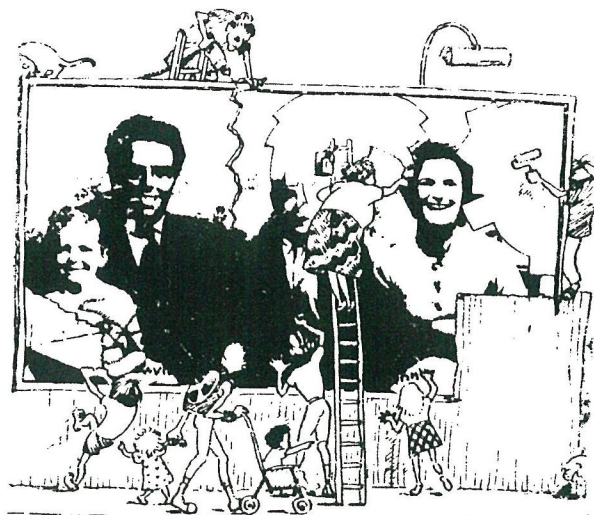A Magazine of radical ideas

Here & Now

50p

Including   The Subversive Past?

The Remaking of the Community.

The Search for Authenticity

Fifth Generation Computers

Sex & Destiny
Cardan #Reviews

WELCOME to Issue 2 of the magazine.

If there is a theme to this issue, it is primarly with the notion of progress & the remoulding of communities, motivations and horizons by the materialist conception of the 'good life'.

We have a feature article written by **The Pleasure Tendency** based in Leeds and a 'short' from them also. We **positively** welcome more contributions, either in the form of feature articles, short commentaries or responses to previous articles, especially if they are contentious or seek to develop the argument in a more factual direction. However, we will only publish articles or letters that are interesting to us or provocative and which will stimulate discussion, both in our circle and beyond.

We are also extending our contacts with groups and individuals involved in like-minded projects - **Workers Playtime** is one example, and have also sent the magazine to around 25 different outlets overseas. Indirectly, we are also challenging assumptions that theoretical magazines only emanate from metropolitan centres (like London).

Our motivation is to provide a forum for much needed discussion and formulation of the key **social questions**, and we reaffirm our intention to transcend ideological boundaries so that the social revolution isn't conceived as an act of 'blind faith', or as the outcome of inexorable and historically preordained forces.

Publications

"COMMUNISME: Elements de Reflexion (1)" by L´Insecurite Sociale (BP 243, 75564 Paris CEDEX 12). A basic text on the nature of, and necessity for communism, placing itself in a communist tradition by interspersing the text with quotations from Gerard Winstanley, Moses Hess, and William Morris. They also sent us an excellent English translation of one section, translated as "Commodity Production and its Abolition".

The Orchestration of the Riot

As if we hadn't already sensed, the reaction of ordinary people to the disruption of the European Cup Final demonstrated their recognition of the futility of confrontation as spectacle.

The 'spark' on this particular occasion ignited. The policing was badly co-ordinated by the Belgian authorities who had compounded the likelihood of disorder through the undermining of the segregation policy for financial motives.

As spectacle, it was certainly more gripping than the football ever could have been. It was unreal, it was unpredictable, it was happening, it was history in the making. The game will be manipulated by the authorities to represent a 'watershed' from which 'football as entertainment will be more rigorously policed and civil liberties trampled underfoot.

The National Front and the role of 'outside' manipulators has been highlighted. Whether most gangs of 'casuals' are directly linked with a fascist 'strategy of tension' is unclear and to a large extent incidental. In Britain after the Falklands and as the 1983 student street battles in France showed, the fascists have hijacked the terrain occupied only a few years ago by autonomists and revolutionary anarchists.

The 'Impossible Class' was the dreamchild of the autonomists and 1981, in Britain, France & Germany at least, was their highmark, which had given the impression that street violence was to be reclaimed by a section of the proletariat & that a generalised consciousness of revolution would spread amongst disenchanted and disunited youth.

The reality has been very different. After the euphoria subsided, the disparate elements within the riot came to be identified and demystified. They had been unable to break out of a localist and ghetto contained arena of conflict and overspill into the large shopping centres & industrial zones; they had represented alternative shopping for many people and not challenged the hold of commodities over our existence albeit that they were 'liberated' and not paid for, and that the authorities quickly put into force new techniques of surveillance, instant response, monitoring and crowd control deployed subsequently in the mining dispute of 1984-5.

Italian rioting fans declared "Reds are animals" and matched the 'Union Jack' minority at the other end in displaying the image of the riot through nationalist and reactionary designs. As with the 'war' on heroin and 'hard' drug usage, the coming period marks a determined effort by the State to intervene with the supposed aim of 'restoring' normality, order and respect for authority.

The fascist of course doesn't aim to undermine authority as such, but to destabilise liberal democracy through escalating levels of tension and confrontation enmeshed within the parameters of instituting a 'new order' out of chaos, where racism and/or strident patriotism is in the ascendent.

They have no scruples as regards manipulation since 'the Masses' within their scenario are to be safeguarded against drawing subversive conclusions by being successively separated on a narrow local basis, for which the support of 'their' football team suits perfectly.

The dangers of manipulation, however 'gentle' and well-intentioned have become evident too in 'libertarian circles as groups like Class War and 'Stop the City' promoters seek to compete within the framework of a macho/street credibility. On one level the 'audacity' may be appealing but the scope for anything but momentary impact has been lost as new rituals, events and codes develop in tandem with media coverage.

You might say - 'what does that leave?' HERE & NOW recognise that the revolutionary activist as catalyst§detonator should be set against the need to develop an analysis of modern conditions. Identify what is radical within 'popular' consciousness and avoid marginalisation of our ideas. Develop a manner of communication; within the 'battle for ideas' that provokes questioning and drawing long-term conclusions rather than merely displaying short-term fads and reproducing images of 'revolt'.

Jim McFarlane.

"VARIANT" no.2 (£1 from 45 Cecil St, Hillhead, Glasgow). Contains articles and discussions on the crisis in modern / postmodern art, the merits or demerits of Punk Svengali, Malcolm McLaren, plus fiction and poetry.

"WORKERS´ PLAYTIME" (40p from 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1). Contains substantial analyses of the miners´ strike and of the inadequacies of Ultra-Left politics.

TALKIN' 'BOUT MY GENERATION

In the past couple of years many articles extolling the wonderful future offered by the introduction of new computer technology have appeared in the Press. As happened in the 1950s when the first computers appeared, these articles have played ambivalently with the hope for, or fear of, a world without work. Terms like Fourth-Generation languages, Fifth-Generation systems and even Sixth-Generation biological computers have been thrown carelessly around. While pop journalism may happily add these quaint terms to its world of yuppies, yumpies and yomps, we should instead try to understand the forces at work in this area.

This article is an attempt to confront that question by focussing on two recently-published books: **"An Information Systems Manifesto"** by James Martin and **"The Creative Computer"** by Donald Michie and Rory Johnson. That these two books are aimed a entirely different markets is immediately indicated by their respective price-tags: £55 and £7. Where Martin's concern is to liberate the productive potential inherent in 4th and 5th generation techniques, Michie & Johnson's book has the perhaps more modest aim of explaining 5th generation Knowledge-based techniques to the layman and of promoting their use in the widest way in society.

Computing and Dialectics

In order to examine the problem to which Martin addresses himself, it is first necessary to describe the situation in which computing is placed in most corporations.
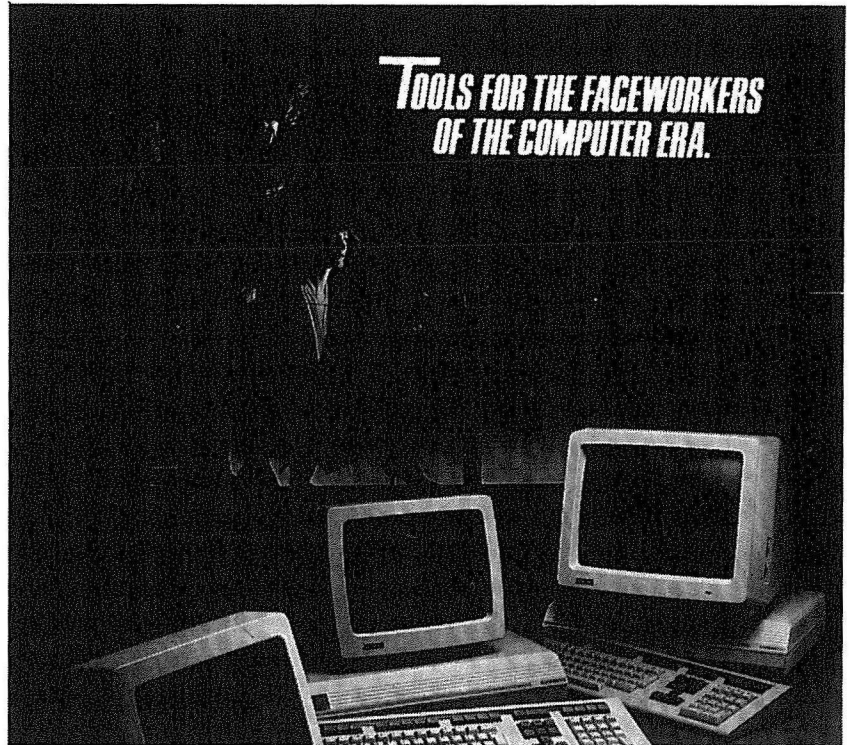
When the computer first began to make inroads into the operation of most companies, it was in the automation of some of the main arteries of the companies' operations, such as stock control or processing of payments. As computer power and storage facilities increased, it became possible to integrate these separate systems (written using 3rd Generation languages such as COBOL).

By this time, the new Data Processing department was consolidating the power it had acquired in the organisation. The form of this consolidation was a codification of acceptable and unacceptable practises in the light of previous experiences. The difficulties caused by chaotic duplication of data items in various forms in different files led to the vogue for database

techniques and to the appointment of a Data Administrator. The problems caused when one programmer tried to understand and change a program written by another (who may have since left the company) led to the adoption of depersonalised Structured Programming techniques. All the favoured practises came together in a "Bible" of standard procedures.

TOOLS FOR THE FACEWORKERS OF THE COMPUTER ERA.

However problems were arising for this new "People of the Book" as the development backlog increased. This was partly due to rising expectations and demands by computer users and partly to the limit on computer programmers' productivity: as Martin points out, programming is "one of the most labour-intensive jobs known".

The active response to this situation came from the frustrated users, who started bypassing the Data Processing hierarchy, buying the new micro-computers (notably the Apple II) and writing their own systems. Not only did this challenge the DP department's power but it also represented a return to the chaotic profusion of systems which the standard procedures had been intended to stop!

DP managers responded by accelerating the introduction of Structured Analysis and Programming techniques and by imposing much tighter time controls on their staff (whose

jobs tend to be resistent to formalised Time & Motion techniques). Because of their internalisation of the equation between productivity and personal ability, the staff tend to accept the increased pressure, even if they display a cynical attitude to it.

Although the DP department may have partially regained its prime

position the pressure has in no way decreased. The newly "computer literate" users demand increasingly sophisticated "user-friendly" screen-based systems (for which COBOL is inadequate) simulating the former activity of their departments, there is an increasing tendency towards exchange of information between companies using standardised networks, and there is a decrease in the lifetime of a computer system (before it needs a rewrite because of the technical developments or just because of all the patches made over the years). The measures taken have increased programmer productivity by up to 30%, but project deadlines remain management's main worry.

Some of the productivity aids now placed under the catch-all "Fourth Generation" label have been utilized by the more progressive elements in the DP hierarchy in an effort to further increase the productivity of their staff while remaining within the same management structure (such as

HERE AND NOW

continuing to operate the same Standard Procedures): such measures tend to double productivity.

Computing finds it's Luther?

For Martin, this is an inadequate response to the pressing demand for greater automation of work. Nailing his theses to the computer room door, he instead proposes the dismantling of the Data Processing Department in an "automation of automation" which would "put users in the driving seat". Stating that "Revolutions normally come from the outside. Monks do not dissolve monasteries", he advocates the "Information Centre" (the new Soviet?) as the location for a "creative partnership" of the Users Revolt with sympathetic insiders.

Integrated 4th generation languages, utilizing new techniques for producing working systems directly from demonstrably correct specifications, could allow users to produce their own systems with a minimum of technical advice. He states forcefully that such methods are often up to 10 times more productive than those used in existing DP departments, which he would wind down within one 5 Year Plan.

