

SOLIDARITY SCOTLAND

PRODUCED BY

ABERDEEN

SOLIDARITY

GROUP

6^D

FOR WORKERS' POWER

WHAT IS SOLIDARITY ?

CLASS STRUGGLE IN SOCIETY

In all societies - be they private enterprise or state-controlled systems, a mixture of both; democratic or communist - working people are in continual conflict with their bosses.

This is the result of the role management has to play organising work. In both nationalised and private concerns, people at work endlessly resist management attempts to speed up work, to destroy job organisation and to further exploit their labour both in the job process and financially.

POLITICAL PARTIES

No matter which political party is in power, or whether there is a 'communist' dictatorship, the struggle between workers and bosses goes on. Despite the facade of parliamentary democracy, dictatorship reigns supreme at work. Workers cannot (constitutionally) get rid of their bosses! In the 'communist' states, nationalisation is often used as a more vicious instrument of exploitation than private enterprise.

TRADE UNIONS

The trade unions, supposedly the workers own organisations, are in the hands of permanent officials, careerists and bureaucrats, who are part of the ruling-class establishment. These bureaucrats are also in continuous conflict with the workers, as is evident from the way they regularly denounce 'unofficial' strikes and other activities.

NOT A SOLUTION

We do not wish to elect people to parliament, or to work inside the unions or Labour Party building left-wings. Working-class consciousness cannot be attained this way. These institutions must be destroyed with the rest of the establishment, when the workers are strong enough, and have built their own new organisations.

SOLIDARITY'S CASE AND ACTIVITIES

We stand for workers management and control of society, at work and out of it. Decisions on what will be produced and consumed, and how it will be produced and consumed will be made by the workers and not as now, by the bosses and ruling elites.

To this end, we support and encourage workers in their struggle with bosses, government and union bureaucrats, and hope, by contributing our ideas and effort to this struggle, to help create a working-class consciousness, and a realisation that the only way to stop the alienating class with the bosses is for the workers to eliminate them, and take over the management of industry, and society themselves.

For further study, read; Socialism Reaffirmed, Meaning of Socialism (a), Socialism or Barbarism (ad), Modern Capitalism and Revolution (b/c) and Crisis of Modern Society (ad). Plus postage from SOLIDARITY.

GLASGOW MEETING

A gathering of Solidarity supporters from London, Glasgow and Aberdeen was held in Glasgow on May 28th and 29th. Some 35 people attended.

Although Solidarity had not created the effective organization that some would have liked, we had nevertheless succeeded - over a period of six years - in making our viewpoint quite widely known. This in itself was an accomplishment. We had put forward a system of ideas more relevant to the problems of today than the received truths, or the muddled militancy, of most of the Left. We had also played our part in helping to re-create a tradition of direct action. In this we had helped bring about some of the union of theory and practice which most revolutionary groups uphold so strongly - in theory. Our activities had helped many to realise the need for a new kind of politics. But in the process of achieving this we too had changed.

Our ideas have been put forward in a number of publications. These are not just descriptions of isolated struggles. They reflect the many facets of a distinct political outlook. We owe a big debt to the intellectual demolition carried out by the original team of 'Socialisme ou Barbarie'. But what appears to us as an integrated body of thought might seem to others mere sterile iconoclasm. We had to state our ideas more positively. A simple statement was needed explaining the connection between the various struggles in which we had been involved and our overall critique of society. It was agreed to produce one.

We had to engage in relevant struggles. Revolutionaries could not pull movements of protest out of their sleeve nor substitute their own moral outrage for the involvement of masses of people. The anti-bomb movement, for instance, was now moribund. But experience and contacts gained there could be most valuable elsewhere. Our main field of work in the coming months would be in industry. We would also conduct systematic propaganda among people breaking from the ossified structures of the Labour Party and the Communist Party.

In the past there had been certain ambiguities about some of our attitudes (particularly in relation to pacifism and anarchism). Good will was often built up on the basis of fundamental misapprehensions. In the coming period our ideas would have to be put forward much more clearly. We have nothing in common with the kind of 'libertarianism' which seeks to create oases of freedom (whether in progressive schools or in 'factories for peace') or whose vision of social emancipation was the appointment of more libertarian prison governors (as in a recent issue of Anarchy). Other groups have rightly considered us heretics. Their criticism is most encouraging evidence that we have broken from their mental straitjacket of stale platitudes.

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Our difference with many of these groups is in our attempt to connect our socialist ideals with the problems of day to day life. The task today is not merely to proclaim that socialism is superior to capitalism (a proposition that hundreds of thousands would now accept). It is to show how our bureaucratic and inhuman society can be challenged in practice. There are groups on the left, some of considerable anti-quity, and most of them several times the size of Solidarity, that stand for a libertarian kind of socialism. Most of them, unfortunately, have all the organizational paraphernalia of large parties. They do little else than hold regular classes in socialism; pass long, muddled and often mutually contradictory resolutions at their annual conferences; or spend their time reminiscing or discussing which foreign groups are the nearest to them ideologically.

The total ineffectiveness of these groups is no accident. It comes from an outdated vision of capitalism and an abstract concept of politics. Well-worn blinkers prevent them from recognizing the new areas of struggle within modern bureaucratic societies. The formulation of programmes divorced from struggle reinforces their inactivity. The era of the resolution as a meaningful form of struggle has ended. Solidarity had had a response because we try to fuse what we say with what we do.

Today reformists are incapable of achieving even limited reforms. They are paralyzed by their acceptance of the existing world. We should therefore participate in rank and file struggles, even for limited objectives, bringing to them our own concepts of action. Such participation does not depend on those involved accepting our ideas. But we should not systematically refrain, as we have in the past, from putting forward our views through fear that this was tantamount to pushing them down people's throats.

The practical problems facing the different Solidarity groups were found to be very different, and consequently required different solutions. Neither the Glasgow nor the Aberdeen comrades have instituted formal membership within their own groups. They were in fact opposed to it.

The meeting also discussed ways and means of maintaining more regular contact and carrying out joint work. Addresses were exchanged to facilitate joint activity. It was decided to meet again in the autumn and at regular intervals afterwards.

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Aberdeen Solidarity

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A group of about half-a dozen people, adhering to the larger part of Solidarity's position, has been in existence for about six months now. So far we have engaged in little activity apart from meetings and the sale of literature, and this, the production of a whole issue of "Solidarity Scotland", is our first real effort.

The group has had a slow and sometimes painful evolution over the past two years, and various divergent strands have been woven together in the formation of the group. Just about two years ago, Aberdeen YCND was resurrected by the efforts of a local anarchist, and began to thrive and grow, becoming somewhat famous nationally. This comrade converted a few people to a basically anarchist position, one or two individual anarchists joined from outside, and under the direction of these people YCND progressed. There was no purely political, as opposed to anti-bomb, activity carried out, and the only effort to contact workers, apart from sporadic literature sales, was when some of them wrote an analysis of Henderson's Engineering Works, which appeared in "Solidarity Scotland" (Vol. 1, No. 6) about a year ago. But gradually disillusionment both with YCND which, although continuing to flourish, wasn't getting anywhere, and with the traditional anarchist movement around Freedom Press, for their refusal to support anti-colonial revolutions (e.g. Vietnam), made the anarchists receptive to new influences.

