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the ultra-left review

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All articles and leaflets represent the viewpoints of the individual writers or groups concerned, and do not reflect the collective viewpoint of all participants.

We welcome contributions to put in this review. Any that are in agreement with the 10 points outlined on the back page have an automatic right to be published, as long as they are typed on Universal stencils and are relatively free of jargon. We are willing to type up short contributions - less than 250 words. Any contributions that are at variance with the 10 points will be published providing they are interesting, at the discretion of the production group.

This issue has been printed and published by members of the CARELESS TALK COLLECTIVE. We can be contacted by writing to the following address, in the following manner: R. Knight, C/O Students Union, The University, Keele, Staffordshire. 31st October 1982.

Welcome to the first issue of INTERCOM. Well, not exactly the first issue, because as you can probably tell from the sub-title, INTERCOM is a continuation of the project begun by the WILDCAT people in Manchester which they called the NEW ULTRA LEFT REVIEW. The original idea was to start a journal that could act as a focal point for contact and discussion between those who might broadly describe themselves as Left Communist, Libertarian Communist, Council Communist, Anarchist Communist and so on. But they didn't start it off as something they were going to be solely responsible for, hence their review was only a Pilot Issue, pending a conference to decide whether or not to set the thing up on a more permanent basis.

Well, the conference was held on the weekend of September 11th/12th, and this is the result. But first, a few recollections by way of a conference report.

The conference attracted people from Aberdeen (Subversive Graffiti), Manchester (Wildcat), Liverpool, London, Leeds, Oldham, Lancaster, Stoke-on-Trent/Newcastle-under-Lyme. About 25 of us in all. Some folk we'd hoped would attend couldn't come, though we've heard from a few since and they've stated they are still interested. The first issue to be discussed was whether we felt it was a good idea to set up a review at all, and if so what should it be for. Despite some dissident voices it was felt to be sensible to go ahead with the project because there is a need for an exchange of ideas between us and an even more important need for potentially isolated groups and individuals to be kept in touch, so they don't end up succumbing to despair and eventual apathy - which has been the fate of far too many over the last few years. There is some contact already, but for many of us the information we get is second-hand, based on the personal contacts of a few individuals or particularly energetic groups letting others know what is going on. Clearly some way of letting everyone in on the discussions would be a good idea.

The next question was, who is the review to be aimed at? As can be seen from the content of this issue it's not the kind of thing to be sold on the streets. It was felt that it should be aimed at already existing revolutionaries, and that initial contact should be left up to local initiatives, like newsheets, leaflets etc. The review should, however, also contain copies of the locally produced material - both to let others know how the politics of each group is developing, and to allow a forum for discussion as to the content of those leaflets. On a more practical front, the circulation of leaflets in this way enables one group, or individual, to use (in reprint form) the ideas of another group or individual - thus saving time and energy. The conference also hoped that the review would contain discussion articles, hopefully ones that dealt with 'real issues', rather than the boring old academic stuff that has plagued our movement for so long. It was also hoped that contributors would keep jargon down to a minimum (and the editorial group of this issue take that to mean that anything which is, in our opinion, too jargon-ridden will be left out).

It was also decided that editorship of the review should be shared around the various groups who had shown an interest. But that left a problem of deciding what should be the criteria for participation, and what articles should have the right to be published. We therefore spent some considerable

time discussing the political points for participation. WILDCAT had suggested 8 points of what they considered to be the minimum level of agreement we all had. Eventually these were knocked into a shape that most of us were reasonably happy with, by which time they had grown to 10 points (they are reprinted elsewhere in this issue). Any articles which are broadly in agreement with these points have an automatic right to be published, as long as they are typed on UNIVERSAL stencils (ie. the ones that fit both Roneo and Gestetner duplicators). Other articles may be published at the discretion of the production group.

We spent some time deciding what to call the review. INTERCOM was the one that met with most favour, the only meaning behind the name is that it exists to provide a means of communication between people.

We also decided to produce 150 copies of the first few issues. The group from Stoke/Newcastle agreed to produce the first two issues, to be followed by WILDCAT for one issue, SUBVERSIVE GRAFFITI for one issue, and then an issue by a group in London. We hoped to get an issue out about every two months. The price was to be 30p (20p if unwaged). INTERCOM was to be distributed largely on a subscription basis, ie people would send in money, in return for which they would receive a copy. This was decided because we had not set up a new political organisation, and hence had no system of membership subscriptions to finance it. It was also decided to have another conference to review progress, and have further discussions, after two issues - early March/late February 1983. The Stoke/Newcastle group offered to host the conference.

These discussions took up Saturday afternoon and a good portion of Sunday too. However, we also found time to discuss the political situation in Italy, where a large number of people around the autonomist movement are awaiting trial on fitted-up charges. More information on what has happened is available in this issue of INTERCOM. Those of us present agreed it would be useful to try and make information available to the 'public' about what is going on there. We also spent some time discussing riots in general and Toxteth in particular, a comrade from Liverpool describing certain rather disturbing activities going on within the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee, which suggested that it was being used by a number of black capitalists and pimps to push their own interests (e.g. drug peddling and prostitution) rather than help those busted after the riots. We had hoped to have more information for this in INTERCOM, but alas it has not come forward.

Tired but glowing with a sense of smug self-satisfaction, we went our separate ways home. What you are now holding in your hands is the end result. May god bless all who sail in her.....

This issue has been produced by members of the CARELESS TALK COLLECTIVE. Further copies can be obtained by writing to our contact address. If you want to send an article for the next issue, please type it on a UNIVERSAL stencil. If you want to send us a leaflet, we'd like 150 copies, or if its a duplicated effort just send us the stencils, even if they already have been used. It helps if typed stuff has at least a half-inch margin round each side. The final date for copy for the next issue is January 3rd 1983. We also want CASH IN ADVANCE. Any money sent should be in the form of stamps, blank cheques, blank postal orders, pound notes etc. DO NOT MAKE CHEQUES OUT TO INTERCOM OR CARELESS TALK OR R.KNIGHT - because we don't have bank accounts in any of those names, so the money will be useless to us.

THE MYTH OF THE WORKING CLASS.

THE GREAT WORKING CLASS YAWN.

TYPISTS NOTE: Richard, who sent this article asked for a plug for an anarchist group he's trying to set up in the Manchester area. He can be contacted at: 72 Sale Road, Northern Moor, Manchester, M23 0DE.

One of the greatest myths of the 20th century is surely the working class. What is the working class? The people in the factories, I suppose, and they have this mysterious struggle. Struggle for what? Struggle to be part of the ruling class, part of the rich jetset so that they can go and shit on other people who themselves are struggling (to be part of the ruling class). Work can be whatever the fuck you want it to be, would you say that trying to put together an anarchist magazine was not work? What differentiates that from working in a factory or an office? Only money - the biggest con ever - the carrot dangling from the stick in front of the 'working class' face. Don't fool yourself - there is no working class - there's only people and you can give them whatever label you want but you still have people and you still have a fucked up world.

I doubt if you'll print this.

RICHARD

A REPLY.

It may seem churlish to even print a reply to such a short piece as this, especially when the reply itself will be longer than the article in question. Nonetheless, despite being short, the article raises a number of questions that are central to the people involved in the INTERCOM project. As Richard's article was so far away from our politics, it was decided only to include it if a reply were written. It would not, however, be appropriate to label this in any way an editorial or group reply. It is written in a personal capacity, though the politics are more than just those of one person.

IS THERE A WORKING CLASS? It would probably be impossible to prove to Richard that there is such a thing as a 'working class' in the space of a few words. We, however, are firmly convinced that such a thing does exist. It does not exist because we want it to (we would far prefer that the working class and all other classes ceased to exist - but that would be communism), rather it exists because that is the way society is structured. A small minority of the world's population own or control the vast majority of the world's resources. This minority probably comprises about 5% of the population. It matters little whether this minority owns these resources in the form of stocks and bonds, or through their control of the machinery of state, or nominally as directors of enormous companies. I prefer to call these people CAPITALISTS, because they own/control capital. Their main function in life is to organise capital in such a way that it maximises profit - which they use for re-investment and spectacular consumption. These people have interests in common - mainly in keeping the rest of us away from control of these resources - and so we call them a social class.

Leaving aside groups of people like the peasants, there is another set of people in the world whose position in life is dictated by where they stand

in relation to the ownership/control of the world's resources. They are the vast mass of us who don't own or control capital, those of us who have no choice but to work for the capitalists, in return for which we are given the privilege of living. True, some of us don't seem to get the chance of even doing this very much, but are forced to subsist on the pittance of state handouts, others (mostly women) work incredibly hard and get little or no cash in return, others work in factories or offices, or on farms and in shops. But add it all together, and you get a group of people who have no choice about the way we live, who have in common the fact that our main function is to collectively produce a profit for the capitalists. Because our position is defined by the fact that we have to work to live, then we have become known as the working class.

IS THERE A CLASS STRUGGLE? Yes, because we all have an interest in common - overcoming the exploitation and oppression of capital. Which doesn't mean that all working class people are aware that this struggle is going on, or see themselves as part of it. Yet every time we take action against the needs of capital to make a profit - like struggling for a wage rise, or fighting a new road that will tear up our districts, or demand decent child care facilities for our kids, or fight against nuclear power stations and the destruction of the environment - then we are engaged in a fight against capital. The problem is that most people don't see the connection between these struggles, or if they do, they don't see that it would be much better to get rid of the cause of the problems than to keep tinkering with the effects. It is one of the jobs of people who like to think of themselves as revolutionaries to show the links between these struggles, and to try to get people to go beyond their confines.

