patriotic pride..."

And again:

"...the miniskirt revealed Sylvia´s wonderful legs and once again, in place of the more traditional male responses, I felt a wave of impersonal pride. The two Czech children sitting next to the trunk also looked irresistably beautiful. I realised that it was my mission to get this load of Central-European beauty through the cordon of oriental steel..."

This is dreadful stuff and certainly not typical of "After the Revolution". But it is illustrative of the false road to which a weary apoliticalism can lead.

Much better is Orville Schell´s account of "China´s Other Revolution". The accelerating drive towards a consumer society since the demise of the Gang of Four has produced a society rich in absurdity, from youths wearing T-shirts emblazoned with "Uncle Sam´s Misguided Children, Beijing, China" to newspapers filled with headlines extolling the virtues of the entrepeneurial spirit. The crime wave which has accompanied this second `revolution has led in turn to a penal productivity drive, with some estimates as to the number of executions in the recent crack-down being as high as 15,000. China´s present leaders, Schell concludes, have lost their "socialist" nerve and have

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BEYOND THE WORKPLACE

One question which remains unresolved amongst Revolutionaries is: what effect does/could the mundane activities and attitudes in our **Everyday Life** have in developing a revolutionary movement/consciousness?

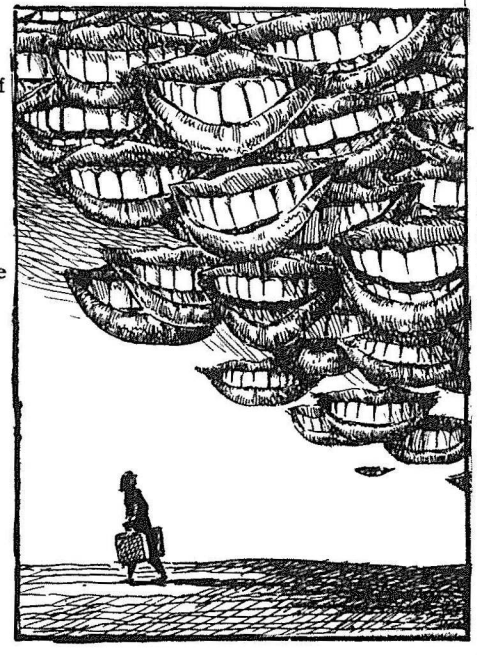
The idea that the workplace is no longer the center of alienation and thus struggle seemed to have developed expressly in the late 60's, and early 70's by amongst others, the Situationist International and then in a different vain by parts of the Feminist movement. The first obliquely suggesting that the reduction of human beings to "Commodity relations" within capitalism can only be overcome by appealing to the subjective ideas and emotions that people have, and the Feminists with their theories on Patriarchy and the expression that the **Personal is political.** However the validity of both of these sets of ideas is put to question when the subsequent activities of both "groups" is assessed, the Situationists turning more towards drink, lunacy, and marketing to escape from their ghetto. While the more progressive elements of the Feminist movement have moved more towards a form of leftism by trying to translate the pet topics of the left (the miners, Nicaragua, anti-racism ...) into womens' issues but in so doing falling for the trap of creating a sort of alternative lifestyle that doesn't challenge either the imagination of most women nor the power of the ruling classes ideology.

At the same time it is not so easy to dismiss the notion that the workplace as the traditional center of life is waning. The archetypal factory as the base of the working class has for probably half a century been on the decline and along with it much of "Proletarian" culture and tradition. The one area that does seem to be still on the upturn is that of Information administration and various service sectors of industry. However it remains doubtful whether this too will be able to sustain the changes required by the economy for long before sweeping changes in work practices alter the nature of the working class even further. In effect what is continually being seen is the "atomization" of workers, resulting in an increased alienation from the (more obscure) product of work but also from other workers.

How many "Revolutionaries" in various sects around the country developed or began participating in activities because of their experiences in the workplace (or more generally because of the effects of material poverty) ? More specifically how many workers will be "thrown up" as revolutionaries **just** because of work-place struggles? How do we explain the 1981 riots or the failure of the majority of **striking** miners to be active in their strike ? On the other hand if we accept that such things as sexuality, work, the family, indeed our whole culture as having a bearing on producing revolutionary consciousness and generalised activity then how do we escape the traps of lifestylism, therapy, leftism, and a general recuperation of struggle by capitalism ?

Theoretical explanations on everyday life struggles cannot be conjoured out of the air but at the same time the methodology of revolutionary marxism seems to think we are still living in the 1920's the time for some sort of re think would seem well overdue.

During the few years that the theories around the subversive nature of responses to our culture have abounded it is difficult to see



where these everyday struggles have been maintained and remained subversive outside the workplace or occasionally on the streets. There have been a whole number of strikes in Italy, Spain,the one time possibility of revolution in Poland, riots in Britain, South Africa and in general there seems to be a trend towards an intensification in industrial disputes throughout Europe particularly in older "unprofitable" sectors in response to the economy's need to rationalise these areas so as to be able to sustain itself. However there have been no generalised struggles over sexuality, the effects of unemployment, etc.If we reject the marxist analysis that struggles develop around the control of the means of production then we have to ask ourselves how this everyday misery or poverty can be expressed in some form of common struggle.

So far to my knowledge nobody has been able to put the "everyday life idea" into practice with continued success, as yet the paradox remains as to whether it is possible for collective self expression, resulting from an alienation from a capital based culture,to assume a revolutionary character.

Perhaps one way of trying to resolve this problem is to see what struggles have in common, leaving aside the question of class for one moment .It would then appear that an important factor in a confrontation are that there be some sense of "community" amongst the participants This can relate to a specific area as with a workplace or housing area. But this alone is not a basis for revolutionary activity, however when coupled with some sort of common demand its potential is greatly increased. Again the problem is that outside the workplace the only immediate form of struggle that doesn't fall into the trap of self managed or self controlled community politics is that of rioting which results more often than not as a boiling over of nihilistic frustration rather than particular demands being voiced with bricks and petrol.

The task then of revolutionaries would be then not only trying to highlight the reasons why society reacts as it does, but also to try and show that the feelings and desires people suppress are as important as feeling angry at substandard material conditions if not more so. There is also the question of whether revolutionaries should put forward demands during times of struggle it would appear on the surface of it to be a good idea but the problem of whether people would be able to distinguish revolutionary positions from those put forward by the leftist swamp remains debatable with practical experimenting probably the only answer.

The question of demands deserves to be dealt with in an article on its own, as do all of the points made in these notes which if they have fulfilled my intentions will have raised important questions which for revolutionaries have to be discussed ,rather than supply ready made answers. The only conclusion that I have come to in this article is that revolutionary consciousness isn't created soley in the workplace and that to be able to proceed any further either in theory or activity then the entrenched positions of dogmatic productivism or dogmatic "personal is political" have to be discarded.

K.H.

THE ARENA OF DISCONTENT

(In the Style of a Greek tragedy)

It perhaps goes without saying that to clarify revolutionary activity through theoretical analysis of modern society, it is necessary to be **conscious** of the historical factors and revolutionary adventures that have littered our era. A simple point and at first hand a clear, though difficult, task to undertake. Any attempt to trace a concise theoretical and practical history, however, is inevitably rigged with ideological booby-traps for the unsuspecting explorer. This is made all the more arduous if, like me, you have wavered between cynicism and Anarchism because of an inability to sustain the impetus of constant theoretical clarification and self-questioning, due to a number of inept reasons (which in my case were post-student inertia, resulting from political lethargy, resulting from a confused narcissism, resulting, I suspect, out of the **separation between my politics and the critique of everyday life).**

If the fragmentary impotence of many Anarchist ideas today is the result of the absence of an overall perspective and historical analysis, then Richard Gombin's book **"The Origins of Modern Leftism"** (1) is a valid contribution to building a picture of a radical history of our times. It also proves stimulating to one who has slowly been drawn back to Anarchism as a result of the possibilities afforded by the Miners strike, not to mention a growing anger at the way **everything** seems to be heading these days.

What Gombin attempts to do - and succeeds by all accounts - is to trace the multitude of trends that go to make up the tissue of a radical alternative theory to the revolutionary ideology - Marxism-Leninism - that has dominated left-thinking and the Labour movement for most of this century. What such a convergence of ideas actually gives birth to - derived from Marx, Fourier, Proudhon, Revolutionary Syndicalism, the millenarian movement, Surrealism, Cardanism and the Situationists - is the theory of contestation. This saw its most explosive expression in the 1960s after a century's slumber in the shadow of that ideological monster of Marxist-Leninism.

Gombin quickly asserts that the desire for universal self-management expresses itself in **contestation,** the desire of the workers to assume responsibility for their own destinies and to struggle on all fronts against the separations of this world and against all alienations. This desire, despite being the most ancient preoccupation of the Labour Movement, has systematically been repressed, suppressed and distorted by the leaders of the Labour Movement; it has, since the revolutions of 1917-20 been distorted by petty reformism in the West and by bureaucratic counter-revolution in the East. This is not all surprising for those on the Libertarian Left, who will recognise that this "new" **mode** of struggle (shabbily described by Gombin as "modern Leftism") not only attacks employers, State authority, but also the leadership of the workers (and of course the proletariat's representatives to the State, teachers, social workers, etc.). This instinctive rejection of leadership and hierarchy, as Gombin reveals:

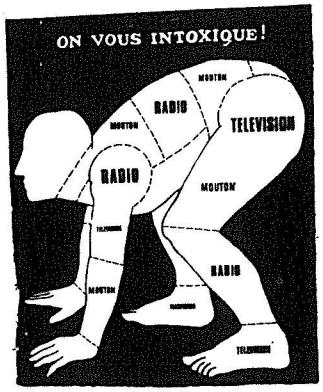
"...appears as a revolutionary praxis wherever the class struggle breaks with the mould previously eatablished by traditional organisations...(It manifests itself) in wildcat strikes, the occupation of factories, takeover by cadres and organisations at shopfloor, factory or company level outside the existing Trade Union or political frameworks. Leftist theory...adopts and puts forward an entirely new historical analysis and projection. According to this view, socialism is no longer to be regarded as a manipulation of an existing model of society, but a higher stage charecterised by the autonomy of human groups." (2)

