

30p

INTER
COM
4

REVOLUTIONARY
DISCUSSION
BULLETIN



This issue was finally put together by a disparate group of individuals (London Workers Group, Workers Playtime, London Autonomists) most of whom, strangely enough, work at Little @ Press. We shall be producing the next issue as well, so rush your articles (pre-typed on universal duplicating stencils), leaflets (we need 300 to insert one in each copy), and money (leave payee blank). Our address is as below. Participation in Intercom is automatic for material conforming to the ten point code printed below. Other material at editorial groups discretion.

1. *Opposition to the class society which exists in every country in the world.*
2. *Commitment to the communist objective - abolition of nation states and the money/market/wages system and its replacement by the common ownership and democratic control of the world's resources.*
3. *Rejection of 'nationalisation' as any kind of solution to working class problems.*
4. *Support and encouragement for independent working class struggle outside the control of the trade unions (including shop-stewards and 'rank and file' movements), and all political parties.*
5. *Opposition to all capitalist and nationalist parties, including the Labour Party.*
6. *For the active participation of the whole working class in its own emancipation through social revolution which overthrows all governments, bosses and leaders.*
7. *Rejection of all forms of nationalism - for the internationalisation of working class struggle.*
8. *Active opposition to racism and sexism.*
9. *Opposition to religion and all other ideological mystifications.*
10. *Support for principled co-operation among revolutionaries and opposition to sectarianism.*

CONTENTS

Proletarian Autonomy and the Function of Organisation (Tampa Workers Affinity Group)	1
Letter from Tampa Workers Affinity Group to Wildcat and Intercom	3
Reply to Tampa Workers Affinity Group from Wildcat	4
The Typist Strikes Back	6
Reply to Aberdeen's (Communist Bulletin Group) Analysis of the Organisational Question (TWAG)	7
Union Negotiation means Defeat (Communist Bulletin Group)	13
Letter from Collegiamenti	14
The War in Chad (L'Eveil Internationaliste/L'Insecurite Sociale)	15
Socialism and Money (Louis Robertson)	17
Why I am not a Socialist (Richard Essex)	19
Meditations on the Question of Organisation (Richard Essex)	20
Out of One Prison - into Another (L'Insecurite Sociale)	21
A Libertarian Translation Project (Keith Sorel)	23
Letter from Black Star	24
Letter from L'Eveil Internationaliste	25
Practical Anarchy: A review of Past Actions, Anticipating the New	26
Historical Reprint: "The Power and Decline of Germany"	27
Letter from Manchester	29
Various Leaflets	(unnumbered)

INTERCOM 5

The deadline for this has not been set as yet. However the next issue should be out sometime around easter. It will include an account of the January Intercom conference. All contributions should be sent to:

**INTERCOM,
BOX LWG,
C1 METROPOLITAN WHARF,
WAPPING WALL,
LONDON E 1**

The 'Intercom' bulletin and meetings were the outcome of a conference in Manchester in September 1982, which in turn followed the production of a pilot issue of a discussion bulletin called the 'New Left Review' by the WILDCAT group in Manchester.

The bulletin is intended to promote an exchange of information on the activities of various groups and individuals who together form a minority communist tendency distinct from what is generally called the 'Left Wing' and who sometimes describe themselves as: anarchist-, libertarian-, council- and left- communists. It is hoped that this information will provide the basis for regular discussion and debate amongst our political tendency, leading to greater understanding of important issues and increased co-operation in practical work.

The printed parts of this issue and the leaflets included were all done at Little @ Printers. We are constantly available for quotes for revolutionary and political magazines, broadsheets, leaflets, cheap typesetting - its what makes our self-managed wage slavery (just) bearable. Ring 01-488 0602 or write to the above address.

PROLETARIAN AUTONOMY AND THE FUNCTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

We'd like to address ourselves to four interrelated issues with this presentation - proletarian autonomy, the function of the revolutionary organisation, the workers' councils and the State.

For us, the concept of workers' autonomy has a dual meaning. First of all it means class autonomy, activity outside of and against all the institutions of the bourgeoisie. These naturally include not only the capitalist bosses, but their variegated colleagues - the Unions, the political parties, the cultural and video industries and of course the State. But workers' autonomy also means for us the autonomy of the individual worker, the self-activity of the self. The role of revolutionaries here is to always encourage direct class struggle initiatives on both a collective and individual plane. It is the convergence of these two lines where communist consciousness meets.

The historic form for the self-emancipation of the proletariat, and for humanity as a whole to rid itself of unconscious social fetters, is the generalised and delegated assemblies of the class: the workers' councils. These bodies are the direct expression of democratic workers' power; everyone is given an equal voice in discussion and resolving all tasks posed by the class struggle. This participation by all, the organic class organisation by universally elected committees, immediately recallable, and with a demand for the rotation of responsibility - this is where the momentum to a free humanity lies.

The workers' general assemblies and councils can only come into existence through the spontaneous course of class struggle against moribund capitalist relations of production (eg. Portugal '74, Spain '76-77, Poland '80). It does so on the basis of the material need and the liberatory spiritual essence of the class movement itself. The council form is further revolutionary because it inevitably acts to link together ever greater units of the proletariat and thereby allows the class to recognise itself as a universal and revolutionary, and the only universal and revolutionary, social force. Therefore, the workers' council movement must consciously and inexorably break all territorial limits to its praxis: it is the vehicle for world socialist transformation.

Revolutionaries are individuals whose conscious radical being is a direct product of the entire class movement, who are in fact concentrates of the proletariat. Their main purpose is to facilitate the clarity and generalisation of the real emancipatory movement, to stand as beacons of light in a shrinking sea of pre-historical darkness. Revolutionaries then are a kind of catalyst, a human catalyst with all the strengths and weaknesses such entails, whose overriding goal is to help the workers' of the world to see their own liberatory path in the radical overthrow of all existing productive and social relations by the suppression of capitalist economic and political relations - the (alien) rule of value.

Individual revolutionaries then constitute themselves into a self-organised minority to fight side by side with the proletariat, as a specialised but transitory detachment of the class, against the bourgeoisie and its many tentacles. Revolutionaries must herald the advent of workers' assemblies and councils as the legitimate and proper forms to contest the sovereignty of capital. They must participate in the broad struggles of their class, making clear the necessity to confront and ultimately abolish the power and authority of the State and its political economy. Once the councils arise naturally - coming amidst the crest of mass strikes - the revolutionary organisation must naturally enter these collective bodies and push forward the themes of constant radical self-activity of the class and the extension of combativity and solidarity to

a global scale. Besides this, revolutionaries must themselves be in the for-
front of the class battles serving to ignite and join in the most
 innovative and cohesive political and military activity of the proletariat.
 During the insurrectionary phase of the Social Revolution ~~ary~~ one of the
 most important political objectives must be the capture and defensible
 operation of not only all industry and commerce, but of the central means
 of communication - TV, radio, telephone, newspapers, etc. Also, the
 revolutionary organisation must immediately advocate measures which over-
 turn the mode of capitalist production and exchange - that is, commodity
 and hierarchical relations within plants and factories, and their
 cultural reflection without.

During the period of the social hegemony of the councils, that is, a
 prolonged period of civil strife, the councils will be faced with a com-
 plex of problems ~~x~~ whose answers come from the entire movement of the class
 and not from any minority group or pre-established program. As Pannekoek
 says, the victory of the councils is not the utopian end, but only the
 real starting place for the solving of humankind's existential problems.
 In this context, the degree of success of the revolutionary organisation
 is not necessarily the ready acceptance of its particular program -
 because for many things revolutionaries are going to be at a loss as much
 as anyone else - but the degree to which the proletariat has gathered the
practical illumination of communist consciousness as its own. Again, the
 real fruition of the revolutionary organisation is not the perpetuation,
 but rather the actual transcendence of the division between mental and
 physical labour.

About the State, we don't see where any trace can be left of this
 cancerous artifice once its violent members - the Army High Command,
 police headquarters, the national guard officer-core, the judiciary and
 prison systems - have been lopped off by the armed proletariat.
Whatever social functions it previously arrogated to itself must be taken
over by the workers councils. Classes other than the proletariat can
 negotiate with the universal councils for the means of their transitional
 existence. Remnants of the petty-bourgeoisie should be invited to par-
 ticipate in the freely operated council structures as equals. But those
 who refuse and who attempt to sabotage the construction of the New World
 should be dispatched without further ado (in the fashion of Durruti).

A final point we want to underscore is the urgent requirement for the
 unification of all revolutionary forces prior to decisive battles. For
 example, we think Pannekoek made a grave error when he cavalierly dismissed
 Erich Muehsam's plea from prison for unity of struggle between the left-
 communists and anarchists in Germany in 1920. Because we have to remember
 that some anarchists - hardly any here in N. America though - are
 revolutionary. This is why Landauer, too, had to be murdered in 1919.
 Not to mention Berneri and thousands of FAI militants during and after
 the 1937 MAY days in Spain. And the Russian anarchists who fought
 ferociously, first against the Whites, and then valiantly against the
 Bolshevik betrayal of the 1917 Revolution. And after ~~the general strike~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ all, the main positions with which we presumably identify -
 workers' autonomy, self-activity, the general spontaneous strike, smash
 the State, and international workers' solidarity - are these not the planks
 of revolutionary anarchism as well? Or are there no genuine Bakuninists
 left? We seek to reunite the Red and Black banners!

Here in the USA we need to press the 'libertarians' on the very content
 of their politics, and especially make them decide which is the authentic
 (and libertarian as well) form for the workers' social revolution - the
 syndicate or the council?

ADDRESS TO A LEFT COMMUNIST CONFERENCE MARCH 1982 BY
 TAMPA WORKERS' AFFINITY GROUP, USA.

CORRESPONDENCE...CORRESPONDENCE.....CORRESPONDENCE.....CORRESPONDENCE.....

TAMPA WORKERS AFFINITY GROUP, FLORIDA TO 'WILDCAT' MANCHESTER, AND 'INTERCOM'.

We have received your shipment of Intercom 2. Enclosed is a 5 dollar contribution for the Review.

Our group is in basic agreement with your 10 minimum political points, although we believe that opposition to frontism should definitely be added.

Concerning the major article on the economy, the first few sentences were so theoretically muddled that we just couldn't bring ourselves to pursue the piece.

On the letter from Hong Kong, L.L.M.'s comments about the situation of Minus - capitulation to Leftism due to theoretical stunting and political cowardice - are all too common among the 'libertarian socialist' circles here in North America. We are also firmly in accord with his underscoring the urgency for an international and centralised (coordinated) revolutionary organisation, a 'party' of the KAPD-type. Further, we assume that you have received by now L.L.M.'s International Correspondence journal in Chinese and English which we consider a most welcomed contribution toward present revolutionary clarity and determination.

About the note from 'Wildcat', we (as did the W.R.) recognise a patented demoralisation from a round of intensive local activism. The federalist and immediatist preoccupations of 'Wildcat' have been no more successful at removing the isolation of revolutionaries from the class at-large than the rigid centralism and doctrinalism of 'World Revolution' (ICC) or the Communist Workers Organisation. The problem of organisation and intervention, of the nature and structure of the revolutionary association, continues to be a difficult one, as stressed by the Communist Bulletin comrades.

The letter from M.B. obviously reinforces our conviction as to the idiocy and pathetic reformism of most latter-day 'anarchists'. Again, this kind of moralistic, group-therapy, ideology-first mentality afflicts the entire 'libertarian' movement of N.America. Here in the States, there is certainly a need for political conferences that apply themselves seriously to contemporary issues of the workers' movement and not to ideology and sermonising.

It is in this sense that we oppose the remark by M.S. that "all of our organisation must be as informal as possible". This kind of lax attitude about what we would presume to be a commitment to sustained and programmatic revolutionary activity is foreign to any real tradition of class struggle. We don't want to favour or imply a heavy watchdog mentality about political duties, but if one accepts to carry out an assignment, then he or she should be held accountable organisationally to their word. "Informality" can breed informal division of labour and hierarchy just as surely as party authoritarianism.

On L.R.'s letter, we feel his analysis of the Communist Bulletin was unfair with respect to the very pressing problems (of organisation) addressed by these comrades. And whereas these people clearly state "We recognise the organisation and individuals (of Intercom) as part of the proletarian movement", for the W.R., you are seen as little more than an anarcho-doormat! It is our opinion that the organisational megalomania and paranoia of the W.R. (ICC), (and the other Leninoid groups such as the CWO and BC etc) does not mark the Aberdeen comrades, who, after all, have forthrightly spoken of the real meagerness of the forces of world revolution. As we have already mentioned, the dilemma of revolutionary organisation and activity is a complex and tough one, in light of the all-encompassing strength of modern Capital. Those of us who would like to assemble an equalitarian, international 'party', without cliques and monolithism, one coloured by the spirit of Luxemburg and Gorter as well as Voline and Durruti, are like rosebuds amidst a Sahara desert. L.R.'s statements that, "none of us regard the current situation and state of organisation as ideal", "we certainly do not think the time is right to create another unified organisation" (then when?), "their (ICC et al) impact was totally negligible", "it must be built from the bottom up, in answer to a real need" - these sound all

INTERCOM 4

too much like the fatalism and complacency of Paul Mattick Jnr. here in the U.S.A. If the class movement cannot develop by conjure, neither can it advance by an organisational sitting on ones hands. The proletariat has already produced an international revolutionary milieu and that milieu must act to synthesise and consolidate itself at a formal, organisational level globally.

In this context, the various anti-war leaflets and letters by 'Suversive Grafitti' absolutely fail to understand the reactionary role of pacifism and frontism as central to an overall strategy by the bourgeoisie to control the working class, to head off direct class combat, and to actually grease the gears of the capitalist war machine. This is in addition to these dumb spectacles as pleasant media circuses, and the diversion of popular anxiety about nuclear war into harmless displays of moral witness and superiority.

'Anarchists' who are always in search of a "mass audience" for their 'ideas' forget or totally misunderstand the fundamental and specific functions that conscious revolutionaries have to play in relation to the broader class movement - re, political clarity, clarity on the social question (who and what runs society?) - and end up everytime as a spongy spoke for some Leftist Front wheel (rolling over the proletariat).

We think the Intercom comrades would do well to address this whole issue of frontism and its meaning in light of contemporary class struggle.

For Anti-State Communism,

PUIG (T.L.) TAMPA WORKERS AFFINITY GROUP. 24.7.83

REPLY TO TWAG FROM 'WILDCAT'

We were very pleased to receive your letter and have now had time to consider your comments.

As regards the article on the economy in 'Intercom' No2 you will see from the conference report and other articles in 'Intercom' No3 that it was considered either inaccurate and/or inadequate by many contributors, amongst whom you may count the 'Wildcat' group collectively.

On the question of 'organisation and intervention' that you raise in relation to several of the other contributions to 'Intercom' No2 we have some sympathy with your approach but feel that you gloss over the difficulties.

We would certainly reject the traditional 'anarchist' approach expressed by MS in his article 'Reply to Melmoth', but do not find ourselves in the same degree of disagreement with the contents of LR's article 'A Reply to Centralist Critics'.

We are in favour of formal organisation in the main collective activity of revolutionaries. We are also strongly in favour of co-operation and co-ordination of our activities nationally and internationally. But we are opposed to miniscule groups of geographically scattered revolutionaries hastily declaring themselves national and international organisations, in opposition to others in the same milieu who have done the same thing. When we say that "the time is not right to create another unified organisation" this is not a statement of our desires. It is simply a description of how things appear to be, particularly after the failure of the various international conferences.

We do as LR says, think that real lasting co-operation and co-ordination needs to be based on healthy functioning groups and built up over a period of time, wherever possible through practical projects. Thus we welcomed an earlier approach from the 'Communist Bulletin' to produce a joint leaflet on the 'Falklands War'. This proposal came too late to be workable, but it would have tested the theoretical and physical possibilities of joint action. Regular co-operation of this sort can lead to the fusion of groups but this isn't an inevitable outcome. We need to be

CORRESPONDENCE...CORRESPONDENCE.....CORRESPONDENCE.....CORRESPONDENCE.....

TAMPA WORKERS AFFINITY GROUP, FLORIDA TO 'WILDCAT' MANCHESTER, AND 'INTERCOM'.

We have received your shipment of Intercom 2. Enclosed is a 5 dollar contribution for the Review.

Our group is in basic agreement with your 10 minimum political points, although we believe that opposition to frontism should definitely be added.

Concerning the major article on the economy, the first few sentences were so theoretically muddled that we just couldn't bring ourselves to pursue the piece.

On the letter from Hong Kong, L.L.M.'s comments about the situation of Minus - capitulation to Leftism due to theoretical stunting and political cowardice - are all too common among the 'libertarian socialist' circles here in North America. We are also firmly in accord with his underscoring the urgency for an international and centralised (coordinated) revolutionary organisation, a 'party' of the KAPD-type. Further, we assume that you have received by now L.L.M.'s International Correspondence journal in Chinese and English which we consider a most welcomed contribution toward present revolutionary clarity and determination.

About the note from 'Wildcat', we (as did the W.R.) recognise a patented demoralisation from a round of intensive local activism. The federalist and immediatist preoccupations of 'Wildcat' have been no more successful at removing the isolation of revolutionaries from the class at-large than the rigid centralism and doctrinalism of 'World Revolution' (ICC) or the Communist Workers Organisation. The problem of organisation and intervention, of the nature and structure of the revolutionary association, continues to be a difficult one, as stressed by the Communist Bulletin comrades.

The letter from M.B. obviously reinforces our conviction as to the idiocy and pathetic reformism of most latter-day 'anarchists'. Again, this kind of moralistic, group-therapy, ideology-first mentality afflicts the entire 'libertarian' movement of N.America. Here in the States, there is certainly a need for political conferences that apply themselves seriously to contemporary issues of the workers' movement and not to ideology and sermonising.

It is in this sense that we oppose the remark by M.S. that "all of our organisation must be as informal as possible". This kind of lax attitude about what we would presume to be a commitment to sustained and programmatic revolutionary activity is foreign to any real tradition of class struggle. We don't want to favour or imply a heavy watchdog mentality about political duties, but if one accepts to carry out an assignment, then he or she should be held accountable organisationally to their word. "Informality" can breed informal division of labour and hierarchy just as surely as party authoritarianism.

