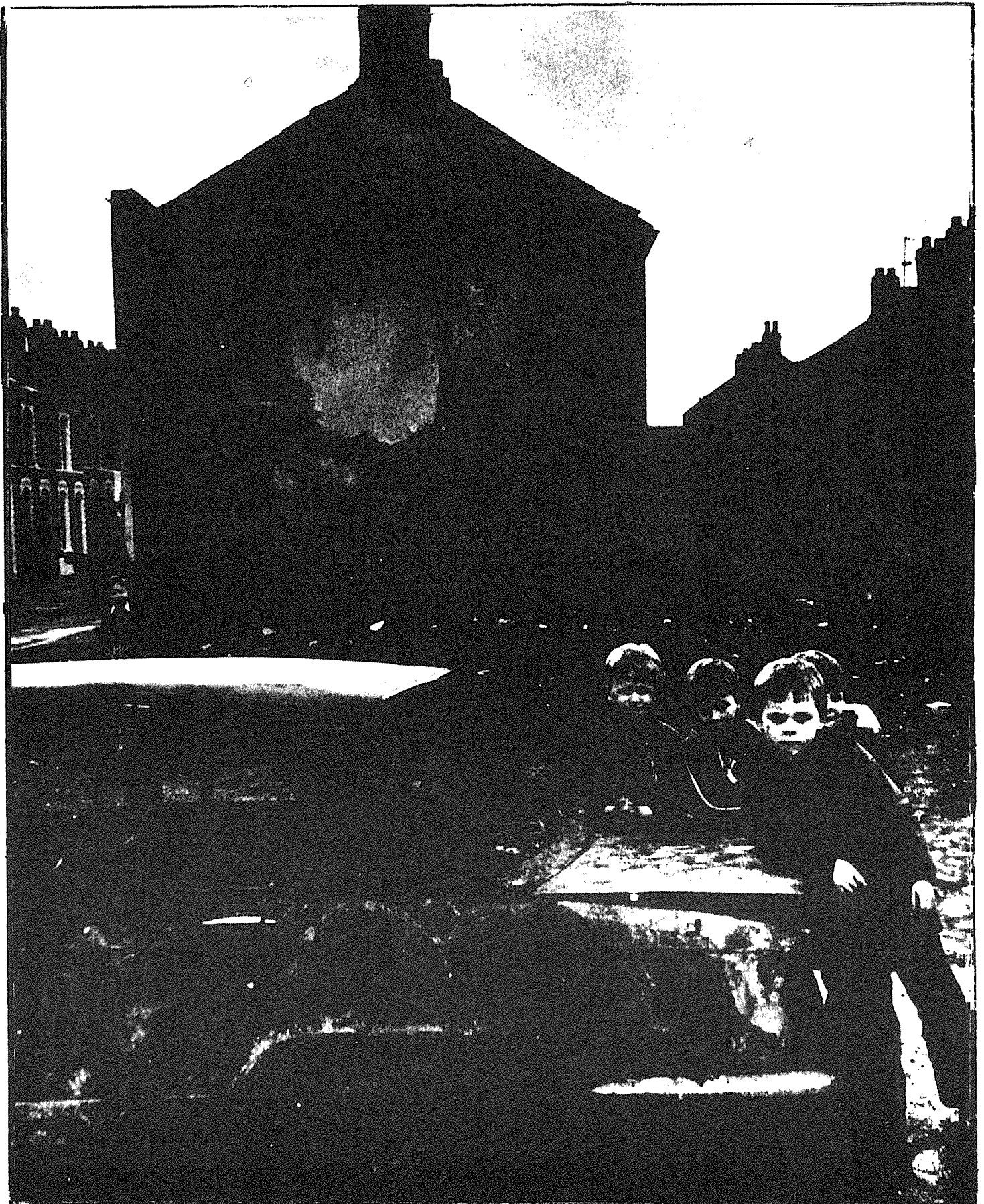


VIRUS

MILITANT ANARCHISM

No 11

25p.



Anarchist Communist Federation

The Anarchist Communist Federation is a network of class struggle anarchists.

The organisation is based upon individual members and groups. At present there are groups in Canterbury, London, Manchester, Medway, Newcastle and Nottingham and members are to be found in many other towns. The ACF promotes the building of a strong and active anarchist movement in Britain. Besides VIRUS we also publish an agitational paper LIBERATION. Subscriptions to VIRUS cost £1 per year; and to LIBERATION are £1.50 for 6 issues.

The ACF can be contacted

c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Contributions to VIRUS should be sent to the same address. The deadline for letters etc. for the next issue is: December 19th 1987.

For details of the ACF send this form to the National Secretary, ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Name

Address

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Where We Stand

1. Capitalism and other social systems in which wealth and power are the property of a ruling class/elite, must be destroyed.
2. Reformist and statist solutions will necessarily fail and therefore revolution is the only possible means of achieving anarchist-communism. How far such a revolution will be peaceful depends upon the degree to which the ruling class clings onto power through violence and state repression.
3. Genuine liberation can only come about through the self-activity of the great mass of the population. We regard parliament, representative democracy and political vanguardism as being obstacles to a self-managed society. Institutions and organisations which attempt to mediate in the fight against domination cannot succeed. Trade unionism as it is presently constituted, plays an important part in maintaining class exploitation, insofar as it regulates and justifies it through collective bargaining and bureaucratic structures. Nevertheless it is important to work within the trade union movement in order to build up a rank and file workers' movement which encourages workers' control of struggle and cuts across sectional boundaries.
4. Workers and other oppressed sections of society will, in times of revolutionary upheaval, create their own democratic institutions, whether they be based on the workplace or the community. To this end we encourage the creation of organs of struggle based on the rank and file, independent of the political parties.
5. Pure spontaneity is unlikely to be sufficient to overthrow entrenched class domination. Anarchists must indicate the libertarian alternative to class societies, participate as anarchists in struggle and organise on a federative basis to assist in the revolutionary process
6. Capitalism is international and needs to be fought internationally. We therefore try to maintain contact with as many anarchist-communists as possible in overseas countries as the preliminary stage to the creation of an anarchist international.
7. We do not simply seek the abolition of class differences, for inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, age, sexuality and gender. Personal relationships are now often based on domination and submission. We seek not only an economic revolution but a social and cultural revolution as well, involving a thorough-going change in attitudes and organisation of everyday lives to free us in our social and personal interactions.
8. We reject sectarianism and work for a united, revolutionary anarchist movement.