Meanwhile the local YS (Trotskyist) was being split by internal quarrels. There had always been a certain aloofness among its members towards the large number of working class youth collected in YCND, and they carried out their own political activities and meetings. It was never very strong, and its efforts to construct "mass branches" in the housing schemes all collapsed. Certain members then became more favourable to a libertarian type of organisation, as seen in YCND, which had succeeded in building a relatively mass movement, where "democratic centralism", "correct leadership" etc. had failed. These began attending YCND and came into very friendly contact with certain of the anarchists and they exchanged views and literature on various subjects. The good effects of these exchanges, combined with S.L.L.-style repression of difference of opinion (which may be the subject of a further article) in the YS, made their break with Trotskyism and alliance with the anarchists inevitable. Both groups gained out of the exchange. The ex-Trots threw aside their doctrinaire approach to problems and adopted a new libertarian, open eyed one. They also gave up certain of their favoured delusions, e.g. "strong leadership", "workers' states", and gained a good deal of historical insight and information into such events as Kronstadt and the Spanish Revolution. The anarchists, on the other hand, gained a new analytical approach, a respect for study, especially historical, and shed certain of their illusions, e.g. that Marx was a Fascist, or that the revolution will take the form of a spontaneous unconscious upsurge of the masses, just as ridiculous in its way as theories of the "strong leadership" variety. We now both accept that mass consciousness is an essential pre-condition to revolution.

The Aberdeen Group is a mixture of various previous political leanings - Anarcho-Syndicalist, Trotskyist, and Stalinist, all, however, having been brought together through the Peace Movement, causing a greater imbalance, even, than there is in the Glasgow Group, (See "AL-

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ignment, p.13).

Production of this issue of "Solidarity Scotland" has been an attempt to shift both work and focus from Glasgow alone. This issue, then, is largely the work of the Aberdeen group, although it has been duplicated in Glasgow since our machine in Aberdeen has gone on strike. We hope that this new sharing of work will enable "Solidarity Scotland" to be produced more regularly, and with less effort on the part of certain individuals on whom the greater part of the work has previously fallen.

In Aberdeen we have no plans to embark on ambitious schemes whose speedy failure would lead to frustration, but are, for the foreseeable future going to content ourselves with education (both of ourselves and of members of the local YCND - we were, and will be when we iron out our technical difficulties, producing sheets on "Major Socialist Thinkers", Owen - Lenin, which are given out and discussed at meetings with the SWF), and the attempt to reach workers through articles about them, e.g. the 'Hall Russell's' article on p.23 of the present issue.

We were able to send seven people as 'delegates' to the Solidarity conference held in Glasgow at the end of May. (See p.1) and may be involved in some local action on the housing question, so we have reason to be fairly optimistic about our chances of survival as a viable group.

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MODERNISATION

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The second in our series of excerpts from "FACING REALITY" pamphlet, "BE HIS PAYMENT HIGH OR LOW. THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS IN THE SIXTIES" by MARTIN GLABERMAN.

It should be clear that the problem does not lie in the inability of the unions to find a solution to such problems as automation. They have imposed a solution on the workers. The first to do it was John L. Lewis in the dying industry of coal mining. He collaborated in the mechanisation of those mines amenable to it and ruthlessly cut off the majority of the union membership, not only from work but from the social benefits, such as hospitalisation, which they had earlier won.

"In the decisive coal negotiations of 1952 the Southern coal producers, owners mostly of smaller mines, offered to meet all the union demands if Lewis would order three-day production in the industry. The larger mechanised mines opposed this move since it meant higher overhead costs for unutilised equipment. Lewis, reversing a previous course, chose to line up with the large mechanised mines and their desire for continuous output. The decision meant higher wages for the men but a permanent loss of jobs in the industry."

In the ten years from 1950 to 1960 the employment of coal miners fell by three-fifths to under 150,000. The bulk of those cut off from the mines make up much of what is known today as Appalachia. The union, however, gets richer because Lewis, with typical foresight, pegged the fringe and welfare benefits to productivity. Instead of the usual form of payment into welfare funds of so many cents per man-hour worked, he adopted the unique formula of basing company payments on the number of tons of coal mined.

The identical pattern was followed some years later by that other notorious militant, Harry Bridges of the West coast longshoremen. He signed an agreement with the dockside employers allowing unlimited automation and mechanisation in return for a large retirement fund a guaranteed 35 hour week for so-called 'A' members of the union. The second 'B' class members were left to fend for themselves. (They used some of their idle time to picket the union.) The East and Gulf coast dockers, not so fortunate as to have the militant Harry Bridges at their head and belonging to what only recently had been one of the most gangster-ridden unions in the US, rejected this year, at least temporarily, a contract that went only part way towards the total disciplining of the workers and struck their ports for over a month.

In auto and other manufacturing industries the transition was not quite so blatant and abrupt. But the tendency was the same. The unions collaborated in the wholesale reorganisation of production and imposed their own discipline of the grievance procedure. In the early fifties Emil Mazey, Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW (another well-known militant), threatened the Chrysler Corporation with the ending of all overtime work if they did not meet certain demands. In 1958 and 1959, however, with automation and a depression both hitting Detroit, when unemployed Chrysler workers picketed the plants and the union headquarters to end overtime while Chrysler workers were laid

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off, the company was able to end the picketing with a court injunction based on the union contract and its no-strike pledge. Workers off the company payroll, some for over a year, were prohibited from picketing or interfering with production because they were held to be bound by the union contract. The union had voluntarily relinquished the right of the workers to refuse overtime work.

The whole problem of automation cannot be gone into. But most of what has been written, from the right as well as from the left, is based on ignorance and misunderstanding. It is concerned entirely with the question of unemployment and has given rise to all sorts of theories about the imminent disappearance of the industrial working class or to theories of a new type of class struggle between the employed and the unemployed. All of this assumes that capitalism can automate at will and can overcome the falling rate of profit and the shortage of capital. The actual decline in the size of the working class in the fifties was reversed in the sixties. The increase in productivity has been greatest in utilities and communications (with substantial automation) and agriculture (no automation at all, but a great increase in mechanisation, chemical application and biological sciences) followed by mining (mechanisation rather than automation). The increase in productivity in manufacturing was slightly below the national average and even further below the increase in productivity that took place in manufacturing in the decade following World War I with the introduction of the assembly line and the endless chain drive.

The spokesmen for management argue that automation in the long run increases jobs. The spokesmen for labour argue that automation decreases jobs. And in this way both of them avoid any discussion of why capitalism, under any form of technological advance, produces, as Marx insisted, an ever-growing army of permanently unemployed. And what is more pertinent to this article, they avoid a discussion of what automation or any other changes in the process of production do to those workers who remain unemployed. The workers take a much more practical view than the sophisticated engineers and sociologists. They do not assume that what is scientifically possible is therefore inevitable in the near future under capitalism. They have much less respect for the supposed technical efficiency of capitalism than that. They are fully aware, however, that what has been taking place is a profound qualitative re-organisation of capitalist production, of which what is technically known as automation is only a part. Without the intellectuals' linguistic inhibitions, they call the whole process automation whether it involves computer operations, improvement in mechanical tools, transfer of work to other plants or simply speed-up. But the workers in the plants are as hostile to the process as a whole as the unemployed.