On L.R.'s letter, we feel his analysis of the Communist Bulletin was unfair with respect to the very pressing problems (of organisation) addressed by these comrades. And whereas these people clearly state "We recognise the organisation and individuals (of Intercom) as part of the proletarian movement", for the W.R., you are seen as little more than an anarcho-doormat! It is our opinion that the organisational megalomania and paranoia of the W.R. (ICC), (and the other Leninoid groups such as the CWO and BC etc) does not mark the Aberdeen comrades, who, after all, have forthrightly spoken of the real meagerness of the forces of world revolution. As we have already mentioned, the dilemma of revolutionary organisation and activity is a complex and tough one, in light of the all-encompassing strength of modern Capital. Those of us who would like to assemble an equalitarian, international 'party', without cliques and monolithism, one coloured by the spirit of Luxemburg and Gorter as well as Voline and Durruti, are like rosebuds amidst a Sahara desert. L.R.'s statements that, "none of us regard the current situation and state of organisation as ideal", "we certainly do not think the time is right to create another unified organisation" (then when?), "their (ICC et al) impact was totally negligible", "it must be built from the bottom up, in answer to a real need" - these sound all

INTERCOM 4

too much like the fatalism and complacency of Paul Mattick Jnr. here in the U.S.A. If the class movement cannot develop by conjure, neither can it advance by an organisational sitting on ones hands. The proletariat has already produced an international-revolutionary milieu and that milieu must act to synthesise and consolidate itself at a formal, organisational level globally.

In this context, the various anti-war leaflets and letters by 'Suversive Grafitti' absolutely fail to understand the reactionary role of pacifism and frontism as central to an overall strategy by the bourgeoisie to control the working class, to head off direct class combat, and to actually grease the gears of the capitalist war machine. This is in addition to these dumb spectacles as pleasant media circuses, and the diversion of popular anxiety about nuclear war into harmless displays of moral witness and superiority.

'Anarchists' who are always in search of a "mass audience" for their 'ideas' forget or totally misunderstand the fundamental and specific functions that conscious revolutionaries have to play in relation to the broader class movement - re, political clarity, clarity on the social question (who and what runs society?) - and end up everytime as a spongy spoke for some Leftist Front wheel (rolling over the proletariat).

We think the Intercom comrades would do well to address this whole issue of frontism and its meaning in light of contemporary class struggle.

For Anti-State Communism,

PUIG (T.L.) TAMPA WORKERS AFFINITY GROUP. 24.7.83

REPLY TO TWAG FROM 'WILDCAT'

We were very pleased to receive your letter and have now had time to consider your comments.

As regards the article on the economy in 'Intercom' No2 you will see from the conference report and other articles in 'Intercom' No3 that it was considered either inaccurate and/or inadequate by many contributors, amongst whom you may count the 'Wildcat' group collectively.

On the question of 'organisation and intervention' that you raise in relation to several of the other contributions to 'Intercom' No2 we have some sympathy with your approach but feel that you gloss over the difficulties.

We would certainly reject the traditional 'anarchist' approach expressed by MS in his article 'Reply to Melmoth', but do not find ourselves in the same degree of disagreement with the contents of LR's article 'A Reply to Centralist Critics'.

We are in favour of formal organisation in the main collective activity of revolutionaries. We are also strongly in favour of co-operation and co-ordination of our activities nationally and internationally. But we are opposed to miniscule groups of geographically scattered revolutionaries hastily declaring themselves national and international organisations, in opposition to others in the same milieu who have done the same thing. When we say that "the time is not right to create another unified organisation" this is not a statement of our desires. It is simply a description of how things appear to be, particularly after the failure of the various international conferences.

We do as LR says, think that real lasting co-operation and co-ordination needs to be based on healthy functioning groups and built up over a period of time, wherever possible through practical projects. Thus we welcomed an earlier approach from the 'Communist Bulletin' to produce a joint leaflet on the 'Falklands War'. This proposal came too late to be workable, but it would have tested the theoretical and physical possibilities of joint action. Regular co-operation of this sort can lead to the fusion of groups but this isn't an inevitable outcome. We need to be

aware of the advantages this possibility holds, without determining our every move as though fusion were the main objective of the exercise, as the 'Partyists' in groups such as the CWO and the ICC tend to. Our initiation of the 'Intercom' project was in line with this approach. It should have provided a forum in which practical projects of co-operation might emerge and where over time those groups and individuals who developed closest theoretically, might decide to fuse or re-align politically, without the prospect of continuing co-operation with the rest suddenly becoming 'unprincipled'. Unfortunately groups such as the 'Communist Bulletin' (CB) have so far preferred, in the tradition of the ICC and CWO, to sort out virtually all the theoretical differences 'on their own' before entering into any formal co-operation with others. They therefore rejected participation in the 'Intercom' project along with their forerunners in the ICC and CWO. Clearly we do distinguish between the CB and the ICC & CWO but unfortunately the CB have bought some 'bad habits' with them from the past. Although it was not our intention, the political balance of 'Intercom' has been unduly weighted towards 'anarchism' largely because of the failure of these other tendencies to participate.

As for our own group in Manchester - Wildcat - our activity has varied according to our resources and to the level of class struggle. The 'activist' bulletin we have previously produced was not in our opinion a waste of time and could well prove a useful vehicle for revolutionary work again given a change of circumstances. In the meantime we continue to be active in different ways (through publications on the Labour Party and Socialist Workers Party for instance and our distribution of 'Workers Playtime')

Whilst we do not wish to sink ourselves in the amorphous 'anarchist' movement we do feel that some sections of this (often very young) movement are worth discussing and debating with. To do this successfully however we do need to be theoretically clear and not allow personal likes and friendships to cloud our criticism. In our opinion the element of criticism in the 'Subversive Graffiti' material on the anti-nuclear movement for instance had become minimal and they have been criticised for this.

We are certainly willing to consider proposing some amendment to 'Intercoms' political basis to avoid the inclusion of the more obviously uncritical material on the 'peace movement' such as the article by LO on 'entrism into the peace movement/CND' in 'Intercom' No3, though we are not sure that "opposition to frontism" by itself fits the bill. We would suggest an amendment to point 5 along the lines of:

'Opposition to all capitalist and nationalist parties, including the Labour Party and other organisations of the capitalist left. Opposition to all joint work with these organisations, including participation in front organisations such as the CND.'

We were pleased to receive your constructive criticism and look forward to continuing our contact with you and hopefully to your participation in the 'Intercom' project.

Fraternally,

'Wildcat' Sept. 1983

 ** NEW ! EXTENDED ! NEW ! EXTENDED ! NEW ! EXTENDED ! NEW ! **

 Now available from the WILDCAT group, the new extended pamphlet
 on the SWP. 20p per copy (incl. postage) or bulk orders at the rate
 of 15p for ten plus postage.
 Available from: WILDCAT,
 c/o Autonomy Centre,
 8-10 Gt Ancoats St.,
 Manchester, M 4

TAMPA WORKERS AFFINITY GROUP - THE TYPIST STRIKES BACK

When I first started to type this very long article I felt I had been conned by my comrades in the Wildcat group who had assured me that what it had to say was interesting and important. Page 1 was the worse since I felt I should have had a degree or Phd in political jargon.

Tampa workers Affinity Group state "we can understand that almost every present member of the revolutionary milieu- and especially those coming from an exclusively marxian perspective- has much familiarity with the Russian Revolution and its political parties..." I have only one thing to say to such an arrogant statement. Bollocks.

Is it any wonder that Revolutionary groupings are such small fry when half of us think of themselves as a kind of revolutionary Exclusive Brethren?

Perhaps the reason that Tampa Workers Affinity Group find Intercom (formerly the New Ultra Left Review) "pretty atrocious" is that we want to make ourselves accessible to those people who might not have gone down exactly the same path politically as ourselves. They should thank their lucky stars that we are as atrocious as we are otherwise their article might not have been published at all!

But I don't want to be entirely negative about their piece. Having persivered beyond the first two pages what it has to say is interesting and useful. I would recomend people who had an interest in history to read it.

A.Mugg

REPLY TO ABERDEEN'S ANALYSIS OF THE ORGANISATIONAL QUESTION

(This article is a reply to an article entitled "Another Look at the Organisation Question" in the "Bulletin" no.2. This can be obtained from the Communist Bulletin Group, Box 85, 43 Candlemakers Row, Edinburgh).

Tampa Workers Affinity Group would like to contribute this detailed answer to the two articles by the Aberdeen comrades on the problem of revolutionary organisation.

First of all, we would like to state that we are in full agreement with their observation that the 1981 organisational scandals and turmoil within the International Communist Current has thrust into relief the need for a completely fresh re-politicization of the organisational question. The Bulletin issue 1 has accurately pointed out that the bureaucratic deformation and tyranny of the I.C.C. has rendered considerable damage to the liberatory integrity of our contemporary communist movement. (The same goes for the nefarious organisational manipulations and expulsions by the F.O.R. 1980-82). And that,

Everything the I.C.C. struggled to achieve on the question of the need for a centralized, international party, on the question of sectarianism and monolithism stands in danger of being wiped out, of being revealed as hot air, a front, a fake. This stomach turning, unspeakable action has brought the spectre of Stalinism back into the heart of the proletarian movement.

We cannot concur more with these sentiments and we totally support the Aberdeen comrades' conclusions about the "Chenier affair", etc. Also we cannot but praise these comrades for their self reliance and honesty in trying to re-think the whole meaning of these events - their implications for a theory and practice of genuine revolutionary organisation. In fact, while we have especially strong criticisms to make of these two essays, we felt that their third part - the conclusion - was the best portion of their analysis. Our own position on the Party is very close to that of Gorter and the later Luxemburg (of Sparatakusbund), and we agree with Aberdeen as to the current weakness, isolation and meagerness of the real forces of world proletarian revolution. And that,

While we remain small and isolated, the pressures towards monolithism, family cliques and sect-like behaviour must be enormous. Our priorities must be a fraternal husbanding of our strength, of reaching out and embracing as much of the revolutionary milieu as possible, while at the same time, reconciling that with a method of organization which allows and promotes a rigorous search for clarity.

Keeping in mind this necessary spirit of revolutionary solidarity, as well as the obvious sincerity of the Aberdeen comrades, we must now criticise what we believe is their boarding of a wayward historical and political train - a most decrepit and insidious locomotive - the Bolshevik Party.

At the outset, we must assume that the Bulletin comrades may be somewhat sceptical and leery as to our "party" credentials after our General Pronouncement on the I.C.C. Controversary and our relentless attack on Lenin with our subsequent, long reply to the Current on Social Democracy and the Russian Revolution. And while it's true that our hatred for and aversion to bureaucratic domination leads us to verbal extremes, we must again insist that our orientation on the revolutionary organisation is almost indistinguishable from that of Pannekoek and Gorter; but unlike the I.C.C., and like the Aberdeen comrades we really mean it! Here as well, our opinion of the eclectic "ultra Left Review" is parallel to that of our Scottish colleagues - that the journal and its notion is pretty atrocious; a watered down version of the now defunct "Internation Discussion Bulletin", with the only lucid remarks coming from the ex I.C.C. people and to a lesser extent, Wildcat. For our part here in the U.S. the Tampa comrades are planning to take some initial measures, possibly in conjunction with FOCUS, towards a principled and formal reunification of all combative council and libertarian communist elements in North America. Of course, this must be done minus the academic lassitude and

self satisfaction of Root and Branch style groups, or the miserable and opportunist Social Democracy with a Libertarian of the sundry anarcho-Cardanists here in the States.

The main trouble we have with the Aberdeen comrades' attempt to re-examine the organisational question, and their intrinsic condemnation of the I.C.C.'s bureaucratism, is their seeming inability to confront this problem at its genesis: the debates and contemps of the 1st International.

Time and time again, every contribution of the central organs to the debate, even their opening contributions to debates which had not been defined, let alone matured, was considered to be the I.C.C. position which had to be defended against "dissidents". Any notion that the central organs should be the expression and synthesis or the organisation as a whole, was completely absent. For the I.C.C. "clarity" is produced by the internal life of the central organs: certainly, the rank and file are free to say what they like in an endless flood of internal bulletins but all of this is worthless in the face of central organs who treat it like a school master (which, by the way M.C. is!) treats his pupils essays, "six out of ten. Must try harder."

But does not this assertion recall the haughty attitudes of Marx and Engels themselves in the 1st International (and even earlier in the Communist League) and to which the membership gathered around Bakunin fiercely resisted, as the Aberdeen comrades now do themselves against the I.C.C. apparatus?

Instead of chronologically investigating the reasons behind the rupture of the 1st International, or scrutinizing the evolution of European Social Democracy, or looking at any large anarcho-syndicalist organisation like the Spanish C.N.T., the Aberdeen comrades move out of historical sync and latch onto the Bolsheviks. While we can understand that almost every present member of the revolutionary milieu and especially those coming from an exclusively Marxian perspective - has much familiarity with the Russian Revolution and its political parties, we must interpret the Aberdeen focus on the Bolsheviks as too convenient, as an axial error: this is surely not the place to sort out anything positive about the communist democracy of the revolutionary organisation.

We have to note two underlying and recurrent threads of their texts:

- 1) A tendency towards projecting their own (unstated) libertarian intensions onto the practice of the Bolsheviks, and
- 2) a tendency to directly name and compliment Lenin whenever something is considered admirable, and to defer to "the Central Committee" or "the Party" whenever something is considered derogatory (thereby absolving Lenin of any personal responsibility).

Going on to the actual texts, the Aberdeen comrades insist that,

It's necessary to realize that Lenin's starting point was the ceaseless fight against oppurtunism of a Social Democracy rapidly moving into the camp of the bourgeoisie. Lenin's fight for an elitist, vanguard party drawn narrowly from the ranks of professional revolutionaries has to be set against this background of the fight against conceptions of organisation with their roots in a period which was rapidly passing and which would eventually have to be jettisoned.

Should have been "Jettisoned" altogether to begin with, we might add! For us, Lenin's "organisational mistakes" of the 1902-1904 period were not part of a "fight against oppurtunism", but oppurtunism in another guise. You see, it was simply not in the cards for Lenin, or anyone else in the R.S.D.P. for that matter, to define fundamentally the origins of Social Democratic reformist decay, because they themselves were already deeply tainted and infected with this disease! One must remember that Lenin's political and intellectual mentors were Plekhanov and Kautsky - the very architects of 2nd International ideological degeneration and betrayal -

and that the former assimilated, body and soul, all of the false representat--ional, objectivist and scientific theorems or Kautsky and Co. at the time of his (Lenin's) own intellectual development. Also, recall that all these shared a common middle-class background with much of the authoritarian substrate that this implies, sociological subtleties notwithstanding. The only difference between Kautsky and Lenin was this: the latter was the former, only with balls! The Aberdeen comrades should take note that the real explanations for the apostasy of Social Democracy have been given by Karl Korsch, Anton Pannekoek and Guy Debord, among others

Concerning Lenin's imperative 'military discipline' within the party and of 'All power to the Central Committee', the text tries to soften Ulyanov's ruthlessness by quoting an academic (Liebman):

Yet nothing about the Bolshevik organisation as it actually existed at that time, justified Trotsky in talking of a dictatorship(?)... True, there was no internal democracy in the R.S.D.P. of that time, but this fact was quite unconnected with Leninism. In their day to day practice, there was little to choose in this respect between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks; down to the Revolution of 1905 they both employed the same methods in which co-optation of leaders was the rule and election the exception.

Sure and now the substitutionist cat is let out of the bag! This quote speaks volumes on the nature of "Marxism" in Russia! And, incidentally, just how do the Aberdeen comrades explain the intensity, the thunderbolts of the Iskra row? Merely Trotsky's youthful impetuosity? No, comrades, one cannot blind oneself to what Trotsky and others saw in Ilych's personality make-up even as early as 1904: "Bonapartist" and "dictator".

Then in 1905, "all is changed". A democratic passage from Lenin is duly conjured up:

The St. Petersburg workers' Social Democrats know that the whole Party organisation is now built on a democratic basis (since when?). This means that all the Party members take part in the election of officials, committee members and so forth, that all the Party members discuss and decide questions concerning political campaigns of the proletariat and that all the Party members determine the line of tactics of the Party organisation.

For Aberdeen, "It was clear to Lenin that in the ferment of class struggle on such a scale, that the rules of membership appropriate to the fight against the opportunism of the old Social Democracy, constituted a barrier between the party and its relationship to the class". Exactly, because without such a tactical turn and such rhetoric, why or how would the insurgent workers even listen to him or join his party? From our point of view, this new policy is nothing but an ingenious ploy, a clever gambit, a patented maneuver at which Lenin is the master, and which he will make again and again on his road to State Power!

And what of the Bolsheviks Party's initial response to the Petrograd mass strikes cited by the Aberdeen comrades themselves?

The Petersburg Committee of the Bolsheviks was frightened at first by such an innovation as a non-partisan representation of the embattled masses, and could find nothing better to do than present the Soviet with an ultimatum: immediately adopt a Social Democratic programme or disband (!) The Petersburg Soviet as a whole, including the contingent of Bolshevik workmen as well, ignored this ultimatum without batting an eyelash. (Trotsky-Stalin)

In other words: **SUBMIT IMMEDIATELY TO THE SOCIALIST FATHERLAND!** But the Aberdeen comrades see no connection between Lenin's 1905 Bolsheviks and Kronstadt - it's merely our deluded "libertarian" imagination. "Poor undialectical fellows!"

The Aberdeen text always wants to see a beneficent Lenin, something which just isn't there. It "wasn't any question either of the workers being recruited as cannon fodder. At the 3rd Congress in 1905, Lenin's arguing for bringing workers onto the committees in a ratio of 8 workers to 2 intellectuals. By November, he's calling that 'obsolete', and demanding a ratio of several hundred to every single intellectual! There's a clear understanding also, that

this opening-up of the party means a change in structure and in functioning."

And the result? Since when did Lenin, Zihoviev, Kamanev or Krasin ever stand aside to make room for revolutionary workers? Talk is cheap, comrades! Then, with the reflux of the class movement in Russia, we see the real Lenin re-emerge:

However the years of reaction which followed the collapse of the 1905 revolution saw the return of monolithism and sectarianism with a vengeance to the Bolshevik party. The call now was "Strengthen the Organisation" which meant in reality "strengthen the Central Committee" (what else). The drive within the party was for absolute homogeneity and adherence to the 'party line'. The constitutional guarantees for minorities and free discussion, though formally still in existence, were abandoned in practice. It was during this period of viciousness and unscrupulousness in polemics which wouldn't be surpassed until the Party of the Counter-revolution, with Lenin, for example, accusing Martov of being "objectively in the service of the Tsar's police."