There is in Martin's book an ambiguity about the intended reader: for all its advocacy of the user, it continually addresses itself to DP managers, Analysts and Programmers. Perhaps, like the Russian peasants at the turn of the century, he hopes that the Czar will decree freedom when he learns the errors perpetrated in his name.

Rules and Knowledge

Much of the impetus for change in commercial computing derives from the feeling that the 5th Generation is just around the corner, and that those who don't adapt now will soon be left behind.

The panic about the 5th Generation arose when the Japanese announced their intention to "skip a generation" and institute a project aimed at developing 5th generation machines. That the term subsumes knowledge-based Expert Systems, natural-language and parallel processors, etc may indicate its breadth, or merely its vagueness. The belief that one can define the forms of development which will be felt to be necessary once the 4th generation is exhausted before it has really got under way certainly

shows a peculiarly strong faith in a linear concept of history, even for scientists.

Fears that the Japanese are about to establish dominance over another sector of modern commodity production (something they conspicuously failed to do in the home computer market with last years MSX debacle) have led even non-interventionist governments to back similar home-grown projects, such as the European Esprit and British Alvey projects. Large sums of money have been made available to a few software companies to go into partnership with Industry and Commerce and familiarise them with 5th Generation techniques.

Knowledge-based Expert Systems are the current vogue, since it is possible to demonstrate successful systems in areas such as medical diagnosis and oil exploration. Michie & Johnson explain the ways in which such systems are built and assess their success, stating that "to be suitable for an Expert System a subject area needs to be large and to include uncertainty and incomplete knowledge".

Such systems are built by assembling sets of rules with attached probabilities, forming a simulation of the knowledge held by one or more human "experts", which can be used to draw logical inferences from input details. This makes them particularly suitable in fields such as Medicine and Law, where much of the knowledge is rote-learned precedent. It is noteworthy that all of the "artificial intelligentsia" (to use Weizenbaum's description) suggest the use of an Expert System to speed-up the legal system - people may soon remember affectionately the days of wigs and good, honest prejudice!

Intoxicated by the seemingly-endless possibilities of such systems, Michie & Johnson embark on an exploration of the use of computers in the Arts, in the hope that they can somehow show the identity of the rule and probability based knowledge of the Expert System with the "creativity" of the artist. In their enthusiasm they seem unperturbed by the similarities between the highest achievements of the computer-wielding artist and the covers of pulp Science-Fiction books!

With such a deep confidence that there is nothing about which they cannot set rules and must pass over in silence, Michie & Johnson predict "a day when poverty, hunger, disease, and political strife have been tamed through the use of new knowledge, the product

of computers acting as our servants, not our slaves" - to which a Soviet bureaucrat would no doubt add the hope that the Plan might actually be met! This resolutely apolitical, Social Democratic vision reduces everything to creative solutions which would be supported by right-thinking people everywhere, and is totally blind to the real forces at work in society.

Productivity and Informationism

For an indication of the social social forces which have forced Expert Systems onto the agenda, it is necessary to return to Martin. He considers that most automation measures have hitherto been directed at "secondary industries" (eg manufacturing) and have left "primary industries" (eg mining and agriculture) and "tertiary industries" (the professions and service industries) largely untouched, and that this developmental imbalance is the cause of much of the social tension of the present time. He then concludes that one of the main reasons for the Japanese focus on Expert Systems is that "they will have a strong effect on productivity in the primary and tertiary sectors".

It may strike us as improbable that a productivity "shake-out" in agriculture, mining, offices and medicine would in any way stabilize society, even if it did establish a symmetry with that in manufacturing. The authors of both books try to comfort their readers by maintaining that new types of more-humane work will emerge in Information Technology. In his list of "Aspects of Work That Will Not Be Automated", Martin includes originality, inspiration, art, humour and love.

The belief that the modern executive wants and needs instant information at his fingertips is probably an idealised over-estimation of the numbers of people not merely minding the shop (In their dreams all executives are decision-makers). Similraly the belief that the consumer of the future will be a Renaissance man/woman sitting at home happily flicking through some specialist Knowledge Bank seems to be a Reithian throwback ignoring the nature of Mass Culture.

It is unlikely that Martin intended his example of the Sydney Opera House organ (which can record any musician's performance for later reproduction) to recall Vonnegut's anti-utopian novel "Player Piano" (written in 1952),

THE MATERIAL COMMUNITY

THE RECOMPOSITION OF WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES IN CLYDESIDE

The areas in which we live have been transformed by the progressive spread of the real domination of capitalism over the whole of our existence.

Today we are assaulted with concern at the erosion of such "community feeling", but such is the measure of the domination of the system's values that, by and large, the debate itself is contained within options for "reform" which are part of the problem rather than any solution.

Dogmatists merely sound the cry "the only solution is revolution" but typically have little or no perspective on how the "crisis" has developed, or in which direction the pace of change is heading. However imperfect our formulations, grasp of facts, etc., it is to the end of **understanding what's going on** that **HERE & NOW** is addressed.

Contrary to the perceptions of some, "modernity" is not our concern or orientation. Instead we recognise that **how** developments have taken place, historically and qualitatively, is crucial to an enhanced understanding of **where we are now**. It follows that we will be able to draw conclusions from our analysis which cast a skeptical "eye" over what passes for "revoltionary activity", and seek to go beyond this and indicate possible areas for contestation in terms of ideas and the way people "participate" within the system.

Homes Fit For Heroes?

Today's housing crisis in Clydeside and other areas with a huge legacy of "Public Sector" provision has its origin in the displacement of the role of the slum landlords in filling the accomodation needs of workers.

Instead municipal plans were devised to create "homes fit for heroes", and council housing, in Scotland at least, developed at the top end of the labour market and set the standard by which future house building and tenants' needs came to be viewed.

Living conditions had to be civilised and aspirations stimulated for advancement. This spread in stages from the "skilled worker" and Council employee to the "mass worker" (deskilled and subjected to the extreme

fragmentation of tasks) only in the wake of World War Two.

In the inter-war period, while Labour politicians like John Wheatley struggled to create the municipal housing sector, the cities were being enlarged at the "expense" of large estates still under private ownership.

One such estate was Pollok, in the South-West of Glasgow, which had been under the control of the Maxwell dynasty, and which had remained largely immune from the urban devastation of the Upper Clyde Valley. In 1926 the Boundaries Act brought the greater part of the estate within the city limits.

Up to then, a mining community in Nitshill had existed in splendid isolation and within the framework of the close ties of the industrial village. To begin with, the newcomers - largely families dependent on skilled trades - were integrated into the ways of the miners. Although this applied to the first wave, with the "townies" shown how to grow vegetables, etc., the character of the area gradually was transformed as successive housing developments were completed.

In the 1930s, Nether Pollok Ltd., under the direction of Sir John Stirling Maxwell, had attempted to persuade the municipal authority to create a Garden City with a select community provided with a large range of house designs and with dual carriageways, with a low

population density.

The "benevolent" individual gave way to the municipal authority and, although the affluent workers could "say to people that we had a house in the country" (1) as late as 1945, this had been overturned by 1955.

In the interim, wartime bombing and revived aspirations for general improvement gave rise to a massive house building programme which affected all the outlying estates (or "schemes" as they are locally known).

A Labour Government had been elected, and Keynsian economic policy and a "social wage" policy (after Beveridge) had given rise to the Nationalisation of certain spheres of the economy and the expansion of the "Welfare State".

Successive plans were revised and by 1947 it was envisaged that 40,000 people would inhabit the area. The scale of these housing developments was matched in Drumchapel in the North-West, Easterhouse in the North-East, and Castlemilk in the South-East perimeter of the city. Other schemes were also hastily erected amidst shortages of labour and materials, leading to new methods such as poured concrete being substituted for bricks, and flat-roofs covering 4-storey tenements with two households to a landing.

Yet dissatisfaction was not the mood of the incoming tenents:-

"My husband and I have looked forward to this day for years, and we can hardly realise that it has come at last. We moved into this house with the help of relations yesterday, who all expressed

their joy at our good fortune. It is a beautiful house, and I don't wonder that our friends are envious. They have every reason to be. My new kitchenette is a dream. It has a grand supply of hot water and a fine gas cooker and wash boiler. Work will become a real pleasure with these fine fittings. We feel very grateful to the men who built these houses, and it is to be hoped they will build a great many more to enable ordinary folk like ourselves to bring up families in decent surroundings."

The old living areas of decaying tenements, overcrowded and in many cases insanitary, were seen in a new light when compared to the new tenements. Space, natre and the unspoilt features of a **new frontier** impressed the families for whom the new dormitary areas had been planned.

Changes in production and the dispersal of the factories to Industrial Estates had removed the need for most workers to live close to their place of work. Many workers were employed at Rolls-Royce and the other plants in Hillington, and it became usual to travel long distances to work, although complaining about the lack of buses, trams and railways to the schemes.

The provision of amenities did not match the new density of housing. People from all over the South-Side were thrown together in the new schemes, but this in itself was less significant in the initial reconstruction of Community Spirit than the absence of basic facilities and a public sphere outside the home.

"People got on o.k. but there was no community spirit. By the time you came home from work, there was little time left. That was one of the main problems living so far from employment"

Depoliticisation

Most of the Authoritarian as well as the Libertarian Left thought of "the revolution" as coming at the end of, or precipitating the end of, the war. (2) It didn't happen, but more significantly the remains of the old Workers' Movement virtually disappeared within 5 years of the end of the global hostilities in 1945.

Although strike action was significant under the Labour Government, and squatting was a working-class response to acute housing shortages in the immediate post-war years (3), the popular mood did not favour insurrectionary or syndicalist ideologies. Projects such as the Workers' Open Forum (4) could not stem the tide, a change of attitude in the popular consciousness that had its basic roots in:
- the new role of the **State** in health and social security provision;

- the "Cold War" between the new Superpowers and the barrage of anti-Communist propaganda from 1947-8 onwards;
and
- the aforementioned new communities which weakened class ties with deprivation.

The fifties are now seen as bleak years, characterised by a seemingly depoliticised "consensus". Politics became a matter of the management of the economy and "the masses" turned their backs on it. The consumer revolution gathered pace, and privatisation in the home (as opposed to the community) as the centre of family life, assumed greated prominence. Domestic appliances such as washing machines gradually led to the virtual disappearance of local Laundrettes and Wash Houses. More crucial still was the role of television, which accentuated the retreat into the family home. Although this can be overstated, especially sincethe medium had not developed a sophistication in terms of catering for
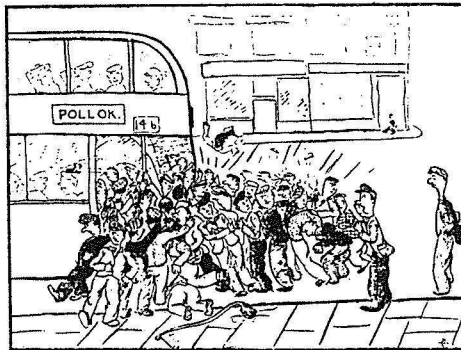
" Hey Wait a Minute Lads There's a Bloke at the Back no' Pushing ! "

"entertainment" until the 60s, the trend was set in motion.

The boom in Mass Culture post-war gradually swung away from football and cinema, towards the "fireside pulpit", the impact of which grew in proportion to privatisation. For women trapped in the home, the TV was to become the single most important source of news and frame of reference (outside the sphere of immediate neighbours).

*The great challenge to the tenants of many of the new Glasgow Housing Schemes is that of remoteness. The men are aware of remoteness from their work; the women from remoteness from shops...and perhaps also remoteness from relatives and friends to whom they could formerly turn in time of trouble...according to social workers, problems in housing schemes conform to a plan. Honeymoon of the tenancy - six months....first year - burden of rent and hire purchase; and in the second and third year tenants are forced - some the hard way - to learn the principles of household budgeting"

Divide and Rule

The divisions within the working-class surfaced very soon after the new tenemental areas were constructed. In one area the tension became especially acute, and the "Bundy" became notorious with the "respectables" in the Garden Suburb of Old Pollok opposite.

the tenants in Old Pollok were horrified to see the tenaments up across the road from them."It was SOUTH KOREA we called it, not SouthPollok" . In fact, over 130 of the 226 original tenants came from the areas of Govan and the South-Side. The scheme became known as 'the BUNDY' - a name derived from a clocking in meter used by bus drivers which used to sit opposite the scheme. "One of the main problems with that wee scheme was that there was too many people living in it. The density was too high for the size of place".(1)

The Bundy was eventually levelled to make way for a long-awaited Township Centre, which saw the multiples such as Presto and Tesco move in, but the "problem" was exported to other areas. One of the first areas to be identified as such a "dumping-ground" was Blackhill in the North of the city, seen as being inhabited by a criminalised sub-class.