SOCIALISME OU BARBARIE

Beginning with Trotsky's critique of the USSR as a degenerate workers' State, Gombin goes on to explain the claims that the Stalinist bureaucracy had become a true ruling class. "Socialisme ou Barbarie" (who emerged in 1948 with Paul Cardan, Claude Lefort, and Pierre Canjuers among their predominant theorists), though drawing in abundance from Trotsky's critique, condemned the whole Trotskyist doctrine as ideological conservatism. They defined Bureaucratic Capitalism as a third socio-economic category (along with free-enterprise Capitalism and Socialism, the latter never having existed except as theory) and recognised in the phenomenon of bureaucracy a development which seemed to be a feature of all modern societies. In the new bureaucratic class in the USSR, "Socialisme ou Barbarie" saw in concentrated form a system of control that all Capitalist nations were moving or aspiring towards:

> "...This new class/bureaucracy achieves the ambition of every Capitalist; it is the sole and undisputed wielder of economic and political power..." (3)

"Socialisme ou Barbarie" set out on a fundamental reconsideration of the quetsion "What is Socialism" in the light of the failure of all past revolutions and on the failure of Trotsky's prediction that the USSR would either go towards becoming a free socialist country or would resort "back" to free-enterprise Capitalism. They looked upon their task as a "preliminary demystification necessary to any reconstruction of revolutionary theory" and probably, as Gombin states, went furthest (in the sense of being the most theoretically radical) at that time in questioning Bolshevism and Party Socialism. Certainly, an arena of possibilities is opened up by viewing Stalinism not as an accident of Stalin's twisted megalomania, but as the inevitable expression of a "bureaucracy inherent in the Bolshevic Party". Gombin goes on to state that "S ou B's" analysis of bureaucracy was the only one that existed at that time - excluding liberal thought on the one hand and Marxist-Leninism on the other".



PHILOSOPHICAL REVISIONISM

In France (4) in 1957, based around the journal "Arguments", a current of Marxist self-questioning emerged, to be known as Philosophical Revisionism. This current of thought attempted to return to the original springs of Marxism, perhaps in the same way that Marx questioned the German philosophy of his day, it applied Marxist methods to the very content of the doctrine. Through its challenging of the monopoly of theory held by the official communists who still looked to the Soviet social system as the epitome of socialism, they opened up avenues previously held sacred:

> "Marxism-Leninism regarded itself as a cosmology, a total scientific system, that is to say, it presented itself as the embodiment of the philosophy which Marx proclaimed in the 11th thesis on Feuerbach, as the final reconciliation between theory and practise. By showing that, far from embodying it, the communists had perpetuated it in mock-scientific form and transformed it into an ideology...Revisionism "unblocked" revolutionary thought, at least insofar as it presented itself as a totality." (4)

THE SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

1956-8 appears to be a period of great change: the process of de-Stalinisation was underway, Workers' Councils appeared in Poland and Hungary, the Algerian Insurrection, and major strikes in Spain. Revolutionary thought had to encompass more than merely the suppression of economic factors when considering the end of alienations. It was with Lefebvre and the Situationist International that the real break with all that had gone before was struck. It was the Situationists primarily (Lefebvre was often left behind) who put into practice a critique from the point of view of everyday life, that was to become, in their own words, "the critical theory of the modern world and of surpassing that world."

As Gombin comprehensively summarised, the SI saw life reduced to survival (to economic imperatives); life was being made increasingly banal by the overproduction of goods which failed to touch the essential quality of life. Perhaps at the base of their thinking they believed that a revolt would spontaneously break out of the contradiction which arises out of the everyday, that is to say, out of a conflict between the forms of life and their content, a thesis which proved correct in certain situations (as in the Watts riots of 1965, "The Decline and Fall of the Spectacular Commodity Economy" in Knabb's book). They also realised, however, that the totalitarian management of life could accomodate all protests against it, even to the extent that the Spectaclehad infected its own opposition. Gombin's "objectively" comes out in favour of the SI several times in his chapter "The Critique of Everyday Life" and he admits to their surpassing of Marx in the sense that, to the Situationists, separation had become universalized, whereas to Marx it was only applicable to the world of production:

> "...the whole social praxis has been split down the middle, into reality and mirage. Between man and his work, man and his desires and dreams, a number of mediations had been interposed. In a society run by cybernetics (to which we are heading) the power of organisation will have replaced the power of exploitation: the alienated mediations in such conditions are multiplied to the point of paroxysm...the masters will themselves become the slaves, mere levers of the organisation." (p63)

Gombin presents a coherent summary of the SI's critique; on how the liberation of desires requires a total reconstruction of the socio-geographical environment, their ideas on "situation" and "spectacle", of the role they saw for youth and "delinquent" sub-cultures, and of their predictions of the "second proletarian assault on class society" in the shape of Paris '68, where their theory of "total contestation" in illegal forms (anti-Trade Union struggle, wildcat strikes, the occupation of workplaces, etc.) legitimises the whole of Gombin's argument.

COUNCIL COMMUNISM

The events of Paris 68 goes some distance in legitimising the theory of council communism, a theory which Gombin traces down through the "Noir et Rouge" group, Pannokoek, Luxemburg and Lukacs (who were in turn inspired by the revolutionary events in Russia in 1917 and 1905), and all the theorising done in between. It is in this chapter that we approach the question of revolutionary organisation for the first time, and is, incidentally, of most interest. It was Luxemburg who claimed that the organisation does not provoke a general wildcat strike, but the organisation is itself a product of the struggle The idea at the heart of the councillist viewpoint is defined as "in the course of its struggle, the proletariat spontaneously creates the organistaion it needs...this can only be a non-centralised form like the works committee or the workers councils." Praise is devoted to Lukacs as a theoretician of the spontaneity of the masses (though still being a card-carrying member of the Communist Party), and in seeing the workers councils as being the only immediate form whereby class consciousness assumes "concrete form to become an effective force" (p.82). Pannekoek, being the most representative thinker of council communism, based his thoughts upon the materialist view of history, the struggle for class consciousness ("men have to think change before they can accomplish it") and on the mass action of the workers.

Pannekoek's thought spurred a radical discussion of reevolutionary organisation; on the role of the 'party' in a pre-revolutionary period and on the spontaneist establishment of workers assemblies during the revolutionary period. It is Chalieu (4) who provides the (impossible) conciliation when he stated that the revolution must be made up of the workers themselves (who else?) with workers councils being set up in the initial stages, though in the "pre-revolutionary period and on the threshold of the revolution some central organisation will be essential, but again the workers councils will have to protect themsleves from possible takeovers by Leninist parties. The organisation of revolutionaries will have to ensure that the councillist viewpoint prevails" (p99).

Councillist tradition, undeniably, finds its true home in the anarchist tradition, though this is not dealt with in any great length in the book, perhaps because anarchism in France in the 20th Century was different than what we might comprehend anarchism now. Anarchism in the 19th Century seems to be construed as a reactionary tendency by Gombin, perhaps rightly so because it expressed a "utopian desire to return to a vanished society of free and equal

partisans"(5), despite its "clairvoyant" critique of Marxism, of bureaucracy and of the authoritarian party. According to Gombin, the 'official' anarchism (as represented at the time by the Anarchist Federation) played little part in the emergence of the theory of contestation and also shut itself off from the positive critiques of Marx, Lukacs and Korsch.

It is here that Gombin's 'modern leftism' diverges from anarchism, even in surpassing it because it would be ready to "recieve and study the revolutionary experience of the 20th Century in order to draw lessons as might be learned from it."(p84). This is the key to a coherent critical perspective which "Noir et Rouge" helped formulate. "Noir et Rouge" was a journal written by a splinter group of anarchists (among them Dany Cohn Bendt) who saw that it wasn't so much a war between anarchism and marxism, as between an authoritarian and libertarian view of socialism. This journal went from an anarchist position to a council communist position, perhaps most influenced by the events in Hungary in 1956.

In the end, however, Gombin's thesis finds its most fruitful expression in the Situationist International;in their make-up all the divergent influences of an iconoclastic intellectual movement were synthesized - the Romantic 'longing', Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Lautreamont, Dada, Surrealism, Fourier, Marx, revolutionary syndicalism, Proudhon, council communism. It is here that we find Vaneigem's radical subjectivity broadening the front of class struggle by applying a reversal of perspective - the sum total of human perspectives harmonised - based upon participation (play), communication (love), and on realisation (to create), revolutionary passions that find their collective expression in universal workers councils.

Gombin had already written an apparently worthy account of the events of 68 in his book "The Revolutionary Project", an account the S.I. were themselves to say as a valid contribution to the writing of the history of the occupations movement, so it can't be all that bad (see "Maitron the Historian" in Knabb's book). Guy Debord and Gianfranco Sanguinetti were later to say of the "Origins of Modern Leftism":

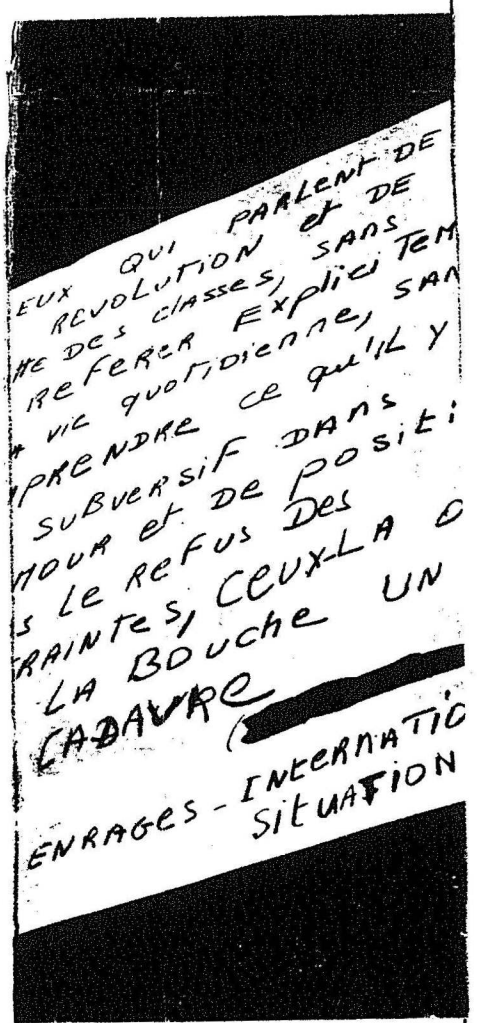
> "Although he shows himself as benevolent as possible to the various semi-critiques which stammered out for an instance in the submissive intelligensia of the last 30 years, essentially in the origin of the new revolutionary movement, with the exception of the pannekoekist tradition of council communism, Gombin finds hardly anyone but the SI." ("Thesis on the SI and its Time" 1974).