Working class people struggle against capital because they have to in order to live. Its as simple as that. It seldom has anything to do with wanting "to be part of the ruling class" - try telling that to the health workers - an extra fiver in their wage packet is hardly going to make them part "of the rich jetset".

WHY IS THE WORKING CLASS IMPORTANT? Well who is going to change society? Certainly the capitalists aren't - they're sitting pretty right now. And I doubt whether starving third world peasants will have much to do with it either (although they will benefit greatly by it). Working class people on the other hand are constantly involved in fighting the effects of capitalism, moreover we have the power to actually change society - who else actually runs the world now anyway. We make the goods, distribute them, design them, sell them, staff the government, and members of our class even defend the state. Without us the capitalists are nowhere, but without them we could do very nicely.

I'd like to finish by paraphrasing something Karl Marx once wrote. I do this not out of any sense of hero-worship, but because I think he was right on this one. He said that at the moment the working class exists as a class in-itself, i.e. it exists, but working people are largely unaware that it exists, and don't see their common interests, for a revolution to occur, he said, then the working class must exist as a class for itself, workers must be aware of their position in society, and want to assert their class interests by destroying that society. That's really the problem for us so-called revolutionaries, to help the other members of our class come to that kind of awareness.

REPRESSION IN ITALY - TWO ARTICLES.

Basically we feel as if we've been buried alive, in the sense that we can't get information out to the outside world. The problem of the Press is one that I have already referred to: the Press upholds the regime and its versions of reality. For them, the blanket term "terrorist" can be used, and is used, to cover all forms of political opposition in Italy.

The above is a quote from an Italian autonomist who was arrested on April 7th 1979 in the University city of Padua. The interview from which it was taken took place in October 1981. Today, a year later, the situation remains the same, there is a world wide press and media silence on the persecution of the Italian Autonomists. This article is an attempt to break that silence, a silence which is supported by the majority of left groups in this country.

Those first arrests back in April 1979 were the signal for a concerted attack on the revolutionary left. The wave of arrests that followed were aided and abetted by the Italian Communist Party. There have been over 3500 people arrested during this period but in this article I will concentrate on the case of those first arrested who have become known as the "April 7th" defendants.

The trial of the "April 7th" comrades opened in June of this year, which meant that they had been held without trial for a period of 3 years and 2 months, and was promptly postponed until June of next year. Needless to say they have not been granted bail. From the time of the first arrests the defendants have been trying to find out what concrete evidence has provided the basis for their imprisonment, none has been forthcoming. And so these comrades who were first charged with being the strategic leadership of the Red Brigades; then the killers of Aldo Moro; then the perpetrators of a further 10 killings; then the organisers of an insurrection together with the Red Brigades; then the organisers of another insurrection (but this time without the Red Brigades); are left facing the charge of being the leadership of a mysterious "O" (for some reason the State declines to use the word organisation), the alleged clandestine level of Potere Operaio (Workers Power) and Autonomia operaia organizzata (Workers Autonomy), consisting of a number of "armed bands", coordinated with the Red Brigades. All this without a scrap of concrete evidence.

What then, you might wonder is the evidence against the defendants. Well it in fact rests on the statements of a "supergrass", one Carlo Fioroni. Fioroni, the self confessed robber and murderer of his best friend Carlo Saronio, took advantage of a new law brought in during December 1979 (note the date). This law enabled "repentant terrorists" to obtain substantial reductions in sentence if they collaborated with the authorities. Fioroni's decision to talk came at just the right time for the prosecution, whose promised evidence against the defendants had not materialised. With the help of Fioroni the case was rejigged.

The State's desperate attempts to connect the Autonomists with the Red Brigades had been challenged by a former member of the Brigades, Roberto Peci. Peci, who was the head of logistics for the Turin Red Brigades stated quite categorically that there is no connection between the Autonomists and the Red Brigades. He has been backed up in his assertion by a member of the Italian judiciary, Judge Palombarini.

Palombarini free from Communist Party and Freemasons influence has refuted the charges against the comrades. He has said that there has been no threat of an insurrection in Italy and that he knew of "no single party comprising both clandestine structures such as Prim Linea (Front Line) and the Red Brigades and a public level known as Autonomia Operaia". He has also dropped the charges against all those defendants remaining in his jurisdiction and also called on the other judges to do the same. His statements were not reported in the Italian Press. The reason for these oppressive measures against the Autonomists is best summed up by one of those first arrested, Toni Negri.

"After the Moro kidnap... the most terrifying campaign of repression we have ever known was set into motion. 3,000

comrades have been thrown into jail in these last two years.

The repressive forces of the bourgeoisie, with the cooperation of those of the trade unions and the PCI, have swept the board clean of an entire generation of militants. The movement's political space has been enormously restricted. Practically all of its papers and journals have been banned. The space held by comrades of autonomia inside the universities and factories has been closed. In the name of stamping out terrorism a great proletarian movement of an entirely new sort, a movement of young workers and metropolitan proletarians, a movement of resistance to work, has been struck a severely weakening blow.

I don't know if recovery will come about quickly. I rather doubt it. What is certain, though, is that the movement still exists, that it has not yet been beaten. Today the problem is the revival of mass struggle together with the reconquest of political space and the release of the comrades from prison."

This article was written by a member of the Italy 79 Committee.

ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF A MOVEMENT.

(The following article is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Careless Talk Collective at a recent production of Dario Fo's play Can't Pay? Won't Pay! put on at the local theatre here in Newcastle-under-Lyme/Potteries. We distributed about 1000 copies over two weeks - much to the annoyance of the Director of the theatre. Interestingly, though, the actors and the plays producer were impressed with the leaflet. We have committed a couple of pieces from the leaflet - illustrations and so on.)

On April 7th 1979 the Italian state set out to smash the popular left in Italy, as it existed outside of the Communist Party. The autonomists, known as Autonomia, were becoming a threat although only organised in loose local groups with many differences between them. The autonomists viewpoint, reacting against the pressures of capitalism, was arising from the needs of the people and in opposition to the Italian state.

The reaction of the Italian state was to have serious consequences for those academics and journalists who had given expression to the autonomist movement. Thus we find people accused of murder, jailed and tortured simply because of their political beliefs.

Since this time, Toni Negri, Professor of Political Science at Padua University, Ariste Scalzone, a leading left-wing journalist, Alisa del Re and 20 others have been held by the Italian state in appalling conditions on very serious charges including armed insurrection and leadership of the Red Brigades (the Italian terrorist group responsible for many armed attacks in the 1970s and 1980s).

THE CHARGES

The charges have never been supported with evidence and as each charge became totally discredited it was replaced by a more serious and ridiculous one. Instead of producing witnesses, the Italian

judges (including members of the Communist Party) have been leaking sensational and contradictory stories to the press in an effort to hide their illegal proceedings under a cloud of emotional anti-terrorist fiction.

The charges brought by Padua Judge Calogero according to warrants issued on April 6th, 1979 were:

- 1) that Negri, Ferrari Bravo, Piperno, Scalzone, Delmaviva, Vesce, Zagato, Pancino, R Ferrari and Marni Palestrini were the founders, organisers, and leaders of "an organisation going under the name of the Red Brigades".
- 2) that at the same time, they inspired and led various interlinked organisations going under various names but constituting the so-called workers' Autonomy.

In other words, they were accused of being the secret brains behind all Italian terrorism.

On the same day, warrants were issued in Rome by the Procurator for the arrest of several Red Brigade members, charged with the Aldo Moro kidnapping and assassination. Negri was charged along with these people. He was accused of being behind the whole assassination plot, yet the only 'evidence' produced by the state prosecution was a series of tapes, supposedly of telephone conversations between Negri and members of the Moro family.

It is important at this point to note that in many Western countries, taped telephone conversations are inadmissible as evidence because IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to prove the identity of the speaker from his or her voice on the tape. In fact, the tapes relating to Negri's case were not examined until 50 days after his arrest and only after protest from Negri's lawyers. Thus we can see that the main evidence on which Negri was being held had no more foundations than a house of cards.

Moreover, during proceedings against the charged members of the Red Brigades the charge against Negri was dropped. Unable to produce witnesses or evidence, but desiring to hold Negri in jail, the state turned to Negri's openly published work and used his ideas and political beliefs as 'evidence' against him.

Ignoring the fact, in his writing, Negri openly condemned the Red Brigades, the judges persisted in insisting that he was deeply involved with them. The following extract from an article in Rosso dated May 29th 1978 shows Negri's real opinions:

'The line of the Red Brigades is a total strategic and tactical failure. In 10 years of combat they have never succeeded in making one correct political analysis. They fought 'fascism' thinking it consisted in and could be identified in individual Blackshirt pigs on street corners. They depend on a concept of 'destabilization' of the state that destabilizes nothing, a concept of 'vanguard' that represents nobody; a delegation of power which does not exist, vis-a-vis the movement; a method that swallows uncritically the old relation between mass-struggle and elite programmes ... while the mass movement accepts no delegation, is only unmediated self liberation.'

JUDGES CREATE EVIDENCE

Despite the obvious declaration against the Red Brigades, the Italian judges STILL insisted that Negri was guilty. They claimed that this statement from Rosso was simply another sign of his brilliance in that he was covering up his work using such articles.