VIRUS #11

CONTENTS

- P.2 Liz Verron On Marilyn French's "Beyond Power"
- P.6 Anarchy and Community
- P.8 Marx, Lenin and Work :- A critical look at Lenin and his thoughts and words on work and work practices
- P.12 Letters.....
- P.14 Don Fitz's article on Delegate Organisation, particularly on the problems of Instant recall

MARILYN FRENCH - BEYOND POWER

Marilyn French - Beyond Power

This review describes a book which brings together important recent analyses of patriarchy and power relations. We believe it is essential to go beyond the simple views of power either as no problem so long as the working class has it (crude marxism) or as something which must be (and can be) abolished altogether. Both preclude any proper analysis of the ways in which humans are powerful in the real world and of how patterns of power can change. Modern feminism has a lot to offer in this regard, and we hope that this review will initiate such a debate in the pages of Virus.

Marilyn French's book, "Beyond Power: On Women, Men & Morals." is a breathtakingly wide coverage of the issue of how power has corrupted human relations and caused the difficulties we experience as patriarchy. She divides the subject into 7 sections:

1. The Long View Back: Matricentry
2. The Fall: Patriarchy
3. Women Under Patriarchy
4. Men Under Patriarchy
5. The Present Perspective
6. Feminism
7. The Long View Forward

"This book rests on the assumption that our present lack of vision as well as the present condition of the world is the result of a failure of our morality; and that it is possible for humans to create and live by a different morality; and that only by adopting a new morality can we restore enough emotional, physical and intellectual equilibrium to create a more felicitous society." (p xiv) By morality here she means - set of values, how we conceive humanness. Humanness is associated with men and nature with women. Men are seen as being able to rise above nature..

HUMAN ORIGINS

Chapter 1 looks at human origins: hominids who lived in small groups centred around mothers (fatherhood was unknown for millenia), sharing, co-operating with nature. The first bonds were between mother and child. The

society thus formed was matricentric (not matriarchal - which means ruled by the mother).

There is no evidence of male domination at this stage. Evidence from studying teeth suggests that early hominids were friendly, sociable and egalitarian.

Humans differed from animals by developing containers (probably the work of women), discovering fire and developing language - almost certainly begun with mothers communicating with their children. She refutes the idea

myths imply a male overthrow of female power -justifying this by claiming women were weak, cruel or had "sinned". This shows a time of upheaval, although French does not agree with some feminists that it confirms that women had been in control before. Quoting from Robert Briffault's book, "The Mothers", she shows that patriarchy was not universal in early society. Finally she looks at contemporary hunter/gatherer societies for comparison.

As humans gradually separ-



that hunting provided the first difference in status between the sexes (or the source of language for that matter) and points out that women have always hunted too.

The first societies were hunter/gatherers. Then women started to cultivate land and the first settlements would have been built here. Worship was of the goddess of regeneration, reflecting the concern with fertility, but then

ated themselves from nature, they also started to consider themselves superior and at the same time invested gods with superior power too. This is when awareness of fatherhood started. Men saw themselves as controlling procreation and humanness became associated with control.

ORIGINS OF PATRIARCHY

In Chapter 2 French considers the origins of patri-

(CONT)...(CONT..) (CONT..)

archy, which she reckons took millenia to establish. Initiation ceremonies were set up for boys to separate themselves from their mothers and sisters. Society was fragmented and not only on the basis of sex but also colour, wealth, religion, race, manners and dress. Patriarchy is a militant ideology and so when it opposes a less aggressive belief it inevitably wins: "If a worshipper of power decides to extend his power over your society, your choices are between surrendering and mounting an equal and opposite power. In either case, the power worshipper wins - he has converted your society into a people who understand that power is the highest good." (p xvii).

French links the attitude of the farmer - seeking to control nature rather than co-operating with it - and the idea of control in human relations. Women had been central because of their association with procreation, then men linked themselves with gods who were above nature, so men became superior to women and animals. Another influence will have been population growth which led to co-existence of alien peoples, new forms of government and consciousness of property.

Men destroyed women's power by breaking the bonds between men and women, between women and between women and children and replacing them with power relations. "In addition, and simultaneously, men had to teach, to disseminate as widely as possible, a new definition of manhood, and to develop rituals for that purpose." (p 60). This was achieved through initiation ceremonies, menstrual taboos, patri-locality (requiring brides to move into their husbands' homes) and the incest taboo. Women and some groups of men became subordinate. "Wars of domination - by a man, a class or a state - followed or accompanied this process. A new political order - a state ruled by a single man

and his supporters, or a class - emerged." (p 77). However, subordination was also achieved through a propaganda campaign - ideas of masculine and feminine roles.

" 'Masculine' qualities are those which demonstrate control and transcendence, anything that fixes, makes permanent, creates structure or prestige or customs are 'masculine': authority, rank, status, legitimacy, and right ability to kill - prowess, courage, aggressiveness, and physical skill - are also 'masculine'. Ownership, possession, ... permanence and structure are 'masculine' ideals because they 'control' or seem to control fluid experience." (p 78). "The feminine experience is ... associated with everything fluid, transient and flexible, qualities sometimes denoted weak ... It is thus the pole of sexuality and bodily pleasure, of nutritiveness, compassion, sensitivity to others, mercy, supportiveness and all giving qualities. It is also the pole of emotion, and includes fury, raging, grief, sorrow. It is associated with lack of control in every area - sensuous, sensual, emotive and bodily." (p79).