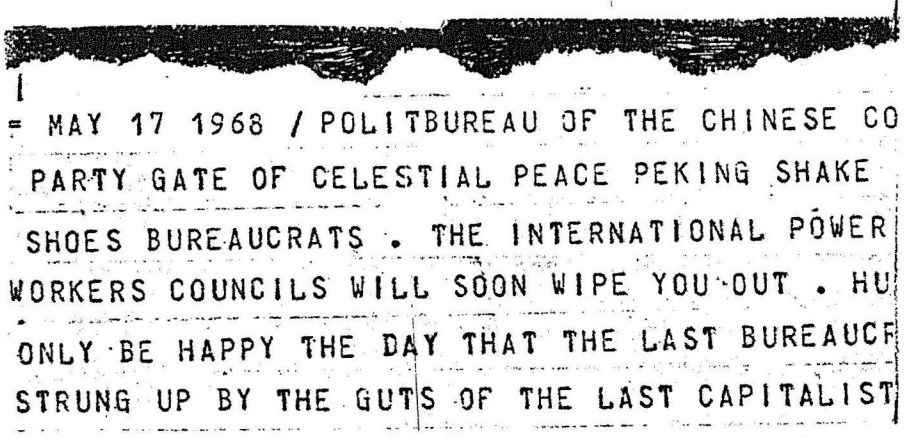
Gombin does not end by actually saying that this new movement will succeed in the battle for life, but it is the impression he departs with. He asks whether this struggle is the "last convulsions of a world approaching its end" when every aspect of life is under a totalitarian management, or whether this contestation is the sign heralding the beginning of a new epoch. The Latter is presumably that time in history (the moment when the subjective enters the stage of history) when that **set of critical ideas** which corresponds to the aspirations of the masses struggling against the separations of this world **achieves its unity in the coherence of its long term goals.**

All this leaves out any discussion on the obstacles to revolution, and also leaves out any consideration of these questions tofday. Yet more questions need asking today when struggles normally end up in resignation to hierarchy and the commodity-spectacle instead of in the perspective of class struggle against them. It is not within the scope of this article to define the increasing bureaucratisation of life and of the ways capitalism has been colonising almost all our experience, developments which have been enormous since the late sixties, but simply to outline some ideas that are still relevant, if not already known to the class struggle today.

Notes
(1) First published in France as "Les Origines du Modern Leftism " in 1969, and in Britain by Penguin in 1974. Although the book is out of print, this article was written in the knowledge that it may be getting a re-print by a certain anarchist group sometime in the future.
(2) Gombin speaks solely of the French situation.
(3) Also known as the Frankfurt School, they wrote a lot on art and aesthetics.
(4) Also known as Paul Cardan, real name Cornelius Castoriadis.
(5) As modern-day Marxist-Leninists are intent on reminding us, even to calling anarchism today a 'petit-bourgeois diversion'. Talk about the left being moribund!

Calum McIntyre.





THE COMMUNISM OF TH

1. INTRODUCTION

It is now almost ten years since the "Glorious 17th of April" in 1975 when the **Khmer Rouge** entered the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, and began the immediate process of evacuating the city of its inhabitants. The leadership of the guerillas had declared that "Our country's place in history will be secure. We will be the first nation to create a completely communist society without wasting time on immediate steps." And indeed the first part of that prediction has proved correct.

As to any evaluation of the nature of the second part of the prediction, there is strikingly little interest in this question on the part of those who would be expected to show some interest in such a radical programme. Perhaps the cause of this is the great physical distance which separates us from that country? Or perhaps it is a feeling that nothing can be learned from events in such a "backward" country? It may be that it is thought that the whole thing was just an invention by the western media, or it may be that there is an unexpressed assumption that the Khmer Rouge were no more than a bunch of primitive barbarians who came to power almost by accident, as a result of the chaos caused by the Indochinese wars(and in particular the American bombings of their country). None of these attitudes, suspiciously like psychological, lie well with any claims to learning from history in order not to repeat it.

If we choose to turn to the Kampuchean question, then, it is not with the aim of regurgitating some of the more choice refugee stories and adding another chapter to the Left's extensive "God that failed" back catalogue. It is rather to attempt to distinguish the forms of the instituted communism created in "Democratic Kampuchea".

2. THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Because of its emergence in the confused areas of struggle in Indochina as one among several nationally-based oppositional movements to American Imperialism, it has often seemed that the Khmer Rouge were just another Maoist sect. This very act of naming has been useful for switching off any further discussion for those of us who are not Maoists. More recently there have been suggestions that, rather than following a Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the Khmer Rouge were "Babeufians" or "Nechaevist".

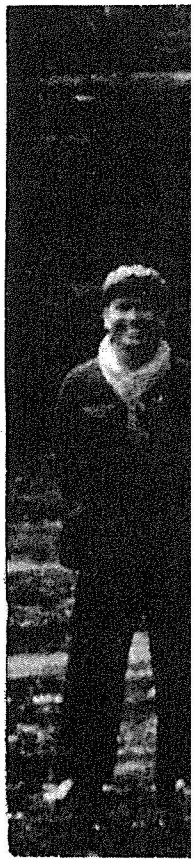
It seems that, while Marxist-Leninist rhetoric surfaced in public statements and radio broadcasts from 1976 onwards (during the power struggles within the ruling group concerning the direction which their revolution should follow), this was far from being the usual Marxist revolution - indeed it was far closer to the "crude communism" which Marx deplored as we shall see later.

It would be wrong to ascribe this to ignorance on the parts of the Khmer backwoodsmen, for it must be remembered that the Khmer Rouge leadership had learned much of their politics while studying in Paris in the fifties, and that some of them had held ministeries in Cambodian governments in the sixties, Khieu Samphan as Commerce Minister and Hou Youn as Planning Minister.

In their theses written while in Paris, such people had advocated the usual ideas on the material advancement of the country, of advancing to socialism through "a political and social programme proposing to destroy the former pre-capitalist economic relations and to set up a homogeneous national capitalist system". Their experiences when they returned to their native land, working in government and elsewhere, turned them against any such ideas as a practical path for Cambodian society.

They instead returned to basics for the blocks out of which the new society was to be built. For them the first principle seems to have been that people were good in their essences, but were corrupted by civilization and education. Khieu Samphan has been quoted as saying that the peasant masses were "the pure" and that "the more man is educated, the more deceitful he becomes". They declared that "Everything in the old society must go. We must return to nature, based on the peasantry".

The reconstruction of society was to be based on one positive value, that of hard physical labour under the supervision of one, impersonal, organisation, the Angkar. To achieve this, they would "do away with any reminder of colonial and imperialist culture, whether visible or tangible or in a persons mind". With the abolition of money, books, schooling, family relations, cities, the whole society would exist only as the materialisation of the Angkar. Where other "eastern bloc" countries are bureaucratic in the sense that they enmesh the whole of social life in interlocking bureaux, the Kampuchean society would instead abolish all social life outside labour, as the only way to institute an equality that would not degenerate once more into inequality.



It is in this absolute commitment to equality, even at the expense of freedom, that Ferenc Feher saw a return to the ideas of pre-Marxist communists like Babeuf. Similarly, it was in the absolute power of the organisation instituting communism that the Soviet journalist Ernst Henry saw an echo of Nachaev's ideas. If we turn to Marx's idea of "crude communists" in his "Economic and Philosophical Manusripts" we find an apt description of the Kampuchean regime: "...(T)he category of **worker** is not abolished but extended to all men...The crude communist is merely the culmination of this envy and desire to level down on the basis of a **preconceived** minimum...How little this aboltion of private property is a true appropriation is shown by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilization, and the return to the **unnatural** simplicity of the **poor** unrefined man who has no needs."

3. THE BIRTH OF THE NEW SOCIETY

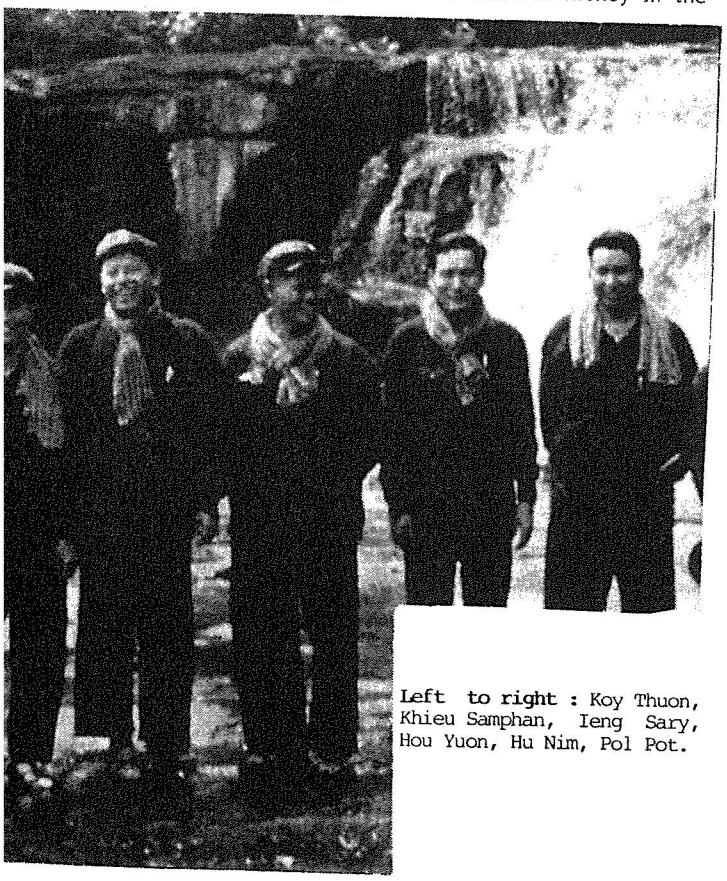
While the aim was the establishment of communism at one fell swoop, this is not to say that there were no stages in the implementation of the programme. Prior to 1973, the peasants in the liberated zones were encouraged to pool their labour in mutual-aid groups. The implementation of the programme was then accelerated with the formation of co-operatives in which "the land the land and means of production remain the peasants' property but are placed at the disposal of the co-operative" (quote from Hou Youn's Paris thesis). The following year these co-operatives were transformed into collectives where where the means and fruits of production belonged to the collective "which distributed it according to the deserts and needs of every individual" (Ponchaud).