What this passage does, in actuality, is to sum up, almost in exactitude, the reprehensible antics of the I.C.C. during the 1981 "Chenier affair"! The current's leaders are the loyal students of, not deviants from, the execrable and nefarious organisation canons of the Bolsheviks and especially Ilych himself!

Then, the myth of the "democratic" Bolsheviks is again prestidigitated for 1919. "The Party once again flung itself open to the working class growing ten fold in less than a year. The monolithic and sectarian practises of the years of reaction, the years of rigid obedience to the 'party line' and the dictates of a hierarchical centralism were shrugged off as if they had never existed."

What do you mean, "as if they had never existed"? This kind of fantastic reasoning might be o.k. for mystics, but not for communist revolutionaries. Lenin's organizational methods, his disciplinary spirit and aura, his chain-of-command mentality, which Luxemburg had early and rightly excoriated, would never leave the inner mechanics of the Bolshevik Party! This query again - when did the party hierarchy ever resign in deference to the development of consciousness by the workers themselves, in February, in March, in July, or the "squealers" in October, 1917? How did the composition of the Party change fundamentally? When was the inner circle around Lenin, of which STALIN was a senior partner, ever get removed from organizational authority?

Throughout this period the debates were fierce, open and public on almost every major issue from the difference of opinion over the July days, through the debates on the seizure of power, to the polemics over Brest-Litovsk, etc. The Brest-Litovsk debates, for example, took place in the pages of Pravda and even when the decision had been made, the Siberian Party organisation refused to recognise the signing of the Treaty.

And just how many of these debates" did Lenin ever lose, even when his position was in sharp minority within the "Party", much less in Revolutionary Russia itself? And precisely how did the Brest issue resolve itself? Isn't it true that Lenin threatened to resign if the war faction won, and that he used personal intimidation against the Left Communists - Bukharin, Radek, Kollontai, Lunarcharskym Ryazanov, etc (vis the party intellectuals) - all of whom cowered before stern Vladimir? In the meantime, all of the other forces of revolution in Russia - the Left Social Revolutionaries, the Anarchists, the Maximalists - wanted indefatigable class war against German imperialism, as a direct way of sparking the workers revolution in Germany! But, curiously, Lenin's will prevailed; his capitulationist policy carried the day and the world-historical debacle of the class then began to set in. Here was the acid test of Party democracy and internationalism, and the Bolsheviks failed it miserably circa February, 1918.

The Aberdeen text then goes on to quote J. Molyneux:

In reality, the history of Boshevism is a history of the struggle of factions. And indeed, how could a genuinely revolutionary organisation setting itself the task of overthrowing the world and uniting under its

banner the most audacious iconoclasts, fighters and insurgents, live and develop without intellectual conflicts, without groupings and temporary factional formations?

This statement forgets to mention that all of these "iconoclasts, fighters and insurgents" were in total agreement on the overriding commandment to seize, exercise and hold fast to state power, and of these, Lenin was the most far-sighted and determined of all!

Then the article makes a very careless slip from an unidentified source (which is probably Trotsky): "In the heat of battle, when the proletarian army is straining every nerve, no criticism whatever can be permitted in its ranks." No criticisms? Of what, of whom? And by whom? Carry out blindly the directives of the Party-State!?!

"What also has to be grasped is the degree to which the emergence and functioning of tendencies wasn't a product of the theoretical clarity of the central organs (Surely!), but was fundamentally the product of the pressure and influence coming from the lower ranks of the Party who were closest to the class." This is our position exactly! "As much as anything, the formal guarantee of minority rights was not so much more than a reluctant recognition of a de facto situation which couldn't be changed." Right, and certainly no thanks to Ilych! "The opening up of the Party to the class swept away the monolithic tendencies and the hierarchical respect for the central organs which in any case was much less substantial than is usually imputed." Really? And the Party cult of Lenin? And the Cheka? And the rapid sealing off of democratic rights beginning in early 1918? The Aberdeen comrades can't seriously expect the contemporary revolutionary movement to believe this for one second can they? Yes, the "monolithic tendencies" may have diminished for a few months during the the period of Bolshevik consolidation of State Power, but any commitment to workers' democracy, to REAL SOVIET POWER was then abruptly nullified because this kind of authoritarianism and substitutionism is de jure Leninism!

Then the Petrograd Military Organisation of the Bolsheviks is cited as an example of an organ of class autonomy. "During the July days when the Central Committee was calling for calm, the military organisation used its press to call for action." (And this is also the Tmpa comrades position on the July days.) "After the July days, the Central Committee tried to exert control and despatch Stalin to insist that their decisions must be carried out without discussion. He was bluntly informed that this was 'quite unacceptable' and the Central Committee had to retreat with as much grace as it could muster. During the same period, the Petrograd Committee demanded its own press because of the timorousness of Pravda and when the Central Committee refused, it went blithely ahead with acquiring a publishing company and press". "Central Committee"? You mean Lenin, don't you? And Ol' Koba was merely carrying out the orders of patriarchal master Ilych! You can't name one and not the other!

The text then again talks of organisational tension between the base and apex of the party. But we repeat, this "dialectical interplay" existed in spite of rather than at the behest of Lenin, who, naturally, as always, would have preferred that everything be done unquestioningly and bureaucratically "his way".

What stands out above all is the total falseness of the myth that the Bolshevik Party was a well oiled monolith, founded in the disciplined implementation of an infallible and invariant blueprint drawn up in 1902. With this myth as a starting point any attempt to draw the appropriate lessons for the period is bound to be doomed to disaster. On the one hand, we have the libertarians who mechanically connect the Kronstadt to 1902, and on the other hand we have the Bordigists who equally mechanically draw a line from 1902 to 1917

Comrades, the plane of travel for Lenin and Co. is concretely just such a straight one: subordination of all else to the exigency of wresting State

Power. The Bolshevick Party was held together internally on the basis of Lenin's dominant personality, and externally by the central apparatus with its intellectualist, pseudo-vanguard liturgy. Here we find the invisible bond, the psychological glue which held the party machine intact, right or wrong. The Aberdeen comrades themselves have indeed seen such a machine (or guillotine at work - the I.C.C.!

"In the I.C.C. we have an organisation which prides itself smugly on the rejection of the monolithism of Bolshevick democratic centralism. But in reality it has created a monolithic practice of all-powerful central organs beyond the wildest dreams of Lenin at his most centralised." Just the opposite! The I.C.C. in its wildest dreams, in its subconscious reflexes could never match or wield the material and demiurgic power of Lenin in his element! And the convulsive splits within the I.C.C. and the healthy revulsion to M.C. and Co. by the Aberdeen comrades themselves proves this, and also confirms obliquely that the revolutionary class has historically innoculated itself - even if only semi-consciously - from all such authoritarian abuse. We simply won't stand for it, from whatever quarter!

About growth and mergers with other political currents by the Bolsheviks, the Aberdeen comrades must mean some of Lenin's old friends (Lunacharsky) and adversaries (Trotsky) of the Inter-Organisational Borough who were brought in and elevated to positions of importance; or maybe ex-soldiers like Krylenko and Dybenko to the extent that they possessed technical military skills and learned well how to execute the "party line".

We have already said in this text that in one sense the history of the Bolshevick Party can be seen at the history of the fight for the autonomy of working class interests and their espousal of that can't be separated from the form of their organisational work - their emphasis on factory work as opposed to Parliamentary manoeuvres, etc. Their achievement of clarity is both a result of, and dialectically a cause of, their implantation in the heart of the class, in combination with the massive and real freedom of debate which existed in the Party and which, at the vital points in the struggle, frequently went against its centralized authority.

"Frequently went against its centralized authority"? When? Where? How? What line formulated by Lenin was ever rejected on a Party basis, with or without internal or public discussion? Just look at it: the April Theses, July days, the Insurrection, the assumption of State Power, the nationalisation decrees, the Cheka, the Vesenska, the Red Army, Brest-Litovsk, the suppression of socialist parties, militarisation of Labour, right on down the pike to you know where!

We must repeatedly stress that Lenin could never grasp the reasons for the collapse of the Social Democracy because his own ideology and organisation were an integral part and continuation of that collapse. And when Korsch succeeded in ferreting out the philosophic roots of reformist miasma with his Marxism and Philosophy, he and his exposition were calumniated and suppressed by the "3rd International", and no less an arrogant and cowardly bureaucrat than the slinky Zinoviev called Korsch a "wildekleinburger". Let the revolutionary movement decide for itself who was the real petty-bourgeois gone mad: Korsch or Ilych!

The second text by Aberdeen more or less covers the same grounds as the first and it would be redundant to answer each and every point again. What we would like to conclude with is a plea to our Scottish comrades to cut the umbilical cord to Lenin because whomever does not will eventually gag on its rancid fluids.

The class instincts of the Aberdeen comrades are sound, even if erroneously they project them onto a party where it simply just doesn't correspond. Let us then advance with the arduous task of constructing our New International, without hoary illusions, and in which the quality of the revolutionary movement itself is the main guarantee of its emancipatory, communist integrity.

UNION NEGOTIATION MEANS DEFEAT (Nigg Oil Platform Construction Strike)

This Strike has stood strong now for more than four weeks and has defied all the management attempts to divide and break you. But one thing is absolutely clear.

THE UNIONS ARE AGAINST YOU.

The stewards have argued all along that the only way forward is to make the strike official, but that is a GUARANTEE OF DEFEAT. The unions are against your struggle because they accept the same logic of the capitalist marketplace as the management. That's why people like Lafferty and Gray have never been out of the news whining about Hi-Fab's losses. They accept that the management are being "reasonable" in demanding redundancies and in screwing up work rates. Their first priority is the health of the profits and to hell with the workers. That's why the unions support the 21 conditions which they negotiated and have tried to frighten you by repeating the management threats about closure.

Don't be fooled by the shouting of the stewards. They rejected the 21 points which their own bosses in the union negotiated because they knew that anything else they said at that point would be ignored. As stewards they are part of the unions and in the long run they'll do what the unions want. When you came out on strike your actions spoke loud and clear:

GIVE US BACK THE SHOWERS
GIVE US BACK THE SHELTERS
GIVE US BACK THE JUICE AND COFFEE
NOTHING TO DISCUSS !

Three weeks later what is Rab Wilson saying: "Let us go back in and then we'll discuss it." That means only one thing - they'll negotiate how much the management can get away with. Now he's saying that the only way forward is to get the unions to make it official.

BUT THE UNIONS ARE AGAINST YOU.

They will accept the harsh new conditions. They will accept the redundancies which are coming. Just as they accepted the 140,000 redundancies among steel workers in the past three years and the tens of thousands of shipyard workers who have been sacked. Ask the workers at BL, at Scott Lithgows, at Ravenscraig, at Robb Caledon. And all the other 3 million who are on the dole. All the unions have done about unemployment and falling living standards is to divert the anger of workers into useless cul-de-sacs - token one day strikes, useless marches to Parliament - and made sure that the strikes they couldn't avoid stayed locked in isolation. This is because the unions and the capitalists believe the same thing - that the economic crisis can only be solved by workers making sacrifices. That is why they attack our struggles.

THE WAY FORWARD

That's why the strike must be defeated if it is left to the unions and stewards. You've already shown your strength - the blackleg attempts were smashed and the 400 sackings were reversed, but be clear, this was not achieved by 'union' strength and skill. It was achieved by your own mass collective strength. The way forward must build on that and that means taking control of the struggle yourselves. This means:

REGULAR MASS MEETINGS
AN ELECTED AND REVOCABLE STRIKE COMMITTEE
NOT A UNION ONE
REGULAR MASS PICKETS NOT TOKEN ONES (ignore the government picket guidelines. They're designed to defeat you)
SPREAD THE STRIKE

Isolation is your greatest enemy. Send large delegations to other yards and

firms to speak to the workers and to ask for their support. Don't send union officials to talk to union officials. The workers at the Ardesier yard have already given financial support but the only real solidarity is sympathy strikes.

Follow the example of the Fife electricians at Moss Morran. In August 400 went on strike AGAINST union orders when they were ordered to work in the rain. Three days later they persuaded 200 workers at Lumas, a neighbouring yard, to strike in support. Two days later workers at Braefoot Tanker terminal also struck in support. All against union orders. By the 16th of August all their demands had been met. ITS ALL ONE FIGHT.

But even if this strike succeeds the victory can only be a temporary one. The crisis of capitalism is world wide and will NEVER be solved. Every country is hit - from America to Russia, from Britain to China. We know how the capitalists solved their crisis in the 20's and 30's and they're preparing to do the same again. They have only one answer - attack the workers and prepare for war.

Every time we fight to defend ourselves, every time we say to hell with your interests, every time we put our own needs before the needs of profit, we point to the only way out - the destruction of the whole rotten capitalist system.

NO TO THE REDUNDANCIES
NO TO THE 21 POINTS
SPREAD THE STRIKE
AGAINST THE UNIONS

This leaflet is published by the Communist Bulletin Group who can be contacted at Box 85, 43 Candlemakers Row, Edinburgh.

(reproduced from the original leaflet)

CORRESPONDENCE.....CORRESPONDENCE.....CORRESPONDENCE.....CORRESPONDENCE.....

Dear Comrades,

June 1983

Owing to financial and political difficulties, the magazine "Collegianti" has not appeared for 3 years. During this period we have published several booklets, some on historical themes, some about local struggles. We have decided to start a new series of the review: it will be edited by Comrades in Milan and will be called "Collegianti-Wobbly (as the comrades who participated in Wobbly will also participate in Collegianti).

The following reasons lead us to this decision:-

* The development of a series of important struggles in such sectors as the schools, the hospitals, the unemployed and technically unemployed workers.... (in the schools the teaching assistants were involved. These struggles have at least two important aspects; 1) Following cuts in public expenditure, the confrontation has a social character.

2) Organs of stable struggle were set up with anti-union platforms.

* The change in attitude of the industrial working class has shown on the one hand, a definite critique of traditional politics (parties, unions) and a great deal of combativity around specific issues (eg. sliding scales), and on the other hand, passivity and a difficulty in confronting the problems of restructuring in the workplace.

* The increasing "combativity" of the traditional bosses and the bosses in the black economy, along with the old and new middle classes who have fought with success to obtain legal improvements and changes in their favour from the state.

* The crisis of political parties which show themselves sometimes as the development of technocratic tendencies, sometimes as the result of an internal political and criminal war.

THE WAR IN CHADIntroduction

What follows is a translation of a leaflet issued jointly by two groups in France: 'L'Eveil Internationaliste' and 'L'Insecurite Sociale'. 'L'Eveil Internationaliste' regularly publishes translations of texts written by various groups involved in 'Intercom'. The leaflet may be seen as an implicit criticism of the proposal for "ultra-left entrism" into CND which appeared in the last issue of 'Intercom'. CND upholds society as it is (including conventional wars) and sees nuclear weapons as an aberration. This leaflet traces war to its roots in the violence of everyday life under capitalism. Instead of making "tactical" approaches to an organisation which opposes our class viewpoint, we should be publicising the true facts about war and the threat of war, as widely as our limited resources will allow.

(RW - Wildcat, Manchester).

AFRICAN SAFARI

May '78: French and Belgian intervention in Zaire. The 'socialist' opposition, with a dove in its hands says it disapproves of the African "adventure".
 August '83: The opposition is now in government. Another identical "adventure" is underway in Chad. Behind the dove, the paratroopers and legionnaires bare their claws.

The same capitalist dirty tricks, justified by the same hypocritical democratic slogans about "the defence of peace and Chads' territorial integrity". There has been almost twenty years of uninterrupted war - today in Chad, yesterday in Algeria, Indochina etc.... For the masses of the worlds' population, for the population in Chad, today's battles are no worse than yesterdays or tomorrows. The capitalist world is a permanent nightmare, far removed from the peaceful dream-world of the Western democracies.

France has been in Chad for a long time. France is defending its' hunting territory in Africa all the more jealousy because it is losing ground there to the "masters of the world". African states have turned to America and Russia: pimps with more muscle. And young sharks like Libya have to gamble to stay in the game.

These are the basic facts about this sordid episode. All the rest is hot-air to disguise the fact that this is a war between capitalist states. The conflict, for a long time a local one, has acquired a continent-wide, or even wider dimension, and several important states are involved. In fact all states are now preparing for a future explosion of world-wide conflict. This is the purpose of the current campaign of chauvinist intoxication in France.

Since the end of the Algerian war there has been peace in France: the 'peace' of wage slavery, the 'peace' of the horror of the daily violence of capitalism. There have been foreign wars, but they seem like something that happens somewhere else far away - something that has nothing to do with the daily routine in the "national community". As long as only mercenaries and volunteers go to fight in foreign wars, they still seem a long way off. In a democratic state, the threat of war in ones own country seems like a terrifying shattering of peace, even more horrible than our miserable existence in the present crisis. Fear spread by the treat of war makes people want to keep the peace that exists now in "our country". But this national peace is social peace, where wage slaves put up with things and don't make too much fuss.

The mood in France at the moment is not one of warlike enthusiasm, but of indifference mixed with disquiet, of "let them do what they want to" in response to Socialist-Communist escapade in Africa.

The French state is able to wage a local war in Africa on the basis of this

passive national unity. For a world war, where the whole population is mobilised, on and behind the battle lines, this will not be enough. The guardians of social order who control us, helped by their trade unionists and their intellectual "champions of democracy", want to transform our fear of kicking the bucket into patriotic hysteria - into fear of an enemy portrayed as a tyrant, as a blood crazed monster against whom brave pacifists are simply forced to defend themselves in the name of peace and the security of all ! If Colonel Gadaffi did not exist it would be necessary to invent a bogeyman like him. Our ideas are being force-fed to us by the radio, TV and newspapers. The skirmishes around Fort Largo, a large village accurately known as the "capital of Chad", have assumed, according to the media, the proportions of the battles at Verdun or Stalingrad! It is the same for all the 'news' of the military situation. As Paris-Match put it so well: " the weighty words, the shocking photos...." Through the spectacle of war, sinking its roots into the violence of the world in which we live, the state prepares us for our role as sheep in today's peace, and as actors in tomorrow's war. It is this social peace which must be shattered !