The Italian judges care nothing for factual evidence and even one of the 'fairest', Judge Ciampani (who has published a 150 page report admitting that there is no connection between the Red Brigades and the April 7th defendants) resorts to the making of assumptions to keep the political detainees in prison. The following is a quotation from Ciampani's report:

"...one cannot, even at the level of logic, accept the hypothesis that men of the capacity, the determination and the leadership qualities of Negri, Piperno, Scalzone etc. had, since as early as 1971 began to discuss armed struggle, and frittered around discussing the armed struggle for around 10 years without making the slightest preparations to bring about the armed crime under examination. Unless it can be shown that Piperno, Negri, Scalzone etc are merely inept word-mongers contrary to the obvious and enthusiastic opinions of many who have described them."

The Italian judiciary's record in the use of informers and police provocateurs is particularly awful. It has been proven that in the case of Valpredes, an anarchist framed for a bombing, a 50,000,000 lira bribe was given to a key witness. Prior to the April 7th arrests, a new law, Fioroni's law, was enacted designed to give huge rewards to repentant terrorists in return for information. Fioroni, a self-confessed murderer, was to be a key witness against the April 7th defendants - until his statements were discredited by another repentant, Peci. Unfortunately for the state, Peci's statements were found to be true by the disclosure of the Red Brigades hideouts, etc.

NO-ONE CARES

The Italian press has worked consistently to build up the image of Negri and the others as terrorists and 'Red Brigades leaders'. This has included not only papers supporting the centre- and right-wing parties, but also Unita, paper of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Indeed the PCI has been one of the prime movers in the whole affair. It seems that they are trying to prove to NATO and the EEC that they are responsible politicians who can safely be left in charge of Italian capitalism - that this means smashing the Italian left seems to have worried them little.

Further information can be obtained by writing to:

The Italy '79 Committee, c/o John Merrington, Middlesex Polytechnic,
White Hart Lane, London N17.

Letters of support, donations and letters protesting to the Italian government, should be sent to:

April 7th/December 21st Association,
via Tomacelli 103,
Rome, Italy.

Money orders should be made payable to postal account Conto Corrente Postal (CCP No. 23235005).

The CARELESS TALK COLLECTIVE would appreciate any comments, criticisms or whatever about this leaflet, and any of the other material we have put out. We know we're not perfect, and are constantly trying to improve what we do.....

ORGANISATION AND THE CREATION OF THE 'ULTRA LEFT REVIEW'.

(Editorial note: this article was written as a contribution to the discussion at the conference which set up I TERCOM)

"Show us not the aim without the way. For ends and means on earth are so entangled that changing one, you change the other too; Each **different** path brings other ends in view"

'Franz von Sickingen' by FERDI A D LASALLE

This conference to set up 'the Ultra Left Review' is an important moment in the political development of the revolutionary movement in Britain. Further, it will represent if successful a reorientation away from the process of splintering and atomisation which has been such a negative feature of our political life over the past two years. In particular this last year has seen this phenomenon assume crisis proportions with many comrades becoming demoralised and leaving revolutionary politics altogether. Here, and in particular I address myself to the ex-comrades of the ICC/Solidarity, we must actively combat this tendency and see this conference as a means among others to that end

The extent of the creation and success of the Review will depend on a number of factors all of which needless to say are deeply political. These factors girate around the question not just of our role in the struggle but more importantly for this conference the way we organise ourselves. This raises that doppelganger of old - Federalism vs. Centralism. No Comrades, the ghosts of the 1st International haven't been exorcised but return to haunt us.

Once already this year a conference has been held of all the comrades who had split with the ICC with the now ex-Solidarity members in attendance. This conference was a resounding failure and its inability to deal with the political tasks of regrouping and reorientating the ex-ICC comrades has to be borne in mind in this conference. What is essential and important is that all the problems and points of political divergence do not get swept under the carpet in the zeal of setting up the Review. The extent of the success of the Review will depend not just on it's capacity to act as a forum for discussion, this undoubtedly an extremely important factor in its creation, but over and above this the essential criterion will be the Review's capacity to develop a perspective on it's own role, the role of revolutionaries in this period. In order to develop this perspective it is crucial that comrades assign a political and co-ordinating role to the Review and not just be content with an organisational apparatus which acts merely as an editorial board. Even before the conference takes place I feel that the differences that exist will impinge upon the creation of the Review. The set of criteria for participation in the conference I feel are weak needing perhaps more elaboration than addition. Here, I would like to elaborate some of the political concerns which should be central to the setting up of the Review....

- 1) The deepening and further elaboration of the points of principle which serve as criteria for the participation in the contribution to and production of the Review. Most notably to strengthen the

emphasis of the proletariat and only the proletariat as a revolutionary class. Here all of the rubbish and gross from the Libertarian movement of the 60's and 70's about marginal elements (women's movement, gays, squatters youth, etc) being a revolutionary category in their own right must be firmly rejected. This is not to say that we dismiss the struggles of women for example, no, we support and participate within these struggles but always with a clear perspective being contained within the framework of the class (proletarian) struggle.

2) A willingness, and more importantly, a political commitment for us all to go beyond what has served us as political practice in the past. Here, for the ex-ICC comrades this means a through-going analysis of the political divergences which made them leave the ICC has to be made. Many, many minority texts were written by the comrades outlining their differences with the current but as yet no synthesis beyond that of an anti-bureaucratic and hence essentially organisational critique has been made.

For the ex-Solidarity comrades, it is absolutely imperative that they go beyond the federalistic practices of Solidarity. Although it would be incorrect to assert that Solidarity suffered an organisational demise (Solidarity suffered it's death because of it's inability to comprehend it's own role within the struggle, it theorised this through Cardan and therefore had nothing to say to the working-class struggle when the economic crisis forced it to the surface!). However, it would be wrong to say that the question of organisation was not a crucial aspect of the political disappearance of Solidarity. The concerns of the comrades with the problem of bureaucracy in the fusion of the Social Revolution/Solidarity was not solved with the rotation of the production of the magazine. This was an organisational panacea that solved nothing, above all we must draw these lessons:- political problems have only political answers. If I dwell over-long here, it is because I want absolutely nothing to do with a new Solidarity.

It would be an arrogance on my part to imply or assert that only the comrades late of these two political organisations are participating in this conference. There are, ofcourse, other groups and comrades participating here, but as I know little or nothing of their political positions other than their acceptance of the conference criteria (that in itself being a weakness) obviously, therefore, I cannot comment on their orientations and look forward to their contributions at the conference.

3) While initially the Review must act as a vehicle for discussion, it is important to see beyond to what the Review might represent in the future. Today we live in revolutionary times, we do not live and militate in the 1940's or 1950's or even worse, in the dark days of the 1930's. Organisations such as International Council Correspondance and Bilan existed politically in the vacuum of the class struggle, their task was to reflect and deliberate on the lessons coming from the revolutionary wave of 1917-1923. Even in these dark days, these organisations understood that their newspaper or magazine provided a focus, an organisational pole around which the political and organisational life revolved. To be sure, revolutionaries such as Mattick and Korsch contributed to periodicals such as the 'New Masses' but the understanding of the need to retain the paper or magazine as the organ, the mouthpiece of the organisation was maintained. The Italian Left understood much better the need to retain political independence. Nothing could be more alien to the spirit of developing and deepening the theoretical acquisition of the revolutionary movement than to hand over uncritically the pages of your journal to just anybody to say just anything as long as it is interesting. Unfortunately, this is the practice of most libertarians, classically illustrated by the past practice of Solidarity.

Today we are in a different period to the one faced by communists in the '30s and '40s. Poland has marked a definitive step towards a deepening of class struggle towards the revolution. Similarly the massive and global nature of the economic crisis of capitalism indicates that the period today is revolutionary.

Today there can be no new Solidarity, no more flirtations with marginalism and 'interesting new ideas' (i.e. modernism) the last ten years is littered with the corpses of groups which claimed to have gone 'beyond marxism' - cf- GLAT, ICO, Socialist Reproductions, Negation, Solidarity, the list is endless. Above all, we need to retain the old understanding of the press as the organiser of the political group.

This means that the newspaper or review must act as a national co-ordinator, as an organisational fulcrum representing not just an organ for discussion but also as a focus for militant life. This demands above all political centralism. That is centralism based on our political needs within the struggle. Anything else other than a commitment to the proletarian struggle, anything other than the centralisation of revolutionaries is dilettantism - to play at being revolutionaries. This is vital for the coming period because the very needs of the proletarian struggle itself will demand the strictest centralisation of efforts. If this perspective holds true for the future strike committees, or for the workers councils, then isn't it also binding for revolutionary organisations?

Here I could write a lot more, and these are just some brief points to act as a catalyst, not that I want to play 'devil's advocate', because I realise that my views will not be in the majority at the conference. However I feel that these short points are very important and I hope the comrades receive them in the comradely and fraternal spirit that they were written.

MELMOTH 11.9.1982.

SMALL ADS....SMALL ADS....SMALL ADS....SMALL ADS.... SMALL ADS....SMALL ADS....

BLACK STAR. paper for independent working class organisation. No 7 available now, price 40p, plus postage. Make orders payable to "William Key Society". From Black Star Collective, c/o 29 Canon Cockin Street, Sunderland, SR2 3PM (temporary postal address).