PRIESTLY ELITES

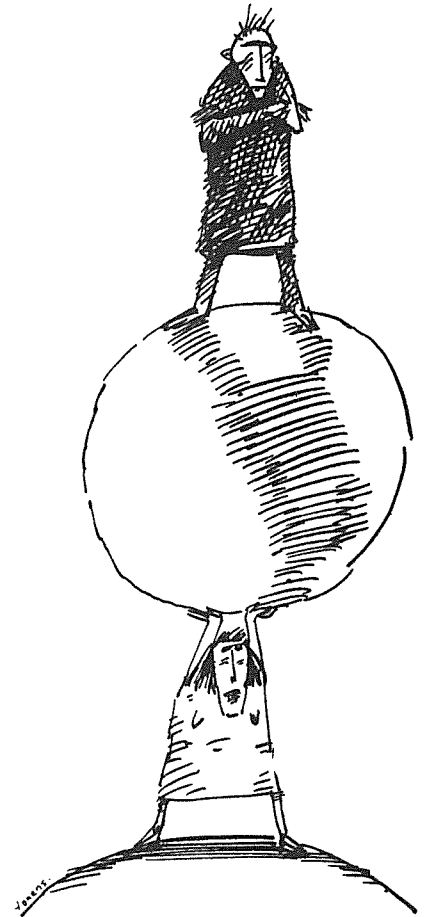
Hierarchy was founded in the early Sumerian city-states. The root of this word 'hiero' means priest and was probably initially a priestly elite, superseded by a military elite. More recently we have had aristocratic and managerial elites. The Greeks saw man as someone in control of himself whereas women are related to necessity, ie the non-volitional.

Patriarchy was not always unopposed, so religion and science were used to maintain the propaganda. More recently industrialisation and imperialism have increased inequalities, so too has socialism, because it was cast in a patriarchal image. Nature is always the enemy - nature and women.

Because of patriarchy's emphasis on power and struggle,

different sects see each other as the prime enemy, like various Trot groups or churches concentrating their resources on fighting each other. "In the end, patriarchy returns to its beginnings. Wars are waged with no definable objective; the thinking of the antagonists is so similar that most people shrug and choose the present evil over the unknown one - until they are fired by propaganda to believe that their enemy is demonic." (p 111)

THE POSITION OF WOMEN



Chapter three looks at the position of women under patriarchy. Firstly French looks at colonisation and shows that it affects men and women differently - women being used for sex as well as labour. Then she goes through history, looking at the influence of property beginning in the Greco-Roman times and christianity ex-



cluding women from education permitted a little more freedom than at other times but this is not maintained as it is soon quelled as control reasserts itself. "In eras we have been examining, women tended not to fight for themselves as a distinct class. When Roman women protested they claimed the rights of the patrician class to which they belonged. Women fought, suffered and died as Christians in the Roman empire, as Gnostics or 'heretics' in the Christian world....But they did not struggle and die as women for women. The first recorded example of their doing so was during the French revolution." (p.188).

The industrial revolution affected women badly - they were paid half the wages of men, were subjected to harassment at work and married women were dropped from the labour force, giving rise to the cult of domesticity. In 1874 the first women's trade union was formed in England. Women were active in the National Socialist movement in Germany and the revolutions in USSR and China. Russian peasant women were used

FROM THE WAY SHE TALKS YOU WOULD THINK THE PARTY LEADERS WERE A BUNCH OF SCHEMING POLITICIANS.



as free labour because of the changes in family law intended to make them equal and then were left destitute with children. In factories they were used as a harem. In 1980 it was calculated that "Women provide two-thirds of the world's work hours. Women produce 44 percent of the world's food supply. Women receive 10 percent of the world's income. Women own 1 percent of the world's property (and much of that ownership is on paper only, for

tax purposes). (p.269).

MAN AND HIS IMAGE

Chapter four looks at the image to which men have to conform under patriarchy, the price of power. Men have been deprived of "pleasure, love, intimacy, sharing and community. Women have been imprisoned in the core, the men on the fringe; and the two areas have been renamed." (p 312). Male structures are hierarchical; they exist to embody control. "Institutions are created to centralise, harness, and manifest power over others, whereas general autonomy requires tolerance of the powers of all." (p 323). The qualities required



of men by patriarchy are control, suppression of emotion and extreme competitiveness.

PRESENT TRENDS

Chapter five looks at the present which she sees as a movement towards totalitarianism. She shows how the so-called helping professions support the pattern of domination: medicine, psychology and education. Law and business are also designed to uphold patriarchal values. Our legal system is based on the idea that competition is the best way to justice! But the adversarial system would only work if the parties were equal. Business has introduced oppression exercised in the name of management.

"The gradual loss of autonomy that has occurred over the past two to three centuries since industrialisation has demoralised the populations of industrialised states. When protest does occur it takes one of two forms - wild destructive rioting that induces further control by government; or workers' demands for more money, fewer hours, more job security ... Very rarely is there a protest against the way the system works, against the shoddiness of products, or even against inhumane working conditions ... We are so brainwashed with the idea that power is the highest

good that we cannot imagine how to improve our lives. We continue to believe that more power (or money) will make things better." (p 463).

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

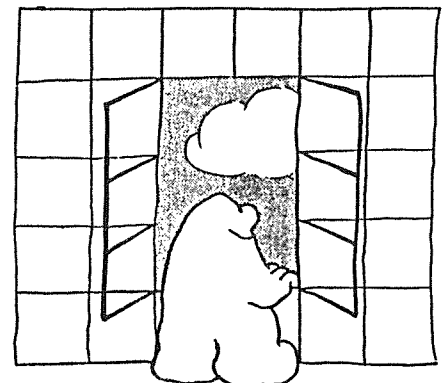
In chapter six French argues that feminism is the only answer to patriarchy, because it would "remove the idea of power from its central position, and replace it with the idea of pleasure." (p 79). She looks at various attempts at this: separatism, revalorisation of 'feminine' qualities, socialist feminism and feminism under capitalism. She examines the group of women who have made it in a male structure and wonders whether they are really anti-feminist. She considers the enormity of the task for feminism and suggests that the solution is not linear nor is it a programme to be followed.