28.8.83

'Le Groupe Communiste Eveil Internationaliste' and other communists in Nantes, BP221, 44604 St Nazaire, France.

'Insecurite' Sociale' BP243, 75564 PARIS, Codex 12, France.

...And from a leaflet produced earlier the same month by Eveil Internationaliste:

" This war is the product of world capitalism. The working class must not take sides. One doesn't choose between the plague and cholera ! Each side involved is equally reactionary and equally capitalist. Whichever wins, the lot of the people will not improve. All that will happen is that someone else will be growing fat on their backs.

The only correct response is to turn our guns against all those who lead us towards war: the Gadaffi's and the Mitterand's, the Goukinis and Ouedeis (local war-lords in Chad - translator)

Here, the only way of expressing our opposition would be to organise, through strikes and sabotage, a blockade of arms shipments to the troops in Chad."

--*-*-*-*-*-*-*-*-*

Collegianti Correspondence Continued from page 14

This framework shows in what way we plan to develop an analysis and intervention in the times to come. We try to link this work to an analysis of the crisis at a

national and international level. We hope that you are interested in an exchange of publications, texts and others ~~texts~~ material, and the reciprocal mention of each others publications.

Our magazine will appear 3 or 4 times a year from Sept/Oct. 1983. If you are interested, could you send us a half-page article introducing your publication, which we publish in our foreign papers column.

fraternal greetings,

the editorial group

G.Carrozza, C.P.1362.50 100 Firenze, Italy

SOCIALISM AND MONEY.

INTRODUCTION. This article was originally presented as a discussion document at a Careless Talk meeting. It was intended to be a fairly straightforward introduction to some socialist economics. However, it does not pretend to be a definitive exposition of the subject and any criticisms will be gratefully received. The division of the document into points was intended to break up the subject into manageable blocks..

A. Any attempt to look at the question of economics is bound to require the introduction of new terms and words that may be unfamiliar to people. This is because socialist economics were first developed over 150 years ago and whilst they may have been intelligible then, our education system has removed them from common knowledge (through the mystifications of 'economics' and 'sociology'). Unless we are prepared to throw away the insights of whole generations of socialists, it follows that we must be prepared to make some efforts to understand them.

B. The crucial point. What makes capitalism different from every previous kind of society is that the basic relations of society are commodity relations, or to put it in other words, everything we need is a commodity - it is something to be bought and sold. Even our leisure time is increasingly becoming dominated by the commodity - nowhere can we escape buying and selling. In fact the whole micro-electronic boom is an attempt to bring leisure time more under the domination of the commodity.

C. A commodity has two values, its use value - or its usefulness and its exchange value - which is almost, but not quite, its price. Everything that is produced has a use value, it must be useful, otherwise it would not be sold. However, usefulness does not determine price - we can all think of examples of very useful things that are free or very cheap, and we can all think of things that are practically useless, but are very expensive.

D. So what determines price? It is the exchange value. Price may differ from the exchange value due to temporary factors like scarcity or because some manufacturer has got a cheaper process than his competitors. Over time, however, we can say that price and exchange value are the same. The exchange value of a commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary, average, labour time that goes into its production and reproduction. Any estimator in any manufacturing process can tell you that it is the amount of time that it takes to produce a product that determines its price. This leads to the very subversive argument that labour is the only source of wealth - that raw materials are valueless until human labour is applied to them. This is known as the Labour Theory of Value.

E. Everything in capitalism is a commodity. It therefore follows that human labour is also a commodity. Workers (blue collar and white collar) sell their ability to work to a capitalist (we call it their labour power - like electric power and water power) in return for a wage. The wage is the payment for the labour power. This payment is calculated on the same basis as for that of any other commodity - the amount of labour time necessary to reproduce it (make it again). Putting it another way, the worker receives enough money to purchase enough commodities to keep him/her and his/her family fit and healthy enough to do the next weeks work and to raise the next generation of workers. This is, of course, modified by the fact that what is 'enough' is not an absolute figure, but is affected by all sorts of other factors, like what the workers will put up with, how hard they are prepared to fight to improve their conditions, what is the culturally acceptable level and other things.

F. It follows from all this that when a worker works for 8 hours (or 7 or whatever) he/she produces more extra value than is used to pay him/her. In a day he/she may produce £250 worth of goods, of which £50 is extra value over the price of raw materials and wear and tear on the machines and tools used, but the day's wage may only be £20. Hence, a figure of £30 surplus value has been produced. This belongs to the capitalist and is used to purchase new capital, pay rents and pay profits. (The production of wealth in modern society is a social process, not every worker actually produces something with his/her hands - but might be necessary for that product to be made, hence the surplus value is extracted from the class of workers as a whole, not from individuals.) We can therefore say that the capitalists exploits the workers. This happens all the time, even when a so-called 'fair wage' is being paid. The creation of surplus value is a natural part of commodity society and is not some form of robbery.

G. Surplus value may be produced as above, but it is only realised (made real, become usable) when commodities are exchanged. This requires some form of money. Money serves two main functions:

- i) it permits the exchange of equal values and hence the circulation of goods - although it does the latter very inefficiently.
- ii) it permits the accumulation of capital (the storing of wealth in a form that will not perish) which can then be used to further exploit labour.

On both these counts, then, money is objectionable:

- i) exchange permits the realisation of surplus value.
- ii) it permits wealth to be accumulated.

It is impossible to conceive of money having any other functions, or serving any other functions.

H. Socialism aims to abolish the commodity, because it is the production of commodities which leads to exploitation and hence capitalism and the modern state, which is necessary to defend the capitalists' privileges. What makes a commodity different from any other type of product is that it has an exchange value - hence socialism aims to abolish exchange. Socialism requires a new system for the distribution of products. Things will be produced for use not exchange.

I. This is the hardest part of all. How will products be distributed? It has been suggested that supply and demand are useful ways of determining what is wanted (actually they don't, they only determine what can be sold at a profit). However, I would like to suggest one system that may allow a certain flexibility - I'm not saying it's the only way, or even necessarily desirable. Many products and services will naturally be freely available in whatever quantities people want - like transport, basic foodstuffs, basic clothing, housing and so on. Other more scarce products may be rationed. (This may mean that they will be more freely available than they are now). This rationing could be accomplished using some kind of voucher system. People could be issued with vouchers that can be ~~xxxxxx~~ redeemed against such scarce goods. These vouchers would only be issued to a specific person, would not be exchangeable with anyone else, could not be accumulated beyond a certain time period and would be destroyed after use - so could not be saved. I would envisage the scarce products being given a notional 'point value', and vouchers also being measured in 'points'. Thus a record player of point value 34 would be 'exchanged' for 34 points worth of vouchers. But these vouchers would not be money, because they could not be accumulated and could not be really exchanged, nor could they circulate.

An individual would be given a certain number of points vouchers every

week/month or whatever and can use them on any 'points' products within a given time period. Hence the individual would have a choice in what scarce products he/she chose to acquire - this would permit the real value of the supply/demand system to function. As points can not be ~~xxxx~~ exchanged or accumulated (for very long), they cannot be used to exploit others. It could also be determined that when an individual has already got a scarce product, say a record player, then he/she will not be entitled to use his/her points to get another one till everyone in the area who wants one has done so. Thus scarce products themselves could not be accumulated and later used as weapons to exploit others. The choice as to whether to operate such a system could quite safely be left to local communes or collectives to make.

J. The ideas outlined above in (I) are obviously tentative and leave begging a whole host of other questions to do with production and distribution in a socialist society. It would be helpful if others felt able to tackle some aspects of these.

LOUIS ROBERTSON.

Why I am not a Socialist !

Reading through the article on "Socialism and Money" above, I came to realise why I have never been able to call myself a socialist. Underlining the article is a certain faith in rationalism which I have never been able to share. Of course it is possible to raise various practical objections to such a voucher system, but even if they could all be answered, I don't think I'd find such a society much of an improvement, and certainly not a society worth fighting for.

Any voucher system remains based on value, and would lead to a black market where all the carefully calculated rules are ignored in a carefully calculated way. So there would have to be an administration, a method for policing the blackmarket, a system of forfeits for those who break the rules, in fact all the familiar qualities which make up the modern state.

There is no point in working out an equitable distribution of commodities, - this is just a distopian concept of the bourgeois revolution. I can understand Louis' desire to start speaking about a future revolutionary society, but I feel the picture he has painted is in the old owenite utilitarian tradition which dominated 19th century socialism. I believe that a more hopeful picture may emerge if we look at how people relate to each other, rather than how they relate to things; a society where you don't have to lock up your house for fear of getting your stuff nicked, a society where even if your stuff was nicked you wouldn't mind too much because a) you would know they must have needed it for something urgent to have nicked it and b) the people around you would help you overcome any inconvenience.

Such a society where co-operation would be the rule and nothing more, would negate any need for rationing. Scarce articles would be distributed both between and within communities on the basis of what is appropriate to the various needs and desires. In fact if there were extremely scarce personal consumer items to be distributed lotteries might be a suitable way for allocation. But I would resist any voucher system which would return us to the marketplace.

MEDITATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF ORGANISATION

Once again the question of organisation seems to be cropping up in Intercom. The ultra-leftists have always had a paranoia about the proletariat never getting its act together without the tutelage of a crack cadre of missionaries. The anarchists have always viewed their ideology rather like aids, to be spread around by gay abandon. But this is all escapism, a plunge into gobble-de-gook. Lets take a clear look at things.

Do we need any organisational basis, be it a party, a revolutionary union, or subtle organisation of revolutionaries whose characteristics have been cooked up out of the bones of a deaf dachshund, to make love? No! Certainly not! (Whilst this may be true for such stout-hearted proletarians as us, the same may not hold true for the degenerate members of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie who set up and get involved in political groups as a way of finding people to sleep with). Therefore there is no reason to suppose we need any sort of organisation what so ever to make a revolution. For a revolution is the generation and realisation of that same passion that still remains closetted in the private world of sexuality. As the multiple orgasm of proletarian revolution ripples from Bangkok to Box Hill via all manner of less genitally centred places (for the proletarian revolution also marks the end of the epoch of genital-centred human sexuality) there is an essential break with all organisation. A way of being erupts through the functional relationships which hold the semi-equilibrium which we like to call capitalism in place. All organisation can only be stretched out in terms of such functional relations i.e. is at heart capitalist and to be swept aside by revolution. What need will we have for organisation as we wander hand in hand amongst the wreckage of capitalist society, smouldering with desire as the banks, brothels and palaces ~~of~~ of the bourgeoisie smoulder around us. What sense will there be in talking of a revolutionary party, as we rest amongst the rubble of some bourgeois's house, our ears cocked for some plaintiff cry by the hapless former inhabitant who has decided to spend the last few ~~hours of their~~ dust choked hours of their life, entertaining the ridiculous notion that we might just be possibly interested in digging them out. Their whimperings just add a certain piquancy to our love making.

However, whilst such speculation on the future is tantalising we are still at the level of breaking through the ice of inhibited relations. It is now that our critical powers are called upon. We must make clear that all concepts of parties are merely ways of shrinking back from the tasks that lie before us, a delegation of our own responsibilities to some historic ghost that has somehow fed of our weaknesses. Although the way our common projects are achieved cannot be governed by some abstract principle but necessarily is derived from the nature of the project involved, it is through the critical consciousness of those involved that the generation and perpetuation of alienated and alienating ways of relating can be exposed, often thereby showing up some flaw in the concept of the original project.

Anarchists have consistently misrepresented the situation through the notion that it is possible to enter into post-capitalist relationships in various radical (and often not-so-radical) projects. But all such projects still retain the twisted helix of their genesis. Whilst they forget the revolutionary nature of a social revolution their fellow confusionists of the ultra-left obscure the social nature of it. For them it all boils down to the seizure of power whether by means of Workers Councils or the party. Their desire to avoid bureaucratisation may well be sincere, but then we all wish that the bolsheviks had been truly revolutionary, that the russian and world revolution had been successful, and that we were now reaping the benefits. This does not get round the fact that we're not and that political parties will generate bureaucracies even if they are called national organisations, or organisations of revolutionaries.

(NOTE: Should anyone doubt the orthodoxy of the above, a few moments brief reflection will show that it lies well within the scope of scientific socialism. Sexuality is bound up with the genesis of gametes, cells which no longer contain the same internal structure as the rest of the organism. In this they break with the basis of organisation being in fact anti-thetical to the organism which produces them. They have to be protected from the various biological functions which ~~the~~ police the body wiping out any subversive cells. From this we can see that the conclusions above are necessitated by the precepts of dialectical materialism and scientific marxism.)

Richard Essex

TRANSLATIONOUT OF ONE PRISON.....INTO ANOTHER

(Translators note: The discussion here continues some themes developed in "Our Kingdom was a Prison" which appeared in the Pilot issue of the New Ultra-Left Review - that magazine that we now know and love as Intercom ! That article took a long hard look at how they organised themselves. This continues such critical activity. When I see long articles about centralism, federalism, organisation, it just reminds me that these questions are not abstract questions but must be dealt with in the context of our practical projects)

During the annual get-together of the group "Pour une Intervention Communiste", held on the 16th/17th May 1981, a reaction of disgust had united those who kept the group following the political-burlesque departure of the future members of the groupe "Volonte Communiste" ("Revolution Sociale"). The majority of participants weren't just fundamentally opposed to their theses, but also to their megalomaniac proposals (a monthly paper and leaflets in view of an immanent war or revolution).

After several months and the departure of the comrades who went on to form the group "Guerre de Classe", the group "L'Insecurite Sociale" was set up by progressively abandoning the theory of a mortal crisis leading to revolution or barbarism. All this helped us to understand that generally the "crisisists" (Trans Note: Try saying that when you've had a few) needed to justify their existence ~~as~~ as revolutionaries by the existence of a crisis, and not by their refusal of the world of commodities and the state; that their ideas were based on the notion that the proletariat could only insurge on the basis of "demands". As "revolutionaries" never know hunger or "material" misery, the "crisisists" were lead to consider themselves as being a different species from the rest of the proletariat.

As reported in No.0 of "L'Insecurite Sociale", the ideas which united us were much more in evidence in "Our Kingdom was Prison" than in the "Reflexions on proletarian Autonomy". Those disagreements which still existed were left as secondary in the face of a split or a communal reflection radically breaking with what we had known in the PIC. We also discovered that a ~~f~~ group could be based on certain affinities impossible to summarise in the politics of a platform. The collective and individual evolution has been profound during the existence of "L'Insecu". We became engaged or re-engaged with various reflections previously obscured by us or others, trying to move beyond a way of thinking based on slogans and grandiose formulations..... We understood that an adversaries arguments couldn't simply be dealt with by dealing with their apparent contents - we also had to deal with their inner logic and the form; that ultimately an argument couldn't be fought with another argument. Also having understood that our arguments, our "interventions" couldn't convince anyone, but that they could however help to bring out the ideas which they were already more or less toying with. The conception of the "role" of revolutionaries was rejected, and the justification of our existence was simply that we came together because we thought the world was inhuman and that we had to share our ideas as widely as possible with those who found themselves in a similar situation as us. Meetings with other groups or individuals were sometimes fruitful, allowing us to see how our pre-occupations were viewed by others, and so to better understand reality through such exchanges.

From this "globally positive situation" stagnation has developed. Over the last few months a way of working has sprung up in "L'Insecu", arising from conceptions which everyone more or less shares and which can be summarised as follows: People encounter each other in a more or less formal way in order to carry out or not carry out the common tasks, the group increasingly became a publications group more than anything else. Such a ~~xxx~~ way of working could be relatively effective for a while, but it could not be the usual way of relating for a group. On the one hand, it leads to what "L'Insecu" has lived through and which we will discuss in a moment. On the other hand it is the - generally unsaid- proof of differences of opinion between participants which are wanted to be overcome in common activity.. This can appear to have a concrete usefulness. But from one moment to the next, it hinders the clarification of evrything

INTERCOM 4

to the benefit of affinities which become less and less real as they are increasingly affirmed and also brings us to want we want to raise in relation to the critique of the practical functioning of the group.

This having come about, we have ~~in~~ come to realise that there is a barrier to more long term activity in common and perhaps even dialogue. This is no real cause for astonishment. The globally unfavourable situation for communist activity favours the stagnation of existing groups (and even their degeneration) and to the divergent evolution of their members. In the crisis of L'Insecu, as in that we have seen in the PIC, they're are certain "practical" difficulties which appear:

- The jobs that need doing aren't done (the mail isn't collected, contributions are no longer paid) or they are ~~ignores~~ avoided and treated as chores (dishing out leaflets for example).

- "Clans" emerge; increasingly discussion takes place outside meetings, which shows that there are disagreements which have not been discussed within the group.

- The disagreements cristalise around opposing organisational conceptions, the most easy to be known straight off.

In particular it is around the form of the meeting that our incompatibilities are apparent. Some of us feel that over the last few months the group has been existing less and less. The gathering of individuals having common positions and wanting to act together has disappeared. The affinities are no longer alive. It is more just a miserable talking shop where amateurs in this style of relating can deliver their monologue and the others wait impatiently for closing time !

We say that the misery, such as its expressed, was a manifestation of deep differences amongst us. We apologised for the separation of beings, of their atomisation. We would-be communists are not going to continually submit to this dominance of the real world over our activity week in week out.

The unanswered mail, the tiresome leaflets are also symptoms of the differences ~~to~~ about the activity of the group. We think that at the time there were important differences over our last pamphlet "Salariat et Lutttes Revendicatives" (see this issue of INTERCOM) within our ex-group, and an indifference in relation to our activity. We felt that the attitude adopted by those we felt had disagreements and/or indifference appeared to us to be a refusal to confront the others.

In view of thh above, it no longer appears possible to us for communist activity to continue within the framework of "L'Insecu". This would be in contradiction with our perspectives: -

- Regular association based on agreement on "communist positions" and not on a simple rejection of capitalism and its institutions. (unions,parliamentarism etc..)
- The development and collective participation in the functioning of the group.
- The repercussion, by the participants, from our discussions to the outside.
- The search for coherence. We don't have to agree about everything, but we have to be clear about what we do agree about without any half measures or reticences.
- The opening of meetings to other individuals, after the prior agreement of members of the group.
- Particular activity with others (groups or individuals) whose behaviour and positions are not antagonistic with our ~~i~~ own.