The favoured 'A' workers on the West coast docks have found that their newly automated work 'was converted into a continuous, almost oppressive stream'. In the Buick engine plant in Flint the workers had

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established sensible production schedules which the management had been unable to touch for years. That went by the board when Buick redesigned its engine from a straight-8 to a V-8 and built a new engine plant (not yet automation but using more up-to-date machinery and techniques and retiming all the jobs.) In plants where automation has been introduced the effect has been two-fold. The automated jobs are lighter physically but a much greater strain mentally. The un-automated jobs have been speeded up to pre-union levels to accommodate the increased flow of work. The great industrial concentrations, such as the Ford Rouge Plant, have been reduced or broken up with new plants built on a decentralised basis. Rouge is down from a war-time peak of 100,000 workers and a peace-time peak of 65,000 to under 35,000 but there are a whole series of new Ford plants built during the last ten years (and General Motors and Chrysler) within a 100-mile radius of Detroit and others in other parts of the country, south, east, and west.

What is involved in industry after industry is not simply the replacing of men by automated machines but the discarding of men, the moving of others and the bringing of still others into the industrial working class and the reorganisation of the work process. Huge masses of capital have been destroyed. In the auto industry Packard, Hudson, Murray Body, large corporations by any standard, have gone under because they did not have sufficient capital to stay in the race. Whole areas of clerical work have become proletarianised. Stenographers, clerks, book-keepers in larger offices and in banking and insurance have been turned into machine operators. It is a common sight to see rows of typists at their desks, with head sets fastened to one ear, typing letters, reports, etc. from dictaphone machines. They no longer see the executives who do the dictating - only the forelady who sees their breaks are not too frequent or too long and that they don't dawdle at their work. Except for being cleaner and better lit it is indistinguishable from factory work.

CLASS and

IDEOLOGY

IAN R. MITCHELL

Doctrinal sterility seems to have displaced analysis as a tool for the construction of theories about the nature of class under modern capitalism; and a repetition of useless cliches, instead of actual observation and experience, allows no foothold for a new approach in the minds of most socialists. Thus modern marxists (and also many anarchists who, not realising how indebted to, and imbued by, the thought of Marx they are, recoil in virgin horror from anything but the idea that they are violently anti-

marxist) claim that, not only was Marx's theory of social class useful and, as far as these things can be, correct in his lifetime and after, but also that it has the same virtues today. Similarly people of bourgeois inclinations seize upon the 'affluence' of certain modern industrial societies (particularly the USA and Britain) and on very superficial examination claim that "class does not exist", while in reality they are justifying their own position and the society which produced them and their privileges. Ideology is a useful thing for both revolutionaries and reactionaries, but they have to be, at a particular stage, revised and even abandoned, since, once they have lost plausibility, they are just cumbersome hindrances to success. I propose to analyse briefly Marx's theories about the nature of class and to question their relevance to certain societies, viz. the USA, USSR and, in some detail, our own. His theory is the most thorough ever made and finds fragmented expression throughout his work, although it finds a fairly simple and concise formulation in the 'Bourgeois and Proletarians' section of the 'Communist Manifesto' (1348).

Marx asserted that the basis of class is economic, that throughout the history of all societies - the main periods being primitive, feudal, capitalist, followed (he expected) by socialist and communist - the existence of various classes was determined by the stage of production and the consequent means of production reached. Membership of the classes in existence was determined by a certain relationship, a relationship of ownership and non-ownership to the means of production and exchange; all other things which people have seen as determinants of class - wage levels, education, values and aspirations - Marx saw as being determined by this basic factor, this definite relationship which was inevitable under a given productive stage. He examined capitalism on this basis and came to certain conclusions. Firstly that this relationship of individuals in a society to its productive forces, which placed them in definite classes, generated an inevitable and all-important phenomenon which he called the class-struggle:

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the class-struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."1 (Communist Manifesto)

Marx's conviction that historical change was achieved by the victory of one class over another he related to capitalism by saying that the inevitable conflict between capital and labour would lead to the victory of the latter. Class consciousness would be fostered by

- a) the growth in numbers of the working class at the expense of particular sections of society, mainly the middle class (by this Marx meant artisans, peasants, small shopkeepers etc.) which would be forced into the proletariat by the growth of large-scale monopolistic enterprises with which they would be unable to compete.

1. 'Selected Works' Vol. 1. p.34 (Foreign Languages Edition) 1962.

b) such factors as large-scale factory production which would enable the worker to see his position, not in isolation, but as that of a class, as well as the speed of modern communications and the 'education' of the workers by a section of the ruling class, which would break away from their former conditions of existence; and
c) by the ever-recurring, ever-worsening crises to which capitalism was prone and which would make the workers' position untenable, provoking him to revolt. In his early years Marx felt that this revolt would take the form of violent revolution, but later he viewed the possibility of the use of universal suffrage and the election of workers' representatives to parliament with favour. The post-revolutionary society he saw as passing first through a stage which he called "the dictatorship of the proletariat"; here inequalities and coercion would persist but he was hopeful that they would fade away and not perpetuate themselves.

"Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the State can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." (Critique of the Gotha Programme 1875).

Marx's theories were constructed out of 19th century experience. The rapid development of 'two nations', noticed by others as well as Marx, in England, the world's most advanced capitalist country, and the growth of class consciousness as seen in the formation of Trades Unions, socialist parties, strikes etc., coupled with the regular, increasingly violent class-struggles (1830, 1848, 1871) which he observed in France could be pointed out in order to lend conviction to his theories. But an examination of advanced industrial societies shows that little, if any, of his predictions have come true, and the existence of Soviet Russia brings even his definition of class, i.e. ownership or non-ownership of the means of production and exchange, into question. Some who are with us so far will not take this step. Perhaps the theory is in need of a little revision, but to call the definition on which the theory is based inadequate, is rank heresy. Let us take the USSR as our test case. Here private property in production and exchange has been almost totally abolished, and by Marx's definition, since there everyone is in the same relationship (i.e. non-ownership) to these things there no classes. But in Russia in the 30s there was greater inequality between the highest and the lowest paid than there was in the West, and this persists, although concessions to equality have been made since the death of Stalin. But even this ignores the fact that the workers do stand in a different relationship to the productive forces in the USSR, from that of the elite, the Party. This relationship is one of control, and it is perfectly justified to say that those who control production and decide its nature and aims are a different class from those who are in a position of being dominated and have no say in what is being produced, for what purpose it is produced, or how it is produced. Marx's definition needs to be extended to, not merely ownership, but to ownership and/or control of the productive forces. In this respect Bakunin is more correct and relevant than Marx, for he said:

"The State has always been the patrimony of some privileged class; the sacerdotal class (here too?), the nobility, the bourgeoisie - and finally when all other classes have exhausted themselves, the class of the bureaucracy enters upon the stage." (from Maximoff's edited edition of Bakunin's writings (Free Press of Glencoe)). Perhaps those who insist on castigating 'revisionism' do it because they hope to eventually become members of this new class?