SHIFTS IN POWER

Chapter seven is French's view of what we must do to bring about a more humane society - changing our approach more than just changing externals. We should reject hierarchical structures and the idea that things must be either/or. It is power OVER she rejects rather than power TO whereas in other philosophies aggression and sex have taken the blame. The new values would be of sharing, nurturing and caring, integration of the self and the world through participating in community.

This is an exceedingly well-argued book, with an amazingly wide scholarship. To get the full reasoning behind the arguments I have outlined above you should read the original. I' is an absolute must for anarchists who want to look at life from a wider perspective than just class.

It is published in Hardback by Jonathan Cape (1986) and in paperback by Sphere (£5.95).



THE END OF COMMUNITY ?

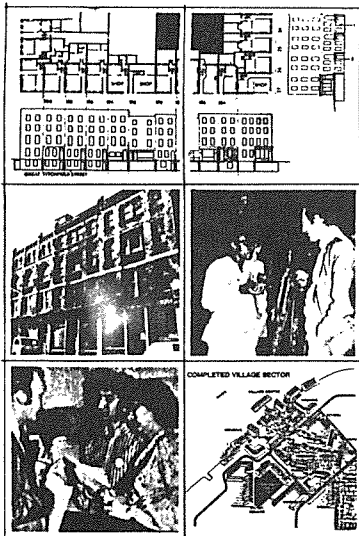
ANARCHY AND COMMUNITY IN THE U.K. by a Thames Valley Anarchist.

This article deals with some aspects of community in British society today and in the hoped-for revolutionary period. It does not touch on "primitive" or feudal communities.

One aspect of modern society which is often commented on is the lack of community. The old stereotypical village or slum community, it is said, is disappearing in the modern era, to be replaced by a society of isolated individuals who do not know their next-door neighbours. As well as being the subject of special reports in "The Mirror", the idea of community is something that anarchists should be interested in. The creation of a free and genuine community should be the aim of anarchist revolution.

THE END OF COMMUNITY

Community is based on common interests and situations; its existence must mean the end of isolation and alienation. As alienation is a product of wage-labour and also of the state, real community must be one form of Anarchy (ie statelessness). What else does community mean? It must mean the end of all separations between members of the community. Obvious aspects of this end of separation, ie abolition of wage-labour and the state, have already been mentioned. Other aspects which are less often associated with revolutionary anarchism are these: firstly the abolition of work as a



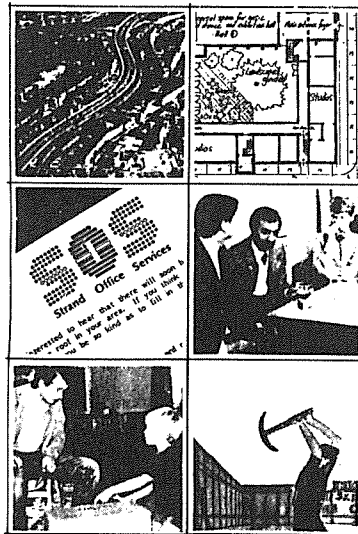
specialised activity, and secondly the end of all

relations (other than personal) which tie us to a particular locality.

PRODUCTION FOR DESIRE

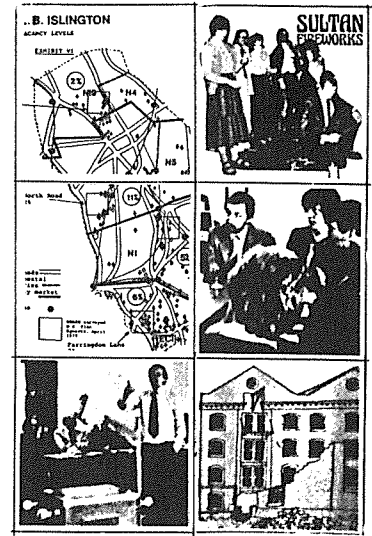
In capitalist society all production takes place for profit, and workers carry out labour primarily in order to receive a wage. In the anarchist communist community production must be for need or desire. This different basis for production will mean differences in production itself, for example:

- 1) There will be no designed obsolescence,
- 2) There will be no advertising industry,
- 3) There will be an end to "fashion" in design of goods,
- 4) There will be an end to overmanning,
- 5) There will be an end to secret research, competition and unnecessary duplication.



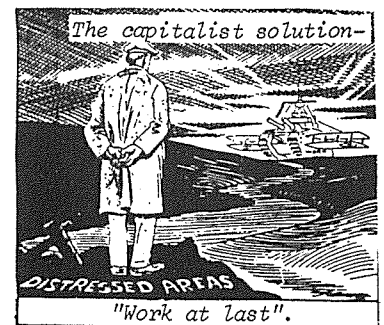
6) There will be a decrease in the amount of administration necessary. All these differences will mean that there will be a decrease in labour necessary for society to function; when the absence of the police and military, and increased use of automation etc. are added to the equation this quantity decreases still further, whilst (wo)manpower increases still further. The amount of work to be done will easily be completed by people "working" purely because they want to be involved in whatever activity this requires (we have not even touched on increased production due to the absence of alienation). This abolition of work means the abolition of the separation between work and other

activities, such as hobbies or play.



If individuals are tied to a particular town or factory (or continent ...), this obviously means they are less interested in localities other than their own. In this instance we have a possible conflict of interests, and so the different localities no longer form parts of the same community. This end to community does not necessarily mean the re-introduction of the state, but it does mean the introduction of a mutated form of competition, that is a form of capitalism in which democratic collectives compete in market economy. This form of society may have numerous advantages over the present forms, but it is something less than the destruction of capitalism/creation of true community, which could be achieved.