A. LIBERTARIAN TRANSLATION PROJECT

Libertarian communist/anarchist ideas have experienced a re-emergence in Europe and North America since the late sixties. There are many reasons for this, the best of which is a series of radical strikes and revolts, another one being that people in various countries have gotten together printing projects, translated old titles, and printed new books and periodicals; thus making libertarian information more available. From here in California, I get the impression that there is a (relative) abundance of libertarian communist information in English, Spanish, French and German, but what about Eastern European or Middle Eastern or African languages? One of the good reasons that Leninist propaganda has been so thoroughly spread across the world is that since the early ~~late~~ twenties, the marxist-leninists have been hard at work translating "their" histories and disinformation into the languages of the people of the "third" world. Obviously the libertarian movement doesn't have the kind of resources that the average Leninist regime has, but if libertarian communist ideas are to break out of their "first world" isolation, we have to begin some kind of project to translate books and pamphlets into the major languages of people in the East bloc, Africa and Asia.

Four languages that would be good to start with are Turkish, Polish, Arabic and Farsi (Persian). Due to the nature of the capitalist world system much of the North African, eastern European and Middle Eastern proletariat are in economic exile in Western Europe. Many people from those areas have also come to Europe to escape political persecution. Many places in the arabic speaking world, Poland, Turkey and Iran have large working classes with a history of class-conscious rebelliousness. How much further could rebellions in those places go if a variety of coherent communist and libertarian perspectives were available in printed form. WE HAVE TO BEGIN TO QUALITATIVELY EXTEND THE COMMUNIST LIBERTARIAN REVOLUTIONARY PROJECT THROUGH OUT THE REST OF THE WORLD.

Let's take Poland for example. To many of us Poland is the most prominent recent example of our kind of struggle; a movement of millions of people, many of whom were working not simply for the 'self-management' of their workplaces but for the revolutionary self-management of all aspects of social life, a movement against the market and against the state. Many of the people involved in the events there seem to have identified themselves as anti-authoritarian socialists. There were several groups such as the 'Sigma' group, that explicitly defined themselves as anarchists. But from what I've read the only libertarian material they had to work with were a few old Kropotkin pamphlets and a history of the Kronstadt Uprising (!?) all dealing with events going back sixty years or more.

Polish exiles that I met recently told of how George Orwell's 1984 and Animal Farm are printed and distributed secretly but Honage to Catalonia or any more specifically socialist works by Orwell are unavailable. Wouldn't the more radical workers and students in Poland be better able to combat the influence of priests and "Market Socialists" like Walasa and KOR if they had better information about the successes and failures of other revolutionary struggles and of coherent revolutionary theory? Or Turkey, like Poland in close physical proximity to Western Europe, has been the site of intense conflicts between the working classes and capital and the state. The organised left has been a big part of the problem. In Turkey and in Iran many working people and revolutionaries have taken profoundly radical actions and been sympathetic to socialist ideas although generally of a social democratic or Leninist bent. I have a friend from Iran who interested in translating some works. The following is a short list of pamphlets and books which I think would be useful:

- 1) The Bolsheviks and Workers Control by Maurice Brinton
- 2) The Irrational in Politics by Maurice Brinton
- 3) The Eclipse and Re-emergence of the communist Movement by Jean Barrot and Francois Martin
- 4) Hungary '56 by Andy Anderson
- 5) The Working Class Uprising in East Germany 1953 by Echanges et Movement
- 6) The Decline and Fall of the Spectacular-Commodity Economy by the Situationist Internationale.
- 7) Red-Eye (a Libertarian communist journal that came out in Berkeley a few years back. They only published one issue, but it is very well written and very coherent)

8) Poland 1970-71 Capitalism and Class Struggle put out by ICO in France

Most of the above titles are published by Black and Red (now defunct), in Detroit. I think it might be useful to begin translating pamphlets and short books, being ~~less lengthy they would be less of a chore to translate and less expensive to produce.~~ less lengthy they would be less of a chore to translate and less expensive to produce. at this stage my proposal is rather vague; I haven't addressed questions of contacting people to translate the material, proofreading, raising funds to publish the material, which printer or printers to use etc Perhaps libertarians in Germany and France are in contact with Turkish and Arabic speaking comrades and they could co-ordinate Turkish and Arabic language projects.

I think translated material should represent a variety of theoretically coherent libertarian left ideas, left communist, anarcho-syndicalist, autonomist and so on.

Keith Sorel

c/o Anti-Authoritarian Studies, 300 Eshelman Hall, U.C. Berkeley, Berkeley CA 94720 USA

@ @@@@

Correspondence from Black Star

Sept. 1983

Dear Comrades,

Thanks very much for the latest issue of "Intercom". It seems to be going from strength to strength. Let us hope this trend continues. It is by strange coincidence that this letter follows the enclosure of Black Star No.8 in Intercom

No. 3 which announced that B.S. had ceased publication (Incidentally produced some eight months ago). We now write to announce the rebirth of B.S. Former collective members, now living in the Buckinghamshire area have taken the decision to resume publication.

No.1 Vol. 2 should be out in the autumn. (Typists note: it is out).

We intend to follow a similar editorial line and format but ~~put~~ placing greater emphasis on theory, debate and analysis. We hope to publish a paper three or four times a year: more often if we can afford it.

Whilst maintaining a clear class struggle line with an unwavering commitment to the creation of a free communist society, we do feel that a broader perspective on the nature of struggle and organisation should be developed. We feel that we are "at one" with, as Intercom itself proclaims, "the minority communist tendency" which describes itself as anarchist, libertarian, council and left communist. Within this trend ~~there~~ there is an urgent need to 'build bridges'. This we feel can only come about by discussion, debate and the sharing of experiences. At the moment Intercom seems to be playing ~~this~~ this role. Therefore the development and support of this bulletin is all important, as is the greater circulation and production of bulletins, broad-sheets and papers by people in sympathy with projects of this nature.

Another, if ambitious, project of interest to us is an attempt to develop some kind of synthesis between Bakunism and Marxism. (shock horror say the purists) In this vein we quote the late Guy Aldred, a man we admire as a constant and prolific anti-parliamentarian communist propagandist who when defining the difference between the two socialist thinkers said:-

"Marx defined the social revolution, whilst Bakunin expressed it. The first stood for the invincible logic of the cause. The second concentrated in his own person its unquenchable spirit. Marx was an impregnable rock of first principles, remorselessly composed of facts. He developed the intelligence of capitalist society and witnessed to the indestructibility of socialism. He incarnated the proletarian upheaval. He was the immovable mountain of the revolution. Bakunin on the other hand was the tempest. He symbolised the coming flood. Both were great brave men; and forever they

gave completeness to the certitude of Revolution. They promised success by land and by water. They symbolised inexhaustible patience, unwearrying stability, inevitable growth and tireless resistless attack. Who can conceive of a world not made up of land and water? Who can conceive of the social revolution without the work of Marx and Bakunin?"

Food for thought? We certainly think so and feel the possibility of some development of some kind of synthesis could benefit our movement in general.

As we mentioned earlier, this (to us anyway) is a somewhat ambitious task. We would appreciate help and support from Intercom comrades and readers who have more experience than us in this field.

Constructive letters articles and documents with a view to publication are more than welcome.

yours fraternally

Black Star Collective.

P.O. Box 153, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Bucks, U.K.

Correspondence from L'Eveil Internationaliste.

27th August 1983

Dear Comrades,

In answer to your request, here is a short introduction to L'Eveil Internationaliste.

Most of the members who are involved in "The Internationalist Awakening" come from the extreme left (Marxism, Trotskyism, Anarchism....) At the start of 1977, E.I. still thought it was possible "To leap the attack to win over the masses" armed with the minimum political line based on "cleared up ~~Leninism~~ Leninism" and the first four congresses of the IC. The writing of a political platform was put in hand, but at the end of a few months, the work hung fire. At the most we began to glimpse the scale of work to which we addressed ourselves: the assessment of the counter-revolution. At the same time, we regularly gave out leaflets about local struggles, or national and international events. But a lot of questions raised by the reality came up: the national question, the conception of the world revolution, the trades unions, the connection between communists and the class movement, and so on. And we began to think that Leninism did not provide satisfactory answers to these questions. After this was a period of noticeable withdrawal. Our interventions decrease (leaflets passing from one per fortnight to one per month). By the way this coincided with the falling back of the class struggle in France, so we spend more time with theoretical research. The word research is not too strong. Because, if there is anything which has become clear to us, it is that we will not find the stark naked truth in the books written by our illustrious predecessors. If we start with the study of different lefts (Italian, German Dutch and so on) in order to fill our crass ignorance inherited from stalinism, we do that with a critical attitude. We had finished with the Grand-Fathers who had resolved everything in our place! Orphans, we had to learn to fend for ourselves, all the more so because among the existing groups, none gave satisfactory answers to the questions that came up. The first step in this work appears in the pamphlet written for the 3rd International Conference (with the ICC and so on) in April 1980. This text is an ~~xxxx~~ advance inasmuch as it tries and to some extent is successful in rising above the debate of "What is to be done" (Lenin), but it remains contradictory: If it realises the importance of the dynamics of the movement, it drowns in a classical ~~xx~~ vagueness the question of the development of the movement. In this text, we rose up against all separation between the class and its minorities, but the way we tackled the question constantly smuggled in this separation. After that, we made some progress in understanding in a sharper way the capitalist social relationship and its reification. So we arrived at the (temporary) conclusion that: there is no gap between "immediate struggle" and "struggle for communism", but only the development by bounds of social subversion. This leap is favoured by making clearer and clearer, in the movement itself, the contradiction in capitalist social relationship which doesn't appear as such in ordinary times. The revolutionary minorities intervene in this process by helping the over-stepping of the mark, trying to avoid the dead ends. These positions

are developed in the first issue of our review (SUBVERSION) but this issue still remains academic, ideological and literary (to be continued in the next issue). Otherwise, we continue to give out leaflets in some factories of the two towns where we are present, and try to intervene in the small strikes that take place today, in the direction of workers Autonomy. We are now trying to deepen our critique of marxism, against the separations which often appear in marxism between politics economics and so on. We try also to deepen the discussion with other groups (for instance "Insecurite Sociale" in Paris and other individuals in Nantes) which seem near to us and engage in some activity with them, even though the level of the class struggle is very low.

L'Eveil Internationaliste, BP 221, 44604 Saint-Nazaire Cedex, France.

PRACTICAL ANARCHY:

Reviewing past actions & anticipating the new

What we have done: Practical Anarchy has come out monthly or bi-monthly. the Exception being Aug-Dec, but then several bulletins appeared. Demos, factories and occasionally broos have been leafleted, 2 public meetings with local speakers in the McLellan Galleries, provincial meetings with varied degrees of impact, in Clydebank, East Kilbride & Paisley. Following on from this street speaking has been tried in Argyle St. Another form of street presence has been direct action/illegal demos in Maryhill, Anderston and the CBI. Local groups have sprung up in Kilnarnock and Stirling.

How is this received ?: P.A.s are usually well received eg. CND demos, no. of people picking them up in the bookshop, although in the case of factories like Govan Shipbuilders or Yarrows it is difficult to determine. An interest in anarchist ideas has been evident in the public meetings. The first meeting at McLellan's demonstrated a difficulty both in ~~xxxx~~ the way we communicate & what was being said. The 2nd one was much more geared to involvement but presentation was still a problem. In Clydebank we stuck to a fixed agenda and did not confront confused youth. EK was more successful, although ~~xxxx~~ not doing much to put people in touch with each ~~the~~ other. Paisley was on much more familiar territory but the x meeting was marred by a drunk etc.. Success on a street meeting depends on participation from passersby & usually the audience has been too passive. The Maryhill action ~~xxxx~~ was badly conceived at the recruitment office, The Holiday Inn proved to be reasonably successful in publicity although the action was precarious. The CBI, again in publicity, but failed in involving the unemployed. A real ~~xxxx~~ problem persists for isolated activists and supporting them.

Some Conclusions: Is P.A. achieving ~~the~~ the right tone, the articles addressing the real issues of our time, does it fall halfway between a paper and a leaflet? How do we view ourselves in relation to the left? (and in demos etc). The bookshop is a much needed base/place for anarchist lit etc., it may soon fail or etc as less avowedly libertarian. Do we need to think of our own centre/printing room/book service/meeting area etc. & how it would be funded. In distributing the broadsheet should youth & the unemployed be more important? Why do so few people distribute it? Are other means of communication such as radio possible (with commitment)? Public meetings are in demand but how can we achieve more participation, and how do we open up discussion free of dogma/ activity free of ritual. The discussion meetings are emerging but a seemingly ingrained resistance is felt mistakenly by many anarchists for whom wider reflection & coherent thought is boring/peripheral/lacks action etc. The Clydeside (male?) Anarchists is largely the reality, although some women are now realising the virtue of an Anarchist womens forum. By attacking the right of women to organise autonomously, some anarchists strengthen "unity" against traditional male dominance as opposed to a critique of separatism. How will a federation of groups work, Glasgow as central etc (satellites) Accepting new people into the fold is more precarious in a libertarian group. Propaganda of the deed and prepared direct action in different spheres of life - how do we identify what is feasible, desirable, not elitist etc? The relative importance of the traditional medium of street speaking.

Beyond Localism: Local groups such as Castlemilk, encourage action in local circumstances, but rarely are these situations unique. Class solidarity is to be ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ encouraged but how does the solidarity escape from many of the oppressive features of its culture? The dominant values of present society are found within our attitudes and assumptions. The decomposition of present society, the partial undermining of authority in individual/collective resistance to authority; are universal and consciousness of the COMMON significance of actions has to be realised & propagated. In "community action" fostered by appendices of the state, participation is prescribed, contained & parochial. How does anarchist activity avoid "participation" /purism/ a fetish of direct action? Beyond this, how is a federation from the base horizontally achieved? Links with other libertarian groups, anarchist & single issue - are they possible on a lowest common denominator of aims? More "developed" but scattered groups like the London Workers Group, Wildcat etc - how can links be developed for mutual benefit. Similarly, international exchanges are spasmodic & often the most worthwhile groups do not have the "anarchist" label. Similarly, solidarity/propaganda in support of international events.

Box 3, 488 Great Western Road, Glasgow.

Historical Reprint

Following the Claus Barbie article in the last "Intercom" we received a letter questioning the soundness of the article and the general approach of some of the french revolutionary groups. For some time now some of them have been involved in agitation to expose the mythology of the "gas chambers" in Germany and its conquered domain during the thirties and forties. It is claimed that this mythology was used to give ideological backing to the imperialist invasions by the USA, Britain and the USSR and to hide the fact that ~~xxxxxxxx~~ the enormous number of deaths was simply the result of deprivation due to war.

However in order to stretch people's incredulity even further, we have been investigating the notion that "war" does not exist, but is just an ideological device to increase exploitation and hide the number people who die in industrial accidents.

It is in this context that we present a text by the german revolutionary Johannes Baader. Originally published in June 1920 simultaneously in Hanover, Berlin and ~~Munich~~ Munich, the three parts reproduced here constituted the first, fourth and fifth floors of a Dadaist Monumental Architecture, which went by the name of "The Power and Decline of Germany or the Fantastic Biography of Oberdada". The second and third ~~xxxxxxx~~ storeys, respectively titled "Metaphysical Affliction" and "Initiation" proved tedious and hard to translate, and hence have been omitted. The groundfloor and Foundations were pre-determined before birth and therefore do not constitute part of the edifice. However there is also an Attic which consists of a ~~xx~~ cylinder that propelled itself into the sky proclaiming the glory of the schoolmaster Hagensdorf Leseput, subsequently shattering into peices which were put on sale for 7.85 marks. Of course, this Hagensdorf Leseput is the very swabian pastor of Weimar to whom Goethe gave a copy of his Italian Journey, declaring that without this, Leseput could generally understand no literature. The letter "W" refers to the "crown and fundament of the cosmos; cassiopia; the Kaiser; the aeroplane; tramlines and the sum of all ills."

This text was also published in the R "Dada Almanach" edited by R.Huelsenbeck, Pub. Erich Reiss Verlag, Berlin 1920. It clarifies some historical vaguaries like a handful of grit thrown into a muddy pond.

R.E. (Historical Reprints Group)

FIRST FLOOR:

The preparation for the Oberdada

From the realm of metaphysics (also known as the "paddling pool") on the 21st of June 1875, there gently arose the birthday of the Oberdada, from the first hint of a pathological mentality stretched from Pallas to Walruss Dada (see Karl Hagensbeck's zoo) through the indian lions of the pomeranian farmers, not counting any price control (and hence brass-gold coins) near the tumbledown church tower of the CROSS church (Dresden) than the competing remains of the newly built and still beloved

INTERCOM 4

Dresden townhall. Shocked and distraught patrons stand in the smouldering ruins of the overturned church. An enormous flash appearing in the middle of the area ~~increased~~ increased these plastic architectural details to the original ideal of architecture suspended in a carbide lamp which was taken from the Dresden Fine Arts Association for Monumental Sepulchres (Baader, Metzner, Rossler, Hempel) to be cremated in 1903/4. A light flashes in the falsely wrong direction of the presupposition of an inspiration of a ~~xxxxxxx~~ future travelling between Schillers poems with the motto "DADA says!!" and the first edition of "FORTY LETTERS OF CHRIST" from D-Tram Kaiser Wilhelm's rails. This magnificence symbolically written through the circular rails spirals ~~xxx~~ around the flash of light till finally there is an explosion!

~~XXXX~~

FOURTH FLOOR:

The World War

The world war is a war of the newspapers. In reality it has never existed. The figure of history, this dismembered head hung out on genuine bavarian beeswax in front of a regal prussian "rex" pressure cooker, will never allow such a mad paradox as a real world war. Thus no ~~xxx~~ newspapers can be believed. They are all nonsense from the first news of the mobilisation, through ~~K~~ Leige, the battle of the Marne, the retreat from Russia right up to the armistice. The press made the war up. The Oberdada will terminate it.

FIFTH FLOOR:

World Revolution

This is the communist world revolution, the building stone and madness of the proctor of the dileteriat (Hausmann) that the world writes after the great hand only to decline the safety of deliverance out of the /W/ taken in the mouth. This is the misfortune of the world historical situation, but however:

I shall be thrown into a lump: those who aren't for me are against me (people used to say pardon). Today is the communism of price control of brooms with which we shall tidy up the world with. Here from this cylinder, on the very wings of Hagendorf Leseputz, I shall broadcast in the ether the last deliverance of life and death. Anyone who hasn't gone to bed with the Oberdada is a fool!