Now that we have amended Marx's definition of class, let us see what happened to his predictions by examining modern Britain, its significant social class differences and structure, and by trying to discover 'where he went wrong'. Accepting Marx's indisputably true contention that the class-struggle in all societies is "an objective social and psychological fact"², we must refute the capitalist apologists and show, drawing on figures from government publications that class is a very real phenomenon in modern 'democracies'. The first, central, field in which social class differences are manifested is that of income. The overall wealth of this country has increased greatly since the war, due to various factors - more efficient exploitation of holdings and investments in under-developed countries, the fruits of modern technology, virtual elimination of the trade-cycle. This has created an illusion of a redistribution of wealth, which is foundationless. Any move towards social equality occurred before 1950, due mainly to the pressures of a war-time economy, and since then the trend has probably been reversed. The carefully fostered illusion of an upper-class dealing both in numbers and ownership of property cannot be equated with the fact that in the short period 1960-63 the number of persons with assets of £100,000 plus rose from 27-40,000. The same pattern emerges when we come to wages and salaries. While the average wage of the manual worker rose by 55% from 1955-1965, in the same period that of non-manual workers (depressed by the inclusion of low-paid clerical groups) rose by almost 80%. Even this does not take into account 'fringe-benefits' such as life-assurances, super-annuation, tax-free payments on retirement, capital gains, expense accounts etc., etc., which are all denied the manual worker. Further, while reductions in income-tax have tended to help the higher-paid workers slightly, they have left the lower-paid almost the same. This has happened while the average percentage of income left to those with £6,000 a year or over after tax has risen from 5% (1949) to 35% (1964). The illusion of a redistribution of wealth is created by the 'hall of mirrors' effect of prosperity, and by the skill of the ruling classes who no longer parade their riches ostentatiously. Why has this increase in overall wealth not been totally pocketed by the ruling classes, and why has the workers' observable standard of living risen? I must confess that I do not really know, but a plausible explanation has been put forward by Paul Cardan in his book "Modern Capitalism"³. His contention is that the class-struggle has forced consciousness not only on the workers, as Marx foresaw, but also on the capitalists. This has led them to various discoveries which we need not go into here, as he does this in some detail, the main one being that a steadily

2. C. Wright Mills "The Marxists" (Pelican).

3. Paul Cardan "Modern Capitalism & Revolution" (Solidarity - (1965), 3/6).

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rising standard of living among the working-class is necessary for the efficient functioning of modern capitalistic economies:

"In the final analysis wage increases are indispensable for capitalist expansion. In an economy where the consumption of wage-earners makes up about 50% of the total demand and where production grows by 3% per year, there must be an approximate parallelism between the rise in wages and the rise in production.⁴... By granting wage increases capitalism solves the problem of necessary markets for its continually expanding production. It tries simultaneously to buy the docility of the workers."⁵

The whole question of wages and wealth in modern Britain shows that today's ruling class is far more skillful than that of the past. They can disguise class rule, assuring, by rigorous control of the economy, that the workers' standard of living will constantly rise, although his position relative to them will remain the same.

In other fields the same pattern evolves. That is that things have improved for everybody, but that the relative positions of the classes are still the same. Let us look briefly at social mobility and education. The claim that in Britain status and wealth depend on ability and not on birth is not substantiated by the fact that almost all social mobility takes place between adjacent occupations, or as a result in changes in the occupational structure (e.g. the elimination of many routine manual jobs due to automation and the increase in the number of clerical, technical and scientific workers). The top positions in Britain are dominated by those who have had a public school education, which is closed to working-class children. Judges were 75% from public schools (1964), Governors of the Bank of England almost 70% (1958), directors of leading firms 60% (1965), Ambassadors 70% (1953); the examples could be cited all day. Is the situation radically different in the grammar-schools? In the mid-50s the working-class with 70% of the population had 23% of the grammar-school places, and a mere fifth of the university ones. The expansion in education has nothing to do with equality and has little benefited the working-class. The fact is that a modern industrial nation needs such people as scientists, managers, teachers, civil servants etc., and these have to be educated. It's a simple mercenary calculation, that's all. A similar view could emerge on an examination of the Health Service, but space is limited.

The purpose of this long digression from Marx, where we left him unable to explain, in terms of his definition of class, the new class which has arisen in Russia, is to show that, although Britain is in every respect most decidedly a class-ridden society, it is nothing like any that Marx either knew, or expected to develop. The possibility of the workers gaining consciousness he examined in some detail, but the possibility that the class-struggle and threat of revolution could make the capitalists act from anything other than their usual grasping, short-sighted greed never really occurred to him. The elimination of the "anarchy of the market" by state regulation has been the supreme fruit of this consciousness, eliminating cycles of booms and slumps, and also widespread unemployment and poverty. The State, as already

4. Op.cit. p.24.

5. Op.cit. p.63.

stated, needs a vast bureaucracy to perform this function, resulting in the growth of a new middle-class the extent of who's feeling of solidarity with the workers is debatable.⁶ Much, then, of traditional Marxist teaching on class-struggle and consciousness is irrelevant today. Even the greatest socialist could no more see the transition from a laissez-faire, poverty-ridden, brutally exploitative economy to one which is increasingly State-controlled, which has eliminated widespread poverty, but which is still undoubtedly a class-system.

But socialist consciousness is more than a reflex to unbearable misery. The attempt by a highly conscious modern capitalist class to reduce the workers to docile, well paid functionaries denies their basic humanity, and the intensity of class disputes shows no sign of decreasing, in fact the reverse is true. What has changed is that workers no longer go on strike solely for an increase in wages. It can be shown that about two-thirds of strikes are fought over conditions of production - tea-breaks, speed-ups, time and motion studies, automation, toilet and other facilities etc. The worker, no longer concerned with whether he is going to live, is concerned nowadays with how he lives, almost controlling the conditions under which he works, and this new sense of dignity can develop into a struggle explicitly for the control of production itself. This trend is manifested particularly in the new assembly line industries, and is less applicable in the old heavy industries.

As the traditional channels of protest - trade unions, socialist parties etc., become integrated into the exploitative structure of capitalism, workers are carrying out their activities on a rank-and-file level, most strikes being unofficial. The possibility is there, given the intervention of conscious revolutionaries, that this struggle can be made a conscious one. People are refusing to be fitted into "the great bureaucratic pyramid" and are pre-occupied with the lack of meaning that their work has for them. This, combined with the unconscious struggle for control of production, involves them in conflict with the State, not only the State of the western 'democracies', but also with that which exists in the east. The Hungarian workers who rose in 1956 and the Polish socialists who were recently jailed were fighting the same battle as those who today, in our country, take part in unofficial strikes and form shop stewards' committees. All these tendencies will not develop overnight, nor will they develop unless they are helped along by revolutionaries. What we need most of all is a 20th Century Marx to give overall meaning to the class-struggle, and that is perhaps as great a compliment as you could pay him.