When in 1975 the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh and the other cities in Cambodia, as the old regime collapsed, their first act was to order the inhabitants of these places to leave the cities. Various reasons have been suggested for this action. The reason given to the population at the time was that the Americans were expected to bomb the cities; this however could not

KAMPUCHEAN ANGKAR

explain the absolute nature of the order, with even hospital patients ordered to leave. Another reason which has been advanced is that there was very little food left in the city itself and that the only way to allow the country to eat was to initiate a massive agricultural programme. This is probably true as far as it goes.

However the cities had become identified as the very materialisation of capital and civilization, the bad superstructure hiding the true human essence.As one Khmer Rouge said to Francois Pouchaud, the day after the entry to Phnom Penh: "The city is bad for there is money in the



Left to right : Koy Thuon, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, Hou Yuon, Hu Nim, Pol Pot.

city.People can be reformed but not cities. By sweating to clear the land ... men will learn the true value of things." For both both the leadership and the peasant militants the cities were "pumps which drain away the vitality of the rural areas"(from Hou Youn's thesis). It was said that "Vietnam is not fully revolutionary. Vietnam did not order the evacuation of the cities". This was one of the main points of agreement between all levels of the Angkar.

The people within the cities on the 17th April had failed to a broadcast instruction a few weeks previously to leave the cities and go to the liberated areas. They were therefore placed in a position not unlike that of being a prisoner of war, that of being the "New People" (as distinct from the "Old People", the peasantry). They were to be retrained in physical, so that they would lose their civilised traits and become worthy of the new society. In the years that followed, this retraining, on vast public works like dams, for ,long hours on small rations, was to kill many of the new people.

In 1976 communal eating was introduced on the collectives of the Old and New people. When, soon afterwards, the Old people, who had until then enjoyed certain advantages over the former city dwellers, were placed under the same living conditions as the New people, this seems to have given rise to disputes within the leadership of the Angkar.A pro-Chinese Cultural Revolution faction was defeated and eliminated (with the traditional confessions of having been long-time CIA spies) A pro-Vietnamese faction, around So Phim, rose up against the main leadership, around Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, and Khieu Sampham, and was also defeated (although the future victor over the Angkar, with Vietnamese help, Heng Samrin, was also a member of this faction).

The ostensible collectivisation did not extend as far as a collective appropriation of the food produced, however. What was done with surplus grain produced is not clear, with some suggesting it was shipped to China, possibly in payment for aid received in other forms. It may have seemed essential to the Angkar that the population only receive according to their "needs" (which would be defined for them by the Angkar), because any distribution of surplus would endanger formal equality. Such was the reasoning behind the abolition of money. As one Khmer Rouge explained it: "Naturally, we could give an equal salary, but how could the Angkar ensure that you spend your money in an equal way? There wopuld certainly be people who would economise more than others. In the long run that would result in new inequalities".

And so we can see in the whole process of creation of the new society the appearance of something considerably more thought out than, for example, that disasterous collectivisation carried out by by Stalin in the Soviet Union. By moving in a short time from mutual-aid schemes to full collectives, the aim was to maintain the support of the peasantry. Similarly, the abolition of the cities and dispersal of the former inhabitants in conditions of near slavery could be regarded by the peasants as just retribution for the years during which they felt they had been exploited by the city. It could also have been the playing-off of one sector of the population against another, allowing the Angkar time to destroy all social life outside itself before it moved against the peasants by treating them in the same way.

One conservative American scholar said at the time "(I) believe that these Red Khmer leaders incarnate really a part of the peasants, who recognise themselves in them". It is open to question how much of this support was lost after the abolition of private property and removal of distinction between the New and Old Peoples, not least because of the speed with which the regime collapsed when the Vietnamese-backed rebels invaded at the beginning of 1979.

4. THE EVALUATION OF EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS

Having argued that the Kampuchean Angkar was more sophisticated than was generally supposed, it is now necessary to turn to the brutality with which the new society was instituted.

The atrocity stories began to circulate almost as soon as the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh and have continued to circulate ever since. Indeed a new wave of interest may be about to break in the western media with the release of the film "Killing Fields", built around one refugee's account.

The veracity of many refugee stories was challenged by Noam Chomsky soon after the first English-language reviews of Francois Ponchaud's "Cambodia Year Zero" appeared. Chomsky and Edward Herman later devoted around half their book "After the Cataclysm" to an analysis of western accounts of the events in Kampuchea. The main points of their objections were:

a) The western media concentrated on the use of terror in Kampuchea while remaining silent on the genocide being carried out by Indonesia in Timor;

b) Most accounts hardly mentioned the American bombings in the early 1970s as a factor in the brutalisation of the country and the destruction of its agricultural base, leading to the danger of famine;

c) The refugee stories were being used in "The Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology" (the subtitle of their

book) by suggesting that the US forces in South-East Asia had in some way been fighting a just war, keeping barbarian hordes at bay.
Chomsky and Herman devoted a considerable amount of space to pointing out exaggerations in the estimates of the numbers of people who had died, suggesting that many of the deaths were not as a result of systematic killings but rather a result of starvation in a war-torn country whose food supplies had been wrecked. The also indicate that there was widespread reliance on unreliable or fictitious testimony.

While their book is essential as a corrective to some of the other accounts, and while their primary concern was "not to establish the facts with regard to post-war Indochina, but rather to investigate their refraction through the prism of western ideology", it also is insufficient to understand the Kampuchean phenomenon. It does seem, having read both their account and that of others, that their was both a peculiar audacity in the project of the Khmer Rouge and a peculiar brutality in the way that they implemented it. As they were writing in 1978/79, before Kampuchea was at all open to Western journalists and film-makers, we have to allow for our benefits of hindsight: they certainly wouldn't have predicted that those same western governments which had been holding enquiries into Kampuchean brutality would still recognise the representatives of the Angkar as the representatives of the legitimate government of Kampuchea more than five years after they were driven out! They assume, in some places when evaluating refugee accounts, that those who complained about the intolerable conditions under which they were forced to live were merely the former rich, shocked at having to get their hands dirty, that the were for the first time learning how the peasants had always lived. It now seems that this estimation was mistaken; that the conditions of the New People were not those of the peasantry, but rather those of a new slave class, the slaves of the Angkar, which had taken full control over their lives and deaths.

Although some of the accounts are demonstrated to be based on hearsay, it now semms that they were also basically correct. Perhaps the ideal of individual testimony is insufficient when dealing with a collective experience such as that introduced by the Angkar with the reduction of the New People to the status of mass objects.

It may well be that most of the deaths were due to starvation -- but the form of this starvation, due in many cases to deliberate under-rtationing, would have to be examined. It may well be that many of the killings were carried out by the local militants of the Angkar on their own initiative -- despite the idealisation of the peasantry by the Khmer theorists, their local representatives seem to have come from the lumpen strata within the villages, ex-gamblers and drinkers for example, who were perhaps the best people to embrace the new puritanism of their new creed. It may be that a high death rate was deemed to be a necessary part of the purification process which was to eradicate all signs of civilization, such as compassion, or that the Angkar, by meting out such punishments, was merely bowing to the wishes of the Old People for revenge upon the city-dwellers.

However it may also be that there is a direct link between the revolutionary principle which held that people were innately good but were corrupted by civilization, and the terror to which it gave rise. By freezing such a belief into an ideology, by placing the entirety of human culture to one pole or the other, good or bad, peasant or city-dweller, physical effort or intellectuality, essence or edifice, the instituted communism placed the New People outside all human possibility. By insisting on their human essence, it denied them the possibility of anything except labour and more labour -- any argument, even to institute another interpretation of equality, could only be that of civilization and thus wrong, and could be answered only by the call to serve the Angkar Leu by fertilizing the fields, from underground.

A.D.

embarked upon the impossible course of trying to maintain a national ideology which is socialist, while encouraging a way of life which is more and more that of the Western consumer societies.

Two pieces - Someth May's "The Field behind the Village" and Nella Bierski's "A Question of Geography" - plum the depths to which life in the socialist countries can sink. Someth May's auto-biographical extract from a forthcoming full-volume work reveals the attention to detail of a totally-administered world, where starving men must hide their nocturnal feasts of ants' larvae and paddy rats, feasts not permitted by their comrade leaders. Bierski and Berger, meanwhile, are in Solzhenitsyn territory; and a cold bleak place it is too.

Edward Said's excellent "Reflections on Exile" includes a description of the psychology of exiled Palestinians - "where every sympathiser is an agent of some unfriendly power, and where the slightest deviation from the accepted group line is an act of the rankest treachery and disloyalty" - that might be said to be true of nearly every little Marxist fragment in our own corner of the globe. Exiles in their own land?

To round off the tour Timothy Garton-Ash gives a fine account of life in East Germany and the way in which resistance is manifested in a withdrawal from the public sphere. He echoes a theme which is heard throughout "After the Revolution": the elimination of the distinction between the personal and the political in socialist societies. Kundera states it first:

"..."politicological" speculations...bore me and worse still, are repugnant to me, for I spent twenty years of my life in a country whose official doctrine was able only to reduce any and every human problem to a mere reflection of politics"

Schell mentions it:

"...while most governments viewed politics as simply one aspect of life, China's leaders viewed it as life itself."

Garton-Ash fleshes it out:

"East Germany clearly is a "totalitarian" state in the sense that it aspires to occupy and direct its citizen's every waking moment. The very idea of "free time" is suspect to all would-be totalitarian regimes."

The result is that resistance becomes a matter of finding spaces that are truly one's own; ie a withdrawal from the political:

"East Germans make the most elaborate arrange-ments to withdraw from the collective political market-place into their own unpolitical niches."

Where politics is all it seems, resistance becomes a matter of political apathy, and yet the example of Poland and the Polish struggle to reconstruct "society" against the State suggests a potentially more fruitful alternative.