The Bundy, and later other areas such as Priesthill, raised the spectre of
  "the dangerous class, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of society..." (Marx)
It was no coincidence that the residue of support for authoritarian socialism came from the better-off sections of the working class, threatened by those who didn't share the motivation to acquire possessions through "honest toil".

The "problem families" issue has got worse in the last decade as mass unemployment has become an apparently permanent feature of life in the Schemes. State policy through policing and "welfare" roles are obviously crucial, but more significant is the transmission across generations of an attitude towards the world. Living outwith the Law, subject to criminalisation and worst of all to crime within the neighbourhood act as barriers to a consciousness of the potential for change.

This is hardly surprising when you consider that existence in many Schemes is akin to a prison sentence (of the open variety) in the opinion of many people who do not have the option to "buy themselves out" either in the form of the growing market in Scotland for newly-built private houses, or even getting their rent arrears down to a level at which housing transfers become possible.

In other districts, the 60s saw the mushrooming of tower blocks. With few exceptions these house-styles and the deck-access blocks have become instant slums or prisons in the sky. In south-west Glasgow, Darnley was completed in the mid-70s and categorised as an area of "multiple deprivation" within 3 years.

The follies of architects, planners and engineers (A.P.E.s as defined in "Urban Devastation", a **Solidarity** pamphlet of 1978) became evident in such developments as Darnley, or the Italian-style multi-storeys in the Gorbals which eventually had to be evacuated after massive tenants' protests.

Dampness, made worse by fuel poverty but largely due to building design and climate, has given rise to campaigns by tenants' Groups which occasionally lift them out of the quagmire of liaison with the authorities and into confrontation. However, it is rare for tenants' groups to resist the channelling of their grievances into "safe" representation and negotiation over a protracted period.

Tenants complained of deteriorating conditions in the Pollok tenements only a few years after they were built.

The enthusiasm of six house-proud women has turned to despair as they watch their houses disintegrate around them, living room floors have canted in at an angle of 15 degrees; floorboards drawn apart, and huge six-inch nails edge their way through the linoleum. Windows seal, never to open again, and newly papered walls peel and crack. Pervading everything is a creepy, musty damp that coats articles with a thick deposit of green mould"

The capacity for tenents' organisations to launch rent strikes has been greatly diminished by mass unemployment and changes in DHSS provision for rent as a requirement of the claimant's "needs allowance". In the 1980s only the tenants paying rent could realistically withhold their payments to the local authority, and hence divisions are structured within neighbourhoods and against collective action.

The role of the DHSS also acts to personalise grievance through the processes of claiming single payments which are individually assessed and where as a last resort, arbitration in the form of Appeals Tribunals can give "objective" judgements within the guidelines of the mass of Social Security Laws and Regulations.

The stigma to claiming has by and large broken down through necessity, but still exists among those who haven't come face to face with redundancy, whether "voluntary" or forced, who tend to

Ballantay Road Castlemilk — one of the areas for co-op renovation.

"swallow" the illusions fostered by the gutter press about scroungers and affluence.

The changes within the institution of the family have led to increasing numbers of single-parent families. Sometimes this is caused as much by a desire to gain separate social security payments as by marital breakdown.

Housing allocation policy, through the "Homeless Persons Act". has tended to concentrate single-parents in the areas designated as "deprived", or about to be so labelled, but the effect is often to "drag down" the quality of life and corresponding expectations of the family as a whole.

Another consequence of the "rationalist" allocation policy has been the disappearance of Catholic and Protestant housing areas, and this, along with the general features of the "Consumer Society", has helped to erode the influence of sectarian divisions. However the education system is still segregated, and the outmoded institutions of the Orange Order and Rangers Football Club, and less significantly their Catholic equivalents, still survive as divisive and reactionary loyalties. If anything, there has been a slight "return" to such traditions in the past few years for many for whom identification with the Battle of the Boyne (and the ever-present example of Northern Ireland) overrides the logic of the "modern" way of life.

Up to now, deprivation has been a game of pass-the-parcel, with the municipal authority transforming one area - through demolition or, as more recently, adoption of "social mix" with private ownership - but merely duplicating the social conditions in an adjoining area.

Poverty Industry

Since local government reorganisation in 1975, and with the added stimulus of mass unemployment and more areas designated as exhibiting indices of "multiple deprivation", there has been a remarkable expansion of a **Poverty Industry.**

In 1976 a key document set out the "problems associated with the communities themselves":

a) sense of hopelessness: lack of knowledge and access to established machinery
b) increased sense of dependence on outside agencies, linked often with frustration at lack of control over own affairs
c) lack of leadership to form groups among the community, organise self-help, etc.
d) incidence of crime, particularly juvenile delinquency and vandalism
e) patterns of long spells of unemployment
f) truancy, under-achievement in schools and general lack of sympathy for educational system
g) very limited horizons, particularly affecting the young
h) sense of anonymity and irresponsibility arising from breakdown of older communities with redevelopment andf population movement, from housing policies, from the concentration of disadvantaged groups like one-parent families
i) ill health - incidence of poor health and handicap
j) feeling of stigmatisation - loss of sense of worth and identity
k) indifference to, if not estrangement from, councillors and MPs

Although the social engineers recognised that more than a "cosmetic" approach was needed, there can be little doubt that few

of the above conditions have been overturned.

However the much vaunted "corporate" approach has succeeded by and large in its social control function. No longer do organisations arise from and sustain themselves in working-class areas. Instead they are either manufactured or hijacked at an early stage by the people paid to "hang around the community" (to use an expression of a Social Work Manager).

Grants exist to be claimed, committees created, liaison meetings to attend, and now and then, an odd campaign or public meeting to justify the existence of the group. Confrontation is to be selectively employed, as a tactic rather than as an outlook delineating a class opposition.

In the late 70s, the Claimants' Unions often overstepped this mark. Welfare Rights Officers were employed by the region, dozens of Advice Centres established, corporate networks devised.... And within a few years, the Claimants Unions were just another voluntary agency dispensing welfare rights, filling in gaps in the "statutory provision".

Participation is seen as crucial to the maintainance of the system. But it must be channelled, and it must be pragmatic and follow prescribed organisational forms. The aim must be to group people together around a single issue, a parochial source of discontent, to represent people within the terms of their categorisation. Many activists can become aware of the contradictions of the participation game, but are enmeshed in the logic of representation and self-limitation of perspective. The majority, however, want to get onto the "gravy train" or are content to nurture ego-satisfaction in terms of their "good works" or new-found status.

The "socialists" and "revolution-aries" are seen as the educated bringing in "subversive" ideas from outside. However genuine many community workers are in their relations with activsts and the mass of people outside the projects sponsored by the local State (there are 700 on Clydeside alone described as "Urban Aid Funded"), they are contained within a structure.

Many who "rock the boat" only get away with it so far. Career prospects or directives from political groups serve to inhibit the capacity of radicals striving to link-up with the "minority" prepared to go beyond the campaign mentality. Campaigns are launched

to create structures, provide recruitment "fodder" for political groups and dissapate anger into a ritual of petitions and calls for more "effective" participation within the system.

The "Social Work Left" are also characterised by an overconcern with "their" Union (usually NALGO) and the seeming fixation on reproducing an "industrial" mentality within the Poverty Industry. This reinforces the separation of the workers from the "punters out there" and is indicative of the failure of the vast majority to face the reality of how the State seeks to foster participation in a structured direction, in demanding amenities and the chance to "self-manage" them with the veneer of financial autonomy.

The Community of Capital

The primary source of the lack of class consciousness cannot be traced to the door of the social control agencies. Traditional class cohesion has been progressively weakened by the logic of capitalist development itself. However the character-istics of modern society are always viewed in terms of the categories applicable to earlier periods of history. Hence we have commentators talking about the tendency to "proletarianise" the middle classes; for workers to become "embourgeoisified" and for the 3rd world peasantry to become the new historical proletariat.
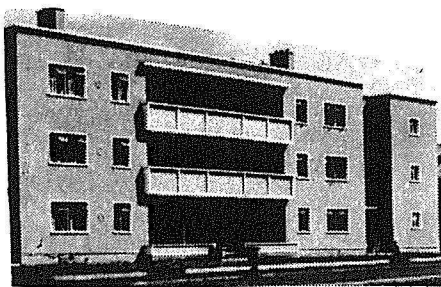
The polarisation of classes, and the corresponding spectre of "the masses" acting **for** themselves has not taken place. That is not to say that polarities will not or can not arise in the future. What is true to say is that cloth-capped imagery is outmoded and that the culture which sustained such conceptions has been systematically eroded to the point at which those in the lower ends of the class structure are as susceptible to the 'trans-Atlantic' mass culture regenerating banality.

In clydeside, older forms of class identification might appear to linger on, but this is partly because of the population switch to the new towns where the new patterns of social relations are

further advanced. Mass unemployment also brings with it the possibility of a permanent sub-class. In Scotland this could only be drawn from the indigenous population and be located in the peripheral schemes. At the moment, such hard divisions are not universally applicable and it remains to be seen whether the street corner/criminalised/drug targetted youth will form its basis in the forseeable future.

The question posed in many areas of the modern city is communism or barbarism. The features of barbarism, experienced on top of the crisis of values in this consumer society where worth is measured in 'objective' terms, are resurrecting demands for a 'real community' simultaneously with the system's project of everyone becoming their own policeman.

Up till now, on a superficial level the 'lid' has been kept on top of the contradictions - with the exceptions of the 1981 riots led by the inner city black populations in England . Yet there is little sense of things getting better. The heroin and cocaine scare that has been created offers new scope for social control in terms of physical addiction and the 'rehabilitation' of those inflicting damage to themselves.

In periods of upheavel, communitarian desires will arise which will be temporarily expresssed in terms of exclusive communities of belief, fashion or even in tenants managing their own schemes through Co-operatives.

The manufacture of illusions will, however be negated by their lack of relevance to emerging social conditions. What is more crucial is the realisation of a radical critique which recognises that, "We have lost the proletariat as a historical class and now humanity have lost the possibility of leaping over the capitalist mode of production(7) in certain areas of the world, and we have been most incapable of conceiving of it, infested as we were by the idea that progress is for all people the development of the productive forces..which was the affirmation inside the proletaria of the interiorization of capital's victory."

The impoverishment of humanity in the western world is primarily(8) in a qualitative sense and the scope for radical ideas to have any impact will be in terms of the way they address compensations in terms of consumption, participation and the value system that binds the social fabric

Letters

Here are two of the letters we have received, the **Wildcat** one is edited for reasons of space. Criticism and commentary, rather than congratulation or abuse is what we'll reproduce as letters...

We feel you should have explained much more '**By way of introduction**'.You refer for example, to the "ineffectual charade of marginalised activity' and to the 'ineffectiveness of most of our activity'. It would have been useful if you had explained exactly what you mean by this. Were you basing these remarks on your own activity up till now with the Clydeside Anarchists ? If so, it would have been valuable to have said more about what this activity was, what you expected it to achieve, why you were dissatisfied with its impact, why you think it was ineffective, and so on.

You also say that your aim is 'to understand **why** things happen and why certain other things do **not** happen . Obviously this implies that you regard existing theories and explanations as either inadequete or else totally false. Again, it would have been helpful if you had explained at greater length **which** theories and explanations you are dissatisfied with, and **why, which** aspects of society you feel are in need of deeper fresher analysis etc.

...As an example of what we are trying to get at, take the article, **Modern Society:Rotten to the Core?**. The opening sentence of this article states that:

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.

This simply begs the questions, none of which are really addressed in the rest of the article:
Which "past analyses" are revolutionaries questioning?
Why are these "past analyses" considered inadequete?
Which 'old' "areas of activity with revolutionary potential" are being rejected ? And, again **why**?
This article, like several of the others, seems to be opposed to something called 'orthodox marxism'. But this is a label which

needs to be explained more fully. Otherwise you may find that you are putting a lot of effort into attacking a position which nobody else is actually defending.

Wildcat,
c/o 8-10 Great Ancoates St.,
Manchester M4

•••

Coventry,March '85.

Dear Comrades,

Congratulations on issue no.1 of **Here & Now** - it was a great tonic. It fills a gap in publications and the stated aims of the group in the **Introduction** put into words things that I had thought for a long time.There is a great need for a serious discussion magazine for the anarchist/libertarian communist movement. Given the present resurgence of publishing the **Situationist** stuff, it is important that revolutionaries make sure that the ideas are being made use of in the correct framework to help ward off the individualists who Jim McFarlane describes as indulging in "**self-indulgent and egocentric diversions§hobbies**". It is also necessary for us to get down to serious theory if the libertarian revolutionary movement is to seriously challenge Marxist hegemony and the emerging **technocratic** mentality/cadres.