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OPEN LETTER ON OUR SPLIT FROM "UNDERCURRENTS"/"MINUS" (HONG KONG) *

"International Correspondence" (see note 5 on our organisational nature) is a recent split from the Hong Kong group "Undercurrents"/"Peoples Press", formerly "Minus"/"70's" (the former of both being the group's international English newsletter and the latter its local press) (1).

Over the past several years, we have experienced differences with its traditional anarchist/libertarian-communist current (referred to as the traditional current below)

These differences occur both in theory and in practice. While both kinds of differences are equally important, viewing in retrospect, the theoretical differences provided the basis and background, while the differences in practice the 'immediate' cause of our split.

THEORY: As those who have read the group's press well know, the traditional current derives its theory from anarchism and Cardaniam. At one time, we were also heavily influenced by the latter. However, as we developed politically, we moved further and further away from it to eventually entirely rejecting it. Here, for reasons which will become apparent immediately, we wish to particularly mention our rejection of the two main pillars of Cardaniam, namely, a) defining classes in terms of executive power/authority (for us now, the only 'scientific' definition is Marx's economic criterion, because it is the 'only materialistic method', Marx, "Capital", vol, 1, p.352, fn.2, Progress Publishers, 1974), and b) regarding capitalism as having superseded its economic inner contradictions, as having 'delivered the goods' (an empiricist critique of Marxism).

The importance of these theoretical differences is not limited to the level of theoretical understanding. They naturally, have direct bearing on practice.

Firstly, since it is now the 'leaders' who are the class to be overthrown, it follows quite naturally, then, that any anti-authoritarian practice is revolutionary, no matter its stand on capitalist (in Marx's meaning) property (relations of production). (the traditional current, of course, also view the latter's abolition as almost as important as the abolition of power/authority, but we cannot see how it must logically follow from it). It is, therefore, no accident that we should find its members giving tacit or open support to, participating in or even initiating struggles against nuclear power, state oppression (2), etc., for what they are. For our part, we are also against nuclear power (at its present level of technology), state oppression, etc. But, for us, these questions lose all revolutionary content if not stated in the context of the struggle against capitalism (in Marx's meaning). For this reason, even if their avowed ultimate aim is the overthrow of capitalism (in Marx's meaning), compared to direct struggles against it, they are of secondary importance. Purely anti-authoritarian struggles of this sort similarly scarcely needs given a damn for, except that they serve to derail the proletarian struggle.

Secondly, by regarding capitalism as having 'delivered the goods', reformism and what the Trotskyists call 'progressive' practice are, therefore, not so many weapons of the bourgeoisie, but are only 'misdirection' within the camp of the proletariat (or led). They are, therefore, often tolerated, supported, passively or actively, or even initiated by members of the traditional current, as being 'steps taken towards the same end', if only circuitously. Thus we find them capable of cooperating and collaborating with unionists, Trotskyists, clergymen(3)

This brings us to the differences in practice.

PRACTICE: As far as we are concerned, both for reasons of revolutionary principle and 'practicality', the dialectical unity between theory and practice is a principle that must be resolutely defended both in theory and practice. In other words, for us, any sacrifice of theoretical positions in practice, for alleged 'practical' reasons (which are in fact not at all practical in the sense that such sacrifice does and cannot lead to the supposed ends - we are thinking of Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder"), is opportunistic.

To our regret, we have observed that such cases have happened with "Undercurrents"/

*(To contact IC write only as follows: P.O. Box 44007. Shaukeiwan Post Office. Hong Kong.)

"PeoplesPress" with alarming frequency. As we have said, members of the traditional current often cooperate and collaborate with unionists, etc. without a blink of the eye, although they are, in theory, deadly enemies against all forms of reformism and 'progressive' practice.

A second, somewhat less important, difference in practice is the traditional currents drift in the last half-decade or so towards almost total concentration on spectacularism (the creation of spectacles for appreciation) in their activities at the expense of unspectacular concrete political work. Thus, we find its members putting almost all their efforts in experimenting with political cinema and theatre, international sticker campaign against CCP's oppression of Chinese dissidents, etc. We by no means deny these activities categorically, although they must also be subject to what's been said in the above (4). But, if they are coupled with an almost total absence of work such as interventions in the developments of the class struggle (leafleting, intervening in strikes, etc.), addressing important issues of the class struggle (the role of 'Solidarity', for example), developing one's understanding of revolutionary theory and practice (instead of emptily regurgitating the same old slogans), etc., then these activities cease to be activities of a revolutionary group, acquire an autonomy of their own, the purpose and direction of which is the projection of a hollow image.

It is not that we have never committed the same mistakes. On the contrary, it is as a result of our own political development that we have come to realise them for what they are.

We have also tried to bridge these differences through mutual struggle. Unfortunately there has never been a healthy tradition, within the traditional current, of criticism, anti-criticism and self-criticism (something not unrelated to its obsession with spectacularism). Such words have long ago been abolished in the libertarian dictionary.

Because of our very limited ranks and resources, in the short term, we will not be able to put out any regular publication. As said in note 5, the purpose of our formation is to broaden deep discussions of communist positions in this part of the world. This we plan to do by establishing and maintaining close contact and dialogue with the international revolutionary milieu, in particular its communist currents. The form of this 'deep discussion' cannot, of course, be purely intellectual/theoretical, but can only be carried out through concrete political practice, i.e. active intervention in the proletarian class struggle.

July 16. 1982.

Communist Greetings . IC.

NOTES:

1. a) "Undercurrents"/People's Press" address is: 5, Holly Road/Mid-garage, Ground floor/Happy Valley Hong Kong. b) We have thought of expressing our differences with the group in a less open and direct way, but later thought we had the political responsibility to be as clear as possible in the matter. We can only hope our former comrades will not take to heart some of the hard words being used.

2. eg. In cooperation with other local activists, they recently distributed a leaflet at cinemas showing the Costa Gavras film 'Missing' which contains a straightforward condemnation of the recent refusal by the Hong Kong government to extend the work permit for an American lawyer who worked for a local reformist organisation, without making any further statement of positions on the matter.

3. Their recent negotiations with some social democrats and clergymen for venues to perform their political theatre '1984.1997' is an example.

4. We wonder how such films can be screened and plays performed, except during mass uprisings, without some form of cooperation with established unions, leftist organisations, etc.

5. IC does not view itself as a permanently constituted grouping. On the one hand

for reasons already mentioned, we find it no longer possible to work with "Undercurrents"/"People's Press". On the other, though we are moving towards communist positions, we think it premature to join existing communist groups. Thus, we see ourselves, rather, as being a transitional grouping, the purpose of which is to act as a rallying point to deepen discussion on communist positions in this part of the world which has so far been disastrously cut-off from communist currents in Europe and America (also see last part of main body of letter).

"INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE" hold positions extremely close to the following, if not exactly them already.

1. That the so-called 'Socialist' countries are but a particular expression of capitalism, neither 'degenerated workers' states' nor a 'new form' of class society.
2. That all trade unions (including 'Solidarity'), whatever the subjective intentions of their members, are objectively counter-revolutionary in nature in 20th-century capitalism.
3. That, likewise, the so-called 'workers' parties (the C.P.s, S.P.s and their left-wing appendages) are equally reactionary capitalist state apparatus.
4. That any form of 'minimum programme' type of participation in the capitalist system or any type of 'using' it in practice for 'revolutionary' ends are reactionary and opportunistic. All factions of the bourgeoisie are today equally reactionary, any tactic calling for 'tactically' cooperating with any faction can only serve to send workers to the capitalist guillotine.
5. All so-called 'national liberation struggles' can only be absorbed into the inter-imperialist massacre. To support such 'struggles' (whether critically or however) amounts to supporting one imperialist against another.
6. The proletarian revolution cannot be 'organised' in any way by revolutionary minorities. It can only be carried out by the generalised uprising of the proletariat itself. The role of revolutionary minorities, as the class's vanguard, consists of ceaselessly intervening in this struggles intensification, generalisation and internationalisation. The substance of this intervention is the drawing of lessons and conclusions of the class's past and present struggle experience, and basing upon these conclusions, to point out the direction the struggle should take to achieve the communist revolution. Only in this way can past errors not be repeated, the struggle not be side-tracked into reactionary blind-alleys and the struggle be extended/generalised.
7. Capitalism is in a state of permanent crisis in the 20th-century. The proletarian revolution has since the first great wave of 1917-23 been on the agenda, on which depends the ultimate destiny of mankind: Socialism or barbarism.

ADS....ADS.....ADS....ADS....ADS....

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UNPOPULAR BOOKS a non-profit making group republishing articles and pamphlets of interest to our milieu and not otherwise available - they have recently published 'How the Bad Old Days Might End' one of the better post-Situationist documents to emerge from the USA in the 70's. They also publish a books listing and book reviews - first distribution now available from:

'Unpopular Books', CIB, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London E1. (send 20½p post)

LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST GROUP.

Below is a slightly re-worded copy of a leaflet we gave out on the recent Labour Party Young Socialists 'Youth Against The Tories' demonstration in Liverpool. We would welcome any comments or criticism people may feel they want to make.*

NO FUTURE IN ANY GOVERNMENT

The conditions on YOP schemes are terrible, most young people on them spend their time doing hard, dirty and boring work, all for a pittance wage. We demand better conditions, a realistic wage and more concern and action over health and safety at work.