Johannes Baader

Since intercom is intended to be a discussion bulletin I would like to bring into the open some of the issues hinted at in the M.B. - Gjon exchange (Intercom 2 and 3), the account of the Keele conference in Intercom 3, and the recent 'class war' controversy in Freedom which has involved members of the Workers' Playtime and Wildcat groups.

To start with I'll quote the second of Intercom's criteria for participation: "Commitment to the communist objective - abolition of nation states and the money/market/wages system and its replacement by the common ownership and democratic control of the world's resources".

From this it could be deduced that:

Firstly capitalism is a system wherein the means of production are owned and controlled by a minority and wherein goods are produced by the exploitation of wage labour to be sold for profit via the market.

Secondly that the class structure of capitalism consists of a division between (i) the owners/controllers of the means of production and (ii) a propertiless class whose labour power is exploited to produce goods in return for a wage.

Thirdly that, in the words of M.B. of Wildcat, "(commodity) production, and the extraction of surplus value at the point of production is the 'life-blood' of the system. Its subversion and eventual destruction (is)...the 'key' to the destruction of the whole system." (Freedom 13 August).

In my opinion this is a dangerously narrow conception of capitalist society - dangerous because the conclusions to be drawn from such a conception do not lead in the direction of the complete overthrow of capitalism and the successful establishment of a communist society worthy of the name.

The Intercom categories of analysis exclude large numbers of people who are neither capitalists nor direct producers of surplus value, yet who have no stake in the capitalist system and who would have everything to gain from the establishment of a communist society e.g. children, students, the unemployed, unwaged domestic labourers, tertiary sector workers, retired people - the list is as wide as the Intercom categories are narrow.

By excluding these groups from its theoretical analysis I fear that Intercom is also thereby excluding them from playing any active part in the actual revolution to overthrow capitalism, apart from in a supporting role to the leading actors, the direct producers of surplus value.

Who's to say anyway what the 'life-blood' of the capitalist system really is? Might not the part played by, for example, those engaged in the reproduction of labour power be just as vital to the functioning of the system as the part played by those who are direct producers of surplus value? But Intercom seems to believe that the direct producers of surplus value play the most important part in the functioning of capitalism. Furthermore, not only are they seen as the most important part of the propertiless class in relation to capitalism...they also seem to be regarded as the most important part of the class full stop. It is accounts of their struggles that dominate Wildcat and Workers' Playtime, it is their struggles that are regarded as central to the overthrow of capitalism, and it will be them who dominate the administration of 'communist' society through the councils of delegates elected by mass meetings of factory workers.

What, exactly, is the rest of the non-propertied class actually supposed to do during the communist revolution, apart from assist, support etc the 'most important' section of its class? If 'workplace class struggle' is all-important, what about those who have no 'workplace' to 'struggle' in?

If Intercom carries on in its present orientation - concentrating on the workplace struggles of direct producers and denigrating the struggles of other sections of the non-propertied class whose oppression stems often only indirectly from the exploitation of wage labour - then I see no way in which it can hope to realise its sixth criteria for participation: "the active participation by the whole working class in its own emancipation through a social revolution which overthrows all governments, bosses and leaders." At most it will achieve a revolution in which direct producers will be the leaders and the rest of the class will be semi-passive supporters.

INTERCOM 4

Unless these issues are addressed I'm afraid I can only see Intercom becoming the mouthpiece of another vanguardist ideology - a vanguardism not of any political party but of a section of the working class, the direct producers of surplus value. (Perhaps this is an ideological reflection of the socio-economic composition of most of those involved in the Intercom project?).

Oppression in capitalist society takes many forms and exists on many levels. While all such oppression is ultimately related to the fundamental nature of capitalism as a class-divided society this does not mean that all struggle against oppression must take place on the terrain of workplace class struggle. Indeed in purely practical terms many struggles simply cannot take place in such an arena. Also, just because all oppression rests on the foundation of the class division in capitalist society, this does not mean that once this class division is destroyed all other oppressions will collapse, automatically, overnight, like a pack of cards. Much 'superstructural' oppression, although 'originally' a product of class division, has over time taken on a momentum of its own and we cannot expect it to disappear magically unless it is combatted as vigorously now as oppression more directly related to class divisions is.

Because oppression takes many forms each struggle against oppression can only involve a section of the working class struggling against one particular oppression; all struggles within capitalism (at the moment anyway) are partial struggles - no section of the working class is more important than ~~any~~ any other and no struggle is more vital than any other. In fact many struggles 'at the point^x of production' are a good deal less fundamentally opposed to aspects of capitalism than some of the so-called 'partial' struggles.

The term 'partial struggle' has become synonymous with 'reformism'. The negativity implicit in literal definitions of 'partial' - "relating to a part only: not total or entire" - seems to have been developed to the extent of denying that the 'part' has any relation to or connection with the 'entirety' or 'totality'. I believe that this mistaken interpretation should be reversed and that partial struggles against aspects of capitalist society should nonetheless be regarded as genuine anti-capitalist struggles in spite of their shortcomings - which is definitely not to say that these shortcomings should not always be pointed out, and the potential and necessity for the partial to develop into the total always clearly spelt out.

In practical terms this implies that more than just lip-service should be paid to the ideal of active intervention in all partial struggles with the aim of showing how the struggle of sections of the working class over particular issues can and must be related to the struggle of the entire class against all capitalist oppression.

M.R. Arnold.

While we were putting the first issue of *Workers Playtime* together, we had a visit from some comrades in the French group "L'Insecurite Sociale". After looking through such articles as we had completed, they made the remark that they didn't get to grips with the question of the demands put forward in the struggles we were writing about.

A few months later, we got a copy of a pamphlet they've produced about "Wage Labour and Demand Struggles".

This article isn't the last word on the subject – far from it. But it does raise an interesting perspective on workplace struggle. We'd be very interested to hear what other people think about this.

Today we can see the limit of all struggles for simple demands in the actual development of class struggle : – its unofficial origin bypassing the unions, its progressive demoralisation, finally sinking back into bitterness. What is needed at the moment is a social mobilisation which is increasingly against wage labour itself, and which goes beyond the framework of the single company or trade. But this is going to be much more difficult than the major strikes of the '70s, for it means that the working class will have to stop acting as an economic category of capitalist society ; in other words, as waged workers trying to get a better return for our labour in the futile hope that this will improve our lot. Everything that is mutilated and repressed by capitalism as it reduces us to packages of commodities must finally emerge in the struggle of the working class.

The struggles which broke out in Europe in the 70's, for example in Spain and Italy, demonstrate through their weakness and the difficulty of going further, that the working class movement is finding it difficult to confront the problem of changing the basis of its struggle. The weight of ideology and its institutions obstructs this change, not only reflecting the weakness of the class struggle, but also playing a very active part in it. The domination of capital rests on two things : firstly, the invisible conditioning of individuals, which leads them to produce and reproduce competitiveness, atomisation and subordination in every aspect of their lives, and secondly the visible location of individuals within organisations (unions, parties, etc...) whose role is to discipline them. It's the extent of the class struggle, its advances and retreats, which allows us to consider the questions attached to the abolition of wage labour : what, in practice, are the responses to this inertia? What form and content will assist them?...

The experience of those working class struggles which have at least partially gone beyond putting forward lists of

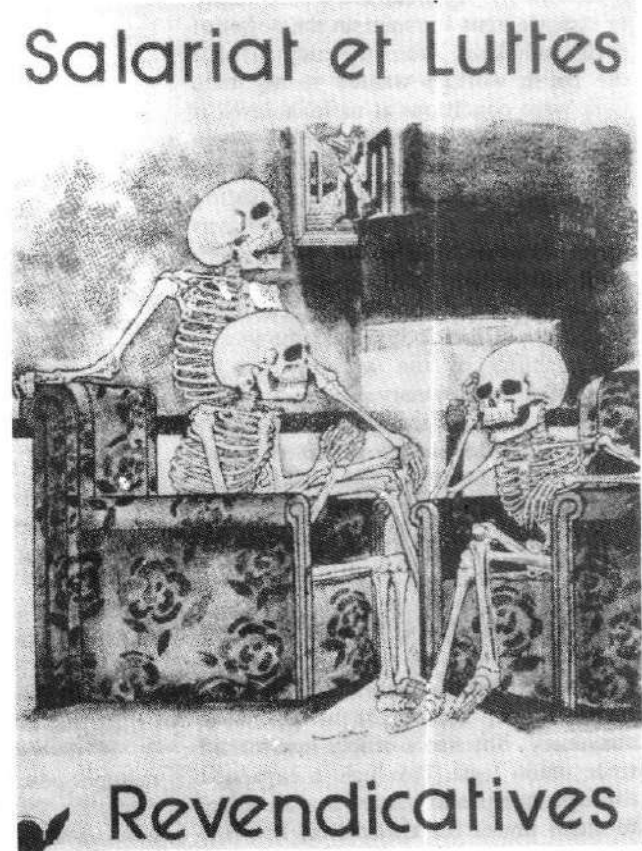
demands shows that their form of organisation is that of assemblies with the ultimate power decision on the actions undertaken. This is the only organisational form allowing everybody to genuinely participate, which generates unity, and where decisions and their implementation are directly connected. Any important struggle throws into question the forms of struggle which capitalism adopts to ensure that its domination is accepted. So it's no surprise that our struggles develop forms of organisation that already

express the communist revolution, and which represent a step towards it.

In saying this we don't wish to introduce any separation between the form and content of struggle. While the "councilist" form will undoubtedly be necessary for a future revolution, it's no guarantee against its eventual degeneration. Only the autonomous activity of the working class – in large numbers – can permanently overthrow the social relations of capitalism, without compromise, and without coming to a halt within forms it's employed in the past. Beyond such terms as 'council', 'committee' or 'assembly', which could just as easily disguise the persistence of relations of exploitation, the working class must organise itself in communities of action emerging directly from the struggle.

When we say that the abolition of commodity society will be a social process which overturns all the relations between people, we aren't appealing to recipes drawn from history. This struggle of disintegration of all social dislocation, leads workers to seek points of leverage in their material circumstances which will

WAGE LABOUR & DEM AND STRUGGLES



Salarariat et Luttes

Revendicatives

make any going back more difficult. The human community won't be achieved in a fortnight, and it cannot come about on the basis of any significant and lasting breach in the relations between people. Life cannot continue without social organisation. If the working class does not set up autonomous mass organisation which can express and implement social transformation, the immediate joy of insurrection will be swiftly replaced by savage repression from those forces which want to restore the old order, with the active consent of one part of the population.

Just as everything depends on the ability and power of the working class to take charge of their own destiny, so the concrete reality of this autonomy depends on the formation of communities of action which allow workers to transform their daily lives through the immediate results of their decisions. In their recent struggles, Polish workers spontaneously created sovereign general assemblies and strike committees only to see this break with the society of exploitation turn into the emergence of Solidarity, a permanent structure of negotiation, a union like any other. The superficial view of this process quickly glosses over the importance of working class self-organisation, and sees only an absence of any will to place capital itself in question. But this ignores the fact that in any struggle of importance, the refusal of exploitation by the working class always spontaneously takes the form of collective bodies in which the division between the representatives and the represented is rejected, and a community of struggle aims to maintain the power of decision-making. From the moment that the Polish workers wanted to negotiate their wage conditions at national level, it was logical that a union would emerge from their movement, complete with experts in negotiation and manipulation of the workers. And it was logical that as this structure emerged, the self-organisation present at the beginning of the struggle should be undermined. While the principal reason here was the inertia and inability of the working class to spread the revolutionary process, we must not gloss over the problem of self-organisation, because all the priests of wage-exploitation, from the Bolsheviks to the Socialists — including Walesa on the way — struggle pitilessly against this autonomy.

THE BURDEN OF UNIONISM

However militant workers are, they will always run up against not just the union machinery, but also a deeply interiorised trade union logic. This logic is expressed through unions and parties as a tendency to claim power for themselves. But it is

also expressed within the working class as a tendency to become involved, passively or actively, in organisations which lie outside of them. The burden of these organisations is only one expression of the survival of capitalism in the working class — as ideology, as a type of social structure, and as a relation between people. The pretence that possession of a 'theory' means the possession of truth would have no real standing if the workers didn't have the conviction — reinforced every day by the conditions of life under capitalism — that general questions are the province of specialists and that their own experiences aren't important.

These interlinked tendencies derive from the same reality and lead to the same dead end. Politicians and trade unionists who seek to impose their point of view by any means possible, always have the means to do so faced with workers powerless to respond to their flood of words or to thwart their cunning. They only 'betray' because they are trusted in the first place. No-one can betray people for long if they don't want to be betrayed and act to ensure it doesn't happen.

The working class has been lulled to sleep by the myth of trade unionism, set in an equally mythological history (General Strike, World War against fascism, Parliamentary socialism, the Welfare State, Nationalisation, etc.) According to this myth, unions struggle to improve working class living conditions. In reality they've never done anything of the sort. They only negotiate the price of labour power. When union policies prevail strikes are broken rather than extended. They merely fulfil their function as capitalist institutions, and in the last analysis they only succeed because they are listened to. Their power is based on apathy, on acquiescence, on insufficient resistance by workers.

Their deep roots ensure that the idea of organising outside these 'representative bodies' doesn't arise, or appears unrealistic. This 'habit' only breaks down to the degree that unions, as loyal managers of capitalist crisis, oppose spontaneous social movements. But the return of militant workers to the bosom of the union, and the appearance of neo-unionist ideology (representation, the delegation of power) outside the unions, as occurred in Poland with Solidarity, remind us that even under such circumstances, illusions won't simply fade away.

The working class doesn't just fight capitalism as a force which lies outside it. If it was only a question of the material power of the exploiters (of their repressive institutions), capitalism would have been abolished long ago, for it has

no power aside from alienated labour. It can only survive to the extent that it succeeds in persuading us to accept our situation. Its most powerful weapons are those which create the objective situation of the working class: organising social relations involving an ideological viewpoint, relations between people which continually recreate the basis of capitalism. Workers not only undergo a systematic indoctrination by the ruling class, they are also dispossessed of their reality as a class through those divisions by locality, trade and nation, which are implied by the domination of capitalism.

The most important obstacle to human emancipation is the continual re-emergence of capitalist reality inside the working class itself. The working class isn't outside capitalism, it's born into it, lives in it, participates in it, and makes it work. As long as capitalist social relations survive, they constantly violate the working class. It's a contradictory situation, for while capitalism continually tends to reduce the working class to the status of an object, it also continually appeals to our abilities as living labour capable of modifying and transforming ... and thus also capable of refusing exploitation and the denial of our humanity through the commodity. Working class struggle, in its most important aspect, is a struggle against itself, a struggle to rid itself of all traces within it of the society it fights.

This struggle isn't continuous but contradictory, composed of periods of partial or total retreat. It's not only in terms of 'Militancy' that the retreats or advances of the working class are measured, but also by the attitude it adopts to the problems it encounters. Opposing the unions often appears to some workers to 'isolate themselves from the whole labour movement', to 'hinder solidarity', etc. It's therefore necessary to show how unions oppose struggles and their extension.

Union officials are generally the only 'link' that extends between different workplaces. Breaking it leads to fear of isolation. It's a problem often troubling workers who have broken with their unions.

But experience shows us that the unions use their 'power of co-ordination' to systematically isolate and divide struggles. All possible links between workers in different workplaces must be encouraged, both during and outside struggles, but above all, so that when a struggle breaks out direct contact can be made. Such links are equally useful for spreading new forms of struggle (when they actually exist!), so that the experience of autonomous actions and organis-

ation in defiance of unions and politicians is as widely known as possible.

DIRECT ORGANISATION OF STRUGGLE

Certain practises assist the development of working class autonomy :

– The absolute control by workers of their struggles (in terms of goals, strategy, and methods), but without excluding criticism of these choices.

– The rejection of all delegation or substitution of power. Everything is discussed, decided and carried out by the workers themselves, whose decision is final.

Because of the openness of their activity, the sovereign general assemblies can more clearly unmask the policy of the unions, and to some extent disarm it. This organisational form isn't a remedy for all ills, but it allows strikers the chance to take decisions and responsibilities for themselves, and to at least partially escape from the limitations of unionism and the passivity associated with it.

– Strengthening unity and extension of the struggle ; solidarity, support, contact and exchange between different workers in different workplaces, and confrontation with hierarchy and competition.

– Examining past and present struggles without any illusions about the degree to which workers experiences in them have been passed on. There is no simple process of workers self-education in relation to the ups-and-downs of their struggles. There is no working class memory except for a limited period of time or amongst a minority. For example, amongst British workers who experienced the militancy strikes during the early seventies, how many remember what happened ?

Groups of workers in a workplace – whether completely informal, or structured around a platform – can make a direct and visible contribution to the development of class consciousness and to the attack on the roots of capitalism. When such groups have appeared in countries where autonomous class struggles are in motion, they have often turned out to be too fragile to survive the decline of the movements which gave birth to them, or to survive the resulting isolation and demoralisation. Thus in France, such groups as the 'Action Committees' of 1968 progressively disappeared. The difficulties they encounter are not much different from those which affect the whole working class movement in moving

beyond a basis of wage rises and reforms. The situation of self-styled revolutionary groups is scarcely any better, even if their method of organisation promises a longer survival.

Moreover, the content of such focal points for discussion and/or action, in putting forward the idea of workers self-organisation during and after struggles, depends on the nature of their break with the forces of capitalism. For some

it will be unionism, for others new human relations appear in the course of a struggle, in discussions with other workers ... We don't have to wait for the appearance of workers groups according to some pre-planned process and with a pre-established content reproducing the experiences of the past. They are only aspects (in a limited framework) of the contradictory and complex relationship between the working class, wage labour and the attempts to go beyond it.

CORRESPONDANCE

L'INSECURITE SOCIALE
B.P. 243
75564 PARIS CEDEX 12

PUBLICATIONS

Directrice de publication : G BYRAMJEE
Imprimerie spéciale de L' I.S.
Commission paritaire n° 48869
Dépôt légal 2^e trimestre 1983

To be working class does not mean to be badly paid, or to work really hard ... behind all these surface phenomena is the constraint that forces us to sell our capacity as living creatures, in order to ensure our physical survival. It means seeing our activity continually taken away from us, so as to turn us into objects dominated by money. The alienation of human activity means that, having lost all control over the conditions of life, workers are reduced to objects of capital, who can only recognise their human needs and desires through their lack of satisfaction.