Just as in the **Gombin** book - yes he was praised by the **S.I.** but this does not exonerate the"..**Leftism**" book which is full of glaring inaccuracies despite it's honourable intention - hence the **C.M.D.O.** is described in the glossary of the 1975 Penguin as "The Committee for the Preservation of **Jobs**"!!! He has sinced produced an "updated recap" of the **Leftism** book called **The Radical Tradition**(methuen, U.P.,1978).

The bit on the Khmer Rouge was something that needed writing - I hope you will tackle some more of the revolutionary movement's taboos - ie. all those **half way house** measures which are held up by reactionaries(and some revolutionaries!) as "conclusive proof" of the futility of attempting radical change.

Anyhow, here's some ideas on things which need serious debunking/discussion in a 'Serious' journal - the whole propaganda»leadership«spontaneity thing, the peace 'movement';'alternative' lifestyles;militantism and dogma'121' anyone?); apathy (reasons for it) and terrorism (in the light of certain peoples continued fetishism and excited schoolboy voyeurism in this area, and **Sanguinetti**'s excellent book).

I think one of the things we have to stress is contained in the last sentence of Jim McFarlane's last article - that is we must communicate and **participate** in a movement towards revolution - there are too many **leaders, cadres** and **armchair critics** and too few revolutionaries who develop theory and then give it concrete form [praxis] in their everyday lives and the class war generally.

Good luck with your venture, I'm looking forward to a next edition.

Yours in solidarity,

J.F.

SHORT NOTES

RESISTANCE TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF TIME BY BUREAUCRATS.........

On May 28th 1984, The Times **carried an article by it's religious affairs correspondent about St.Catherine's Mill, Bramley, Leeds. This old textile mill was converted by the local vicar, Mr. Stonestreet, into an unemployed centre with a difference.**

"..the message is that, on the dole or not, 'a man's a man for a' that'. It is an expensive gesture for the chairs of polished hardwood ply cost upwards of £50 each".

"...aimed not at providing paid work but at supplying the sense of personal worth that can disappear with the loss of a job...For the unemployed, or 'unwaged' as they say here..'

"This is the arena in which the 'gift economy', in Mr Stonestreet's phrase, will operate It is for the pursuit of activities falling somewhere in between work, leisure, hobby, or entertainment, where his ideas on 'the separation of work from wage' will be applied."

"..Mr Stonestreet persuaded the National Westminster Bank to buy it for him, for £100.000... an anonymous donor has pledged £82.000 a year for running costs."

"The Archbishop in commending the scheme, also endorsed its philosophy of separating work from wages."

This pseudo 'commodity-free zone' found only one problem to its well laid plans of controlling the unemployed. They refused to come.

"We put all sorts of things on at the mill' said Mrs Avril Barton of the management committee, "but very few people ever turned up."

'**Atractions' included pop singer Hazel Dean and members of the 'Coronation Street' cast. Talent contests for local youngsters also met a wall of popular indifference. A crisis has developed and the centre has now been 'temprarily' closed.**

Word now has it that Stonestreet saw the centre as an institution for his own 'cultural' values and though 'money-free' certainly wasn't control-free. This month [May '85] an advert appeared in the local paper for a paid administrator for the centre. As this latest attempt by Power to control our pleasures fails in the face of mass refusal,the administrators of misery turn to expert help in their project of suppression. The response of the people is awaited with interest.

The Pleasure Tendency,Leeds.

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together.

Within the dynamic to negate materialism there also remains the urge to **re-invent** a community where **social responsibility** triumphs over narrow self-interest and rugged individualism(9).

By understanding the social **reproduction** of relations within the 'material community' we at least should be in a better position than past revolutionaries whose efforts have contributed to the present features of capitalist society, especially in the variant of 'The Soviet Bloc'(see 7). That this is possible is an indication of a diffuse and contradictory consciousness within all those who doubt their allegiance to **things as they are.**

(1)The quotes are from original inhabitants of the scheme interviewed as part of a P.h.D. thesis and reproduced in a local magazine -**The Banner** no.4. For a marxist overview by the author of the history article, see "**The State, Housing and the Reserve Army of Labour,1850-1939**".Centre for Urban and Regional Research,University of Glasgow.
(2)Albert Meltzer -"How Near were we to revolution" in **Black Flag Quarterly,Autumn 1984.**
(3)See "The Labour Government & the Dockers"'**Solidarity' pamphlet 19 & Colin Ward -**"Housing an Anarchist approach".
(4)A forum set up by Willie McDougall.ex-council communist propogandist who published '**Solidarity**' during the war when the local **Anarchist Federation of Britain was especially active** & Guy Aldred's "**The Word**" assisted conscientious objectors.
(5)"Multiple Deprivation",1976,**Strathclyde Regional Council**, recently revised in the neo-corporatist spirit as "Social Strategy for the Eighties",1983.
(6) The question of class, it's **cultural as against economic** aspects merits much more research and analysis;.

(7) Jacques Camatte in "Community and Communism in Russia",p.54. Available from **Unpopular Books** c/o Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High St.,London E.1. The main focus is the destruction of the traditional communitarian villages by the Bolshevik State concerned to develop the forces of production at any consequence.
(8) Not withstanding the real cuts in Social Security provision which the "**Fowler Review**" is to usher in and which may stimulate anger especially amongst youth on 'forced labour' Y.T.S. schemes. Perhaps the '**Right to be Lazy**' will again become a revolutionary demand!
[9] The miners strike, won by attrition and by appealing to stark material interest by the Government, nevertheless saw considerable **sacrifizes on a community basis** to resist pit closures decreed without regard to the **social consequences**. The position of women, especially. has been radically altered in the family, and it remains to be seen whether traditional patterns will reassert themselves over equality.
Jim McFarlane.

WE live today in what could be called the conti-
nuous present. We progress through time not with a
continually growing collective memory, but with a
conciousness spanning some ten years into the past and
the future. Only the rich, the academic or the eccen-
tric presently escape this. The instance par example
is the consumer item. Every tool or substance is soon
made obsolete by some new embellishment or formula.

The home brewer's Automatic Siphon (with bellows
and tap), the Retractable Head Squeeze action floor
mop, the Bostik Hot Glue Gun (needs special glue
pellets), and New Daz are examples which spring to
mind. As the previously neglected Leisure field
expands, Hobbies provide a new excuse for an explosion
of newly complicated or newly created retail items:
the cross head screw, the snap-together kit. What was
previously unmediated fun, needing only the most rudi-
mentary materials and a great deal of skill and imagi-
nation, poses a threat. That activity must be
simplified, complicated, taken and possessed by the
commodity-makers, and once it is their own specialised
property, resold to the consumer. The activity is then
only available in a represented form, mediated by
products, can only be performed through these commodi-
ties and therefore becomes a commodity in itself.

Mass production's vast potential has been harnessed
not to provide the basic needs of life in abundance,
but for the endless reduplication of effort and the
trivialisation of diversity. Man's ingenuity has been
concentrated into producing the throw-away car, a new
fizzy drinks maker, individual fruit pies and the
regular-shaped potato crisp. The Paint-Master, adver-
tised on T.V. in May 1984, is a battery powered
machine which feeds paint from a reservoir at the hip,
through a tube to a specially designed paint roller.

Looking around the everyday environment, there
remains hardly anything to hand which has remained the
same for a man's lifetime. The teapot, the candle and
the hammer perhaps. Even the humble pencil can be
modernised, however, into the plastic implement with
twelve pop-up points. The coffee pot, seemingly
perfectly fitted to its task, must yet have its rival
in the vacuum suction design; you don't even have to
tip it up to pour elevenses.

In this way, all contact with the past is erased.
We are borne along in the present on a crest of a wave

of consumables. We are made aware of the passage of
time by the circulation of commodities. Anything which
is old is seized upon, labelled °antique' and put in a
special price bracket, almost in amazement that it
should still exist. It is treasured as a lone asser-
tion of permanence against the current of transcience;
and yet the institution of the Antique is the final
confirmation of the commodity society.

Increasingly we pass through life with no recollec-
tion of or connection with the past. Sealed in a
capsule of the present, we are allowed contact only
with a reality authorised by manufacturers of novel-
ties, and allowed to visit the past only in coach
tours to a theme park, as part of another revenue
generating activity.

What we see, hear, read, touch and think is
carefully controlled by those who have a vested
interest in speeding up the flow of possessions. °The
Present' is artificially shortened by increasing the

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO(

Responses to the Subversive Past.

" A society that has made 'nostalgia' a
marketable commodity on the cultural
exchange quickly repudiates the suggestion
that life in the past was in any important way
better than life today. Having trivialsed the
past by equating it with outmoded styles of
consumption, discarded fashions and attit-
udes, people today resent anyone who draws
on the past as a standard by which to judge
the present. Current critical dogma equates
every such reference to the past as itself an
expression of nostalgia."
"The culture of Narcissism",
Christopher Lasch.

The 19th century notion of progress finds
a banal counterpoint in the spectacular
notion of modernity. The idea of **Progress**
finds its expression in the realm of **product-
ion** both as justification for the tyranny of the
economy (Jobs must go...you can't stand in
the way of Progress") and in the technolog-
ical determinism of Leftists who see social
change following on from changes in the
means of production (the word progressive is
never far from the lips of the most neolithic
of Stalinists). On the other hand, the notion
of modernity is present chiefly in the realm
of consumption. Life is artificially accele-
rated by the rapid turnover in new 'essen-
tial' commodities. The recent past recedes
into distant history. Nothing looks shabbier
than the just out-of-date. The past is pres-
ented as a **desert out of which we have**

**escaped into the oasis of the present from
which we can glimpse the abundance of
an orgiastic future.**

Yet the past too can be recycled as
commodity. Nostalgia for pre-consumer
society is used to sell anything from brown
bread to furniture. Vague memories of an
urban life perhaps not entirely devoid of
community are recuperated by Hovis.
Habitat's new range presents an idealised
version of a supposed rural past, catering to
the anxieties created by an uncertain
present;"Habitat Country offers a soft look
combining gentle colours and clean shapes.
It echoes a search for the honest reassuring
qualities of life...." Habitat's ageing custom-
ers, fatigued by the constant obsolescence of
the commodity, yearning perhaps for some
vague notion of transhistorical 'quality', are
seduced by a product neither truly of the
past nor original in the present; an attempt
to capture the **imaginary essence** of a phony
rusticity. The vertigo brought on by the
whirligig dance of consumer fashion becom-
es the basis of yet another marketing ploy.

Not only is pre-consumer society packag-
ed as a consumer good, but the Spectacle
has taken to recycling its own drab history.
Pop culture has developed an obsession with
its own recent past, and in tandem with
some radical sociologists, created a false
history of a past **subversive in its patterns
of consumption.** Youth cults, seduced by

the invented image of recent times which
offerred pleasure for hip young kids parade
their sad painstaking parodies of originals
already pathetic in their first manifestation.
The hopelessness of **now** is chanelled into a
longing for the mythical sixties; a Golden
Age of consumerism; a sexy exciting time
for youth, pregnant with possibiiity. And the
desire to escape leads to the ritual re-enact-
ment of acts of consumption - the resurrect-
ion of the Vespa and the button-down shirt.

The true past, as always is kept secret.
Yet an awareness of what is lost is essential
to the **vision** of what may be possible. The
belief that elements of the past were better
than an awful present can supply confidence
in the possibility of a better future. Historic-
ally radical movements have drawn on†the
myth of a previous golden age, for nourish-
ment. To admit the possibility that the
past may be in some ways have been super-
ior to what we now experience is not to
express an impossible desire for a return to
the past. It is rather that:-
"To emphasise the pre-eminence of cont-
emporary society in history is, subtly, to
elevate a deadening, homogenising mass
media over the spiritual yearning elecited by
religious ceremonies, a mechanistic scient-
ism over a colourful mythopoeic sensibility,
and an icy indifference to the fate of one's
immediate neighbours to a richly inter-
twined system of mutual aid".
Murray Bookchin,**"The Ecology of Freedom"**

SIVE PAST

NEED IT BAD, WE'VE GOT IT GOO

Colour	Size	Qty	Price
			£
			£
			£
Please add postage & packing: £1.45			

velocity at which things and ideas pass before us. Our conciousness, instead of being spread over hundreds of years by connection with artefacts, ideas and customs from those times, is concentrated more and more narrowly. No wonder that sometimes an empty desolation is felt by those whose minutes, having by themselves such little interest, are connected to nothing else -- not the future, not the past, and only to each other by the stubborn will to endure.