IAN. R. MITCHELL

6. See "White Collar" - C. W. Mills, & "Blackcoated Worker" - D. Lockwood.

ALIGNMENT

The result of several years of dominance by the Peace Movement over the "left" has created a residue of political workers ranging from those whose reckless stupidity and lack of political accumen leads to "action at all costs"; to those whose reactionary reserve from years of traditional "left" activity (or inactivity) leads them to condemnation of all but the most safe, sterile, confined activities.

The traditional "left" split roughly in three over the Peace Movement. Firstly, those who were downright hostile. Secondly, those who were cool and condescending. And thirdly, those who participated enthusiastically, seeing it as a breeding ground for political discontent, a place to bring "left" ideas to new people and perhaps a potentially revolutionary movement. The experiences of these groups are continually schooled over such issues as the role of the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy and the attitude of revolutionaries towards it.

Here the big split comes; into those who are willing to make some apology, no matter how small for the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy, and those who will give no quarter to them. In other words, into those who want to reform, change or squeeze something from the old organisations, and those who want to build new organisations and destroy (or ignore) the old.

Of those who were active in the Peace Movement, but had never previously participated in the "left", a minority rationalised their experience, and in most cases, as a result of contact with "left" politics, developed a more advanced political position. The majority, seeing the Peace Movement getting nowhere fast, left, disillusioned, through a lack of political perspectives.

A fusion of those traditional leftists, who had been Peace Movement activists, and*who came into left-wing circles through the Peace Movement has been partly the basis of most Solidarity Groups, with the theoretical writings of Paul Cardan and others, as the mainstay of the groups' philosophy.

Both tendencies have complimented each other, the older lefts having a sobering effect on the peaceniks and they in turn have breathed some life into the traditional "left".

The balance between the groupings is necessary to the survival and development of the groups. The imbalance in the Scottish Group has had bad effects.

Finally the influence of the third and most important group of people must be taken into account; these are the industrial workers and shop stewards, whom we have engaged in group activities, who have neither been involved in traditional left-wing political activity nor the Peace Movement.

The integration of these three groups and their joint development is necessary if the Scottish Solidarity Group is to survive as a workable unit.

* Insert "those".

REVOLUTIONARIES: WRITE ABOUT LIFE!

After all the drivel written by revolutionaries these many decades, is it any wonder most people still prefer Jesus?

What's the matter with revolutionaries, that they can't communicate?

"Western Culture" is a shambles. Our society is corrupt from the bottom up. Modern philosophy can no longer define Truth. Kids who can stand their parents will soon be nine-day wonders. Black seeds of revolt have the mayors of our cities pissing in their pants, and are sucking all white kids worth their salt in their wake. Even industrial psychologists, advertisers, etc., faced with the impossible task of at once giving pseudo-information and convincing themselves and their victims that they are giving real information, are beginning to balk. No one believes a single one of those values "on which our republic stands". We are killing, gassing, burning, torturing, starving --all in the name of freedom, justice, equality, democracy and motherhood. And the "enemy" is doing the same in the name of freedom, justice, equality, socialism and motherhood. In the face of all this, the majority, however, are still at least half-afraid of the revolution.

Why?

This question cannot be fully answered in less than a book. I will limit myself to one single aspect of it. Since this is directed primarily at radicals and revolutionaries, the relevant question is: in what way are we responsible?

Some time ago, I was in England talking to some libertarian socialist friends, and I brought up what I consider to be a fundamental question for any revolutionary. Whatever differences we may have among ourselves, we revolutionaries, at least theoretically, agree on one point: our society is fundamentally inhuman. This proposition separates us from the "social reformers". We do not believe that the inhumanity we see all around us is a set of defects in an otherwise "good" social order. Since Marx and Freud, we know inhumanity to be the essence of our social order, not its defects. The model of Auschwitz was a Ford factory. (This point of view, of course, implies the denial that the official descriptions of our society - most sociology books, etc. - are true. We consider them rather to be studies in ideology formation and mystification.) I mentioned all this to my English friends and, getting their agreement, concluded I thought logically: then we should look for the damage in ourselves as well as elsewhere. Had I been one to believe that logic was a motivational force for human beings, I'd have been surprised at the react-

ion. They didn't want to hear anything of that sort of argument.

I was present when the same matter was brought up among some revolutionary socialists in Paris this summer, and saw the same negative reaction. This reaction is the symptom of an anti-introspective disease common among radicals. My point is: if radicals would spend more time admitting to themselves their own needs, wishes and motives, a lot of the petty strife within the radical movement would stop by itself. And radicals would finally begin to write stuff ordinary people can read without throwing up.

Is this, or does it imply, a put-down of radicals? No. Why should it? Radicals are products of the same lousy society as everyone else. If anyone singles them out as if they were the only damaged neurotics, he is merely an ideologist for the establishment. But radicals should not fall for the illusion that their "revolutionary consciousness" exempts them from the shit. Capitalism stinks! And it is totalitarian!

Does this mean that radicals should spend the rest of their lives in morbid soul-searching excavating the vomit from their unconscious? Sure, baby. The very fact that this type of question keeps arising is only a further symptom of the general disease. Paint the world blue red green yellow purple, not black and white! Reality is a diamond, not a block of wood.

The point is: we have to realise that, whatever ideologies people may concoct to justify their actions to others and to themselves, the driving force for their behaviour is not the theoretical ideas they give, but their needs as human beings. Since Marx and Freud, we no longer need stress the fact that the concept need includes far more than just hunger. If we want to talk about the revolution to ordinary people, we will have to drop all lifeless abstractions and talk about the concrete possibility of another and better society. We will have to start realising that it is our fault that "the masses" have rejected us so long. Much of the shit we have written has had little to do with their lives, with their needs. The emotional tone of much of radical literature has been rather to reject people's concrete human needs, and to demand they replace them with abstractions or a revolutionary morality.

Some of the best recent examples of this can be found in pacifist literature. In our society, almost every single basic human need is systematically frustrated and stunted from infancy to death. This means that any normal human product of our society is filled to bursting with aggression and hate. (When we turn this against our rulers and their society, instead of against each other, we become revolutionaries.) Under the inhuman conditions of our society, this aggression and hate represents a real human need. The abstract and absolute "Thou shalt not kill" of some pacifist writing denies this need. This denial represents a lack of basic respect for the needs of real people. But when pacifists criticize or attack people for hating or violence, they are not only ignoring need; they are doing something worse. They are condemning this society by criticizing its victims. It doesn't matter at what level of consciousness people perceive this. The fact is: it gets through. Pacifist arguments, however convincing they may be to

their authors, have not changed the world. The question is: why? And that line about "good and bad acts" has worn a bit thin.

To answer this question, pacifists will have to admit more of their own needs and motives to themselves. Personally, many pacifists are in fact what they are out of "neurotic" motives. As I said, you grow up in this society shit on from get up to go to bed. This holds for all of us. In addition, many of us get an extra goody. They get batted into their heads the idea that the aggression they develop under these conditions is immoral. "Johnny, you shouldn't hate Tommy; he's your little broooother." Ha! Can you think of any better reason to hate him? The world of these children is not enviable (though smaller doses of it were probably there in the lives of most of us). Every aggressive impulse they show evokes horror and hurt in their ever-"loving" parents. "No sane, normal, decent person could ever think of hurting a close friend or relative." O, Mama! Can't you deposit you ass on the city dump? Grow up long enough under these conditions, and you begin to accept these values. Then you develop an internal cop who punishes you for and makes you afraid of your own impulses of aggression and hate. Put up with this for a while, and you stop becoming conscious of these impulses in yourself. The repression is complete. (The path outlined is not the only way to get this problem, but it's as good a one as any.) As individuals, such people are often very gentle and loving people, but they chase others out of the peace movement, because they communicate their anti-vital attitudes in many subtle ways. Others see in them a threat to their own individual needs. After all, we don't all have the same problems.