The reduction of human physical and intellectual capabilities to labour power, to a commodity, is a process which tends to reduce us to objects. The contradiction of capitalism lies in the fact that human beings are not objects, and that the actual sale of commodities implies that they are active. Human beings are living creatures. They adapt, modify and create the environment in which they evolve. This implies that it's also possible for them to reject their situation. Working class people continually reject the way of life capitalism imposes on them. The problem is that this refusal is most often in capitalism's own terms. The individual refusal of capitalism can only be an accommodation with it, sometimes taking the form of social opportunism. Thus the choice is made to profit out of others by climbing the ladder of the hierarchy, or setting up in business for oneself. It can also take the form of absenteeism, which is never more than taking advantage of circumstances, and while it sometimes involves a refusal of work, in other cases is only the means of doing some moonlighting.

Strikes, which imply workers stopping work collectively, are the basis on which we can put forward something more than an accommodation. But from the outset, there's a conflict between working class needs and their expression in the form of demands, whether these arise from the workers themselves or from the unions.

If it is not quickly transcended, the struggle to to maintain or increase wage levels can only lead to workers negotiating the price of their labour power (in competition with others); and

to their identifying with their "niche", with the localist and corporatist interests which the fragmentation of society assigns to everyone. The nature of negotiations fosters all kinds of "specialists" in the sale of wage labour. Today, this is the role of the unions, but even if strikers elect representatives to take charge of negotiations with the bosses, these representatives will immediately fight the control and revocability exercised over them. They will want to assume the role of leaders on a basis of equality with their opposite numbers in negotiations, and will be supported by strikers themselves who will want to be led by people who reassure them. Collectively stopping work is a process which upsets the normal habits, behaviour and living conditions of workers. Faced with no extension of the struggle (whether through geographical or social barriers), or with no further widening of the fissures that have been opened up, they find themselves confronted with a vacuum which they want filled with reassurances.

It is not enough to denounce the various divisions between workers – corporatism, racism, false needs, competition, nationalism, regionalism : the commodity logic of value and exchange must be fought. The "unity" of workers around demands, or in alliance with the unemployed, is at best wishful thinking, and at worst a capitalist manoeuvre. In being limited to "workers unity" or "solidarity with the unemployed", instead of contributing to the assault of the working class on the state, which is the only way of integrating the unemployed into new social relations, every worker – employed or not – is fixed into "their" particular

situation, and in a fragmented view of the world. From such an isolated viewpoint, the unity of the proletariat can only ever exist thanks to some exterior body; the party, the union, the state, the nation, the law, democracy or a moral principle. But this atomisation is only one aspect of the working class, its negative aspect. Faced by capital, another aspect is its collective material interdependence. The proletariat's strength consists in the potential associated with its position in the social set-up. This makes it the only class expressing a tendency – through its revolt and its consciousness – to overthrow its situation in society, and the relationships which keep it there.

THE DEAD END OF DEMANDS

We must understand the contradiction at the heart of the working class, if we are to understand the process of development which precedes revolutionary upheavals. It's not just presented with a consciousness of its identity, nor for that matter with a will to dissolve itself into a world human community.

The conflict between, on the one hand, material needs (which can't be reduced simply to food), and on the other hand the domination by market relations, forces workers into a desperate attempt to satisfy their needs within the framework of wage demands. In this situation, they obviously make use of their power – real or illusory – that gives them their position as wage labourers; strikes, sabotage, go-slows, absenteeism, theft ... through these means, they try to resist the worsening of social conditions by seeking the weaknesses in capitalist relations. In a period of relative prosperity, these weaknesses appear in the sense that capitalists are often ready to toss a few crumbs to maintain relative social peace. But with the appearance of economic crisis, the logic of putting forward demands ends up in defeat. If the speed of production is slowed down, capital reorganises the labour process; if we build up a position of strength, capital erodes it by dividing the workforce or replacing it ... wage increases are eaten away by inflation. In order to drain all means of self-defence as wage labourers, the lessons of defeat are drummed into us. If workers limit themselves to putting forward simple demands, they fall victim to discouragement; struggle is abandoned as it "doesn't lead anywhere", and then the worsening of living conditions and frustration once more accumulate, and the search for weaknesses in the system begins all over again.

But to say that we have less and less to defend as wage labourers, is also to become aware that wage labour is not a form of organisation that can satisfy

social needs. So the problem is not "championing" or "condemning" struggles around demands, it's the capacity of workers to move beyond them. It doesn't particularly matter what event serves to stimulate such a move; price increases, repression, a workplace accident, redundancy ... The revolt which arises uses this single incident to concentrate on it everything that has been suffered before – the waged condition. Struggles develop out of a refusal at a given moment of some major or minor matter concerning the conditions imposed by capitalism. Moreover this refusal over one issue may – because it does not allow for direct struggle – give rise to another. Ultimately, the particular issue isn't important, what matters is that the workers express a refusal of something and through that their desire to live.

Workers will not become united through particular demands, otherwise they would generally maintain autonomous forms of organisation outside struggles. The slow road to consciousness runs through those rare moments when "something happens" – those discussions, or confrontations where the logic of exchange and negotiation is forgotten.

There is therefore no straightforward progression from struggles around demands, but a confrontation with the dead end they constitute. The moments of unification, of development, leave a strong memory of "taking things further" which can allow the appearance of radical elements after the struggle has subsided.

BEYOND MAKING DEMANDS

Even in the course of the most traditional strike, we can see all sorts of other things emerge beyond the particular demand. Everything that's hidden away in everyday reality can quickly push a struggle beyond its original horizons – the search for a way to discover a new goal, and the realisation of things outside the framework of capital, arise to the extent that the struggle is transformed.

Those who don't see that the demands are overshadowed by more important things merely apologise for some sort of "hardheadedness", and help limit the movement to secondary questions by masking its essence. For them, needs can only be expressed in terms of existing reality; to demand, to sell, to buy, to negotiate, to exchange.

Rather than drawing up lists of demands classified as "reactionary" or as "subversive", it's better to look at what the participants put into the struggle. There are neither "reactionary" nor

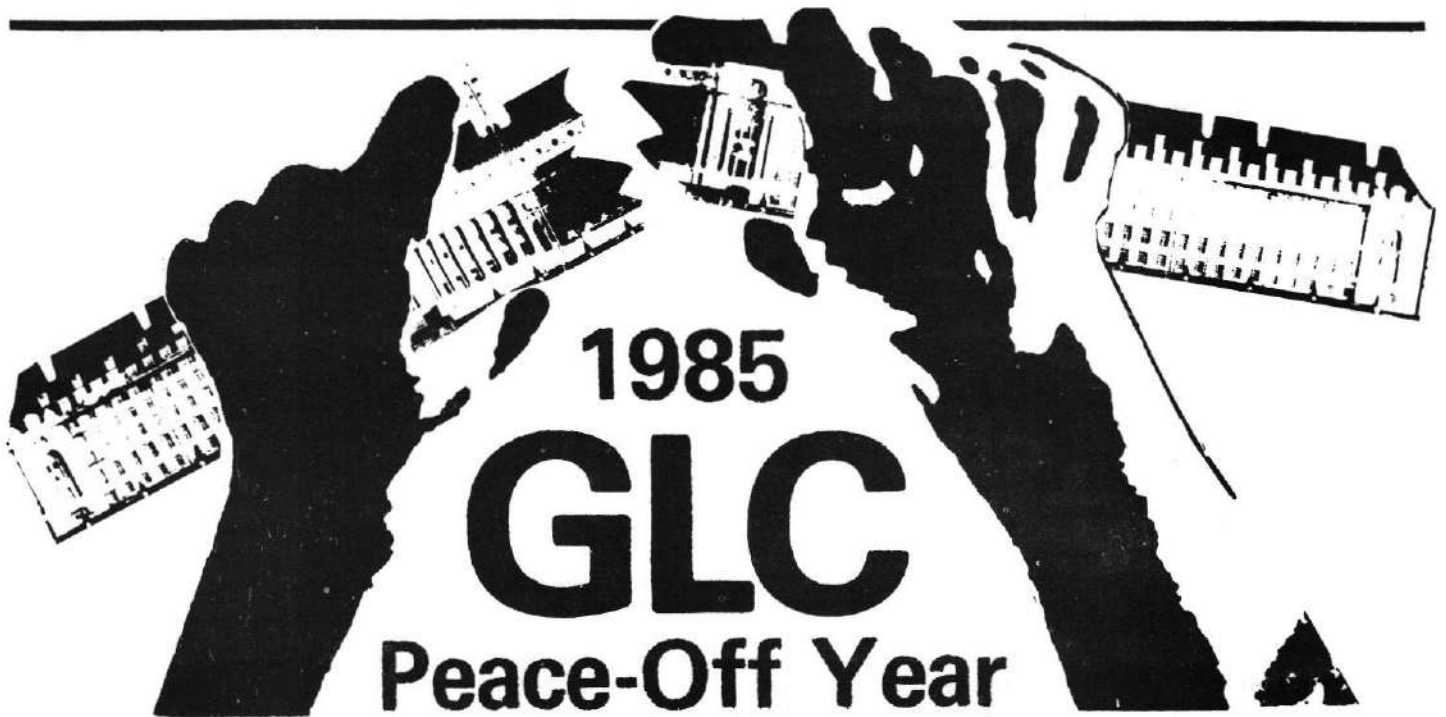
"revolutionary" demands, rather there are rejections of the conditions of existence which express themselves in various ways. Often what inspires the strikers goes beyond what set the movement in motion. In 1982, for example, during the strike at the French bank Societe Generale, the principal demand put forward was for a new wage scale. The majority of strikers more or less realised they couldn't get this. The fact that the movement lasted so long indicates that the workers no longer wanted to go back to work.

After a strike about some demand where the return to work only happens with some difficulty, or when strikers say "It's not just a matter of more money, but about change, about our dignity", it's not because they are some brave type of idealists untouched by material necessity. It is because having experienced a break with the denials and privations that capitalism imposes, they are less tolerant of them. They express, if only for a moment, some needs that are a thousand times more real than the illusions of survival which are fostered by demands.

In that moment of realisation and of refusal of their lot which is expressed by workers in the course of many strikes, it's important that it ceases to be repressed by them and becomes an active force. This is the central problem of class struggle. Work today is one of the rare places in our lives where we meet others, even if it's only in a competitive way. The strike allows us to meet together, pitting us not against one another, but against the existence that is imposed upon us. It allows us to question the everyday reality of work and society around us.

In relation to the daily grind, to ordinary exploitation, to our routine non-existence, these moments express in themselves the refusal of wage labour, the desire to escape the capitalist organisation of existence, the privatised view of life. This aspiration to live cannot be taken into account by any programme of demands. It cannot be negotiated with any authority.

The communist revolution can only come about through a break in the mental process and the ideological representations (morals, etc.), produced by working class struggle on the basis of the material conditions of existence which are implied by the domination of capital: the atomisation, competition, subordination and monotonous existence which wage levels and unemployment are merely an expression of. **This break will come about, if it is produced, through the generalised destruction of the state and the commodity.**



GLC workers are being asked to stage a one-day strike as part of the campaign to 'defend the GLC'. They are being told by the GLC politicians that the campaign will defend the workers jobs and stop the cuts in services, and increases in rent, fares and possibly rates that will come with the abolition of the GLC.

But these same politicians obviously aren't really interested in encouraging workers to fight for their interests, because they themselves have already cut hundreds of jobs by various manoeuvres, and only recently abandoned their plans to cut thousands of jobs on London Transport, when they realised they wouldn't be in power much longer, so they may as well keep their popularity.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAD MAKES GOOD

The GLC bureaucrats can't even defend themselves – let alone us – because they are committed to maintaining the social peace. If there were ever large-scale strikes or other uncompromising actions to defend the GLC, the role of Ken Livingstone and his cronies would be to 'restore order' as soon as possible.

In any case, whoever heard of a successful strike that was supported by the *bosses* of the workers involved ?

For the Tory government the abolition of the GLC is a convenient administrative method for cutting a lot of jobs and services very quickly. For the top GLC hacks, it means that they can pursue their careers in Parliament and the media without having been too closely involved with clobbering working class Londoners, so keeping their 'left' credibility intact.

Who wants to defend the GLC as an institution anyway ? Local government has always been the loyal servant of central government. Spending its allocation of money, extending some services and cutting others depending on the funds available, and keeping the wages of local government employees as low as possible.

Local government in its modern form arose in the mid-C19th. Its function was to provide adequate policing and to administer the repressive Poor Law to keep control of the newly-created working class, packed into urban slums. Not much has changed.

Good Left-wing Capitalists

The state (by which we mean all the institutions of government, from the army to the DHSS) is usually seen as somehow floating above the class conflicts in society, and acting in the interests of everybody through 'democratic representation' in Parliament and local government. This is an illusion.

The role of the state is determined by the need to create some kind of social cohesion in a society where any real community is absent and the population consists of a mass of isolated buyers and sellers of commodities. In this society, to have power means to control capital, and the majority own nothing of any significance but their labour (which they sell to capital), and effectively control nothing. These days, the state itself is a major capitalist, exploiting the labour of millions of workers in the 'state sector' and local government. 'Democracy' is just a polite word for the rubber-stamping of decisions already made according to the interests of capital.

When both Labour and Conservative governments in the '50s took functions away from the boroughs and gave them to the County Councils there were shrieks of rage from councillors about the 'attack on democracy'. Today, we see the same accusation as powers are shifted back to the boroughs. The moans of bureaucrats never change, but the working class has got no control to lose, only a place in the cheap seats of the democracy charade.

The Municipal 'socialists' are no different from municipal Tories, they know the rules of the game and are prepared to play by them. After the GLC cheap fares policy was scrapped by the Law Lords, Ken Livingstone said that people should protest, but that no-one should seriously break the law. In other words, petitions and the moralistic token law-breaking of the 'Fares Fair' campaign is *in*, but mass fare-dodging is definitely out.

In the short-term, our struggle has got to be the ruthless defence of our interests, the jobs that we do purely as a source

of income and the services that we are forced to depend on.

GLC-ING THE WAY FORWARD

If local government workers are really going to defend their interests, they've got to be prepared to take strike action on their own initiative and spread it as widely as possible.

This can't be left in the hands of the trade unions, which are bodies whose whole reason for existing is negotiation. If workers are to win, their actions must be based on a refusal to negotiate with the class enemy, instead trying to escalate the action to the point where the bosses are forced to meet their demands.

To do this, workers will have to set up their own strike committees, composed of delegates that can be revoked at any time, and be prepared to go directly to other workplaces to argue the case for an all-out strike. Demands which are put forward should be those which unite the whole of the working class.

In 1974, a strike began amongst Glasgow dustmen, which spread quickly to the extent that it became almost a local general strike. It was broken by the workers' shop stewards, who argued that each group of workers should negotiate separately with their own employers.

World capitalism (in which we include all the countries of

the world — workers have to sell their labour in Russia as well as in Britain), is a system which staggers from crisis to crisis.

Faced with a general fall in the rate of profit, the only way that the capitalist ruling class can respond is to attack the working class — through redundancies, cuts in services, cuts in wages/benefits, and so on — and build up their armaments to fight it out when there aren't enough profits to go around.

This is why even the most militant struggles for reforms can only bring temporary gains for the working class, as can be seen from the vicious suppression of struggles in Poland which followed the concessions which the rulers had been forced to make.

WHAT'S ALL THIS GOT TO DO WITH THE PRICE OF BREAD ?

In order to defend ourselves, it will become more and more necessary for our struggles to link up between different workplaces and industries (striking car workers confront the same system as those in local government), and to start to take on an insurrectionary character. Large sections of the Tunisian working class, particularly the unemployed, recently rioted for several days, forcing the government to reverse an increase in bread prices.

However much we fight back, the attacks of the ruling class will keep coming. The only permanent solution is for the working class to take power internationally, by means of the mass organisations which arise in the course of struggle.



This leaflet is produced by some members of the London Workers Group. The LWG is open to anyone interested in workplace struggle from a revolutionary point of view. It produces a free occasional bulletin, and a bi-monthly journal, 'Workers Playtime', which costs 20p.

Meetings are every Tuesday, upstairs at the Metropolitan, 95 Farringdon Road, EC1. All meetings are open, and regular discussions on a particular subject or struggle are advertised in 'Time Out' and 'City Limits'. No party recruiters should bother.

PROTEST WITHOUT ILLUSIONS

It's encouraging to see lots of people becoming aware of the threat that militarism and nuclear weapons pose to their lives. But those things are only a symptom of much greater problems, problems that the self-appointed leaders of the 'peace' movement don't want discussed. The contemporary 'peace' movement is like most single-issue 'anti-' movements; it exists in opposition to only one or two aspects of this society. And when people in a 'movement' aren't questioning the nature of this society in its entirety they end up choosing tactics that only have a symbolic value, conservative and timid activities like electoral politics and pacifism. "We got beaten up by the police and we spent a week in jail so we must have changed something..." or, why the confusion?

I was involved in the blockade at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power plant in the fall of 1981. I spent four days in the demonstrators' camp and after getting arrested I spent three days in jail. At Diablo I found that the more committed people were to pacifism under any circumstances the less committed they were to radical social change. Most of them were very smug about it, "No, violence is never justified..." People were generally unwilling to discuss the authoritarian politics of nuclear energy. The protesters preferred to engage in a lot of 'New Age'-style 'group therapy'. It was an overwhelmingly white, middle-class scene. Even when the police were beating the shit out of their fellow demonstrators they would be telling the cops how much they "loved" them. A group of people wanted to hike up to the top of the hills and 'chant and pray until the reactor would go away..' The Diablo affair was a very wierd scene.

PACIFISM AND SOCIAL CONTROL: LOOK AT GANDHI AND A FEW EXAMPLES FROM HIS LIFE

My impression of pacifism is that it is (generally) a principled and unconditional opposition to any and all forms of violence, even violence in cases of self-defense. by victimized individuals and classes. Is the violence of a rebellious slave as terrible as the violence of the slave-owner? Doesn't a person who is being assaulted have a right to fight back? The ideas of Mohadas K. Gandhi have had a profound effect on the development of pacifist ideology. People should find out about the life of Gandhi, not the Hollywood-movie Gandhi. Find out about what he really said and did.