Social atomisation is the third dimension of the commodity society; such notions as solidarity, community and transcendent vision pass away as it reaches its perfection. Any concern wider than the individual and the family is seen as a pointless indulgence. This is the apotheosis of capitalist self-interest, and its crisis.

It is more than lucky for our masters that such events as the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War are today °unthinkable', and even the 1981 Riots are relegated to dead history. However, atomisation tends to undermine the social fabric to such an extent that the atomising agency is itself threatened - but not in a subversive way, merely in a way in which barbarism is the logical outcome.

No longer are hardwood oak trees planted, they take too long to mature, long enough anyway to be out of the range of vision of economics. The repository of the idea of bequeathal to the future is a few conservationists and the rich, whose wealth allows them to escape the economics which it has helped to create.

We escape to the °old' things as if they were a subversive oasis in a desert without life. In this secret garden we are able to look at things with a new, and longer perspective. In normal life our dissatisfaction is keenly repressed by the distraction of a thousand petty choices.

Exhortations in the instruments of conditioning on childrearing, sex, marriage, achievement, society and the self change contradict each other with bewildering rapidity, even from the same source. The only ideology to which these agencies are committed is superficial choice and superficial substitution. Once in the past an idea is only useful for temporary revival. Behaviour must be able to change at a speed to match new industries and the demands of capital. The consumer and labour force must be plastic, ready to be moulded to fit in with new productive patterns, conditions dictated by the development of commodity society. Enduring values are dangerous.

Connection with the past provides standards by which the present existence can be evaluated. Not only is this dangerous today where standards of all sorts are being ground down and the unsatisfactory alternative is always adopted, but also in that in the interests of the present order of things there must be as little public resistance as possible to the ever swifter adjustments necessary in a consumer society -- a society which consumes ideas as fast as it consumes useless objects. Although nostalgia is the revolutionary conciousness of the unimaginative, and as such is easily recuperated, awareness that elements of life disappear with increasing speed to be replaced by shoddy and ridiculous substitutes, is only the beginning of a critique condemning the whole system of economic organisation.

The Pleasure Tendency.

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Without a consciousness of the past, capitalist man is non-essentialist, a nervous Zen Buddhist living only in the instant defined by the ad-man and the T.V. pundit. As our identities are formed by the goods we consume, we can only identify ourselves in relation to the fashions of the moment. A consciousness of the subversive potential of the past becomes a psychological necessity.
"This historical discovery [of the importance of the past to early popular movements] reinforces the psychanalytic insight that loving memories constitute an indispensible psychological resource in maturity, and that those who cannot fall back on the memory of loving relations in the past suffer terrible torments as a result".
Christopher Lasch "The Culture of Narcissism".   T.D.,14-5-85.
■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

THE article seems to assume a "real" essence somewhere in the individual's "self" in his or her utilisation of tools, or in the memory of the past, shared with his or friends and relatives. Capital is seen to be threatened by manifestation of this **essence**, and it therefore has to chip away at it, replacing utensils which may have resonants of a different past and potentially different future with newly designed tools which have no excess over the functions for which they were intended. Each substitution of the **artificial** for the real enmeshes the individual more deeply in Capital. it is asserted that the **velocity** of this process keeps increasing, and that awareness of this can be the beginning of a critique of **capital** itself.
The examples chosen echo Chtcheglov's

image of the choice between love and the Garbage Disposal Unit. The area from which they come is not without interest: D.I.Y. is a very popular sector through which the urban map changes, with the encirclement of towns by a belt of weekend wharehouses (instead of the **Red Belt** which once encircled Paris!) Vast profits are made as people attempt to regain a 'lost' craftsmen essence to their lives (and in so doing reinforce the retreat into the home as castle). However, concentration on the gimmick tool end of this market may obscure other important aspects of the purchase of lifestyle.
I am skeptical about the idea (or hope) that a greater turnover in fads will drive people towards the critique of all fads, because I feel that it underestimates the extent to which the sense of time/personality is constituted by just this obsolescence. Picking up Freud's metaphor of the "Mystic Writing Pad" (a device which most of us had as children), the repeated acts of writing, erasing and writing leave a **formed topography** on the layer underneath, a debris which forms the individual. An example would be the myth (lyrics, sleeves, history etc) of Rock Groups which once pre-occupied you, but which no longer have any "relevance".
Collectively, such memories can be the very stuff of your social life (the once shared myth), individually, the personality forms in the disjunction between such memories of significance and that which today is supposed to be significant, the memory of the social status which once went with a rote-learned skill with the Rubic Cube...
"And i felt...a sensation of weariness and amost of terror at trhe thought that all this

length of Time had not only, without interruption, been lived, experienced, secreted by me, that it was my life, was in fact me, but also that I was compelled as long as I was alive to keep it attached to me..."[Proust, "Time Regained"]
Having formed personal identity as an "independent" individual/consumer at age 16, through such experiences, the path beyond an everlasting repitition of this identity rejoins the proposed critique of the artificial tool, by proposing a dissolution of identity, a play with the excess over intent...
The article argues that enduring values are dangerous to Capital because knowledge of the past may make people want to change the way(s) things are moving. It is certainly more common for the invariability of values to be asserted in the face of Leftist **relativism** (eg. "Times Change, Values Don't") - the Daily Telegraph advertising campaign). That this invariability is itself created can be seen in: recent work on the creation of tradition (clan tartens, jubilees, etc); the substitution of the "tragic" cinematic cliche of the 1913 "Indian Summer" for the actual state of impending civil war; and, not least, in the recent elevation of the huckstar from American vulgarian to the sort of enterprising chap who'll make Britain great again. The precise area of malleability in popular prejudice remains to be outlined.
Despite widespread loss of faith in a better tomorrow, despite the moaning about declining values and increased acquisitiveness and greed, it would seem that, by and large, people accept this society as better than that if 30 or 40 years ago.
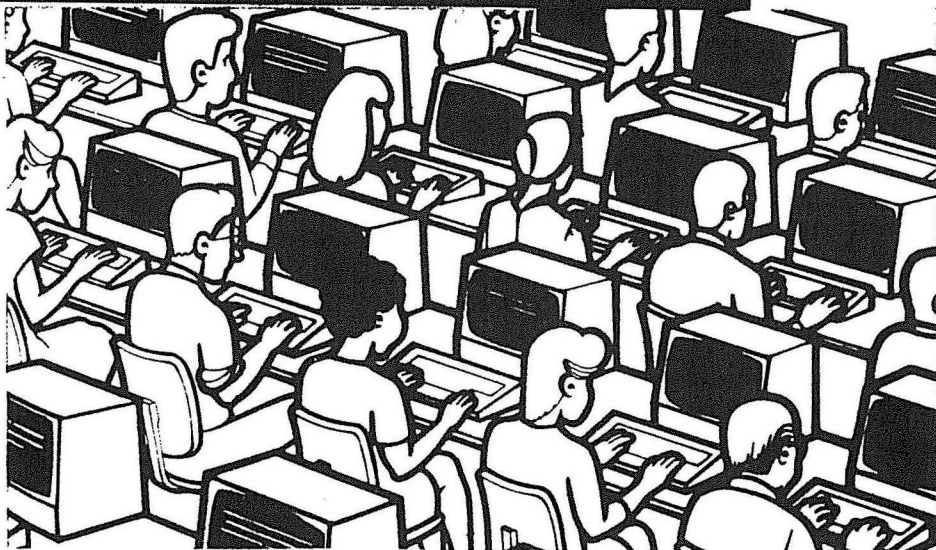A.D., 5-5-85.

HOW THE OTHER HALF THINK

"If, as the saying goes, information is power, will the advances in Information Technology lead to more power in the hands of those who operate the technology, or will the power base be spread to all those who can use it?"

This is the introduction to an article entitled "How can IT lead to better government?" that appeared in the April issue of the local government magazine **Public Service and Local Government.** It examined some of the thoughts on IT that surfaced at a seminar organised by the computer company Sperry Ltd. in 1984. In particular, it focussed on the ideas of three men: David Howell, formerly a minister in Thatcher's cabinet; Norman Strauss, once a member of the Prime Minister's No. 10 Policy Unit; and John Kay, Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Howell reckons that the information monopoly has been "blown wide open"; that stores of information have now become accessible to individuals. In future, he thinks that the government's role will become one of a service provider rather than a power in itself. Interestingly, he also says: "Maybe the information society, with its computers in millions of homes, is really the little old bourgeois society, with its tight little networks of contacts and interests, writ large. The bourgeois wanted to be left at home alone to persue both its individual and communal interests, while the government sent the gunboats abroad. The labouring classes were meant to underpin this comfortable state of affairs. Could it be that the powerful tools of the micro-electronic age are now about to do for everybody what the workers did for the bourgeois of the past?". As the writer of the article, Alan Pickstock, points out, the ideal of all citizens being involved in government because computers make that **possible** begs a few important questions. Can all citizens **afford** the machinery (or will the state provide)? If they can afford it, will they be able to use it (will the state provide re-education)?

Norman Strauss has different ideas. He wants to set up another arm of the executive - the **Computeracy.** This new organ of state will require "a new kind of non-elected professionalism... an intellectual thinking and doing class, able to think things through more effectively, to turn ideas into practice and to make theories into realities. We would need to grow a new breed of **Pracademics,** practising the skill of **Theoreality**". So you had better get out there and start growing those budding pracademics.

Strauss appears to be a right-wing libertarian, because he also suggests that staff would only work in the Computeracy for a few years at a time, so avoiding the career structure which he feels inhibits ability in the Civil Service. And that full consultation would be possible because anyone will be able to contribute through their own computers. Anyone, of course, that has, and can use, a computer of their own. This would lead, he says, to far more open government, because citizens would have access to the decision making process and policies chosen would be chosen on the grounds of the most effective due to the use of computer analysis.

Howell and Strauss seem to be expecting to enter a very rosy computerized society in the very near future. John Kay, however, disagrees. He reckons that the kind of information which computer models can generate is at best peripheral to the political decisions which have an immediate effect on policy. Politics, he says, is about the mediation of interest groups, and the computer is not and is not likely to be one of them. He "remains sceptical that the analytical information [that computers] provide will ever be central to [the] decisions [of politicians]".

In conclusion, as Alan Pickstock says, "major political and social changes will be required before full advantage can be taken of today's, let alone tomorrow's, technological advances".

ALEXANDER.

Cont. From Page 4

which dealt with the spectre the kind of society offered by the 5th Generation's enthusiasts.
That evocation of presence through absence may take us back to the fundamental point, of the distinction between life and its simulation, and give an unintended resonance to his final question "What sort of a world do you want your children to live in?".
The vision of a "world without work" exists for some as that of a society outwith the economy of production and consumption. It has also always been disseminated widely whenever any new technological development has been introduced, often serving as the light on the horizon. In the long shadows cast by this light are often concealed adverse changes in peoples' working and living conditions.
It is too early to predict what real changes will be brough about by 4th and 5th Generation techniques, but the pursuit of ever-increased productivity does lie at its heart, and leads to sometimes unexpected situations within the enterprise as yesterday's radical becomes today's conservative.

Wynn Chester

UTTERING NOTHING BUT BLOOD

A Review of Germaine Greer's "Sex and Destiny"

In 1729, Jonathan Swift published a pamphlet on the population "problem" in Ireland. Now usually known as "A Modest Proposal" its original title in full was "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country". Swift's solution, in the days before synthetic oestrogen was, to put it bluntly, cannibalism:

"I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance that a young healthy child, well nursed, is at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing and wholesome food, whether Stewed, Roasted, Baked or Boiled, and I make no doubt that it will equally serve as a Fricasie or a Ragoust."

He was not, of course, serious. Rather he was having some satirical fun at the expense of the sort of well-heeled moralist who worried over the irresponsible fecundity of the lower classes. Whether or not the poor are always with us it certainly seems that as long as they are, the rich will consider it their moral duty to combat the fertility of the impoverished.

Germaine Greer's "Sex and Destiny" is a sustained polemic against the same phenomenon today. According to Greer the industrial consumer societies are anti-child in contrast to traditional tribal and peasant societies which are, on the whole, pro-child. For us child-rearing is an extraordinarily difficult and burdensome process and procreation is a hazardous affair to be entered into only when a mass of stringent pre-conditions are met. Sex is principally a leisure activity, undertaken in order to fulfil our inalienable right to the orgasm, with procreation an unpleasant by-product somewhat on a par with herpes. For us, conception is likely to spoil the fun. For traditional societies, Greer maintains, the children ARE the fun.