Let's aim to better our present conditions because they're what we all face each day, but let's not just stop there, let's aim to put out of business those elected representatives who have never solved problems like unemployment, but have only come up with solutions like stupid YOP training. YOPs offer work experience, this means learning to do as you are told, obeying rules, learning to clock in, clock out. Training some of us to work in the future in some useless employment; advertising, armaments, the production of useless commodities, it's an endless list.

Is it enough to demonstrate for a full-time job with union rates given that in a few years time there will be other demonstrations making more or less the same demands? Let's aim to destroy party politics, let's get rid of the politicians. Let's control our own lives with workers' co-operatives and no bosses. In the end we don't just want improved conditions, we don't want schemes like YOP, we want much more. We want total control of our lives, we want to make all the decisions that affect our lives. For too long other people have been doing that for us and abusing us.

Always work, work, work for us, and profits for the rich. Politicians keeping us in line and keeping themselves in power. We stand in a park thinking we're achieving something, listening and clapping, taking in their lies, and what will any of them ever do? Perhaps scrap YOPs and bring in a new scheme with a new name. Will you always follow wherever they lead?

Politicians never encourage real workers' unity, and over the years we have seen strike after strike crushed. Power and prestige is always the politicians first concern. Work and schemes like YOPs keep us in line and then in power in nice comfortable positions. We should not trust them any longer, but simply organise ourselves, call our own strikes when we want and not wait 'til we're told we can or we can't, be it by the government or the union hierarchy.

WE DON'T JUST WANT A SLICE OF THE CAKE. WE WANT THE WHOLE BAKERY!

(*either via the pages of this review, or else direct to

Box LAG,

37 Bagot Street,

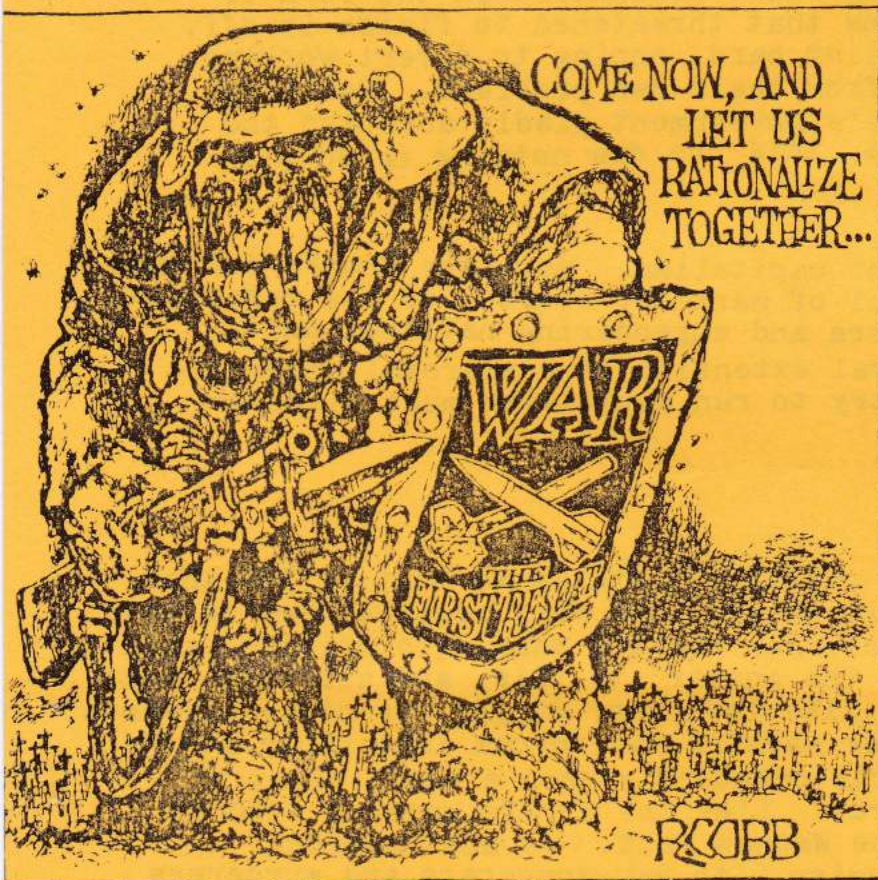
Wavertree,

Merseyside LI5 2HA.)

CND, LABOUR AND THE FALKLANDS

The crusade against nuclear weapons is so important, says CND, that we must all sink our political differences and work together. But the Falklands war and the reaction of the Labour party and CND leadership must surely raise serious questions about this approach.

Through marches, carnivals, demonstrations and petitions, CND has attempted to persuade MPs to vote against the Bomb in Parliament. Much work has been put into trying to gain the support of the Labour party, which is thought to be more sympathetic. CND hopes that a Labour party with Michael Foot as leader will behave differently to the victorious Labour government of 1964 (elected to abolish nuclear weapons - it started building Polaris submarines instead).



WHAT LABOUR SAID.....

But can the Labour party's response to the Falklands crisis give us any hope that they would not drag us into another world war? On April 3rd, in the House of Commons debate, with only one exception (Patrick Cormack) they supported Thatcher's decision to send the Fleet. Some now seem to believe that it could be sent and not used - such apparent Doublethink is preposterous. Michael Foot donned the garb, not of pacifist, but of war-monger. He said of the Falklanders, '...they have been betrayed (and)... the government must prove by deeds, because they will never be able to do it by words, that they are not responsible....' His deputy, Dennis Healey, interviewed on Panorama the following Monday, was even more

explicit. He stated that Britain must be prepared to sink Argentinian ships and re-invade the Falklands.

Against 'foul, brutal aggression' (Foot) by a 'tin-pot fascist junta' (Silkin), Labour is prepared to send thousands of young working class men to kill their Argentinian counterparts and die in the process. It is ironic that only a few weeks ago Argentinian sailors were training in Britain, that many Argentinian ships are made in Britain. So much did the Government, Tory or Labour, care about Fascism then.

AND CND????

And what of the CND leadership? Instead of denouncing the war, they supported it:

The Labour Party, Liberal/SDP Alliance, many Conservative MPs and military experts have spoken out against Trident. Quite rightly, it's hardly the best way to defend Britain. Just look at the Falkland Islands. (CND advertisement, the Guardian, 10-4-82)

This clearly shows they think there is a best way to defend Britain and squares with their advocacy of strong conventional weapons. Quite simply CND is not opposed to war - it is in favour of conventional wars. Such wars have killed over 20 million people since 1945. This April the sum population of countries engaged in wars was about 701,600,000 (Sunday Times 21-3-82) - or one person in six. They embrace forces not far short of those taking part in the Second World War.

This war started because the Argentinian government, reeling from the effects of the world recession and 150% inflation, was faced with massive working class discontent in the form of strikes and demonstrations that threatened to finish it off. So it played the nationalist card, hoping to divert working people's attention away from their own problems. For very similar reasons, Thatcher's government gladly accepted the challenge. Like all wars, this one has nothing to do with working class interests.

War is an integral part of capitalism. Wars are fought for many reasons, including control of markets, sources of raw materials, securing national frontiers and engendering national unity. They are simply the natural extension of commercial competition. And all those who try to run capitalism must discover this fact.

CAN WE STOP WARS?

Against this war between capitalist states we must affirm that a nation divided cannot go to war. We must realise that we have more in common with Argentinian workers than with British capitalists and politicians. The answer to this, and all wars, must be more class struggle. Like last year during the civil servants strike, when the NATO war machine was thrown into panic at the threat to Britain's Polaris capability when a small group of dockyard workers walked out. Like the strike wave of 1980 in Poland which paralysed the Warsaw Pact. We must abandon this false road of compromise with war-mongers and murderers of workers, advocated so blatantly by CND. We must choose for a libertarian revolution, for a world with no nations, no states, no 'bosses', no 'workers', no 'profits, where people matter and where things are produced because people need them, not to keep an idle few in luxury and power. Where the causes of war have been eradicated forever.

This leaflet has been produced by a group of libertarians living in the Potteries. We would like to discuss the issues raised in this leaflet with others. If you would like to contact us, you should write to the following address, in the following manner: R.KNIGHT, c/o Students Union, The University, Keele, Staffs.

WORK FOR A CHANGE



Today in Britain, workers are suffering the full effects of a savage attack upon their living standards. With three and a half million as the official level of unemployment and the Tories talking of a zero wage rise for the coming year, the prospects for many of us, in and out of work, is even more belt-tightening to help the bosses solve their crisis.



By working to "make Britain great again", workers are, in reality, working to strengthen the system which serves to keep ordinary working people in a position of subservience. It means working to keep the bosses in their rich lives while the rest of us struggle from day to day.

We think it is important to look at the purpose and

possible outcome of marching for the right to work. We believe that governments of any political shade will not change their policies. Lets not forget that the Tories are only continuing what Labour started. Labour started the run down of State services, the cuts in British Leyland and the axing of jobs at British Steel. And it was Labour that brought in the cuts in the Social Services as a back up to their infamous Social Contract with the unions to contain our struggle against falling living standards. And it was the Labour Party and the TUC that drew up an approved set of guidelines on picketing very similar to the the Employment Bill.

By taking part in marches like this we are showing the Government that they can control us by channeling our energies into safe activities which pose no threat to the bosses and serve to boost the credibility of the Trades Unions and the Labour Party.

Let us instead fight to change this depressing situation not by fighting for the right to work for a capitalist system but by fighting to change the system to one where we, the workers have control over our own lives and our own futures.