Gandhi was the son of a very well-off family from Porbandar, India. After receiving his law degree Gandhi moved to South Africa. He involved himself in the civil rights struggles of Asian people in India. In 1913 the civil rights campaign reached it's height in a massive strike of indentured Indian miners. This strike threatened to link up with a simultaneously-occurring strike of European railway workers. The government declared a state of seige. Gandhi helped to break the strike wave by calling off a demonstration by Asian workers, saying he did not wish to embarass the South African regime. With the praises of the South African regime, for his "moderation", Gandhi sailed off to India, leaving behind an embittered, defeated and racially-divided working class.

In India the struggles against British rule were not simply nationalistic or within the context of 'single-issue' demands. In the early 1920s' a wave of strikes and peasant revolts swept the country. As in South Africa Gandhi used his considerable influence to take the steam out of the rebellion. Gandhi advocated non-violence in the struggles of dispossessed peoples but during both World War One and World War Two Gandhi actively recruited young men of India to fight in the British Imperial Army. In an incident in the 30's a group of Indian enlisted men under British officers mutinied and refused to fire on a non-violent demonstration. Guess whose side Gandhi took? Gandhi condemned the soldiers, proclaiming that a soldier takes a "sacred" oath to his commander, that soldiers must always obey orders, and that when he and the Indian National Congress took power in India they would need to rely on those same soldiers. (Why would this "siantly advocate of non-violence" need the military obedience of soldiers? To shoot down unruly demonstrators, crush strikes, round up political opponents, perhaps?) These are just a few examples of the course of Gandhi's activity throught his life. There are many more that are just as bad or worse. Find out for yourself. Gandhi was a very shrewd and demagogic conservative whose philosophy and tactics served the nationalistic interests of the big

landowners and industrialists in India. His pacifism served to disarm the radicalism of the Hindu and Muslim poor and working classes. Gandhi's pacifism was very conditional; the lower classes should be non-violent but Gandhi considered violence as an option for the state and the ruling classes. One last quote from the beloved "Mahatma", "I shall never support the forcible dispossession of the propertied classes.(of India) Capitalists are fathers and workers children." (?) That was what Gandhi was all about! That was his 'non-violent' philosophy and that same kind of attitude carries over into today's peace movement. The smug advocates of non-violence at any price circulate photos



like this one. Like most photos from symbolic 'blockades', this one shows a demonstrator suffering a lot of pain at the hands of the police. To most people this doesn't seem like a very desirable situation. But the bureaucracy of the peace movement celebrates the imagery of people being brutalized at the hands of the police. The pacifists seem to wallow in a morbid desire for physical punishment. And the pacifists glamorize getting punched-out by cops and thrown in jail because most of them are upper-middle class privileged people or religious believers who don't live under the real everyday threat of violence at the hands of the cops the way that working-class and poor people do.

THE PROTEST TACTICS HAVE FAILED COMPLETELY

In the past four years of resurgent peace movement activity all the well-organized marches and civil disobedience have not stopped or even slowed the deployment of a single nuclear weapons system. And the invasion of Grenada proved that the 'peace' and 'anti-intervention' movements are completely powerless and ineffective. To think otherwise is to be fooling yourself. After Grenada and the European missile deployments we can look each other in the eye and say, no more empty gestures, all the votin praying, lying down in front of freight-trains, postcards to congressmen, the "Freeze", all the crawling and begging can be consigned to the museum of paleontology. The old men who rule us are criminal, insane, and stupid. You can't guilt-trip those maniacs, they won't listen, they don't care. So far pacifism has only worked in the interests of the system.

We want to live in a world without the threat of war, too. We want peace in our lifetimes, too, and we want a whole lot more than just peace. The nuclear bomb doesn't exist in a vacuum, it wasn't created by accident. The bomb was created by the same thing that has caused most of the horrible wars of this century, struggles between capitalist powers, and you can't fight against militarism in any effective way without opposing the barbaric systems that dominate every corner of the world. Real Estate agents and ex-NATO Generals are against the bomb because it would tarnish the paint on their Porsches. "liberal" politicians and millionaires won't get rid of the bomb. Direct Action means we should spread the idea of wildcat industrial strikes against war production, advocate sabotage of war materials. Spread the idea of a nationwide mass strike in the event of another invasion. Much of the most effective anti-military activity has to be carried out by the enlisted people in the Armed Forces. Soldiers and Sailors can wreck military equipment, refuse to carry out war orders, and ultimately, mutiny. People forget that a large part of the reason for the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam was because of the active resistance of the troops who were supposed to do the fighting and dying. There are many examples of a real and far-going opposition. In France in May 1968 two-thirds of the country, ten million people went out on a wildcat general strike. Look at the wave of mass strikes that swept Poland a few years ago. Or the urban uprisings in Britain in the summer of 1981, in forty cities poor people of all different races rose up and took what they wanted when they couldn't pay for it anymore. In Italy and Spain and South Africa in 1977 or in Chile in 1983 large numbers of dispossessed and threatened people have fought back and pointed out ways that we can not only free ourselves from the threat of war but also how we can free ourselves from the systems in the West and East that threaten us and rob us.

Many people in Northern Europe, people in the squatter's movement, the 'Sponties' and 'autonomen' are finding that you can't always be completely peaceful when confronting a vicious and authoritarian social order. A real far-going rebellion is the kind of thing that can free us from the current mess. Let's all fight to make that here.

Don't go on idiotic 'fasts' to starve yourself, let's starve this system!

THE BLUE RINSE STARTS TO RUN



Some people would like to see the police made more accountable, more 'democratic'. Our attitude is a little simpler. We hate them.

All politicians, of whatever party, are united in their desire for a strong police force. Despite some feeble criticisms they always end up congratulating them for a 'good job done'. But when the police are portrayed as kindly and supportive, we know the reality is far different. Arrogant, brutal, repressive: we have every reason to see the law as an occupying force on our streets. And we have every right to deal with them as such.

Ever since they were set up in the middle of the last century, the police have been at the forefront in the efforts to control the working class. By protecting the wealthy from attack they have forced crime back into our own ranks. The true meaning of law and order is for us to vent our anger on each other instead of letting the rich and privileged take the full brunt of our instinctive class hatred. Racism and petty crime amongst people who should be fighting side by side, together with the shadowy control wielded by organised criminals over their own communities all add up to the old game of divide and rule. Whether knowingly supported or not, this policy is backed by every one of our so called representatives.

With the collapse of the welfare state the leftist fantasy of "policing by consent" becomes more absurd every day. The attacks on our already pitiful living standards can only be made when backed by the strong arm of the law. It may be smashing up workers' picket lines and occupations, the onslaught against unauthorised gatherings of the young and unemployed, or raids into our housing estates and homes. How can we "consent" to this? Only the cossetted middle class can pretend this doesn't happen - and that it won't happen on an ever wider scale.

He said that CND was extremely sorry that "as a result of an accident a policeman was injured and we shall be sending a message of sympathy." Another get well message came from Mrs Glenys Kinnock, who was among the demonstrators at Greenham on Sunday, and her husband Mr Neil Kinnock, the Labour Party leader. The policeman, Inspector Michael Page, was said to be comfortable in hospital.

Fourteen police forces in England and Wales are authorised to use the bullets, which were introduced in 1981 after the inner city riots. In Northern Ireland, the army has used them since 1975 and the Royal Ulster Constabulary since 1978.

To date, 11 people, including six aged 15 or below, have been killed by plastic bullets and hundreds very seriously injured, Professor Pat Wall, of University College, London, told a press conference.

THE GUARDIAN Tuesday December 13 1983

We say that the Police Bill merely legalises what is already common practice on our streets. The Police Bill is a blatant threat to the working class. "Our" rulers are telling us that should we step out of line in any way they deem, they will set the full fury of the police onto us. And these are early days yet. What other repressive laws are they going to come up with

as the crisis bites deeper? These new provisions are preparations that they are making for a stormy future. If we are serious we must make ours without delay and get ready to meet them on our own terrain, the streets.

By looking at the Police Bill in a wider social context, we can see that it is designed to meet a more violent class response to the deepening crisis in our cities. By making legal provisions for area saturation policing, this shows that their concern is not only the control of individuals but also the quelling of the first signs of urban revolt. They want to drive us off the streets and back into an isolated existence locked up in our own homes pursuing a sterile privatised lifestyle, never questioning the system as it crumbles around us. They will not tolerate any life outside those activities and spheres of influence they organise and control.

But there is an answer: 1981 destroyed the myth of police invincibility. For a week the whole establishment was rocked to its foundations as town after town exploded with our reply to class society. Despite their shortcomings, these events marked the change from mere defensive reflexes to an offensive against the system. They set the tone for the future. The ruling class knows that. So do we. Let us get down to business.

Peel's Police, RAW LOBSTERS, *Blue Devils,*

Or by whatever other appropriate Name
they may be known.

Notice is hereby given,

That a Subscription has been entered into, to supply the **PEOPLE** with **STAVES** of a superior Effect, either for Defence or Punishment, which will be in readiness to be gratuitously distributed whenever a similar unprovoked, and therefore unmanly and blood-thirsty Attack, be again made upon Englishmen, by a Force unknown to the British Constitution, and called into existence by a Parliament illegally constituted, legislating for their individual interests, consequently in opposition to the Public good.

Anti-Police broadsheet handed out in 1830

"...bringing the police into the trade union movement could help avoid the situation where a remote & bureaucratic police force is so alienated from the people that it ceases to be an instrument of protection & instead becomes an instrument of oppression..."

This piece of drivel was in Peter Hain's introduction to the book "Policing the Police".

THE RED ARM OF THE LAW

How is it that the Labour Party and the left are always in the driving seat of any campaign that seems to be against increasing police powers. The answer is so obvious that you could easily overlook it. When they're out of office, the Labour Party desperately needs to jump on whatever bandwagon will help it recruit new members and more importantly catch votes in the next general election. This is nothing new. They've been at it for years: the People's March for Jobs, the Anti-Nazi League, Rock Against Racism. Each time they are squeezed dry and cynically discarded. This process can be seen working very smoothly with the peace movement as they protest about the very weapons that the labour government brought in to the country in the first place. And how many campaigns was Benn involved in when he was a minister.

Given the Labour Party's opposition to the Police Bill, let's have a look at their past achievements in the field of law and order: The Prevention of Terrorism Act, arming the police with riot equipment (the shields were first used at Lewisham in 1977), strengthening elite units like the SPG. When in office the Labour Party has given the police every ounce of its support as they smash down those who fight back outside the cosy confines of their rigged publicity stunts. Are we meant to believe that some miraculous change of heart has taken place? Or are they going to continue in the spirit of Eric Heffer MP when as the police were routed on the streets in 1981 he said "Rioters and looters must be punished with all due severity."

When they talk about 'policing by consent' this is because they recognise that 'consent' has to be created in first place. The police on their own cannot do this. They need the help of social workers, teachers, community leaders. Oozing socialist sincerity, these soft cops try to make us accept our alienation as a natural part of everyday life. These new welfare state gentry have the nerve to think that they can lead us in struggle. In the inner cities they make up the left establishment; running the councils, forming police committees, and whatever they say, their true role lies in diverting our anger into the most irrelevant community schemes and projects, trying to make us embittered individuals feel closer to the system that divides and isolates us. The contempt with which we treat them in the political arena is only one face of the hostility we show them in the "caring, sharing, socialist network."

For the extreme left, their adventures into electoral politics have been a devastating disappointment and have only resulted in a series of lost deposits. They are now generally united in the belief that their progress is dependant on the electoral success of the Labour Party, despite its shortcomings ('vote labour without illusions'). Worming their way into the labyrinth of party committees, they hope to develop an alternative leadership within the party. As workers' distrust and discontent with the traditional leadership grows, they want to neutralise it by feeding it back into the Labour Party machinery and dissipating it in support for left-wing caucuses. Being part of an established institution, such as the Labour Party, and at the same time part of the militant left is not a contradiction. It's just a question of tactics. When it comes down to it, the extreme left has no intention of abolishing the police force. They merely want to give these 'workers in blue' the opportunity to obey the instructions of their own political gang. If they got to power we would have the same social fabric, with a socialist police force kicking our heads in with their socialist boots.

Although these different groupings are often in fierce competition, reformist and 'revolutionary' alike seek to ride to power on the back of our struggle. So they must try to control that struggle right from the start. We are the canon fodder for their 'tactical advantages' to be safely put away in prison when no longer needed.

We have no need of these parasites. They leap from issue to issue, holding back those ready to put up a real fight and recruiting the more gullible amongst us. We've got to fight on our own terms, and let these vote cadgers wander in the wilderness of their own impotence.

LONDON AUTONOMISTS c/o Box 17, C1 Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London E 1



Back at the Station the old bill look really worried about the Labour Party's policy on Law and Order.

FOLLOWING THE LONDON INTERCOM CONFERENCE (27th/28th/29th Jan.)

An amendment to point 5 of the "Minimum basis for participation" in Intercom, as proposed by Wildcat (see page 5 of Intercom No. 4), was adopted.

Intercom 5 will be produced in London. Contributions should be typed onto Universal duplicator stencils if possible, and sent to :

'Intercom 5',
c/o CIA Metropolitan Wharf,
Wapping Wall,
London E1

- not later than Friday March 16th. (1984). The bulletin will be sent out at the beginning of April.

THE NEXT INTERCOM CONFERENCE will (provisionally) be held at Keele and hosted by the Careless Talk group. The dates will be 27th/28th/29th. April. Further details in Intercom 5.

"People who talk about revolution, without referring explicitly to everyday life -- such people have a corpse in their mouths."

Best wishes, LONDON INTERCOM GROUP

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE

What is Communism? A good question. You won't find the answer in the russian factories or prison camps. You won't find the answer in the kitchens and housing estates of Cuba or the "Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire". You won't find the answer in the ravings of the Leninist and Trotskyist sects. You won't even get a clue. Not that this booklet has all the answers. We can only really find the answer by making it, by abolishing the wages system, disposing of all the trappings of capitalist society and developing a human community where we are no longer governed by the logic of the commodity economy.

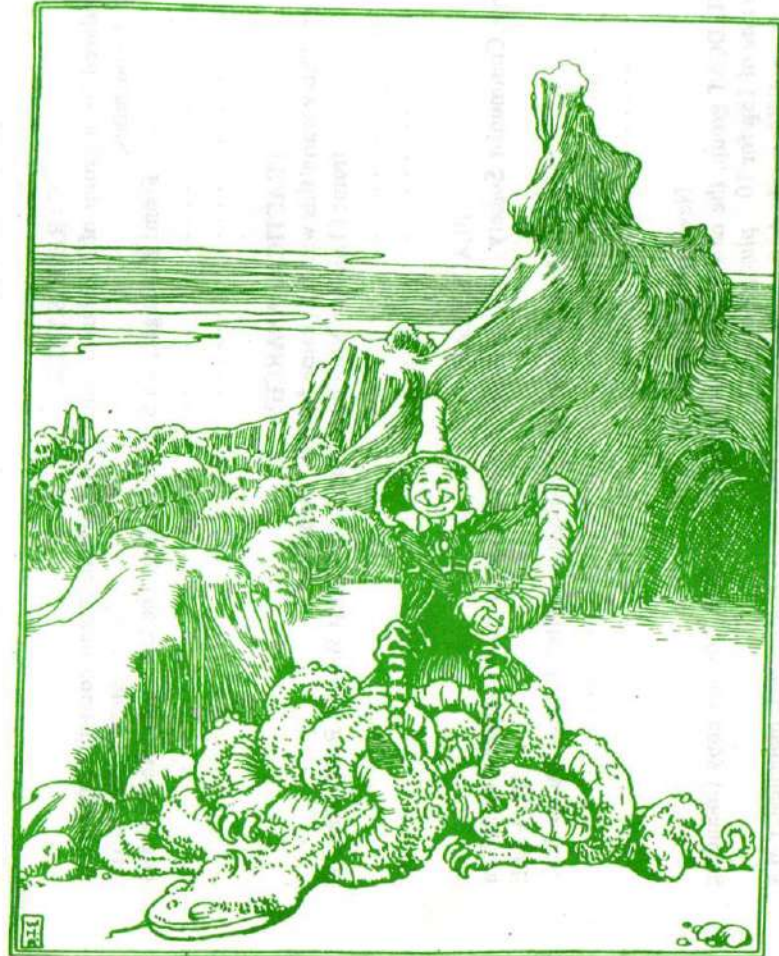
This booklet is however a contribution to that revolutionary struggle. By concentrating on the need to change social relations, it makes it clear that communism is nothing to do with new ways of managing the production and distribution of commodities in a more even way i.e. what passes for socialism .From a clearer understanding of capitalist society we can strengthen our struggles against it.

UNPOPULAR BOOKS

50p

WHAT IS COMMUNISM

BY JEAN BARROT



UNPOPULAR BOOKS

UNPOPULAR BOOKS

Booklets and pamphlets available

What is Communism
by Jean Barrot (previously published in "The Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement")
50p + 20p postage

This World We Must Leave
by Jacques Camatte
25p + 13p postage

Community and Communism in Russia
by Jacques Camatte
60p + 20p postage

Against Domestication
by Jacques Camatte
70p + 30p postage

A Modest Proposal for How the Bad Old Days will End
by "Re-invention of Everyday Life"
10p + 13p postage

Workers' Dreadnought, July 28th, 1917
Reprint of the first issue of this Left-Communist/Feminist magazine following its change of title
30p + 13p postage

1/3 discount available on bulk orders.

from: Unpopular Books, C1A Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London E 1

CARELESS TALK

North Staffs Newsheet, produced by a group of libertarian communists, anarchists and council communists living, working and claiming in the potteries.
5p or nearest offer (+SAE)
From: R. Knight, c/o Students Union, The University, Keele, Staffs

PRACTICAL ANARCHY

Clydeside Anarchist Newsheet - "Stay warm this winter.....cause trouble" - send SAE
from: Clydeside Anarchists, Box 3, 488 Great Western Road, Glasgow

BLACK STAR

Workers' Journal 'for a Free Communist Society'. Old Tyneside libertarian paper now published in Milton Keynes.
30p + SAE
from: P.O.Box 153, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Bucks, U.K.

New SWP Pamphlet

Now available from the WILDCAT group, the new extended pamphlet on the SWP. 20p per copy (including postage) or bulk orders at the rate of 15p for 10 plus postage.
from: Wildcat, c/o Autonomy Centre, 8 - 10 Great Ancoats Street, Manchester M 4