The abolition of ties to a locality, then, is obviously something desirable, but what in effect does it mean? One thing it does not mean is that the workers' final aim should be to take over and run their own factories. In this instance workers would remain doing the same jobs as they were forced to do under



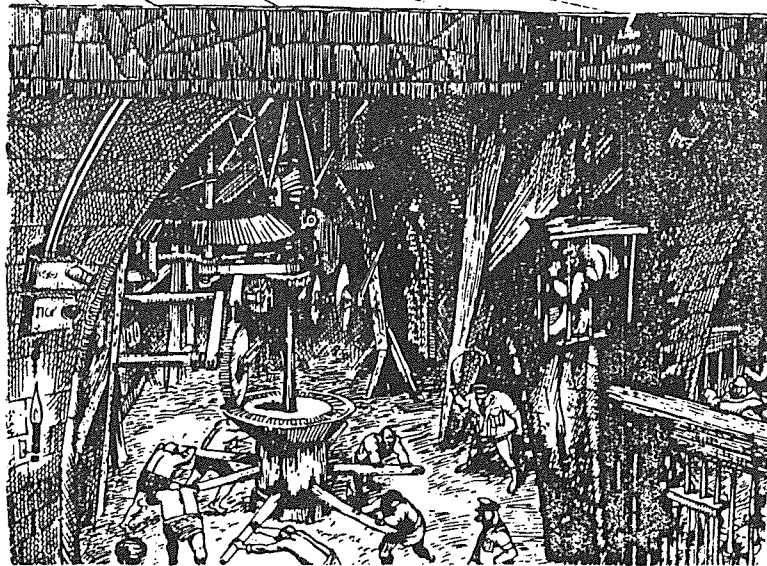
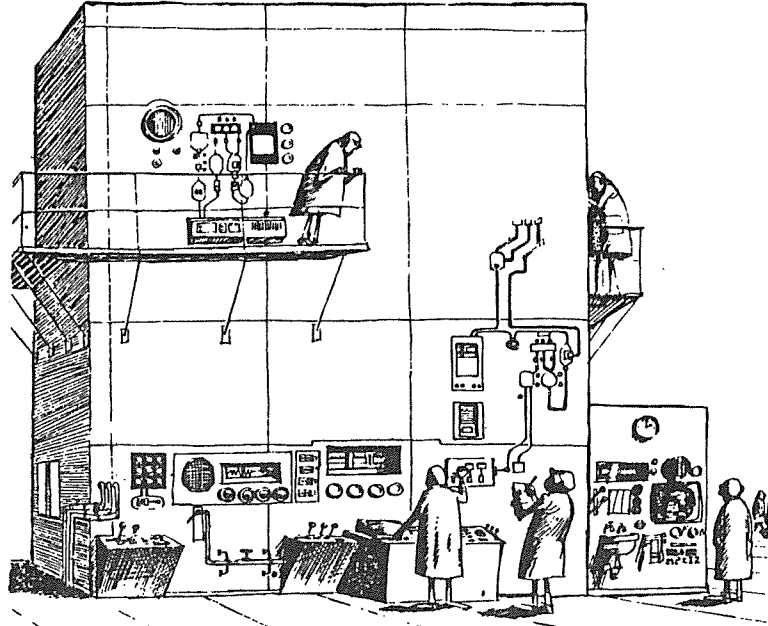
capitalism. Workers must not take over "their" workplaces

for themselves to run. What must happen instead is that the international working class must take over all workplaces (and all society) to run for itself, as a class. What this would mean at the level of individual enterprises in the course of a revolution is that the gates of the workplace would be opened for anyone to enter, be they former workers at that enterprise, or former workers at another, or former housewives, former school children or whatever ... The people who are then at the enterprise would decide what if anything would be made with the productive apparatus there (of course, previous to this total socialisation, the enterprise may be occupied, and even put to use, purely by the striking workforce). This approach must mean the end of all unions, including anarcho-syndicalist unions, the reason being that unions group workers according to the capitalist organisation of production, and so keep workers apart from other workers in other industries, unemployed people, housewives etc.. A revolutionary movement must destroy the unions, along with all other capitalist organisations, in the process of ensuring its own ascendancy. A revolutionary workplace struggle would be more like the 1986 Spanish dockers' strike, which was controlled by an assembly of all the people who were actively involved in the struggle, whether dockers or not.

By now it will be obvious that the real community to be created by revolution is somewhat different from the stereotypical "community" described earlier. This "community" which is being crushed by modern capitalism, is a mini-society based on "leading figures", eg the local GP, local bobby, the local shop-owners and the local priest. In other words the local community consisted of links of class collaboration and accommodation between the working class and the petty bourgeois "leading members of the community". We can now see that the communities which are everywhere said to be disappearing never existed in any real sense; the interests of the working class were in essence different to those of the petty bourgeoisie. The apparent community existed mainly because the petty bourgeoisie was generally as tied to the local area as was the working

class, and so personal links were long-lasting and strong; in a sense almost traditional. The modernisation of capitalism meant the virtual ruin of the petty bourgeoisie, and its replacement by the wage-earning New Middle Class or Cadre. For example the corner shop (if it was not knocked down

and probably be destroyed (one reason for this is that the middle classes whether the old or the new tend to side with the ruling class, partly because shops are likely to be looted etc.) so where will the new real community come from? It is unlikely to appear just because we would like it to.



because its business went to Sainsbury's) is now probably part of a chain of grocers. In this case, the shop is not run by a petty bourgeois owner but by a wage-earning manager, or cadre. This manager may at any time move to manage another shop in the chain in a different part of the country, or even change to a different job working for a different company. The old apparent community, in either case loses one of its vital pillars (it follows that what generally constitutes "community politics" is not as a whole revolutionary politics).