If you agree with any of the ideas expressed in this leaflet or would simply like to hear more about our politics write to:

R.Knight
7 Northcote Place
Newcastle-under-Lyme
STAFFS

printed and published by a group of libertarians living,
working and claiming in the Potteries.



The Salesmen of Death



In towns and cities throughout Britain the Armed Forces have recruitment centres, all round the country the Armed Forces hold military displays and exhibitions. They're spending considerable sums to persuade young people to join up - and to convince people generally that the Army, R.A.F., and Royal Navy are great institutions that everyone should support. But just what would it mean if you decided to sign on the dotted line?

SLAVERY

You sign your rights away. In all the Armed Forces it's strictly forbidden for people to get together to push for better conditions or more pay. Strikes are outlawed. You're expected to do everything your superiors in rank tell you - without question. The discipline and training can be harsh and brutal, several servicemen have been killed on training exercises in recent years.

And you can't even leave when you want to! You sign a contract for several years and can't leave till it ends, except in special circumstances. Even if you manage to save enough to buy your way out, you can be refused permission to leave. IT'S A SLAVES LIFE!

DEATH

You risk being killed or maimed. Since the 2nd World War British servicemen have died in Korea, Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus, Aden, Northern Ireland, the South Atlantic and the Falklands..... And you won't be killing others and risking your own neck for "freedom and democracy". It's the rulers of Britain - the government, the top state bureaucrats, the executives and chief shareholders of big corporations - who decide when Britain's Armed Forces are to fight. And they so so in their own interests. Take the Falklands. The British state hasn't waged war in order to safeguard the interests of the Falklanders. If the British state was really concerned about human

rights - why have they been selling the Argentinian dictatorship military equipment? Why did they take away many Falklanders' right to come to Britain by passing the Nationality Act? Why do they allow the Falkland Islands Company to evict its workers from their homes when they retire?

Take Northern Ireland. The army are not there to "keep the peace". They are another force for anti-working class violence, in addition to the Provisional I.R.A. and the Protestant para-military groups. Since 1969 the army have shot dead over 120 innocent civilians (including children), none of whom were involved in the fighting between the Irish Republican paramilitary groups and the British Army.

REPRESSION

You could be pointing a gun at your own family and friends. The Armed Forces are not only for fighting overseas. Governments - Tory and Labour - use them to break working people's strikes for better pay and conditions. At the Army college at Camberley in Surrey officers train to use troops against civilians.

WHY WAR ?

The Armed Forces try to present an image of glamour and excitement. But behind it all is the death and suffering of war. And with nuclear weapons another World War could destroy the entire human race.

Wars are fought because the world is divided into different states and power blocs whose rulers compete for control of strategic areas, raw materials and minerals, markets for goods. To end war people must overthrow all rulers, East and West. It's no good electing a new government - all governments, right or left-wing, will maintain and use the war machine. People need to take over the workplaces and all society's resources. Then all of us can help create a co-operative world community where human needs - not profit and power - are what count.

N.H.S. DISPUTE

IT'S EVERY WORKER'S FIGHT

For over 5 months health workers have been resisting the Government's attempt to cut their already low wages.

In their fight for a 12% rise the government is not the N.H.S. workers' only enemy. They must beware those most effective strike breakers, the T.U.C. and the Union leaders. These bureaucrats still have blood on their hands after stabbing the train drivers in the back. Now in the health service dispute they're dictating a strike strategy that has about as much bite as a toothless sheep.

TOKEN GESTURES

The T.U.C. Health Services Committee are limiting national action to 1 or 2 day strikes, weeks apart. What's more, Union leaders are trying to restrict solidarity action. When the Fleet St. electricians struck in support of the health workers they defied not only a court injunction but also the T.U.C., COHSE leader Spanswick, and the print union leaders. While restricting workers' direct action, Union bosses are pushing the futile course of arbitration.

This compromising approach can be adopted by local Union leaders too - witness the actions of Grampian Association of Health Service Unions chairman Jim Kiddie at the demo against Thatcher on Sept. 1st. While the rest of the 2,000 crowd were intent on giving Thatcher a hot reception - complete with scrambled eggs - Kiddie busied himself pointing out demonstrators he considered "troublemakers" to the police. This helped the cops arrest 4 people and hit at least 2 others.

BUREAUCRATS OUT

To win, health workers will have to take control of the strike away from the T.U.C. Health Services Committee and the Union leaders.

Decisions about strike strategy could be taken at mass meetings of all workers at each hospital, or site. This would also help overcome any divisions between workers in different unions. The strike actions could be co-ordinated nationally by meetings of elected delegates, mandated by the local mass meetings.

HOW TO WIN ?

What kind of action could win the dispute ? Mass rallies of Grampian N.H.S. workers have twice voted in favour of all health workers going on strike, leaving only emergency cover.

Health workers have recently occupied Health Service administration buildings in several areas. Such occupations taking place all over the country would have a tremendous impact.

Solidarity action by other workers is vital - and must go beyond symbolic gestures. We need to seriously disrupt the economy. Experience shows that a very effective way to win such support is for health workers to speak directly to mass meetings at different workplaces.

IT'S US VERSUS THEM

The Health Service dispute is really a struggle between the ruling class and the entire working class (and that includes unemployed, women who work in the home, etc.).

This Tory government - like Labour before it - aims to slash workers' living standards, in order to boost employers' profits. Governments everywhere, from Poland to the U.S.A., are doing the same, as capitalism East and West sinks deeper into recession.



To effectively resist, we need to go onto the offensive in our struggles. For example, health workers occupying administration buildings is very positive. By these occupations N.H.S. workers are implicitly challenging the whole hierarchical set-up of the N.H.S., where most workers have low status and no say in making decisions. If anyone knows how things could be improved in their own area of work it's the ancillary and nursing staff - not some pen pushing bureaucrat or government minister.

This principle applies to all jobs. Why shouldn't all those doing the work collectively decide on how it's to be done ?

TAKING OVER

How can we make such a change ? Certainly not by voting in a new set of politicians to rule over us.

But if workers in all industries and jobs occupied their workplaces....If workers then started to run the workplaces under their own control without any bosses or managers.... If people re-organised production so that it was geared to human needs not making profits.... Then we could create a world worth living in.

WHAT NEXT?

We can strike a blow against this exploiting system right now by ensuring the health workers win their claim. A victory for the health workers will be a victory for all working class people. The rally in support of the health workers in Aberdeen on 27th August proclaimed that Aberdeen workers were prepared to play their part in a general strike in support of the Health workers - we must be prepared to make these words a reality.

22ND SEPT....NHS AND OTHER WORKERS STRIKING IN SUPPORT OF NHS WORKERS CLAIM....

Step Up The Strikes

A big stepping-up of strike action by workers inside and outside the NHS is what the health workers' struggle needs. But what do we get from the TUC and the Union leaders? A pathetic strike strategy: One day actions followed by weeks of inactivity. 6 months long struggle culminating in a TUC call for a one hour general strike!

The TUC and the Health Service Unions have adopted a policy all along designed to keep the lid on a potentially explosive struggle, capable of releasing all the pent-up frustrations of workers suffering wage cuts, redundancies, speed ups and escalating restrictions in all aspects of everyday life.

Calls by the NUPE conference and many mass meetings up and down the country for an all out strike with emergency cover, have been either ignored or condemned by Union leaders. Most of the action so far, whilst determined, has been in reality either symbolic or sectional.

UNITY NOT UNIONS

Other groups of workers, even in the public services and in the same Unions, many of them formerly in dispute with their own employers, have been deliberately 'kept on ice'. For instance local authority white collar workers, with the same minimal 12% demand due for settlement last July, and offered only 5%, have been called on to take sympathy action for Health workers, but NO action on their own behalf! Even then solidarity actions like those of the Fleet St. electricians had to be taken unofficially AGAINST the TUC and the Unions.

The Union strategy is precisely that which defeated the Health workers in 1979, the Civil Service workers in 1981, and the railway workers just 2 months ago. These negative lessons need to be learnt very quickly if the same fate is not to befall the Health workers today.

The lessons apply not only to the conduct of the dispute but to its objective. The aim is a 12% wage rise, just enough to cover last years CUT in wages. BUT the Unions are actually only asking for arbitration. We all know that at best all this would produce, even if the government accepted the arbitrator's recommendations, is 1 or 2% more than the offer.

All of this demonstrates that if this dispute is to be won, NHS workers must start to take control of it away from the TUC and the Unions and run things directly in their own interest.

That means :

1) Organising through general meetings and delegate committees of all the workers, irrespective of their position in the hierarchy or membership of different unions.

2) Sending delegates to other workplaces and arguing with them for real solidarity action.

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Comments and inquiries welcome, copies of our other leaflets and the SUBVERSIVE GRAFFITI local news-sheet obtainable free.

3) Starting an all out strike with the workers, not the hospital managers, controlling the emergency service.

4) Extending the strike to other (especially public service) sectors starting with those already in dispute and organising joint action.

5) Not being shy to take guerrilla actions outside the consent of the union bureaucracy. The occupation of an administration building by Rhondda nurses, which sparked off a rush of similar actions elsewhere, is a good example.

6) Struggling for the full 12% and nothing less.

The 22nd September Day of Action will only help the health workers' cause if its the start of a major escalation of action - by health workers and all workers. That way the 12% can be won.

But even then the Health workers will still be working for effectively the same pay as before last years cut - and for the same bosses and in the same hierarchical set up which keeps everyone firmly in their place - with the worst paid workers and the patients at the bottom of the pile.