IMPORTANT. This and similar "psychological" arguments are usually misused by establishment ideologists as an argument against the pacifists' case itself. This is prostitution. The arguments of the pacifists must stand or fall on their own merits as arguments, not on the basis of the mental health or disease of their proponents. The psychology of the pacifists bears no relation to the validity of their arguments, but it is relevant to the pacifists' motives, and these in turn have to do with the reasons for their isolation. Their psychology is relevant to this, and to nothing else. But that is exactly what we are talking about here.

Similar things could be said about socialist literature. Directly or indirectly, most serious modern socialist thought is the intellectual grandson of Karl Marx. Marx, like Freud after him, knew that the motive force in human history was man's needs, and not the abstractions he invents to explain his behaviour. The socialist writers themselves tended to lose track of this. The picture of this society they presented degenerated to abstractions like exploitation, surplus value, mass poverty; etc., and their presentations buried concrete, suffering, emotionally crippled, alienated, intellectually stunted, mentally tortured individual human beings (who after all are what constitute this society) under this pile of abstractions. For our purposes here we can ignore the CP apologists, because their banality has long been exposed. But even the libertarian socialists have not addressed themselves to concrete human needs. The "puritan" tone of much socialist literature, the unrealistic idealization of a mythical "working class", a clean muscular bare-armed smiling statue standing on a pedestal in the clouds - these may

have been fine ideals, for the person who held them already. But the average "peasant" does not long for the world of noble austerity which was the (emotional) promise of socialist literature. In our society today, real human beings, as opposed to "socialist" statues, are full of hate and aggression, not nobility, are physically and mentally gnarled and stunted, preferring fucking to Mozart, beefsteak to oatmeal (though they may be willing to put up with dry bread instead of both rather than admit the full explosive force of their own desires), and comic books to "literature". On those occasions where socialist literature did take cognizance of all this, however, it became even worse. It developed a disgusting tone of condescension, as if the working class were a pack of children. Let's face it. The working class is a pack of barbarians. But only in the same sense that the "intellectuals" in our society are a pack of barbarians. Because this society we're living in reduces all of us, intellectuals or boobs, to a fraction of our humanity.

This is what the socialist intellectuals forgot. They grasped the fact that this society is fundamentally rotten. But they would not accept the consequences of this for themselves. Having no understanding of their own (alienated) needs, they of course had none for the needs of others. This helps explain another seemingly contradictory phenomenon on the left, the vacillating attitude to the "working class". At one phase, the working class was a set of idealized statuettes, noble and true, suffering under the indignities of capitalism, but pure of heart, needing but to throw off their capitalist masters to become Superman. At the other phase, workers were brutes incapable of attaining a true socialist consciousness except if fed by their generous middle-class intellectuals. These two sets of stereotypes are only apparently contradictory. Both develop quite naturally out of the alienated position of the intellectual.

One of the salient effects of the division of labor in our society is the creation of antagonistic compartments out of pairs that in a more human society would be complimentary and integrated: head work vs. manual labor, theory vs. practice, reason vs. feeling, spontaneity vs. reflectiveness, introversion vs. extroversion, etc. The intellectual in our society is quite typically victimized by this structural principle. Empirically, intellectuals are often people with a quite inhibited emotional life. They are very often individuals who developed their "intellectual" bent as a compensation for inabilities in other more fundamental areas. This correlation has been observed so often that apologists for the status quo tend to believe that there is a natural, eternal and irreconcilable enmity between reason, or intellect and the vitality principle of human beings. This is pure ideological nonsense, of course, accepting people's victimization at the hands of an inhuman society as a law of nature. But as an empirical statement, it rightly describes the state of affairs in the lousy society we are forced to grow up in. Upbringing and schooling in our society tends to isolate the intellectual not only from the rest of society, the non-intellectuals, but also from the "non-intellectual" part of himself, his own feelings and his basic needs as a human being. Normally, our society allows you to develop the one only at the cost of sacrificing the other. "If the kids really enjoy school, they mustn't be learning too much."

The radical or revolutionary intellectual is no exception to this. Isolated from an understanding of his own needs, of the motive forces in himself, how can he have any real grasp of these forces in others? On the other hand, revolutionary intellectuals rightly sensed that they themselves would never attain freedom except in a mass movement. Besides, they had glimpsed, even if only dimly and in an alienated way, the real possibility of a future emancipation. After this, they badly needed ideals to carry them through the sordid world of reality in which they were actually living. The working class served this purpose. This was not even so stupid as it may seem at first sight, for oppressed masses, in their great moments in history, have in fact shown all the great noble and glorious characteristics of their idealized representations. Moreover, our potential salvation will in fact come either from "the masses", or never. There are no real islands of freedom in an unfree world, nor will intellectual elites ever free the world, and these revolutionaries, at one level of their tortured psyche, knew this.

The ideal picture of the noble working class was fine for bedroom contemplation, but revolutionary intellectuals couldn't completely avoid contact with ordinary people in everyday life. And there they met not their porcelain statuettes, but dirty, stinking, fearful, stupid, short-sighted, hate-ridden, narrow-minded brute human beings -- human beings who, potentially noble perhaps, had in real life all the characteristics which have been the trade-mark of the oppressed since the beginning of oppression. They met in these "masses" the same brutalization and dehumanization they were suffering in themselves, but they would not recognize themselves in it. They saw in them the victimization an inhuman society inflicts on all alike, but could not recognize it as such, for to do so would have meant to admit the extent of their own degradation. And this was too much too ask of them. Understandably, but unfortunately none the less. Unable to face themselves in the horror mirror the working class held up to them, they had no recourse but to concoct theories in which they attributed to themselves a "higher consciousness" - an alienated consciousness which the working class patently could never achieve except from without. This of course made their isolation complete, and them irrelevant. (A variation on this theme is seen among those who refused to admit their own barbarization, but at the same time resisted the temptation to constitute themselves as an elite. They did this by denying the empirical fact of the brutalization of the working class. For these people, almost anything ordinary people do is almost automatically all right, and intellectuals have no right to criticize. This position is of course as absurd as any other uncritical position.)

In their splendid isolation, these revolutionaries developed analyses of our society which were quite correct and even profound, as far as they went. But they remained nailed up high as abstract generalizations with no relationship to the day-in, day-out preoccupations of ordinary people. There remained an unbridged gap between the mundane needs and misery of concrete people in an inhuman society and the abstract generalizations offered by the radicals. Almost nowhere in radical literature is there any real attention to the unconscious or only semi-conscious motivations or chains of motives and associations which their

writings might unlock in a normal reader. How could there be? These writers had no clue to these things in themselves, if they didn't out-and-out deny their existence. "Don't talk about it and it'll go away." How, then, could they possibly attend to these things in others?