In a revolution then, the old "community" as much as it still exists will be damaged

The answer to this question is already known to most class-struggle anarchists and to most people who have been involved in collective struggles. In the course of the revolution community will be formed spontaneously as relationships are transformed by participating in the struggle. The fact that class struggle creates as well as relies on working class solidarity has been known to revolutionaries of all shades for over a century. As long as the forms of organisation and tactics that we use do not retard the spontaneous development of community in struggle, then the New World will have a new, World Community.

MARX, LENIN AND TAYLORISM

"Socialism is not an invention: it is the assimilation and the application by the vanguard of the proletariat which has seized power, of what has been created by the trusts." Lenin.

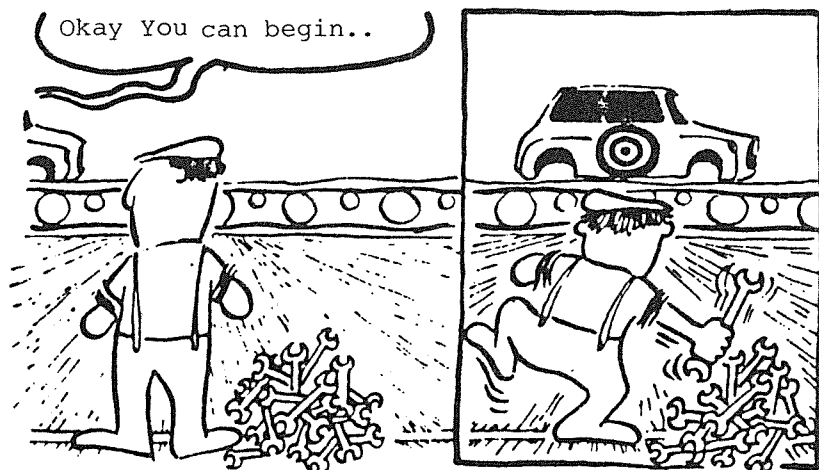
What will the organisation of work be like under anarchist communism? We think that a revolution that maintains a statist organisation of society, in placing at its head a "revolutionary government", will only reproduce the old social and political relations where a minority

side the workplaces the most democratic structures possible existed. Class relations are born in production, in the relations and organisation of work itself. Socialism, in its most general application, is the taking-over by the producers of the means of production. But this taking-over cannot be limited to a simple transfer of property. The workers must seize the real property of the means of production - their management and control.

The most important task of socialism (or anarchist comm-

labour similar to that of the West. The condition of workers in these countries is no different from what we know here - repetitive and without interest, speed-ups, foremen, daily brutalisation and work accidents. The lot of East European workers is the same as for all workers throughout the world.

What this article is concerned with is how this happened. Many think that all this started with Stalin. Nothing is further from the truth. Bureaucratisation had its roots in 1917, in the first months of revolution when the Soviet leaders consciously and deliberately developed the most 'modern' work techniques of capitalism, in particular "Taylorism". Taylorism was a "scientific" organisation of work developed by the American engineer F.W.Taylor, and applied in the US in the 1880's. It consists of a systematic study of the motions of workers and establishing norms that are fixed and narrowly-defined. By struggling against workers' "shirking" it aims to obtain maximum productivity through specialisation, a 'rationalisation' of work, particularly through the assembly-line, supervision through time and motion studies, and strict surveillance through foremen, as well as the standardisation of products.

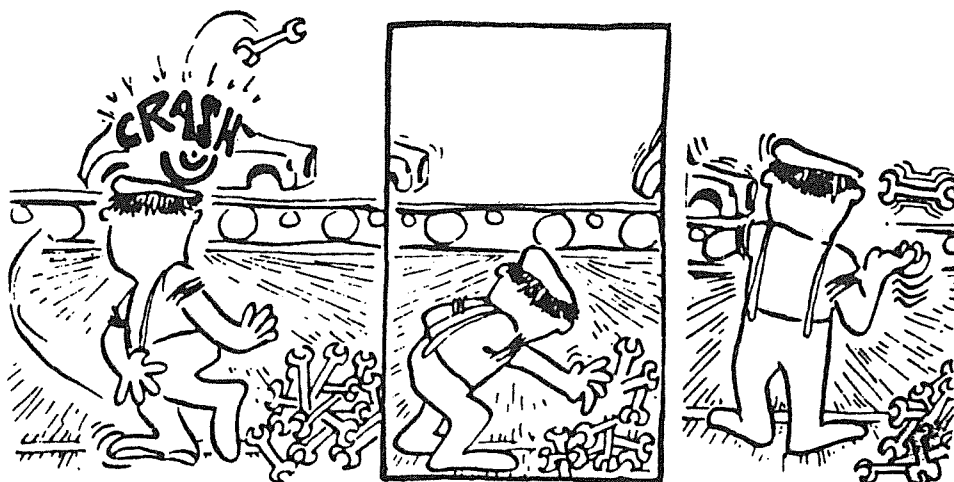


dominates all of society, and is not a social revolution. We think that a revolution that leaves the old organisation of work intact will reproduce the old relationships of alienation and exploitation which are linked to it, and through it the class relations of which it is a direct product.

How can the working class be emancipated by maintaining a work process that is mutilating, deprived of all possibility of independent thought and action, reduced to machine-cogs of production? What sense would a 'socialist' society have where you would have to work five days under the same conditions as today, to profit from the newly-conquered political freedom at the weekend?

The maintenance of a capitalist organisation of work, not only alienating but hierarchical, where information, knowledge and power are concentrated in the hands of a few, would quickly create a new bureaucracy, even if out-

unism) must be the immediate transformation of the content of work, its re-appropriation by workers, and the suppression of all divisions between tasks of conception and organisation and those of execution. The organisation of



work and political organisation are not independent, and it is not by chance that in the East European countries a bureaucratic power goes hand in hand with a division of

LENIN AND TAYLORISM

"We do not invent a form of work organisation, we borrow it ready-made from capitalism." Lenin.