The history of the birth-control movement, from its conception to the present day, is, to an extraordinary extent, the history of the efforts of the rich to control the reproductive rate of the poor. While some dedicated anarchists, socialists and feminists(among them, Rose Witcop, Guy Aldred and Emma Goldman) proselytised on behalf of birth-control on the philosophical basis that the individual had the right to have control over their own procreative destiny, those who were to become the stars of the movement, e.g. Margaret Sanger and Marie Stopes, were motivated by the usual desire to stop their inferiors breeding like rabbits. It comes as something of a shock to discover how closely the birth-control movement was linked to the eugenics movement, which was racist and near-fascist in its assumptions.

"We.........sought first to stop the multiplication of the unfit. This appeared the most important and greatest step towards race betterment." (An Autobiography. Margaret Sanger. Quoted in Greer.)

"Are these puny-faced, gaunt, blotchy, ill-balanced, feeble, ungainly, withered children the young of an Imperial race? Why has Mrs Jones had nine children, six died, one defective?...Isn't it for the leisured, the wise, to go to her and tell her what are the facts of life, the meaning of what she is doing and what she ought to do?...MRS JONES IS DESTROYING THE RACE!" (Marie Stopes in the "Daily Mail", 13th June 1919. Quoted in Greer).

perhaps comes as less of a shock to find a Fabian ixed up in this stew:

'What we as eugenists have got to do is to...dis-

courage or prevent the multiplation of those irrevocably below the National Minimum of Fitness." (Sidney Webb 1909. Quoted in Greer)

The birth control movement has not only had links with daft racial theories. The finance for the population lobby has largely come from a Big Business no doubt worried by the instability that might be engendered by the unfettered spawning of the victims of its activities. Comforting as it may be to peasant societies that Ford, Dupont, Standard Oil, Rockefeller and Sheel are seriously worried about the possible cramping effect on peasant lifestyles from producing too many children, we suspect that the poor of the world might consider these peculiar benefactors more of a burden to them than their children. Millions of dollars have been pumped into the promotion of the idea that the problems of the poor are not the result of the misappropriation of resources by the rich but are caused by the tendency of the poor to breed excessively. Though of course we cannot doubt that this profligate philanthropy was motivated by anything other than pure altruism:

"...let us act on the fact that less than $5 invested in population control is worth $100 invested in economic growth" (US President Johnson 1966, quoted in Greer).

Having defined poverty as essentially a problem of "over-population", the rich then proceed to throw expensive high-tech solutions at it. This has the rather pleasant side-effect of experiencing "benevolence" returning in the form of huge profits to the multi-national drug companies and all those involved in the manufacture and distribution of paraphenalia associated with contraception, abortion and sterilisation throughout the world. Furthermore these high-tech methods are often actively dangerous to both the women and any children they may subsequently conceive. Drugs proved dodgy in the West are marketed in Third World countries in dosages far exceeding the maximum permitted in their country of

origin. In addition, IUDs, oral contracaptives, etc, not always easy to use in the societies for which they were first manufactured, may prove almost impossible to fit in with a traditional lifestyle.

Greer maintains that traditional methods of controlling fertility are not understod in the West and are oftenextremely efficient. Low-tech methods such as abstinence, coitus interruptus, late marriage and the barrier methods can be very successful ways of keeping population levels stable. They are not dangerous and are suited to the circumstances of a traditional lifestyle. The Westerner looks at the large family and difficult circumstances of the peasants and assumes her children cannot be wanted children. But peasants have large families not because they cannot control their fertility (they can), but because children are seen as a positive addition to life and even as a raison d'etre. People in poor countries will control their fertility if and when there seems good reason to do so. The circumstances which might bring this about would include improved primary health care, so that the chances of all infants surviving to adulthood make it unnecessary to reproduce many times to ensure that some children survive.

Greer has been strongly attacked for romanticising traditional societies and their attitudes to children. Not being familiar with such societies I don't know whether she does or not. Her evidence is certainly anecdotal. Some of her argument, however, merges with a critique of THIS society with which we would be sympathetic. In particular, she touches on two dynamics within modern Capitalist society which sustain its domination over formerly-autonomous aspects of our lives. These are the tendency of "radical" or "progressive" movements to cheerlead reforms necessary to Capital's continuation, and secondly the tendency for experts to take control of activities which were formerly controlled by ordinary people.

The "progressive" cause of birth control and the allied critique of the family is in danger of smoothing the way for Capital's drive to destroy all social bonds and reduce the size of the household, the former because such bonds might act as a locus for resistance to Capital, and the latter in order to maximize the potential markey for consumer goods. In consumer society the child is in competition with the commodity for its parents' love, attention, and disposable income. Parenthood is a long way from Capital's modern ideal of the autonomous consumer, free at all times and in all places, to lavish affection and spending-power on the commodity, the dead offspring of our mis-directed libido. Children fuck us up as far as the freewheeling lifestyle of mimimum commitment and maximum consumption is concerned (see Cosmopolitan and Martini adverts, Wham! videos and passim). Still, they have their uses in that they too can be turned into consumers!

"In the last hundred years, the consumerism of Western babies has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. The baby-carriage, a relatively modern invention, is the most expensive item, and significantly the one that is paraded before the public; to it are added the baby's layette, crib cot, napkins and the like, all clearly designed for baby's use and therefore instantly obsolescent." (Greer, p22)

The problem is of course that most of these goods can be passed down in the time-honoured way. The market for such things is inherently limited by the lamentable tendency of kin-groups to share:

"As a consumer unit, the multi-generational family is unsatisfactory because of its economic efficiency. Whatever is acquired is used to maximum capacity..." (Greer, p208)

Such families have long-since disappeared from consumer societies, of course, the nuclear family having provided an effective form of damage limitation. Still the signs are that this may not be enough if the paeans to the joys of single parenthood and, even better, living alone, which appear fairly regularly in the "progressive" media ar anything to go by. No strong social tie must threaten the power of the commodity and nothing must obstruct the individual's drive towards maximum consumption.

Yet living alone, or childlessly, does seem a reasonable option, indeed almost the only reasonable option, when one considers the nightmare that child-rearing has been made to be under modern capitalism.

"To mother-guilt in the nuclear family must be added the other guilts and fears which build up on parents who must "do their best" for the child, first by denying it brothers and sisters, then by struggling to give it a better life than they had, for the consumer society is never satisfied. More space is needed to play, to sleep; more medical attention, balanced nutrition; more stimulus is needed in the way of books, music, intelligent conversation, participation in schoolwork, outings,trips,development of special talents, sport, sports equipment, entertainment ,electronic hardware and so on. The losers are the parents of poor children: their offspring fall below the subsistence line and become a statistic to be singled out for special treatment, for free lunches at school and uniform supplements and all the other petty humiliatioins. To keep these cuckoos in the nest mother and father must both go out to work, so the whole point of the parenting exercise is lost. No wonder couples concentate more and more upon themselves and their orgasms while the European birthrate...gently declines and the sales figures for sex aids go up." (Greer. P. 253)

This whole painful scenario leads to the second tendency, the overlaying of a process with mystification until it seems a dauntingly difficult affair. The only answer it seems is a recourse to experts. What was formerly "ours" becomes the domain of the state and/or the growing ranks of the professional classes, be they social workers, teachers, doctors, health visitors, journalists and mediapersons,or academic child-care experts. This begins with the near monopoly on childbirth of the medical profession and continues from there. The idea that we are not fit to rear children unaided is fast becoming the conventional wisdom. The agitation concerning child-abuse would convey the impression that every child is in near constant mortal danger from its parents.

"..what is occurring in the child abuse arena....is the manufacture of a social isue. By a manufactured social issue I do not mean that there are not numerous cases of children being criminally assaulted by there parents and other caretakers, but rather that the discussion of these events has been mediated PRIMARILY not by the needs and situation of the victims. Instead the issue and the debate have been shaped by the social interests and values of those who have publically defined it." ("The Manufacture and Consumption of Child Abuse as a Social Issue" John Grady. Telos 56 1983.)

Or, in other words, it is in the interests of groups of experts to proclaim a problem which requires the attention of precisely those same experts. It has recently been estimated that 1 in 3 of all Swedish children is at one time or another the subject of scrutiny by social workers, with a view to their being taken into care. Apparently too there are a lot of social workers in Sweden.

The net effect of these tendencies in our societies is to reduce our confidence in taking control of our own affairs. The result is weakened individuals less

THE REAL THING ?

When looking at their situation, people from any particular Radical political minority cannot escape the overwhelming sense of their isolation from society. The ideas and sometimes accompanying life-styles which were initially the areas from which inspiration and the wish to communicate stemmed, often end up becoming modes of non-communication, enhancing or even creating the barriers between political change and present life.

Although situations vary in terms of place and circumstance, making it difficult to pinpoint patterns of social behaviour, the fact that people generally pay very little attention to "Radicalism" must also to some extent be seen as a product of the nature of society.

1. The Ascendency of Consumption

In both the Eastern and Western world, particularly since the second world war, there has been a tendency towards expanding bureaucratic administration and the 'centralisation" of culture within capitalist values. In a sense we are increasingly being alienated from our experiences.

In the world around us where both social values and the physical environment are decaying, often expecta-tions and desires can only be sought from a culture dominated by a Capitalist economy. Whether this be, for instance, a reliance on the commodity as the source of pleasure, or the dominance of the specialist in interpreting and "solving" both social and personal problems.

Bureaucracy, which has accompanied the development of Capitalism along the lines of the ascendancy of consumption and the need for intensive management, has lead to the rule of the Economy, or "logic" of exchange taking priority over social heirarchy and individual power. In essence our culture is becoming that of the commodification of life. Any hope for change becomes located within the present system, better times are portrayed by the myth of progress - where the point we are at in history is seen as the ultimate in human achievement. Prosperity and indivi-dual satisfaction are tied down to the idea that a continuity of the present norms will lead to greater salvation" A culture such as this, which is embodied within the accumulation of capital, relies not so much on objects assuming the form of desirable commodities, but more importantly on the manipulation of human desire and aspiration. Through adapting cultural attitudes into marketable images, it could be suggested that this leads to the growth towards the total administration of society".

Correspondingly Radical Politics has degenerated both in terms of content and influence within peoples thoughts, making it essential not only to try and understand the social forces at work, but also creating the need to shift some scrutiny onto its own effectiveness so that the potentialities for revolu-tionary change can once again be talked about. For the most part the "Left" of the late 19th and the first part of the 20th century was rooted in a reliance on this same rationality of progress which capitalism has now come to represent. Socialism would either evolve from the inconsistencies and irrationa-lities of capitalism or the inevitable proletarian revolution would smash its way through when crisis came overwhelming.

Depoliticisation

To a large extent, the "popular" political sphere, characterised by the world of public meetings, factory gate politics and the cheap pamphlet, as the means to which people were persuaded to "join up" in the political group, party or union to fight the struggle, was destroyed by the last war. The cultural base for this type of activity was eroded along with the

strengths of the community and communication both at home and work. Society has progressively moved away from a time where this Public Sphere could play an important part in the politicisation of the Working Class community, to a world now where the individual, with the means of impersonal communication at his or her fingertips, with people the other side of the world, often doesn't know the person living opposite. Thus, Politics has become less of a living force of ideas in people's lives. No doubt, the "Cold War" mentality of the fifties along with the rise of consumerism and the television played its part, along with the exposure of the atrocities committed by the ideological societies of Stalin and Hitler, in de-politicising people. Leaving Politics now in the hands of International administration and media sensation-alism.

It could be said that the whole rationalist base on which the desire for political change rested, has slipped from under it, leaving us with the problem that the crisis of our time is a crisis of [political] rationality - which has become the ultimate form of mystification. No aspiration, for the most part, can realistically be imagined by many to exist outside this society. Political change is therefore trans-formed into consumerable desire.

The effect on the minority who do become politicised is that of further isolation and the problem of not being able to orientate oneself towards the complexity of society from an active position, where a radical minority can play an important part in trying to create change. Often individual motivation is trans-formed by the need to communicate into group motiva-tion in search of a thriving popular identity with one's ambitions. This in turn leading to the "interna-lisation" of a view of society within the aims of the group. If things don't fit with group interpretation, they are either seen in such a way so that they do, or conveniently pushed to one side.

In many cases the politics of radical groups either totally alienates itself from any social base, or retreats into half baked ideas concerned with "social

issues" rather than trying to get at the roots of life in this society, as with Nuclear Disarmament, and Environmentalism. Any meaning these issues may have had end rather with the creation of a false sense of reality- politics as an "appendix" to be attached onto the illusion of mass support.