How, then, could their writing have been other than what it was? A set of fairly accurate and to some extent even profound generalizations divorced from real life. Even some who took on concepts like need, motive, desire, remained rather theatrical or abstract. It is not need or desire in the abstract to which we must attend, but to the specific needs, motives, or fears, unconscious or not, that may be awakened in readers by what we write. There is more attention to (alienated) motives in a single well planned and conducted advertising campaign than there is in most of the radical literature in print.

I am not of course suggesting that revolutionaries should copy the advertisers, whose job is to destroy not to form consciousness. But I am suggesting that we at least recognize a few basic principles that even the ideologist Ernest Dichter with his banal bourgeois "common sense" recognizes (even if in a distorted way). People are not mov-
ed by abstractions and generalizations. They are moved by their immediate conflicts and miseries, even if the nature of their motives is unconscious to them. (This statement applies to intellectuals as much as it does to 'ordinary people'.) Generalizations, or theoretical statements, are a real motive force in us only to the extent that we grasp their essential relationship to our concrete and immediate needs and motives. This is not because we are blunt, but because we are human animals. But in the "education" process our schools inflict on us, we are trained not to try to grasp connections between individual misery and the society at large. If the socialist intellectuals have any useful function at all, it is to work against this trend, to help people learn the kind of integrating thinking our schools try to beat out of their heads. But these generalizations will remain lifeless and irrelevant if not clearly related to the needs and frustrations of living people. People have been so well conditioned in school and beyond to regard critical generalizations about our society as the enemy of their desires (Think of them "critical generalizations" you got in church from moralistic preachers, from those anti-vital schoolteachers, or from moralistic editorials in the conservative press.) that they quite naturally and properly reject those socialist theoreticians who speak to them on the plane of abstract general morality.

We didn't ask for the world we live in, but it is characterized by a division of labor in which intellectuals by specialized training (not by birth or "native talent") have particularly cultivated abilities to draw generalizations from everyday experience. (In this article I do not distinguish between intellectuals by profession and intellectuals by "hobby".) This does not mean that they always do it better than others, nor that they are always to be trusted when they do, for it is not only how well you do the job that counts, but also in whose interest. It simply means that they have a certain amount of particular "training for the job". It is simply a fact in our society of division of labor that some people are trained to see social connections better than others. Those who are revolutionaries will do all they can to end this state of affairs as fast as possible.

If revolutionary intellectuals want to have any relevance, therefore, they cannot set themselves up as an elite, or as an isolated caste apart. The practical criterion for the value of their analyses must be simply: are they accepted by ordinary readers? In the face of what I've already said about the barbarization of our society, this may seem a stiff statement. Sure is. Life is rough in a shitty society, and if you don't make it, tough titty. Intellectuals are simply going to have to adopt a new rule: if I didn't convince what was wrong with my arguments and my presentation, what motives, feelings, needs, fears, etc. of my readers did I overlook? And stop trying to dodge responsibility by appealing to the stupidity or dullness of others. You cannot change others by fiat; you can change yourself by work and self-examination. Begin with the knowledge that the damage this society has inflicted on you is only specifically but not generically different from what it has inflicted on everyone else. Admit your own brutalization, your own spiritual and intellectual poverty. And above all, learn to hate passionately this society and those who gain from it, and not its victims (except those in the cop category, of course - let's not be meek and humble Jesus Christ).

Do all this, start writing about life, and you might make it.
Jim Evrard.

SHOT YOU WILL BE!

1966 proved to be a bumper year for one old American custom - the mass-murder.

In April, a young man, who broke into a nurses' home in Chicago, stabbed and strangled eight of the girls. About six weeks later, a student at the University of Texas locked himself in a high tower there, having laid in a supply of food, water, ammunition and high-powered rifles. He was an expert marksman, trained in the Marines. He shot twelve people dead, killed an unborn baby and wounded thirty-one, before being killed himself by police. In November, an eighteen-year-old lad shot five women and a little girl, after making them lie in a circle on the floor of a hairdressers' shop in New York. He had been given the gun as a present.

America was shocked by all this. It was terrible to think that Americans were being killed as they went about their normal lives.

Clearly it was not the killing, per se, which caused the moral upset. Thousands of Viet-namense, some armed "Viet-Cong", but most of them defenceless old men, women and children are killed every month, if not week, by Americans, or at their instigation. What is more the killing is done in the most brutal possible ways, often by napalm and shrapnel bombs, aerial sprays of chemicals and torture. Several thousand Americans have died in Viet-nam. But all this is acceptable.

But, when foreign spokesmen claim that the mass-murders are evidence of the degeneracy of American society, the Americans and their foreign mouth-pieces reply that, since the murders were mad, their actions do not reflect on the American Way of Life.

But do they?

VIOLENCE AND PATRIOTISM IN THE AMERICAN CULTURE-PATTERN

21

In every Society, there are fairly definitive ways in which things necessary for the continuance of the Society are achieved and social relationships maintained. From these, develops a set of traditions, beliefs, ideas and expectations, upon the acceptance of which, the lives of most people in the Society are based. These form the Culture-pattern of the Society.

The American Culture-pattern is saturated with selfishness, one-upmanship, disregard for others' welfare, and sheer criminality. U.S. Society could be described as the most intense of rat-races, which all modern societies tend to be but this is doubtless grossly unfair to rats.

Violence and glorification of all things American are two prominent features of the American Culture-pattern. There is, as always in these matters, a definite inter-relation between the two.

From the time that he/she can understand anything, the U.S. child is taught to revere Americanism. This fierce, irrational patriotism takes many forms, from singing to the American flag every morning in school, to the oft-repeated claim that the USA has the biggest of everything, (e.g. crime-rate?).

At the same time, violence is all around, as part of the great American tradition. They see it in real life, in comics, films, on television and in various forms of military propaganda, which are rife. History, as taught in schools, is full of glorification of U.S. military exploits. The "Conquest of the West", was achieved by a series of broken treaties, and by the deliberate massacre of the bison by the settlers. This deprived the Plains Indians of their main source of food and clothes. Mass starvation followed. Thus was born "The Land of the Free".

To-day, the good work is kept up in Viet-nam, all the barbarities of which, the U.S. child is taught to applaud.

INDIVIDUAL VIOLENCE IN THE CULTURE - PATTERN

True, the good American parent, teacher or priest will deplore individual violence, and support mainly the State type (War and police action). But a certain amount of individual violence in defence of property is often encouraged.

More important than that, there is not a clear distinction between the two. They worked hand-in-hand to conquer the Indians. Also, Americans greatly admire, and strive for success or "getting to the top". In business and politics success is frequently accompanied by violence, of the State or of the individual (gangsterism) variety.

It is only by using the "Mental Mechanism" of Dissociation, that one can draw the required distinctions. The mechanisms allow people to live at the greatest possible ease with the illogicalities and contradictions of their conscious and sub-conscious beliefs. But too great use of any of them can fairly be termed 'insanity'.

It is also to be remembered that the U.S. legal system is extremely corrupt, which fact makes the verbal disavowals of individual violence even more hard to believe.