From 1918 an intense debate took place in the USSR on the organisation of the new economic system. From this debate Lenin's position, bitterly opposed by 'left communists' and anarchists, is firmly in favour of the massive introduction of Taylorism in Russian factories.

"The task incumbent on the Soviet Socialist Republic can be briefly formulated thus: We must introduce throughout Russia the Taylor system and the scientific raising, American-style, of the productivity of work." (The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Power. 1918).

Could it be argued that Lenin was unaware at this stage of what 'scientific organisation of work' and Taylorism really meant? Cert-

The capitalist method of production is for Lenin the most efficient there is. Not a new idea, but one already developed in Marx's "Capital". But its use under socialism implies a much larger error, where the capitalist organisation of work is not only considered the most efficient, but as having been put in place solely to increase productivity - its role of domination over the working class is totally forgotten - the idea of the NEUTRALITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

MYTH OF NEUTRALITY

The Leninist approach to the problem of the organisation is parallel to that of the State, as if it is a neutral structure that can be used when convenient, its "workers" or "bourgeois" character dependent solely on

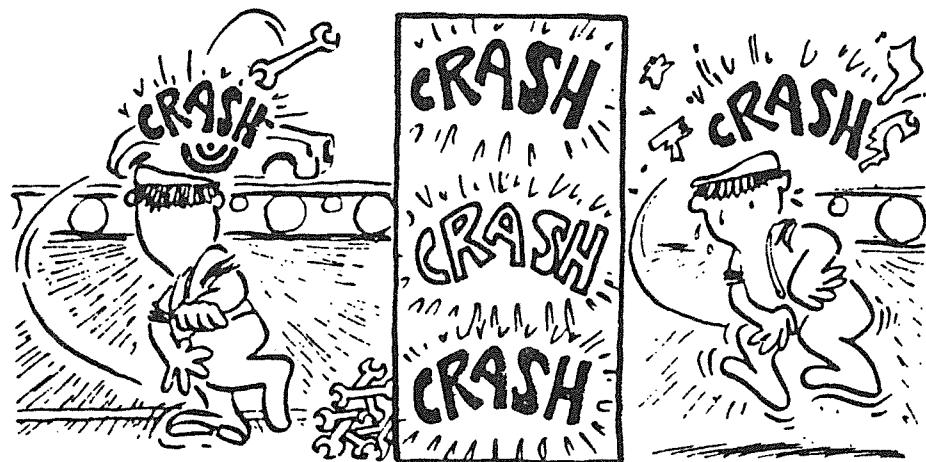
without the technique of big capital, developed with the latest in modern science, without a methodical organisation of the State which subordinates tens of millions of men to the most rigorous observation of a single norm in the production and resharing of products ... One cannot create or install socialism without learning from the school of the trust organisers. For socialism is not an invention; it is the assimilation and the application by the vanguard of the proletariat which has seized power, of what has been created by the trusts." ("Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder.").

PRECIOUS SCIENCE

For Lenin the Taylor system assembles, "The most precious scientific conquests concerning the analysis of work movements, the suppression of superfluous and clumsy movements, the elaboration of the most rational work methods, the introduction of the best systems of verification and of control." ("Immediate Tasks.").

In other words, what the working class has always resisted!. "The Republic of Soviets must make its own the most precious conquests of science and of techniques in this area ... To combine the power of the Soviets and the Soviet system of management with the most recent advances of capitalism." ("Immediate Tasks").

For Lenin there is not a capitalist technology but a science (with a capital 'S') and technique (with a capital



ainly not. Not only was the anti-worker nature of Taylorism known (Taylor himself did not hide it, calling his method "war machine against the workers' unions") but also workers' struggles against his methods had spectacularly developed in the USA and even in Europe (strikes at the French Renault factories in 1913). How could Lenin defend the use of a technique of production which sought (and was admitted by its promoters) to break workers' resistance and which met with workers' opposition everywhere? Simply in the name of 'realism' and efficiency. What mattered was to increase productivity to ensure economic stability in Russia, and the only method for that was Taylorism. "The Taylor system represents an immense progress of science which systematically analyses the process of production and opens the way for an enormous increase of productivity of human labour" (Lenin, "Immediate Tasks").

who happens to be at its head. The same goes for the organisation of work, whose concrete content remains unaltered, but whose capitalist character changes after



the revolution from the simple fact that it is now at the service of a "socialist" society.

So socialism can, indeed must, use the capitalist organisation of work.

"Socialism is impossible

'T'), which combined with "Soviet power" will create socialism. More than "The Soviets plus electricity" Lenin's socialism is the Soviets plus capitalist technology.

Whilst Lenin proposed in

(CONT..) (CONT..) (CONT...)

1918 to invite American engineers to put the Taylor system into operation in Soviet factories, the model to imitate, for him, was that of Germany.

"Yes, learn from the German school ... it is Germany who today incarnates at the same time as a ferocious imperialism, the principles of discipline of organisation and of harmonious collaboration on the base of modern mechanised industry, of checks and controls of the most rigorous nature." ("The Principle Tasks Today - 1918").

In Germany "we have the 'last word' in modern large-scale capitalist engineering and planned organisation, subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism. ... In place of the militarist, Junker, bourgeois, imperialist State put also a State, but of a different social type, of a different class content - a Soviet State, that is a proletarian State, and you will have the sum total of the conditions necessary for socialism." ("Left Wing Communism").

It is enough to replace a description of a State structure for a type of organisation of production, an instrument for the exploitation and alienation of the workers under the capitalist regime, to become the instrument of emancipation of the same workers under a so-called 'socialist' regime!

Lenin's view of socialism is limited to a change in the system of political power without considering the important objectives of changing work, overthrowing the technology and organisation of production and liberating people from alienating and servile work.

IMMEDIATE TASKS ?