3. Reassessment?

A course that would seem more advantagous to take in order to reasses the nature of political "contestation", would be to start by trying understand one's own contradiction of being a Political activist in a morass of apathy and then try and relate it to "popular consciousness". Firstly, why do some people become politicised? Then on a broader level, is the "reasoning" behind taking up some sort of activist position a fragment or offshoot from cultural attitudes generally? Unless one came to an improbable conclusion that all political malcontents were psychologically insane or all showed strong similarities in their type of personality, it would be fair to say that radical politics is a part of a culture at a given time.

Without wishing to simply tail end popular sentiments for the sake of attention, the next thing would be to see where, from a radical perspective there was common ground in terms of motivation. The aim not being to try and give a political character to all aspects of life which would be awful and the way towards a society devoid of any human content, but rather to see where social and cultural myths or expressions could take on a transcendent nature, with a view to seeing human liberation outside the control of power relations and capitalism generally.

From involvement in a fragmented politics it can be seen that this transcendent wish is prominent. The difference with more general wishes of transcendence, which exist in western society in the form of the identification with progress as mentioned above, is that in its radical form the faith is in the goal rather than the method. Often in both cases there is an idealisation of aspects of the past as much as wishes for the future. It could be suggested then that there is a common desire to transcend one's present situation through as extension of one's essence into one's surroundings. As was suggested earlier, the commodification of life allows for this sense of security to be bought, and acts as a buffer to widespread discontent. However if revolutionary desires are to gain any footing in popular consciousness, it will be done through the exploration of aspects in human desire such as this.

4. Authenticity

To be more specific, and bring this desire for transcendence into line with present society, the forms that it takes have to be examined. In a society where "faceless" bureaucracy and synthetic values hold sway this shouldn't be too hard to do. Society by its nature, increasingly reduces or destroys any lasting sense of meaning, to the point where the individual in many cases becomes little more than a voyeur of the world around. Whether in work, leisure, learning, communication or communal existance, this meaning lessness invades everything, leaving consumption as nearly the best area where desire can be seen to be fulfilled. Any really felt experience that someone may have is so often incommunicatable in a moving sense on anything other than a one to one basis. It could be said therefore that a popular desire such as the transcendence of one's present condition takes on a form where meaning can be assumed. Given the prese social conditions it would appear that from the alienated forms of culture which capitalism breeds off that one present form of transcendence which seems to strongly influence peoples lives and thought is expressed in the desire for Authenticity.

This would hold true in western Culture, where all number of attitudes, lifestyles and objects are taken up to give on the real sense of living or identity in an impersonal world. Also with Radical politics, the desire for an authentic society centered on some form of equality has some predominance.Rather tha seek mass identity or individualism as solely the place to create an authenticity, politics also seeks authenticity on an overall social basis.

To see what implications this has in creating a combatative popular consciousness that poses a challenge to capitalism, it must be asked whether the desire for authenticity in one's life and in culture generally, the development of potential, imagination and satisfaction, can firstly generate a critique in peoples lives of the society we live in now, and thus make a world where reality becomes the enhancing of such things to the best advantage for all on both a social and individual level. Or whether the search for authenticity, or for that matter any society which is not based on pure reason, is rooted in illusion and must stay there.

5. Communication

In itself a goal of a politics of authenticity offers no greater solution than a reliance on commodities. The idea that participation in Politics is the agent by which authentic meaning will be supplied just adds to the faith placed in mythological solutions. Most likley this would end in disillusionment or the creation of authoritarian utopias by which to subject the individual. Likewise to take on the more irrational characteristics which often accompany this sense of longing such as a mythology of the past or a desire for strong moral values is more a basis for Christianity or even Fascism, rather it is the desire in itself along with real examples of better times and human cooperation that should be drawn out.

It could be said that authenticity can have no goal but rather, if it has any potential it is that of a catalyst rejecting both the rationalisation of its image as well as surpassing the mysticism in which it is often expressed. The radical content of authenticity would therefore be the desire to become conscious of itself where the individual can come to terms with a confrontation with the illusion that a society based on the economy, can create social harmony and liberation.

Too often, however, politics doesn't go beyond the stage of critique, and here simply "exposing" the causes of misery in life without offering any form of a solution other than "Join the Party" leads to creating cynicism more often than generating opposition. For the sense of authenticity to have any radical potential it must seek to draw the individual out of isolation and fantasy in order to create authenticity in solid forms of a community based on resistance - the well spring of communication and unmediated social life.

Primarily Radical Politics [a limited expression in itself] should seek to communicate in the most direct manner possible with people, not only to confront what it sees as myths in society, but also forms, areas and

the reasons behind resisting capitalism. A sense of community, a realisation that history isn't pre-destined and that progress in human terms doesn't necessarily run in a linear fashion, and overall if "politics", if it is to have any relevance in modern society, must seek to suggest that a society which has meaning for everyone, is based on both human need and the imagination to create a society where the wish for authenticity wouldn't need to arise in its transcendental manner.

6. Activity & Community

Finally the areas where "politics" can have most effect in bringing people into the wish for confrontation with social forces, and in direct communication with each other have to be found. This would require an approach completely in contrast with the dogmatism of "leftism" [as over the "workers movement"]. No doubt places of alienation such as work where there are numbers of people brought together on an artificial basis may provide areas of struggle. However it is of prime important to also look for other places of resistance with different reasons behind struggle [other than wage bargaining etc].

In confronting the illusions of consumerism would seem to be one area, opposition to bureaucracy and administration could be others. Exposing new techniques in media of technological developments - by showing the ways they destroy human community: through Urban planning, the destruction of nature, the separation of life into areas such as work and leisure, as well as the older ones such as nationalism, religion, the family, sexual and racial stereotypes. Rather than trying to recreate a resurgence of the community pressure group, it becomes more a question of trying to undermine a culture based on the economy with the aim of re-creating community in real terms. One which can have no interest in the present society.

It is therefore my assumption that the desire for an authentic life serves as one example of where there is a potential of a radical break with the values of this society. It becomes not simply the question of looking for new areas where struggles are taking place, but more a wish to attempt a rethink in terms of motivation and attitude which "Politics" can assume.

In a society which erodes values particularly to suit the accumulation of capital, the creation of a popular consciousness which assumes communal values and a consideration of human liberation has much potential in undermining the lie that authenticity and life in general can only thrive in the myth of progress and capitalist monotony, where the individual continually seeks the need for escape.

K.H.

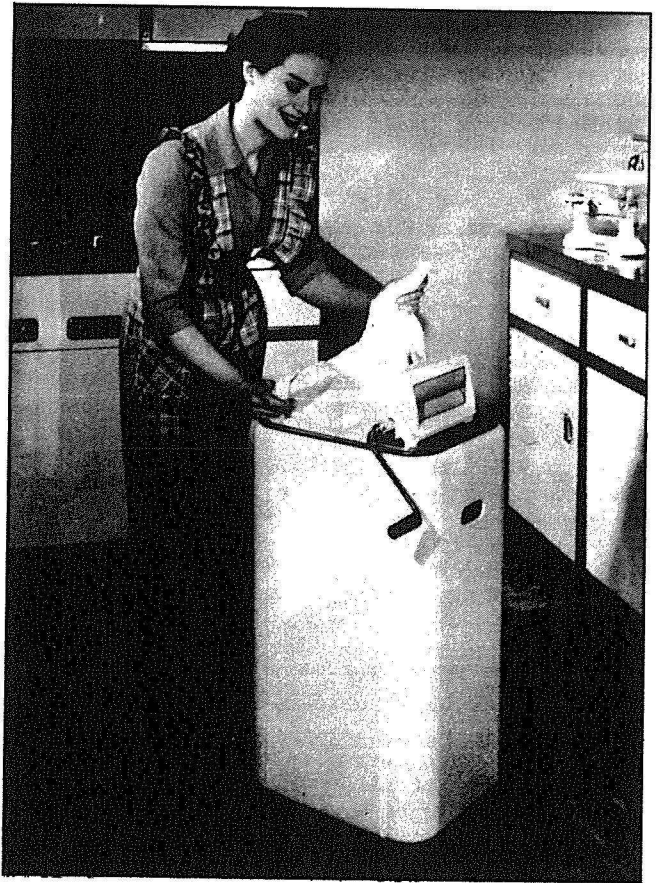## UTTERING NOTHING BUT BLOOD Cont.

likely to find the individual and collective confidence to overthrow the prevailing social order.

Dr. Greer's book has apparently met with a degree of hostility from some feminists. The tendency of some feminists to analyse social life in terms of a galazy of "oppressions" (or sex, of race, of handicap) seems to miss out on the expecially odious position of the child in Western society. The desire of some women to exclude children from Womens' Centres (or at least to have "Child-Free Zones") reflects the dominant culture's exclusion of the child from the mainstream of social and economic life. When someone wrote to the Guardian Womens' Page lately complaining that she had received a Wedding Invitation which had specifically excluded children, she received a mass of replies all emphatically applauding the exclusion of children from such public gatherings.

The anti-child bias of much of feminist thought is perhaps not too surprising when one considers that at least one seed text for radical feminism saw the liberation of women in terms of liberation from her biological inheritance. Shulamith Firestone's "The Dialectic of Sex" looks forward to the day when biological engineering will end womens' child-bearing role. The elimination of the barbarity of pregnancy will place reproduction in the hands of a "new elite of engineeers, cyberneticians" ("The Dialectic of Sex" 201). It is a short step from this to seeing the child as in itself oppressive to womankind. The scandal over "Sex and Destiny" highlights the tension between pro- and anti- child tendencies within feminism.

Greer's book is anti all the right things - the State, Capital, consumerism. Indeed, her evident distaste for all aspects of Western consumer society seems contradictory in a woman who, not so long ago, was to be seen on our TV screens pleading for the preservation of more aesthetically-pleasing commercials. For Western societies apparently she holds out little hope, her concern being rather to stop the import of destructive contraceptive technologies into societies which still retain the possibility of experiencing child-rearing as a joyful thing. The rest of us are too far down the road to be able to turn back, so unremittingly sterile - "uttering nothing but blood" in Sylvia Plath's words - that we are bound to simply fade away, leaving the earth to the fertile and child-loving. In the end, sympathetic though her argument may be, there is a fatal lack of a political dimension to it. "There is no possibility of return..." she says. Fair enough. But there is the possibility of moving forward to a world where the idealised pattern of childhood she celebrates becomes a possibility.

Greer's intention is perhaps to disturb the smug, ethnocentric attitudes she finds in the West. Yet her rooting of the anti-child impulse in social formations, such as Capitalism and Consumerism, cries out for a more closely argued political strand to the book. Her "traditional" societies will not be saved by the Western population lobby packing away their steroids and heading back to the sterile West. The most staggering phenomenon with regard to population

CARDAN'S SOCIALISM

The redefinition of the nature of socialism which was carried out by Cornelius Castoriadis (under various pen-names, including Paul Cardan and Pierre Chaulieu) in the postwar period, mainly within the Socialisme ou Barbarie group and journal (until its dissolution in 1965), has been widely influential on the "Libertarian" left. Indeed it has largely formed that area, providing a framework which has often seemed more valid in the modern world than those of Marxism and Anarchism. This article is an examination of some aspects of this redefined socialism.

The end of the war marked a fundamental turning-point in recent history: the old class antagonisms seemed to be being eradicated with the appearance of a society based on an ideal of material prosperity for all, beginning in the USA, which had grown rich on the war industries; and the bankruptcy of societies based on political ideologies seemed evident, with the revelations firstly about the Nazi death factories and then about the extent of the Terror in the Soviet Union.

For some in what became "the West",the murmured rituals of Marxism continued to provide their "haven in a heartless world", even if they no longer had any faith in the inevitability of socialism. A few others (perhaps those who had been the best "Marxists") would feel that a new analysis was necessary, given the failure of Trotsky's predictions for post-war society (the Soviet Union having failed to either go forward into socialism or relapse into capitalism).

Beginning such an analysis, Cardan, perceived a basic similarity between the situation of the worker in the West and in the Soviet Union (despite the abolition of private ownership of the factories in that country), and used this as the leverage-point in his "fundamental reconsideration of one question °What is Socialism?'". This "necessarily started with the idea of autonomous action by the proletariat as the central theoretical and practical idea of the revolution. It ended with the definition of socialism as worker management of production and the collective
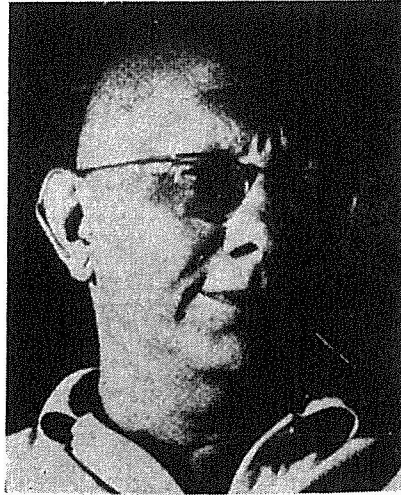
management of all social activities by everyone who participated in them" (1).