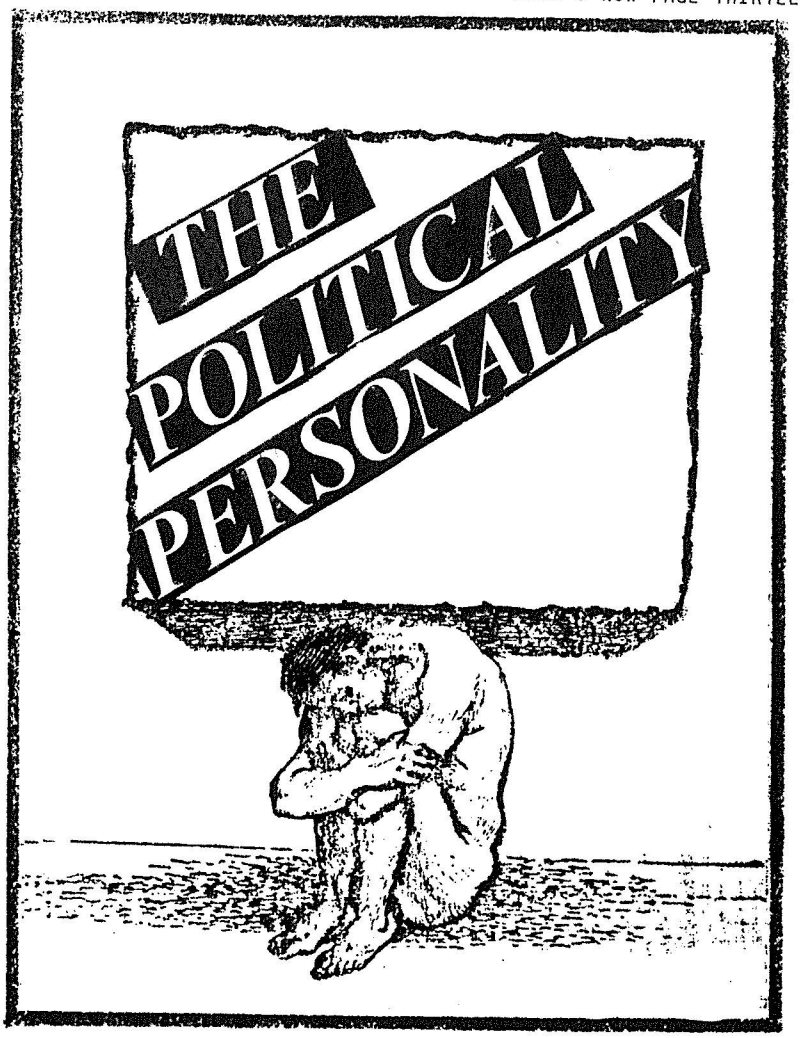
Kundera suggests that underlying the disaster of the failure of twentieth-century revolution is the notion of revolution itself. In praising Skvorecky he singles out his "anti-revolutionary" spirit; anti-revolutionary, he says, not in a reactionary sense, but in that it is sceptical of the eschatology and all-or-nothing attitude of revolutionaries. One can hear the easy and mindless retorts of knee-jerk Marxists to this (bourgeois reactionary?), yet the failure of all socialist revolution and the monstrous offspring such revolutions have spawned, lend great weight to such a view. If we wish to maintain the position that revolution is possible and necessary then we must pay heed to the strength of the counter-case and meet it if we can. For, although the failure of revolution is cruel indeed, the lack of hope of it may be even more cruel. The editorial to "After the Revolution" quotes the South African novelist Nadine Gordimer:

"Communism has turned out not to be just or humane either; has failed, even more cruelly than capitalism. Does this mean that we have to tell the poor and the dispossessed of the world there is nothing to be done...?"

T.D.

Most of the material for this article comes from:

Francois Ponchaud "Cambodia Year Zero"
Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman "After the Cataclsym'
Wilfred Burchett "The China, Cambodia, Vietnam Triangle"
Ferenc Feher "Review of L'Utopia Meurtriere" in Telos 56



Speaking personally is difficult for the revolutionary. On the one hand there is the introspection and therapy emphasis of the "alternative ghetto", and on the other, the aim to participate in or perhaps even detonate the class war.

Yet the old saying "I ain't gonna be much help in smashing the system... because the system is doing a pretty good job of smashing me" holds more than a grain of truth.

Politics is a dirty word, and this is testified by the equation of fanaticism and inhumanity with those seeking revolutionary change. The 20th century is crammed full of examples of self-abnegation and the remoulding of the personality in order to implement, at all costs, totalitarian programmes. Nor is this dictated by the logic of rapid industrialisation as the Stalinist model would have us believe. The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia from a Leftist position, and Muslim Fundamentalists in Iran have witnessed the authoritarian personality directed in drastic moves to dewesternise their societies and subordinate economic forces to political and quasi-religious ideologies.

For the libertarian revolutionary it has been all too easy to equate the authoritarian personality with sexual repression. (1) But reality can be more complex. The spiritual and emotional poverty widespread among the authoritarian left and right doesn't stop there. We have to cast a critical eye towards our own motivations and "liberated" behaviour.

Asexual, autosexual and unrealised bisexuality, for example, can form partial explanations, in terms of the substitution by militant (or armchair theorising) activity for other pursuits. Yet even the apparent satisfaction and conscious direction of the sex-drive, often cannot overcome a deeper expression, characterised by a lack of self-love and understanding and unease in emotional situations.

To be sure, this can be said to typify national cultural characteristics which, while eroded by Capitalism, give rise to the "British" manner of restraining emotion and inhibiting joy, other than through ritualised exchanges deemed acceptable and safe. Yet, class and national differences aside, ritualised exchanges are part and parcel of character armour. Permeating the urban capitalist society is a "spiritual" unease which, in the USA, has been manipulated into a need to be "born again" as a soul saved from the mental turmoil of current everyday existence.

That immunity to such a "spiritual" (2) malaise isn't guaranteed by a revolutionary consciousness. It often seems as if the mass rejection of politics by the working class has a lot to do with the revulsion of the"means justifying the ends" mentality of the vulgar materialist doctrines of Marxist-Leninism and National Socialism.

■■■

The urban guerilla groups of the 1970s are a case in point, with spectacular operations geared to media coverage and the most notorious theories of "revolutionary warfare" negate the struggles of ordinary people in favour of a spiralling growth of repression and the supposed scenario of revolt against the role of the State.

Such fantasies have been discredited and are criticised by the authoritarian and libertarian left alike. Bommi Baumann (3), however, has chronicled his participation in a group which saw the separation of themselves from the alternative subculture they grew out of, by means of being outlawed as armed revolutionaries. In the process, he came increasingly to question the way he was forced to live and the virtual impossibility of sustaining such an attitude with the capacity to love and care for his fellow human beings.

In a less dramatic sense, such choices are also imposed upon the individual who has opted for participation in revolutionary collective activity. (4) To examine this dilemma, it is useful to go back to the way the individual makes such a choice. For many, participation in political activity arises out of a need to cultivate new interests and find new outlets to meet people.

In larger organisations, especially such as the Labour Party, or the SWP of a few years ago, the social advantages often underpin the commitment to "Build the paper, sell the party".

■■■

For anarchist and libertarian revolutionary groups there is the additional, or perhaps even counter-posing, need to identify with and be identified as an "uncontrollable", a person characterised by the total refusal to sanction all the rotten values of this society. The "Spirit of Revolt" is not in itself enough, and the capacity to be enraged can burn itself out and sometimes the person with it.

The timing of such a choice is also usually crucial, coinciding either with the training of the personality for careers and job specialisation, or with teenage needs to recreate themselves with their "own" rebellious identity, such as Punk.

A few years back, in the era of "Full Employment", the vast majority of rebellious students were reabsorbed into society at the juncture of being about to leave or having left the ivory tower of learning. This was jettisoned and the pressure of "finding something

suitable" or "settling down" finally won out. Some would abandon their previous ideals as "unrealistic", or adopt a trendy-cynical pose, characteristic of the selfseeking narcissist individual. Others would dilute their ideals into civil libertarian, community politics, or single-issue activity, more appropriate to the compartmentalisation of politics as yet another specialised hobby, largely demarcated from a revolutionary critique of everyday existence.

Today, with mass unemployment, most students cannot afford the luxury of rebellion (5) and adopt the cynical mode from the outset. The revolutionaries are getting younger! The crisis of adopting and being subjected to the dominant values of capitalist society are being felt by increasingly younger elements. The domestication of the individual into worker, marriage, or surviving on the Social Security breadline, provokes rebellion which can be expressed as the need to identify with a cause, ideology, or, in the case of Anarchism, an ethic of opposition and incorruptability.

However, identification often stops short of a liberation of the personality. Some adopt a bohemian lifestyle, encouraged by the theory that the pursuit of pleasure undercuts the values of this society instead of being accommodated by it. Indeed, even the apostle of "pleasure" states that: "From pleasure's diminished returns comes the desire for real life". (6)

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Alternative hedonism leads to ghetto culture and is sustained by it.
The alternative "West-End" culture of people seeking "self-knowledge" and "self-growth" is for the most part shallow and is characterised by individuals searching for a transformation of interpersonal relations without confronting the forces which shape and reproduce as saleable commodities the values which they embrace as "new" and different.
In the seventies, largely in response to the growth of Feminism (7), there developed the slogan "The personal is political". While true in a sense, it has gone the way of all such slogans and assumed the status of a banality. Anti-sexism became a new moral code by which to discipline and regulate behavior. It has become the watchword of the new middle-class employed in the professions of social control and the flow of information! Well-meaning parents, for example, studiously follow and monitor ways to bring up children with the minimum of "hang-ups" and the maximum immunity to the "old" values of traditional capitalism and authority relations.
Yet the fear of acting freely, of thinking in a subversive way, of exposing private thoughts to public scrutiny, of mutually supporting one another, of measuring needs and desires against possession in sexual relations, of countering the schizophrenia of work and play, what can be defined politically, and so on, persist as vital questions which require continuous confrontation. As previously mentioned, this necessitates more than the capacity to be enraged, but also for the libertarian revolutionary to be imbued with the capacity for critical and self-conscious thought. While not separated from understanding of emotional concerns, we need to be able to focus on the dynamics for social change which have the potential to go beyond the bullshit and recuperation by the system.

One attitude to a stress on such social questions, and forthcoming from many anarchists as well as authoritarian revolutionaries, is that it is "petty bourgeois". Such self-indulgence is said not to interest the working-class. Yet we do not live in the cloth-capped imagery of the past. Working-class culture is not autonomous from the effects of capitalism on the personality and on the perception of needs and ways to raise children free from authoritarian conditioning. Indeed the influence of the Mass Media and their interrelation with a home, distanced from any sense of community and communal identification, has increased the misery of the working-class in ways which Marx could not foresee. But there is no excuse for his latter-day followers. Some "go to the people" as in the 19th century, oblivious to the widespread wish to somehow escape from the misery to the materialistic security of a middle-class neighbourhood.