At Wexham Park hospital in Berkshire nurses have refused instructions to drug patients against their will. Such actions challenge the whole authority structure of the Health Service. That challenge is needed not only in the Health Service but in all areas of society. Why should a privileged few take all the decisions about how society is run?

World-wide we all need to join our struggles together and overthrow the system that allows low pay and inadequate health care, when the resources exist to overcome this. We must create a society without bosses or leaders of any kind, where production is for human needs, and access to health care and all goods and services is freely available.

We've been shot at by both sides in the South Atlantic.

Though the media would have us think that the 'free, democratic, British state' is fighting a 'brutal, fascist, Argentine junta', the rulers of both countries have a lot in common. Their differences are a matter of degree rather than of principle. Both countries have millions unemployed, and rising rents and prices while wages are held down. Relative economic prosperity allows the British rulers to treat people a little less nastily at the moment. They fire plastic bullets at demonstrators in Belfast, lead ones in Buenos Aires. In Britain dissidents face police harassment and occasionally incarceration in prisons and mental hospitals. In Argentina its death squads and torture chambers.

Both sides needed the war to divert people from fighting back against capitalism's economic crisis. The dispute was gaining momentum while workers in Argentina took to the streets to resist their rulers, while in Britain our rulers fear a bigger and better repeat of last summer's riots. Now the rulers of both countries hope these struggles will be drowned by a wave of chauvinist jingoism. And both sides now have the war as a handy scapegoat for their troubles, and working class resistance can be put down as 'unpatriotic'.

How can we choose sides in their dispute? The British Empire and the Argentine Republic are both our enemies. Like all states, in so-called 'socialist' countries as well as the west, they are committed to preserving their brand of capitalism and are prepared to defend it by brutal attacks on the working class in their own countries, and by sending young men to kill, and be killed by fellow workers from other countries. And so long as there are competing states and power blocs, there will always be wars. No government can prevent this, however much they shout about peace. The Falklanders have had a brutal lesson in what can happen when we rely on the state to 'defend' us. Whatever happens they now face many years living with their islands under military occupation by British, Argentine or UN troops.

The only war worth fighting is the class war against the rulers of every country. In the last four months the workers in Poland have shown it is possible to keep up some resistance to the most repressive regimes. We can hope the Argentine workers can follow this, and assist both these struggles if we possibly can. But we have the most power to act against the ruling class here in Britain. We can extend the struggles in our own communities and workplaces. We can reject the leadership of all would-be governments and start acting together towards creating a co-operative world without states, national boundaries or war.

What better opportunity to demolish the British state than when half its troops are out of the country?!!

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The NHS was set up by a labour govt. in the sway of pseudo-socialist post war euphoria. Everybody had been pulling together for the war effort, and women had proved their equality with men by working bravely and heroically in agriculture, industry (munitions and textiles etc.) and especially in the business of cleaning up where war hurts most i.e. in medicine, surgery and the running of hospitals. Naturally Britain had to continue to care for all its heroic casualties, so while most of the women were told to 'go back home', raise the new generation and let the men take up their dominant role again as the breadwinners, those women in medicine were expected to continue their arduous work by running the NHS, mopping up the mess left by irresponsible capitalists and imperialist aggressors. There was nothing social, nor idealistic, about WW II - and nothing socialist about the policies adopted by the post war govt which was still basically under the thumbs of the same powers which caused the war - the big capitalists' means of production and exploitation with the imperialist politicians rule of nation against nation, colonial and neo-colonial exploitation.

SOCIALISM, if it is at all, is by the people for the people; it is not a govt which merely attempts to mitigate the iniquities of capitalism, nor a state machine which administers every tiny need and in the process eclipses humanity with bureaucracy. The sentiments of communal solidarity or brotherhood aroused by the war were neither by nor for the people: They were by big institutions staging campaigns of hatred. They were for, not the love and welfare of the people, but the nation. Any love and solidarity aroused in the people was channelled into the exploitation of women of our own countries, and the continued nationalist effort to compete with and beat the peoples of other countries. Where the nation benefits the people suffer. Because nation means the small class of people who own control and manipulate the resources of the people under the national govt. SOCIALISM must be by the people for the people, not by the people for the nationalist and capitalists exploitation of the peoples.

THE NHS was then not the triumphant creation of weak-hearted labour politicians and stooges who gained credit for it. It was forced to come about by the undeniable responsibility of the nation to continue to care for the casualties, although it stood for a while as a concession to the left wing movement, and the fringe group who had been campaigning for it since 1935. Now the NHS has ground on for the best part of 40 years, like a socialist island in a sea of capitalist competition and hatred. Indeed the NHS has been under SIEGE for the last ten years since the endless destructive/competitive struggle of blind profiteering capitalist production has once again brought society to its knees, and the world into its deepest ever economic and ecological crisis. IS IT ANY WONDER THAT THATCHER CHOOSES THIS MOMENT, AFTER HAVING STIRRED UP THE STENCH OF NATIONALIST SENTIMENT via THE FALKLANDS WASTAGE, TO BE PARTICULARLY PERNICIOUS WITH THE HANDLING OF THE NHS CLAIM? THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NHS AT THIS MOMENT WOULD MEAN MASSIVE PROFITS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR, A CRUSHING BLOW TO THE POOR AND NEEDY PEOPLE, AND A DISGRACE TO THE WHOLE LEFT-WING MOVEMENT, MAKING WAY FOR UNDISGUISED INTENSIFICATION OF EXPLOITATION OF UNEMPLOYED AND WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL SECTORS - ESPECIALLY THE ETHNIC MINORITIES. The history of the NHS is one of constant decline; the increasing exploitation of conscientious people - both black and white, skilled and unskilled, mostly female, health-workers; as our govt has been less and less prepared to finance the health and welfare of its people because it is more interested in serving the requirements of nameless and faceless capital and a national pride that requires nuclear weapons by the megaton in order to hide its inadequacies and corruption, and so make itself feel (falsely) Secure: - scared on the one hand of bureaucratic socialism, on the other of giving people the freedoms (educational opportunity and productive resources) which are the basis of any truly civilised society, freedoms which are denied us by the capitalist system of production by exploitation, economic and ideologic oppression and repression.

IT IS FULL TIME WE STOP BLAMING THE OTHER PERSON, THE OTHER NATION, THE OTHER RACE. IT IS TIME WE THINK ABOUT WHERE WE ARE GOING WRONG IN OUR OWN CAMP. IT IS TIME WE STOP ACCEPTING THE ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS WHICH MAKE US COMFORTABLE, IGNORANT AND IRRESPONSIBLE. IF NOT APATHETIC. IT IS TIME WE STOP ACCEPTING THE BACKSLIDING LABOUR PARTY AND RESIGNING OURSELVES TO MUTE SUFFERING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM AND THOSE WHO EXPLOIT IT AND US. AND IT IS TIME WE STOP ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE LEAD TO THE SLAUGHTER -- WW 1....WW 11....WW

Thatcher wants to turn the NHS pay dispute into an issue (she has) WE SHOULD TAKE THAT ISSUE UP AND THROW IT BACK IN HER FACE SO HARD THAT SHE NEVER RECOVERS. We must mobilise massive support for the health workers - not a one hour symbol ! We must go further and mobilise for the renovation of the NHS and the socialist ideal it stands for. We must tie in the NHS dispute with the struggle to build our own organisation for producing and distributing wealth and welfare by the people and for the people, and to cease being as irresponsible, ignorant, shortsighted and commodity dependent as our present leaders are and want us to be. There is no time left for selfish and pecuniary motives, apathy and excuses, we must get together to break out of the economic and legal restraints which this old, crumbling society imposes on us.

Our present drastic situation requires bold and decisive initiatives from us. One suggestion is that we need a backbone structure of primary industries and agriculture and public services, to provide the basics material needs of our population, and which is 'profitable' enough to make a large provision of funds available to self-help organisations community trusts and the like, which can carry out secondary productions and in so doing build up local community forms of life, releasing people from the misery of condemnation to unemployment, racial discrimination and shit-work. Release us from the grip of monopoly and multinational capital, and we can do the rest by ourselves working for ourselves.

Wildcat

MANCHESTER FREE BULLETIN

NO. 7 PASS IT AROUND

DHSS Strikes

The recent strike at Bury DHSS office is another shining example of how traditional trade unionism is failing workers. We went to talk to pickets a week after the strike started and this is what we heard:

A team of special investigators had gone to the Bury office to try to offload some of the work of the inspectors onto clerical staff. This was part of the Governments Long term aim of privatising large chunks of the welfare state, involving 17,000 jobs lost. All the workers at the office are aware of this and all refused to co-operate with the team. Even

Eventually the team demanded to interview an inspector, who refused and was suspended. Immediately the SCPS (inspectors union) held a meeting and walked out on strike. The next day at the clerical workers (CPSA) meeting they walked out in sympathy. the strike

The strike demand was that the investigating team be withdrawn. The strike soon became official, but it seemed the unions main concern was how much strike pay they could afford (sounds like the boss, doesn't it?) A week later the DHSS was being very provocative and the unions were trying to get everyone back to work.

The chairman of the strike committee told us of a mass meeting to be held the following morning. He saw two possible courses of action. The first was simple - stay on strike until the team left. In view of the fact that the team was due to move

to Dundee and Barnstable the next week and that the workers at those two offices had already decided to come out if they did, solidarity seemed the obvious choice.