INSANITY AND THE CULTURE-PATTERN

In no other "developed" nation are crimes of this ferocity regularly committed. In the USA they are merely an extension of the "normal" high crime-rate, which is a prominent feature of the American Way of Life. Yet the U.S. spokesmen maintain that the mass-murders do not reflect on American Society, because the murderers were mad.

There would seem to be a great many homicidal maniacs in the USA. Is this because there is an unusually high number of madmen? This in itself would decisively condemn the American Way of Life.

But it is likely that there is an unusually high proportion of homicidal maniacs among U.S. madmen. This can only be explained by the prominent place violence occupies in the Culture-pattern.

Usually, lunatics carry with them into insanity, some parts of what they learnt in normality. Sometimes it is only the ability to co-ordinate the actions of the hands and body, with the information transmitted by the eyes, or language, both of which were learnt in normality.

Often it is much more: ideas and ways of thinking about things are, to varying extents, retained. It is, then, to be expected, that, from a Culture-pattern so loaded with violence, a fair number of those who find it impossible to carry on normally, will incorporate into their madness this violence. One might say that they were partially sane, because the violence is directed, not at the Viet-Cong, or defenceless Viet-nameese villagers, but at those in their immediate environment.

This is the main difference between the God-fearing American citizen and the Mass-murderer.

Other Culture-patterns have produced other types of insanity from their own dominant factors. E.g. at the time of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, when the dominant factor in the Culture-pattern of many Christian Nations was religious bigotry, an unusually high incidence was to be found of Satanism, religious mania of the sadistic and masochistic types, "Witchcraft" and Black Magic and other mental disorders of a religious or other-worldly nature.

The American ruling class encourages the present Culture-pattern, because it tends to preserve their power. They may squeal at its "backlash", but they will do nothing significant to alter it, because to do so would make increasing numbers of people challenge their right both to maintain the police regulation of "their own" people, and to make war on others.

The efforts of psychiatrists and social workers, and even of individual, well-intentioned policemen, are of very little avail against such immense social forces. The growing awareness of sections of Americans of the true nature of "their" government, and their struggle to replace it, offer the only permanent hope for the potential victims of the homicidal maniac, and those of the "Defence Department".

NORMAN M. MILLER

HALL RUSSELL'S

23

Shipbuilding first became important in Aberdeen's industrial life in the middle of the last century, when the city could boast six major yards. The heyday of the industry passed with the closing of the clipper era and since the turn of the century yard after yard has closed and now there are only two left, Lewis's and Hall Russell's. If you go down to Fittie, the traditional centre for the trade, you come to Hall Russell's where I am a first year apprentice. I used to work in a tailor's shop, but decided to learn a trade and so my sad decline from tweed suits to boiler suits began. The yard is the biggest of the two which are left, and employs about 750 craftsmen, apprentices, labourers and clerks. All types of ships are built in the yard, ranging from sugar-boats and tankers to trawlers for the local fleet, and much of what we build is for the export market.

Hall Russell's has a reputation in the city for industrial strife. But I found that although the workers were quite militant, they are not all conscious in a socialist sense. When they strike or walk out, even when they quite rightly try and make their conditions of work bearable by nipping into the bog for a smoke, or leaving the yard for a quick cup of tea (we only have one official tea break); even when they do all these things they have no real understanding that they are fighting capitalism, fighting a system which imposes certain wages and conditions on them from above and over which they have no control. Also, their tactics play right into the bosses' hands. If a shop has a grievance they often act without consulting the other workers or asking for their support. This sort of thing only sets the workers against each other, and real contact should be established between all sections of the yard. Some progress has been made by a few of us in organizing the apprentices into a committee. Their main grievances are that they are fed up with doing labourers' jobs when they're supposed to be learning a trade, and that the length of the apprenticeship is far too long, and used by the bosses as a cheap way of getting labour. Some left-wing literature - "Direct Action" and "Solidarity" mostly - is sold in the yard but the workers have no real confidence in the principle of workers' control. But my understanding has been sharpened by my short experience in the yard and it is obvious to me that the workers could run it better than the bosses. This is shown by the case of two ships which were recently built and launched.

In the first case we'd completed a ship on schedule and had earned ourselves a bonus. But then up comes the management and says they've made a mistake and underpriced the ship by £600, so that this money'll have to be made up somewhere; naturally not out of the profits or salaries, but out of our bonuses. One and fourpence I got instead of my usual 30/- or so. The second case was that this other ship was unable to be launched because of a strike. So here were the bosses, dressed in overalls, practically asking labourers how to do it, so the thing could be launched on time. Even then they made a balls up of it. These events show that the workers couldn't make a more inefficient and useless job of running the yard themselves than the bosses actually do.

CONDITIONS

Conditions in the place could be worse, but they still aren't all that could be desired. The machines are mostly ancient, some being 50 or more years old, and they keep breaking down, causing great delays. It never occurs to the management that they probably lose more money in the long run by having to repair them than they would if they invested in new ones. The shops are fine in summer, fresh air and sun sweep in from the nearby beach, but freezing in winter, especially since a new 'heating' system which doesn't work was installed. We have nowhere to put our clothes and have to hang them up on hooks beside us, and they (and sometimes us) get shitten on by the flocks of doos which are all over the place. And of course the lavatories are filthy. All this may sound normal to workers, but just ask yourself if the bosses would put up with these conditions for a minute. No? Well why the Hell should we? Overtime is often available to make up the average rates of about £22 for welders, £15 for other tradesmen, £25 for draughtsmen, £10 for labourers, £3-15 for 1st year apprentices (all these being for a basic 40-hour week).

At the time of writing this article 65 platers in the yard have just returned to work after a successful strike. The dispute was over the sacking of a worker who refused to do a job under an interchangeability agreement. He demanded that either he should be returned to his own job or he should get his usual rate, although it was higher than that for the job in question. The management refused to accede to his demand and sacked him. Sixty-five platers came out on strike in protest at the management's attitude and have been successful in getting their workmate reinstated.

Medical attention in the yard is of a very poor standard. I myself cut my hands working at a lathe. The nurse refused to bandage my hand completely, although it was still bleeding, because I had still work to finish. At the hospital I went to at night I was told that it should have been stitched immediately. As a result of the injury I was off work for a fortnight. On one occasion the lights were switched off at 5-00 pm and a worker coming off the boat fell down a man-hole. No ambulance or taxi was called since it was after stopping time. The worker had to make his own way home. On another occasion a worker fell off a scaffolding - no ambulance was called, but a taxi to which he was made to walk - he died getting into it!

These are the things the workers are concerned with. They are not interested in the fact that the Americans are murdering workers and peasants in Vietnam, or in the H-bomb. They are a little more interested in the Wage Freeze, and many have the feeling that the Labour Government has betrayed them, but don't think that there is anything that can be done about it. It's our job to prod them into action, to make them aware of what is actually happening and to help them forge contacts firstly within the yard and secondly with other factories and workshops where we have support. This will all be useful preparation for the struggle ahead, the struggle firstly in defence of our hard-won conditions, but ultimately for a better, more humane society, controlled by the workers.

First-year Apprentice.

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