Another attitude is that it is the crisis of the male "revolutionary" (8) which is being described. Feminism is said to offer women a theory and modes of behavior which go beyond alienation. Yet it is a culture which is part of the alternative ghetto. It is also highly dubious whether Feminism can embrace all that revolutionary women have to contend with in their lives without subverting part of its appeal. There is also the question that Womens' Centres, by erecting a predominate sexuality, that of Lesbianism, are simply inverting the "tyranny" of heterosexuality for a new dominant culture. This in turn both acts to distance many women who have relationships with men or have children, and reinforces the marginalised appeal of Feminist politics. In addition the social spin-offs of participation in the Womens' Movement, as with the Left, can act to repress the need of many women to have a heterosexual aspect to their sexual and emotional relationships, and a fear of not being part of the scene if they don't closet such desires.

■■■

It is all to easy to be obsessed with criticising the "alternative scene" and indeed, in truth, it is also an easy option. If we are serious libertarian revolutionaries, we need specifically to identify **how** we can communicate our divergence from all the values around us, and **how** this can be expressed in terms of the class war.

The first step in revolutionary consciousness is to be sure to ask the real questions, a task which has more often been achieved by fiction writers and trailblazing artists in recent years than by revolutionaries. The next step is more of a leap in the dark and requires more than just individual commitment but the capacity to collectively transform how we live and mutually support each other in our efforts to discard the accumulated effects of the dominant culture.

■■■■■

Notes

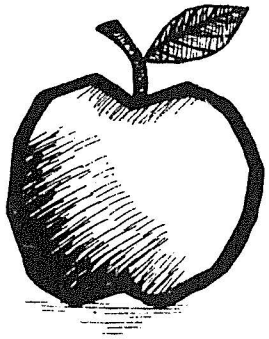
(1) Following the early writings of Wilhelm Reich, 'Solidarity' for instance, pillaried the Left for many features it's own members had in abundance.
(2) This is meant in a non-mystical sense and involves coming to terms with 'inner tranquillity' but not divorced from a vision of how society is changing.
(3) "How it ALL Began" or "Terror or Love", Pulp Press,1977.
(4) Individualist projects adopting a pro-situationist or stirnerite image, are largely self-indulgent and egocentric diversions/alternative hobbys.
(5) In France and Britain they have recently demonstrated to preserve the status quo, some drawing rightist and leftist conclusions respectively.
(6) Raoul Vaneigem, "The Book of Pleasures", 1983.
(7) Which erose out of the late 60's protest movement, as women objected to the sexist undertones of 'free love' for the benefit of radical males.
(8) As the Men Against Sexism groups would uncritically accept. What they, together with the more credible pacifist-ecological movement, don't realise is that the breakout from alternative ghetto culture has to accompany activity which threatens the fabric of the dominant culture. Otherwise 'revolutionaries' are doomed to meet and go round in circles (an astronomical determinism identified by a San Francisco group, The Last International, in FIFTH ESTATE, June, 1982.

Jim McFarlane

MODERN SOCIETY: ROTTEN TO THE CORE?

At the present time a number of revolutionaries are questioning past analyses of societal dynamics, and are searching for new ways of determining social "laws of motion", and of identifying areas of activity with revolutionary potential. An interesting attempt to achieve this was made relatively recently (1978) by two American Marxists, Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, in their book "Unorthodox Marxism".

One section of the book is dedicated to their attempts to develop a **Social Theory of Praxis,** and central to this theory is the need to develop a near total view of societies' **core characteristics** as possible. It is this section of the book that I think makes an intriguing contribution to this search for new "laws of motion" and is worthy of further discussion.



So what is a core characteristic? Hahnel and Albert define it thus:

> "**Core characteristics:** characteristics that determine the major contours of what people are and can be in a particular society, of what fulfillments they can attain, of what oppressions they will endure, and of how they may develop themselves."

Full analysis of a particular society is necessary to clarify these core elements. Empirical investigation and verification is probably the only possible method to achieve this analysis. The authors suggest the following societal relationships as being possible areas for investigation: economic, kinship, authority and community.

> "But why single out these four characteristics in particular? What makes all four of these functional prerequisites to societal reproduction is that each function requires rather elaborate forms of **social activity** and therefore has the potential to give rise to important social institutional characteristics."

And later they also state:

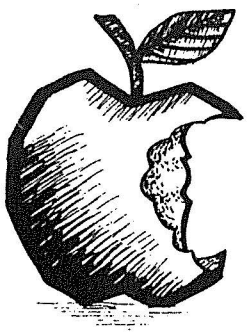
> "So while not wishing to prejudge the core characteristics of any particular society, much less the forms of their actual manifestation and interrelation, this list of four possibilities is certainly a good one to investigate. Ruling out any one of these four possibilities on apriori grounds--as ' orthodox Marxism, radical feminism, radical nationalism, and individualist anarchism do for three of the four--would seem particularly limiting."

This analysis leads them to the following conclusions regarding that old argument: "revolution or evolution"--

> "So there are two issues: first, **the presence of a deep contradiction,** and second, **the translation of that contradiction into human activity which overthrows one or more of society's core characteristics.**"

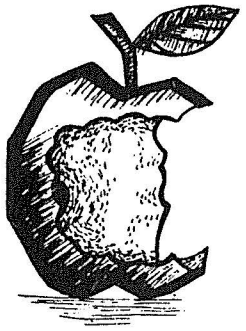
> "Revolutions are carried out by people who share **similar positions with respect to these active core characteristics.**"

> "But on the other hand, when there are contradictions in which the core characteristics aren't so centrally involved, they will most likely be resolved by evolutionary changes reproducing the contours of the old society."



Hahnel and Alberts' theory leads to two other conclusions of major importance. Firstly, that there is not a standard worldwide °path to revolution' as orthodox Marxists (and a number of other revolutionary groupings) suggest. Their analysis would, in fact, suggest that the opposite is the case, that due to differing core characteristics in different societies revolutionary activity will occur in various situations some of which may be unique to a particular society. Secondly, their theory also challenges older notions of which groups in a society have °revolutionary potential'. As they say: "Just as which characteristics are core to a society is contingent and to be empirically verified, so which social groups will become revolutionary is not determinable in an apriori manner - only through investigation of society".

The above is analysis to be applied in the future. But these theories can also be used to explain what went wrong in revolutions in the past. Hahnel and Albert call their theories a "totalist analysis" and state that "Each characteristic is but one manifestation of society's **core totality** of defining aspects".



They also state that if a revolution fails to overthrow all of a particular societies oppressive core characteristics (a partial revolution instead of a total revolution) then that revolution is almost bound to fail, because in most societies "The core characteristics neither exist nor operate in isolation from one another. The manifestations of each reproduce and also help to determine the manifestations of the others. Rather than simple accomodation, there is °entwinement'. All core characteristics are always operative, each not only consistently with the others, but also **reproducing** them". Therefore, if a particular revolution only overthrows, say, two out of an original four core characteristics, then the two remaining elements are most likely to reproduce the two elements that were overthrown and to destroy the revolution.

> "It is necessary to challenge all core characteristics, not some peripherally to one, but all centrally."

> "All of this implies the need for a totalist approach to social change."

This all sounds very good in abstract theory, but can these theo-

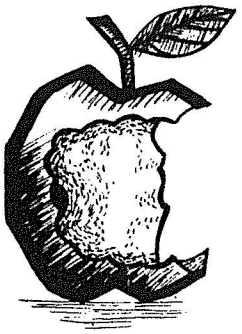
ries be applied in practice? In their book Hahnel and Albert use their theoretical methods in an attempt to analyse U.S.A. society, and come to the conclusion that in the U.S.A. "the active core characteristics are racism, sexism, classism, and a specific extension of hierarchical dynamics we call authoritarianism, and that they interact in such a way that only a °totalist revolutionary movement' stands a chance of really succeeding". And they later state: "Each [core characteristic] has a determining impact upon the life of a particular oppressed group and a defining effect upon everyone else as well".

So, in practice this means that

> "Women will not remain in a class-issue movement that is sexist, and they will see any movement that denies the centrality of sexual oppression as sexist. Black's will not relate to a racist women's movement, and they will see any movement that denies the centrality of racial oppression as racist. Anti-authoritarians will not be attracted to. nor long remain part of a hierarchical anti-racist organisation. Workers will not trust a coordinator oriented women's movement. And so it goes. Each particularistic movement will have difficulty growing. Each will be internally fractured over how it ignores or even perpetuates °other oppressions'."

The "imposition of an alienated set of needs, ideas, and capabilities into us all by way of our involvements in society's day-to-day life roles" they term **hegemony**, and then state:

> "The lesson of hegemony is that particularist movements, even if they somehow manage to subsist, have an additional tendency to regress even with respect to their key concern precisely because of the impact of the rest of hegemony."

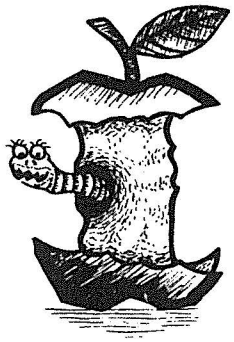


Their suggested method of implementing this analysis will cause feelings of horror from both °central control' Marxists and anti-party anarchists and libertarians: a non-hierarchical, federalist Revolutionary Councilist Party. They write that the struggle focus "is now multiple but in each arena all manifestations of totality are addressed. The split between foci is now only tactical, deriving from the fact that different groups are affected by the totality differently." On the always vexed question of organization they state:

> "There is one big movement for socialism, but this movement recognises the varying principal manifestations of totality and has autonomous branches...There is a movement of various branches united by a shared analysis, program, and goal developed continously and collectively, and also by an organizational federation stressing autonomy and solidarity."

Finally, this is how they see the revolutionary process:

> "The revolution is built by the people. Crisis provides opportunities but that is all. The revolution develops as a struggle for institutional and ideological hegemony at all levels of daily life. The party is a kind of detonating agency. It serves as a means through which those who become revolutionary first coordinate their efforts to °bring others along', and to also further develop themselves. But it is the councils which serve as the real vehicles of people's power. They wage the struggle and attain the critical position in the new society."