But another idea was being pushed by the union. Ever mindful of the state of their bank account, they suggested everyone go back to work, and if the investigating team hassled the inspectors again, then all the inspectors

(20 out of 170 workers!) would walk out. This way the union could afford full strike pay. And, they said, if Barnstable and Dundee are coming out too, there's no way we can afford strike pay for everyone, therefore go back to work. How stupid can you get! IN the face of a common threat facing all staff at all DHSS offices in the country, the unions best response is to divide workers, not unite them.

At the same time as this 'local' dis-

pute was fizzling out several DHSS offices in Birmingham were taking action over a similar issue. 400 staff from four offices are on indefinite strike and the regions other offices have supported with a 24 hour strike. The dispute is over staff shortages - what with reduced staff levels and increasing numbers of claimants, the workload is too much. This dispute has been going on for a month now and shows no signs of being resolved. And in Oxford benefits office staff walked out indefinitely at the end of September over the same issue.

With all these 'local' disputes occurring at the same time, isn't it about time DHSS staff realised that united action would be far more effective than sporadic 'local' strikes. It is entirely obvious that the Government is trying to decimate the Welfare system - and it's not only claimants who'll be losing out. Thousands of DHSS jobs are also at risk.

It has got to be said that times have changed. Gone are the days of the quick victory or the small successful strike. The only struggles that have any hope of succeeding are massive united ones. The social and economic system is cracking up and it's going to drag us all down one by one unless we unite and fight.

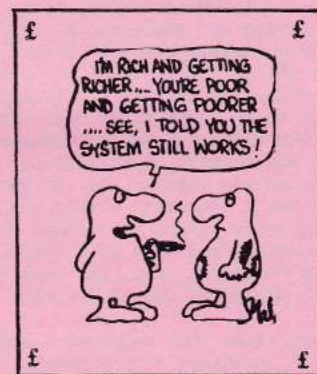
NHS Fiasco

'Another TUC day of action in support of the Health workers!' - You can hear the yawns and sighs in every workplace, even from workers who were originally enthusiastic supporters of such actions a short while ago. The dispute has been dragged out for six months now. Not only are the vital solidarity actions beginning to falter, but some hospital workers, like the Central Manchester Ambulance men are giving up and agreeing to settle for the Governments paltry offer.

The unions strategy of token solidarity actions, sectional strikes in the NHS and symbolic gestures, like routine demonstrations and petitions all well spaced out, is precisely that which defeated the Civil Servants back in 1981. The TUC is the same TUC that arranged for the isolation and defeat of the train drivers

OBJECTIVES

1. To report on, analyse and seek solidarity for important struggles amongst our fellow workers, especially in the Greater Manchester area.
2. To encourage independent working class activity outside of the control of the trade unions and in opposition to all political parties.
3. To aim at the revolutionary overthrow of all governments, bosses and leaders by a revolution in which the majority of people, who at the moment are just expected to follow orders, all play an equal part. And we would like to see the creation of a world without the wages/money/market system, where we can all have a say in how things are run, and where production is for human need not profit.



just a few months back. NALGO and NUPE with many workers in the NHS and in Local Authorities have successfully shelved any joint action over their common pay claims. Calls by the NUPE Conference and many mass meetings of hospital workers (up and down the country) for 'all out' action, with emergency cover only, have been either condemned or ignored by union leaders. And all this simply over a demand; not for the full claim - small as that is; but for a reference to arbitration. All arbitration did for the railway workers and teachers was to confirm a cut in their real wages, does anyone expect the Health workers to fair any better?

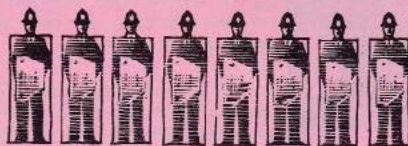
There is still a fighting spirit amongst many Health workers and there have been some excellent, imaginative actions outside the confines of the official Union campaign. BUT all of this will be wasted if there aren't some drastic changes of course.

If the dispute is to be won, NHS workers must start to take control of it away from the TUC and the unions and run things directly in their own interests. We think this means:-

- 1) Organising through general meetings and delegate committees of all the workers, irrespective of their position in the hierarchy or membership of different unions.
- 2) Sending delegations to visit other workplaces and arguing with them for real, effective solidarity action.
- 3) Starting an all out strike with the workers controlling the emergency service not the managers.
- 4) Extending the strike to other (especially Public Service) sectors, starting with those already in dispute, and organising joint actions.
- 5) Struggling for the full 12% claim and nothing less.

Community Police!

Complaints about police brutality continue unabated in Manchester and especially in the Moss Side area. A recent incident in Moss Side has confirmed the opinions of the people who live there that the police are above the law.



At the end of September (22nd) a young man was stopped in Moss Side by drug squad officers, who wanted to take him to Moss Side station to search him. Not surprisingly he didn't want to go. There was some discussion and a crowd gathered. He offered to be searched in front of the crowd. The police refused the offer, more police arrived and there was a scuffle. 2 community workers arrived to try and calm things down, one of the workers was described as "a riot leader" by police there and a fight then took place after which the police arrested 4 people and forcibly took them to Moss Side police station. One of those arrested was a community worker who had no injuries before his arrest but on his release from Moss Side has a suspected fractured skull and possibly permanent damage to one of his eyes.

Three days after this happened a demonstration 'organised' by a small number of local people (not even a formally organised group) attracted over 1,000 people including the local MP, Councillors, and JPs. Many people on the demonstration were middle aged or old people who had never been on a demonstration before. A petition was handed into the police demanding an independent enquiry into the Moss Side police.

Although we applaud the action of local people in coming out to protest in large numbers we think the calling of an independent enquiry is a waste of time. The Scarman enquiry recommended that officers who had taken unofficial weapons to deal with the civil disturbances be severely dealt with and prosecuted. However the DPP has refused to prosecute any officers - even though the officers concerned were identified through photographs.

In Manchester the police committee seem powerless to stop the excesses of the latter day Jesus Christ, Anderton. Throughout Britain more and more people are dying in police custody every year. The recent appointment of a community liaison officer for Moss Side has been an unmitigated disaster. Although paid a huge salary the liaison officer has no credibility in the community.

The job of the police is not to protect the public - it is to protect the people in control of our lives from the people they control - us. So it is no use talking of more community policemen and more democratic control of the police. Only when people organise themselves so that the government and its army and police are disbanded forever will people stop being treated with brutality by the police.

It is interesting to note that there has been a complete news blackout of this matter. The demonstration 3 days after the arrests was not reported and neither was a demonstration held outside the Court when the 4 arrested appeared last week.



Direct Works

"This Council is more right wing than the Tories" a union convenor said about Salford's Labour Council after being told that its Building Maintenance Committee had decided to sack all 430 workers in the Direct Labour Force, then offer them new jobs at reduced rates with poorer conditions. This kind of heavy handed dealing is certainly typical of Tory Councils but is it really any different to other more 'reasonable' Labour Councils, like Manchester, where the unions have just done a deal to accept 350 more redundancies? A deal, which in giving more money to early applicants, is deliberately intended to stifle any unofficial collective opposition. Of course both these Labour Councils are blaming the Tory Governments pressure on their organisation and finance. But the element of truth in this should-

n't hide two important points:

Firstly, what kind of so-called workers organisation is it that acts against the people it claims to represent?

Secondly, are our memories so short that we have forgotten the Labour Government in power carrying out its own cut-backs and attacks on workers living standards, even bringing in troops (firemen, dustmen) to black-leg?

To fight back effectively against these kind of attacks we've GOT to go beyond the politics of trade unionism and Labourism, which simply imprison us.

NAME THE SCAB QUIZ NAME THE SCAB
QUIZ NAME THE SCAB QUIZ NAME THE

Q1. Who said "Kitson should have his head blown off"?

Q2. Who described striking ambulance drivers as "terrorists"?

Q3. Who declared a state of emergency and used troops to break a strike, and where?

Q4. Who said we were "paying our selves more than the value of what we produced"?

Q5. Who called for "the trimming of 'candy floss' items, such as education and social services so that more money would be available for the police"?

ANSWERS TO SCAB QUIZ ANSWERS TO SC
AB QUIZ ANSWERS TO SCAB QUIZ ANSWERS

- changed?
At the end of 1982 what's
or
or
Illor Ronald Wooten, March 1980,
Midland Police Committee, Council-
A5. The Chairman of the West
well.
Mrs. Thatcher would do just as
A4. Jim Callaghan in 1976, or
In using troops as strike breakers.
Government got plenty of practice
drivers strike, 1979. The Labour
A3. Roy Mason in N.I. tanker
Its 'Jacksy'.
member of the ruling class or
TUC General Secretary, or any
A2. Frank Chapple - next years
boss or bureaucrat.
1979, or any worker about any
A1. Striking lorry driver in Jar.

CONTACT Wildcat

We would like to hear from anyone who agrees with our objectives or is interested in the articles we publish. You may be able to give us useful information or write short articles for inclusion in the bulletin. If you like what we produce you could distribute copies of 'Wildcat' regularly at your workplace, school or club etc. We can supply anything from 10 to 100 copies quite easily, free of charge, although financial contributions are most welcome. If your particularly enthusiastic you might actually want to help produce the bulletin.

If you would like to come along to one of our regular meetings let us know.

We can post you single copies of 'Wildcat' as they appear if you send us a £1 contribution (cash or stamps).

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