Attention was drawn to the space at the centre of production which the technicians of the new Management Sciences were trying to erase:
"...Capitalism is obliged to try and achieve the simultaneous exclusion and participation of people in relation to their activities...This fundamental contradiction appears constantly whenever the process of management meets the process of execution which is precisely...the social moment of production" (2)
Despite expressed recognition of the impossibility of a "complete rational-

isation of the economy", the possibility which he claimed to have detected, and which was beyond the capabilities of any managerial "pseudo-rationalisation" imposed from above, would be "an immense rationalisation...(which) can only have positive results in peoples' lives". (3)

A rationalistic bent is particularly clear in some texts co-written in the 1950's with the Marxist Humanists:
"If we have placed our concept of the future of society upon the working class in the social relations of production, it is because it is the single stable, unifying and integrating element in a society that is otherwise riddled with insoluble antagonisms and rudderless..." (3)
Elsewhere in this same text is predicted a society where "men would soon face the realities of social life as phenomena created by human beings to be organised by human beings in concrete life and not in the escapism of abstract thought..." - a glorification of materiality as such. Only the emphasis on rationality arising from collective discussion at the point of production separates this outlook from that of the modern technician.

Socialism would therefore take those forms which would best allow this. As a theory of institutions it would see the only hope of avoiding degeneration in the maximum extension of such institutions to every area of life. Cardan therefore saw as admissable the exercise of defining the inter-relations between such institutions, based on the councils, an exercise he carried out in the article "On the Content of Socialism" (5). Of this, his erstwhile collaborator Claude Lefort said
"...(H)is will to say what socialism was, to define its content, compelled me to ask myself why I deemed this ambition insane...Castoriadis' sketch of the contents of socialism, precisely because it affirmed a rigorous mode of

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Cont. From Page 17

in Third World societies is the rush to the cities (for example current estimates suggest that the population of Mexico City will be 30 million by the year 2000). With colour TVs in every shanty the reign of the image will surely erode traditional attitudes towards children more thoroughly than mass sterilisation ever could.

There is no return and the only way forward is to overthrow the social relations which have produced the sterility Greer laments. Her constant depracatory references to consumerism, capitalism and the State suggest she knows this, yet she does not explicitly consider how we might re-invent childhood as a source of joy - perhaps a more fitting task for the inhabitants of the consumer society she deplores.

T. D.
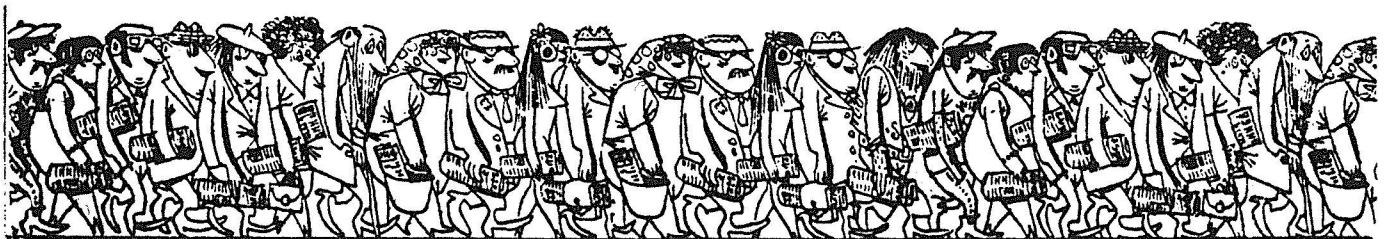
SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

"POLAND 1980-82: Class Struggle and the Crisis of Capital" by Henri Simon (published by Black & Red, Detroit, and also available from Echanges et Mouvement, BM Box 91, London WC1N 3XX). We hope to review this pamphlet in the next issue as part of a large feature on Poland.

"SOLIDARITY" numbers 6/7 and 8 (60p from 123 Latham Rd, London E6). The double issue 6/7 contains an interesting, researched article by Bob Potter on religion. Number 8, just received, seems scanty in content, although elegant in appearance.

The Pleasure Tendency (who wrote "The Subversive Past") can be contacted at PO Box 109 Leeds.

"Processed World" no.13 (55 Sutter St no.829, San Fransisco, California 94104). Magazine on office work, containing an excellent article on Artificial Intelligence research, as well as a range of autobiographical articles in the style which Americans have made their own.

deduction, revealed to me that to **conceive** socialism, to display the connections of this concept, was to be engulfed in a rationalist fiction" (6)

\ further problem is that of the role /hich Cardan envisaged for money in a ost-revolutionary society, a question omplicated by the degree of editing which ppears to have taken place when English ranslations were prepared. (7) It would eem that Cardan, aware of the dangers of ureaucratic planning as a substitute for market, and believing that alienation 'ould have been abolished along with ierarchical management, considered that 1oney could continue to serve, as a 1tional means of regulation between Jpply and demand, production and Dnsumption, at the service of the Duncils. It was therefore possible for im to participate within the CFDT, the rench trade-union most sympathetic to :lf-management, as an advocate of wage-qualisation as a step towards socialism.)

aving asserted the global nature of the Dntradiction between order-givers and 'der-takers in production in modern Icieties, Cardan stressed the growth of Jreaucracy as the most important trend in Ich societies, and described societies 1st and West as versions of the same Irm, catagorised as "Total Bureaucratic apitalism" and "Fragmented Bureaucratic apitalism" respectively. He disparaged 1y attempt to discuss the nature of Iciety in the Soviet Union in terms of cialism as "one of the most horrendous ystifications known in history", as well ridiculing any equation of class ciety with formal ownership of the means production.

1d yet there is a sense in which a ress on similarities between workers' Isitions within management hierarchies 1st and West, and on the notion that the Ireaucracy is mainly concerned with :tracting the maximum possible surplus Dm the Soviet worker, comes into strong Inflict with such observable facts as the vermanning" in the Soviet factory, and ggests that there may indeed be fferent traits dominant in Soviet ciety. (9)

The meaning of socialism
by Paul Cardan
Solidarity pamphlet 6 ● 15p

the fifties and sixties however, the :orised contradiction between order-'ers and order-takers was to be a useful >l in identifying and analysing the nificance of new forms of disputes sing in, for example, the car industry can be seen in the various **Solidarity** nphlets of the time).

was also claimed that ..it is found in more or less :ransposed forms in all spheres of
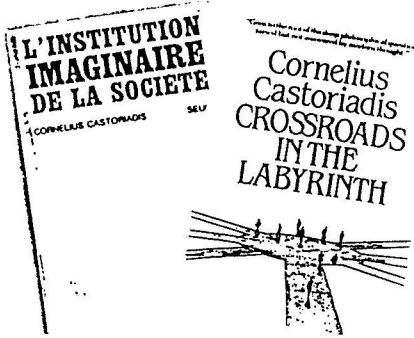
social activities, whether one is dealing with political, sexual, family,. or cultural life." (10)

It was to be utilised in an analysis of the collapse of social value systems in the modern world:

"..(T)he crisis of the very personality of modern man...stems as much from the contradictofy situations with which he must grapple, both at work and in his private life, as from the collapse of values in the deepest sense of the word. Without values, no society is capable of structuring personalities adequate to it..." (11)

This proposed analysis began at around the time that the journal "Socialisme ou Barbarie" ceased publication. Since that time, in Cardan's own words, his ideas "..transformed themselves for me from points of arrival into points of departure, forcing me to rethink everything starting from them" (12)

He went on to study psychoanalysis, language and philosophy, exploring questions of representation in the individual and the collective. (13)

L'INSTITUTION IMAGINAIRE DE LA SOCIETE
CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS SEU

Cornelius Castoriadis CROSSROADS IN THE LABYRINTH

Paralleling the new (or restated) focus on the real social relations in production, there had been a critique of the theory of impending economic collapse, which had had such a debilitating effect on Marxism from the 1890s onward. Sometimes (particularly at second-hand) this critique had veered towards an assertion that the bureaucracy had definitively learned to manage crisis out of existence, rather than merely that there was no "Iron Law" making such a crisis inevitable. As a result the theory seemed to have been dealt a heavy blow when the downturn of the late seventies and early eighties happened, not only by the return of "Free Market" theory, but also by the recollection of such statements as:

"On paper working-class pressure might lessen if one was able to push unemploy-ment to fantastic proportions, say 10 or 15 percent of the labour force. But no capitalist is foolish enough to try this, for they know that their system would instantly explode." (14)

When he turned to the question of why such conditions **are** now tolerated, right across Western Europe, it was to announce that a "crisis of sociality afflicted these societies, and dangerously opened the door to military penetration from the Soviet Union, a society whose own crisis of sociality he had recently felt to run so deep that "the only cement of bureaucratic society is cynicism". (15) The crises afflicting both social forms were both to be caused by the dead-weight of bureau-cracy, but that in the Soviet Union would result in vigorous expansion while that in Western Europe would only result in tired submission. It would appear that the only organisation not debilitated by bureau-cracy is the **Red Army**!

Two central strands in socialist thought, inherited from the Enlightment ideal of the society of citizens, were those of

popular management through some form of institution, and opposition to the impersonal and oppressive force of Capital. In Cardan's theory, the latter of these (which has now become diffused throughout society) was downgraded, while the former was pursued to its furthest conclusions: the rationalistic elements of his theory such as the mapping-out of networks of inter-connections between popular institutions, although fantastic, are also inevitable if socialism as management by people in full knowledge of all the facts is to be practicable.
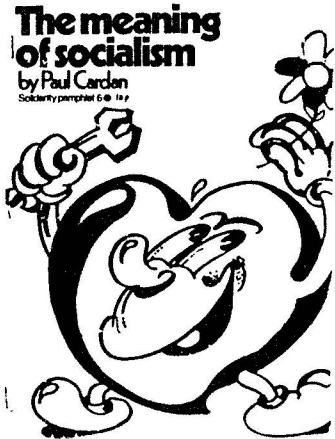
The main objection to this specific projected social form, with its essential merger of the administrative with the political, is that it would already be a simulation of real decision-making elsewhere: that decision-making, even if it were to be taken-on as a general social obligation and desire, would reduce to an incessant referendum on "sensible" decisions already made by the abstracted power of the economy.

It does seem though, that it is the greatest merit of Cardan's theory, whatever one may think of his later work (16), that it is by far the most consistently thought through theory of socialism as a system of management of production and consumption and that it is with this theory that such a version of socialism ultimately stands or falls.

A.D.

NOTES:
1. Interview in Telos no 23, p133.
2. "Redefining Revolution" section 19.
3. "L'Institution Imaginaire de la Societe" p118.
4. "Facing Reality", coauthored with C.L.R James and Grace C. Lee (Raya Dunayevskaya?)
5. Published in English as "Workers' Councils and the Economics of a Self-Managed Society".
6. Interview in Telos no.30, p182.
7. See Adam Buick's article "Solidarity, the Market, and Marx".
8. See the article "Hierarchy of Salaries and Incomes" from "CFDT Aujourd'hui" No.5, reprinted in "The Red Menace".
9. See for example the analysis by Gyorgi Markus in "Dictatorship over Needs"
10. "Redefining Revolution" section 19.
11. "Redefining Revolution" section 20.
12. Preface to "L'Institution Imaginaire"
13. Despite later attacks on Jacques Lacan and his school, there would seem to have been an influence by certain of Lacan's texts of the late-50s in the development of the idea of the "imaginary".
14. 1974 Introduction to "Modern Capital-ism and Revolution".
15. In "The Social Regime on Russia" in Telos no.38 and "The Crisis of Modern Societies" in Telos no.53, the latter being a translation of the intro-duction to "Facing War" vol.2.
16. We have not yet had the chance to see the English version of "The Imaginary Institution of Society"; however there is an uneasy feeling that one gets from reading many of Castoriadis' later writings, in that one seems to be in the presence of a monologue on the infinite forms of human creativity, a continual declaration that society is both instituted and instituting, etc. Perhaps when that translation becomes available, it will bring to light some **necessity** in the passage from "Theory and the Revolutionary Project" to the termin-ology of "legein", "teukhein" and other neologisms.

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