At this stage I should state that I do not entirely agree with Hahnel and Albert's suggestions on organizational forms. So why have I given these extensive quotes? Because, as I stated at the beginning of this article, there is distinct need to find new ways of defining social "laws of motion", and I consider H & A's theories to be an important contribution to this debate. It is a debate that I hope will be continued within the pages of HERE & NOW, and this article was written in an attempt to stimulate discussion. It is a theme that I, personally, shall certainly return to.

ALEXANDER.

THE BOOK "UNORTHODOX MARXISM" BY ROBIN HAHNEL & MICHAEL ALBERT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO GET IN BRITAIN BUT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FROM SOUTH END PRESS, BOX 68, ASTOR STATION, BOSTON, MA. 02123 U.S.A.

REVIEWS

International Dockworkers Struggles (Workers of the World Tonight) by BM Blob, London WCI 3XX, 1 quid plus post.

This pamphlet is more interesting than at first sight. It chronicles the efforts of workers assemblies of dockers in Barcelona, Aarhus, and in many other ports to combat the effects of containerisation and the impact of new techniques and methods of exploitation. There are also two commentaries on Britain, one being written for a Portugese dock bulletin, **La Estiba**. This article, however, makes the unfortunate prediction that the power of workers in Britain (as manifest in the 70's) would deter the Tory Government from launching major offensives against particular industries. That aside, some of the material is new to readers, especially the statutes and organisational basis of the assemblies in Spain. A much better researched and more meaningful publication than **The Bankruptcy of Anarchism and Syndicalism**, which failed to demonstrate neither (apart from another late 70's critique of the CNT, now decomposing into many CNT's. On a par with **Wildcat** Spain.. (1978), but perhaps sharing with the syndicalists a conviction that Spain will somehow spark off revolts elsewhere in Europe.

J.McF.

VARIANT:

a **Radical Arts Magazine.** Number 1 is out now. Available from 45 Cecil Street (2 up right), Hillhead, Glasgow, G.12. (65p plus post). Concerted attack on the state of art today, and including an article on architecture, the transgression of art in crime, and one on how revolutionary women approach art. The others, from different stances, broadly libertarian socialist, argue for active artwork related to the liberation of humanity.

COUNTER-INFORMATION...

is a monthly broadsheet on the miners dispute, from Box 81, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh. Intended to, and succeeding in, chronicling miners resistance at grassroots level. Their own stories, with commentaries on the 'way forward'. A bit like 'Solidarity' in the 60's if taken in isolation, and has to be read in conjunction with more theoretical magazines like **Here & Now** or **Workers Playtime.**

THE REVOLUTION BEGINS AT CLOSING TIME

THE POPULAR conception of revolution is trapped in the legacy of the past.

Images of men and women rushing to the barricades and performing glorious deeds abound, whether it be the *memory* of the French Revolution, the 1848 uprisings, the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution of 1917. In the 20th century the *mass strike* whereby the workers seize control of the means of production has been added to the scenario. In addition, the example of Soldiers and Sailors Councils, in Russia and Germany in the 1917-9 period, and more rec ently in Portugal in 1974-5, anticipated the *neutralisation* of the military power of the State.

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Such events have arisen from one, or a combination of more than one, of the following:-

War and destabilisation conflicts between inter-imperialist blocs;

Irreconciliable conflicts leading to *Civil War* between factions of the ruling class presented as Democracy vs Dictatorship or Order vs chaos, etc..

The escalation of workers resistance by means of the generalisation of strike waves, *expropriation & insurrection*.

There is a need to analyse such a scenario and identify *how it might come about today*. The 'romanticism' of the revolutionary who envisages a *flashpoint of conflict* spreading like wildfire from country to country is a bad joke. Such scenarios are idealised visions which fail to confront the obstacles in terms of the organisation of the State and the capacity of workers to organise to overthrow it.

Clearly, the rulers of the States in the Eastern bloc, and the relation of the State to society is different. This has consequences in the way struggles develop and how the State responds to defuse or destroy them. The differences in the class structure also have a bearing, and the collective interests of *urban and rural* workers, or the aspirations of peasant masses (as in the third world) as against the demands of an emergent industrial workforce etc. can be crucial - as evidenced for example in Portugal 1974-5, with the North-South and other class based divisions.

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To pursue the situation in the *Peoples Democracies* further, these East European States were 'liberated' by the Red Army and not, with the exception of Yugoslavia by the efforts of *anational liberation* struggle. However, the uprisings in East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia betwwn 1953 and 1980 all combined the contradiction of class & nationalist sentiments. For example, in Hungary 1956 which erose out of a factional struggle within the State, has been lauded by neo-Nazi authors such as David Irving, as well as by some Trotskyites, Council Communists and libertarian revolutionaries. Similarly, the role of *Solidarnosc* during the Polish events of the last 5 years, and the seeming reinforcement of class opposition to the militarisation of everyday life with the *nationalist sentiments* personified by distinct religious/cultural traditions.

In these States, the scope for independent self-organisation amongst the working class is limited by the *overt incorporation* of trade unions into the administrative arm of the State. There is also the scarcity of foodstuffs and the *go-slow economy* characterised by overmanning and under investment in new technology. When a combination of circumstances arise, and there is a *collective will to change social relations*, the class conflict rapidly goes beyond localised disputes and attains a national character with the State as *collective capitalist[1]*. A precondition for the success of the escalation of such conflict is the 'winning over' of the armed forces and the incapacity of the soviet Union to intervene. Such developments have profound consequences for the political stability of Europe.

In Poland, many Solidarnosc leaders sought to *contain the movement* with the intention of democratising the State. evolving plural channels of representation and liberalising areas of social life, while remaining within the Warsaw Pact. Neither class nor nationalist aspirations would be satisfied, however. The destabilising influences led to the wholesale repression that civil war, normally results in.

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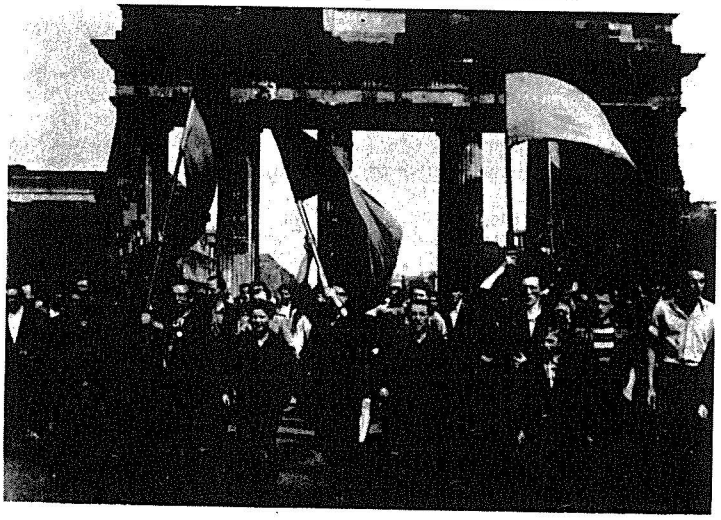
In Western Europe, there are significant national differences in the recent history of class conflict. Despite the linguistic separation, Belgium has been one of the few countries in which opposition to austerity measures has led to general strikes from below (as opposed to national stoppages called from above, by political unions as in France or Italy). As the present miners strike in Britain demonstrates, there are formidable obstacles to the unification of class opposition to austerity, far less the capitalist system.

The liberal democratic form of capitalism is typified by its *covert incorporation* of unions and parties into the workings of the State. The political fate of Western Europe is interlinked, as an area of potential super-power conflict, and the tendency has been for the export of 'democratic' models to Greece, Portugal and Spain as a precondition of their inclusion into the E.E.C. and defence alignments.

Furthermore, in addition to the sophistication of the system in *incorporating* demands for reform, there is also the *recuperation* of protest into acceptable forms that represent a safety-valve of single-issue campaigns or alternative lifestyles which in turn are marketed for 'popular' consumption. The strength of the liberal democratic *representation of capitalist interests*, is precisely in its adaptability to changes in society and in inculcating the myth of accountability, the legitimacy of the Law and the role of the State in general.

Distinct national differences have had implications for the *generalising of conflict*, or for that conflict to be directed into terrorism. In France 1968, the rulers and De Gaulle in particular, were momentarily paralysed by the fusion of student revolt with the dissatisfaction of workers, including many in the new technocratic professions.

On June 17, 1953, young workers from East Berlin and the outskirts of the city march through the Brandenburg Gate into West Berlin.



The levers of *participation* were blocked, except in the most limited sense of periodic voting and referenda. Reforms had to be instituted to *defuse the situation*. Significant in the 1970's was the rebirth of the Socialist Party in France as embodying a 'reformist' alternative(with self-management advocates as in the C.F.D.T.union). The alternative came to be realised in a parliamentary majority in 1981.

The complexities of voting systems are testament to the divergent strategies to represent different social groups and political aspirations. In Italy, for example, there is almost complete proportional representation, which leads to polities on the level of the State being the public accommodation of alliances. Such ossification and the, for the moment, exclusion of the Italian Communist Party from national power has stimulated *armed struggle* against the State and individual capitalists. The historical memory for the Brigate Rosse and other *armed proletarian nuclei* was the Communist Party's resistance, at one level, to Mussolini's fascism and its post-war legacy. However, in the context of autonomous workers and marginal resistance to austerity and for the *self-management of areas of social life*, such terrorism has only acted to reinforce the legitimacy of the 'spectacle' of democracy and present the rulers with the opportunity to erode civil liberties and display the naked force of the State.

In West Germany, a country artificially divided by super-power designs, there is a 'cut-off' inbuilt into the electoral process which incorporates popular 'third parties' but excludes those of limited appeal. It is also a country which has given rise to a massive counter-cultural movement, which has attempted, despite the repression unleashed by the State's crushing of the Red Army Faction, to create liberated zones of alternative living which stand in stark contrast to a passive working class which has *co-management* institutionalised at work. The rise of the Green Party is in a sense an expression of self-limitation, whether due to a conscious recognition of the pivotal significance of Germany for super-power relations or as a strategy for insulating the alternative 'community' from State repression by instituting a dual policy of parliamentary/extra-parliamentary opposition.

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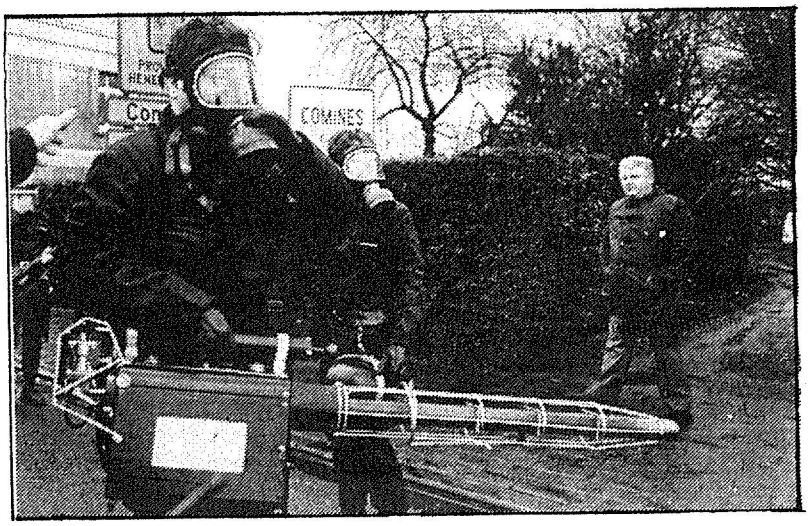
Forthright attacks on working class interests can have unintended consequences and are precarious undertakings.In the case of Britain, the Tory Government of 1970-4 had not sufficiently prepared it's onslaught, and had not directly stimulated the growth of unemployment amid the *restructuring and scaling down of many sectors of the economy* as in the present period. The groundwork for the present miners strike was prepared in 1978 under Nicholas Ridley when the Tories were in opposition and meticulous care was taken to ensure the limitation of workers resistance into *sectional* forms.

In Britain, the trade union structure is the first obstacle to workers resistance and the role of the leftist to 'revitalise' union democracy is nothing more than the fostering of illusions in the representational structure whereby Unions 'normally' assist in the negotiation of the rate of exploitation, and where at present this participation is blocked at the instigation of the Government.



Contrary to the *vulgar anarchist* position, it is obvious that unemployment was directly significant in relation to the Riots of 1981 in terms of releasing a *street 'army' of the discontented* .However, this did not produce a cry for 'full employment' as leftists would have wished. The scope for rioting to contribute to a *scenario for revolution* is limited by it's tendency, reinforced by State policy, to be contained in a territorial sense. The methods practised in the Creggan and Anderstown are being imported into the *'British way of life'* to the consternation of all the liberal democrats who fear the breakdown of respect for the existing channels of representation. Liberals are united with Communists in demanding *proportional representation* - the former to challenge the 'two party system', and the latter to undermine the role of the social democrats in the Labour Party and pave the way for a 'genuine' Socialist Labour Party.

The leftist scenario for 'revolution' - we all know - is nothing more than *the seizure of power* and the strengthening of the role of the State to direct the functioning of the economy. But, in reality, what are the likely consequences ? In Britain, should a Benn/Scargill scenario come about, a 'socialist' Labour Party will order the U.S. to withdraw their Bases including nucleur launch-pads. This will have an even greater effect than the flood of financial capital generated by the State control of the' commanding heights of the economy'. The likely result is CIVIL WAR, perhaps backed up by N.A.T.O. intervention. The fantasy of some right-wing Generals during the Wilson era would become a reality. The capacity for the Left to resist, would of course depend largely on the *sacrifizes* that the working class are prepared to make. The *Spanish Civil War of 1936-9* would have certain parallels in terms of the Left attempting to appeal on a class basis and embue it with a patriotic character(as Michael Foot and others view the Second World War in).

Such a scenario could not easily contain the aspirations of the workers, even allowing for the *expropriation of the factories & workplaces*, the control of the main urban centres by the 'citizens' (with London as a Madrid, as in 1937-9, or a Paris Commune). The use of the *regular army* reduces the capacity of the insurgents to neutralise the military might of the State. Nor should we rule out selective deployment of chemical and other weaponry by the enemy. The example of Latin America and Northern Ireland in terms of *internment* and unofficial *death-squads* is also appropriate. The traditional ruling class is not only adept and sophisticated at handling crisis situations, but has the capacity to ruthlessly deploy the 'iron fist' while presenting it as the application of *rule of law.*

The scarcity of foodstuffs is another likely consequence of such a civil war or even republican victory. *The solidarity of workers in other west European and also east European states is crucial. It is certain that their own ruling classes would no doubt combine concessions, on the one hand, with preventative repression & internment on the other hand.* Such is the limitation of national cultures, it would demand a fundamental break with how workers in one country view their class in another country to prevent the situation being 'normalised' abroad.

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In the global super-power system of today, we cannot lose sight of the fact that social revolution is impossible without the solidarity of workers in the U.S.A. or the Soviet Union. Either by their own efforts - which would have direct consequences for the stability of the power relations in the U.S.A. or the Soviet Union by their own efforts - which would have direct consequences for the stability of power-relations in Japan, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Australasia and Latin America - or by reacting to *class war* in Western and Eastern Europe respectively, the creation of a *social revolutionary consciousness* would have to arise in the working class of the super-powers.

Such a development, in all honesty, seems even more far fetched than revolution in Europe, which would

PUNISHMENT EXERCISE:

MARX AS INQUISITOR

Marxism and its gamut of illegitimisations now pervade the very societal institutions which it purports to abhor. The cooption by capitalism of apparent paradox is nothing new, however, the adoption of Marxism into the arena of social reformism which exudes a humanitarian and indeed at times a libertarian veneer perhaps serves as the testimony to the authoritarian nature of Marxist organisation and its propensity to hierarchical and essentially conservative structures.

Today, in the ideological supermarket, Marxist brand-names are promoted and demoted, floated and marketed with the same celluloid gift-wrapping. All varieties claim universal validity, all have pretentions to human truth, all legitimized by scientific cant. In this sphere of ideological barter, the packaging and image are all important, indeed sacrosanct. The pluralistic interpretation of Marxism with its diversity of brand-names tends to dissapate the odious nature of the promoters, a range of labels, jargon and market slang encased in different focus but all containing the same ingredients, all vying in the same market with claims of moral, political, interpretive superiority - because it's biological, scientific, pre-determined - because I say - it's all spray-on, a deoderised truth. In the end the stench becomes over-powering and oppresive.

Marxism has attempted to gain justification primarily through promoting a "scientific" credence. This scientism is of bourgeois origin, as is the social reformism of today.

However the scientific accoutrements of Progress, production and the cult of technology have proved to be myth, totally at variance with human development and freedom. "Having" has taken the place of "becoming". We still experience the legacy of this 19th century dogma. All too evident given its scientific and dialectic pretentions, Marxism has been no more prophetic than any other philosophy from the religious allsorts bag. Where, indeed, it has excelled, is in a retrospective analysis of events. In each event or crisis, through the dialectic, the facts, whether speculative or downright spurious, can be arranged accordingly within the dialectic framework. But the framework is extremely malleable, expedient. Anything can be judged worthy of inclusion or discarded - where historical truth is subordinate to the whim or survival of Party line or Central Committee.

The Marxist dialectic requires this subordination of both historical truth and personal freedom to political necessity. This is the predetermination of mass existence, where individual freedom is bartered for a collective servitude. Any suggestion of the value of human life, quality of character and importance of a revolutionary integrity as the basis for a free society has been repudiated, castigated as bourgeois sentimentality.

Marxism confiscates our contemporary living freedom for an ideal freedom. The dialectic demands that, to be free in the future, we must be provisionally enslaved. Unfortunately for the Marxist, the synthesis has not transpired. History has not arranged itself to the order of the Marxist catechism and the great icons of Party and State.

Little consolation for the Anarchists, many of whom met their deaths by executioners who were exonerated for their crimes in the name of Marxist purity and morality. In the name of Power, Party and State.

History has shown that State Communism is the exultation of the executioner by the victim, but, as the Anarchists well know, the vanquished have never written History.

Di A. Tribe

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draw on opposition to the roles of the respective super-powers and be presented as 'Anti-american' or 'Anti-Soviet', in their homelands. Here we cannot ignore the effect of television in the west to 'present the facts'. The sight of Czechoslovak citizens in 1968 causing consternation among invading Warsaw Pact troops, if replayed in the U.S.A. in terms of U.S. tanks rolling into the urban centres of Britain in the midst of a workers uprising could have dramatic consequences in the consciousness of American workers. In the Soviet Union, as 1968 proved, such images and reports would be more controlled and overtly redefined to suit the official viewpoint.

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Apart from the unsettling influences of such a European scenario, the normal means of social control would have to be eroded. In the U.S.A. there is a multitude of divisions, ethnic, regional, etc. plus the history of the resort to armed force on the part of the owners or the State(s). Clearly, economic disruption could be a 'detonator' although this could just as easily lead to *barbarism*. In the Soviet Union there is the legacy of the sacrifizes made in the Second World War which upholds the legitimacy of a regime which possesses all the means of crushing workers resistance which goes unreported and largely unknown to fellow workers outwith the immediate region.

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In conclusion, I have merely 'succeeded' in identifying some of the obstacles to social revolution at a continental or global level(4). Such an exercise will demoralise the niave, anger the militants for whom analysis and theory is a *diversion*, and frustrate many commentators who have argued that the *"Soviet Union will not survive until 1984"*...etc.. It is obvious that much more detailed examination of the scenario for revolution is called for. Also, the *social character of revolution in instituting new relations between individuals in wider CLASS terms*, require libertarian revolutionaries to go beyond confusion into developing the capacity to identify the dynamics for social change, and to concretely and imaginitively participate in a process which *culminates* in the outbreak of revolution.

Jim McFarlane.

Notes

(1) Leaving aside whether this is State capitalist, Bureaucratic Collectivist, etc, etc.

(2) Many political systems such as Sweden and the Netherlands are not designed to pursue such policy options which over-ride 'consensus'.

(3) See Black Flag Quarterly, Autumn 1984.

(4) "If we consider the problem from a simple material point of view, the superiority of capital is remarkable: our only hope lies in a subversion so general and yet COHERENT that the State will be confronted by us everywhere", from Barrot & Martin, "Letter on the Use of Violence", 1973 in "Eclipse and Re-emergence of the communist movement", Black & Red(1974).

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Contents of Issue no.1 (Spring 1985)

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PRINTED BY PRESSGANG