Lenin does not hide the fact anyway that for him the change of the organisation of work is not an immediate task. "The expropriation of the capitalists necessarily leads to a prodigious development of the productive forces of human society. But what will be the speed of this development, when it will lead to a break in the division of work, to the suppression of the difference between intellectual and manual work, to the transformation of work as a "primary

vital need, that is what we do not, and cannot, know." ("State and Revolution").

Lenin is in no hurry to liberate workers from their chains, and the transformation of work is put off to a distant date, subordinated to "a development of the productive forces" which determines everything but explains nothing.

To use the capitalist division of work is to reproduce the mechanisms of class domination, of strict division between intellectual and manual work. That is what has happened in the USSR.

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Some Leninists have attempted to defend him by finding an excuse which can explain the adoption of Taylorism as a simple mistake. According to them, Lenin thought this would cut down the working week, whilst increasing productivity. Lenin's own writings contradict this notion. In his eyes Taylorism permits an increased control over workers (see the above quotes with their obsession with checks and controls).



DICTATORSHIP

"The nomination of these or those people invested with unlimited dictatorial powers, is it compatible with the fundamental principles of

Soviet power" Lenin asks and replies, Yes! stating that "There exists absolutely no contradiction in principle between Soviet democracy and recourse to personal dictat-



orial power." ("Immediate Tasks").

This dictatorial power is absolutely necessary for the construction of socialism because "all large scale industry expects a rigorous absolute unity of will controlling the work of hundreds, of thousands, of tens of thousands of men ... But how can such a rigorous unity of will be achieved? By the submission of the will of thousands of people to that of a single person." ("Immediate Tasks").

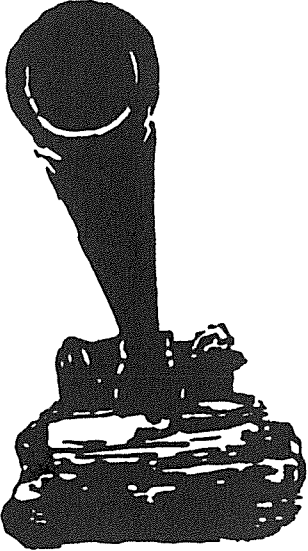
"The revolution broke the oldest, the most heavy and solid of the chains of this con-men regime. That was yesterday. But today, the same revolution expects, justly in the interests of socialism, that the masses will obey without reservation the single will of the directors of work." ("Immediate Tasks").

ASSURING ORDER

"Our dictatorship of the proletariat consists in assuring order, disciplining productivity of work, of checks and controls. Submission during work, and an absolute submission to the personal orders of Soviet leaders, dictators elected or nominated by the Soviet institutions, invested with full dictatorial powers, is still of a very, very insufficient fashion." ("Theses on

the Immediate Tasks of Soviet Power, 1918").

Dictators, full dictatorial powers ... the dictatorship of the proletariat is a dictatorship OVER the proletariat, "A discipline of iron and a dictatorship of the proletariat to the maximum against petty bourgeois hesitations, that is the slogan of the hour." ("These on Immediate Tasks").



For Lenin the immense mass of workers is judged incapable of constructing socialism itself, dominated by "petty bourgeois" tendencies which continue to exist after the revolution. But how can the workers be made to accept such a discipline after freeing themselves from Tsarism and still in revolutionary effervescence? Lenin is aware of this. "Our task, the task of the Communist Party, is to put ourselves at the



head of the masses ... to put it on the good road, the road of discipline of work, the proper road to conciliate the tasks of meetings on work conditions with those of submission without reservation to the will of the Soviet director, of the dictator, during work ... We must pair the democratic spirit of the toiling masses, as seen at meetings, impetuous, wild, like a spring flowering, with absolute submission to the will of one, of a Soviet director ... Today's task consists of establishing a rigorous distinction between, on the one hand, discussions and meetings, and on the other, the execution without reservation of all the orders of the directors." ("Tasks").

To obtain this submission, Lenin proposes an incentive scheme, based on piece-work, backed up by repression pure



and simple. Tribunals will deal with 'shirking workers', workers who ask for too much, who are identified as common criminals. "But the tribunals have a more important task. It is to assure the most rigorous application of discipline and self-discipline of the workers." ("Tasks"). "self-discipline" applied by tribunals!

"As to the measures of repression for not observing work discipline, they must be more severe. They must include prison. Sacking can also be adopted, but its character is totally modified. Under capitalism sacking is a violation of work discipline, notably with the introduction of compulsory work service,

is a common crime, and must be punished in consequence." (Speech before the Presidium, 1918).

What is the difference between Leninist Russia and Western capitalism? Very little. Russia is state capitalist, and it is not us, but Lenin himself who states this.



RUSSIA IS STATE CAPITALIST.

The workers "Are marching towards socialism... through mechanised large scale production, through big firms where business figures grow by millions every year and only through this production and these firms. Workers are not petit-bourgeois. They do not fear large scale "state capitalism" they consider it as their proletarian instrument, which their Soviet government will use against disorder and the mess characterising small property." (Left wing Communism) "I have said that State Capitalism will be healthy for us : if we have it in Russia the transformation to integral socialism will be easier, it will be in our hands, because State Capitalism is something centralised, calculated, controlled and socialised.... Only through the development of State Capitalism, by the establishment of minute checks and controls, by a strict organisation and by work discipline can we arrive at socialism." (Speech before Presidium, April 1918).

To be continued BEFORE LENIN : MARX, ANARCHIST COMMUNISM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF WORK.

Adapted from an article in LUTTER! magazine of the Union des Travailleurs Communistes Libertaires, France.

LETTERS

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Dear ACF,

I've ben meaning to write for quite a while. but my immediate inspiration was the article in Virus 10 on Council Communism. Your clause 8 of "Where we Stand" explicitly rejects sectarianism in an effort to create a united revolutionary anarchist movement. While Council communists don't call themselves anarchists, their aims and goals are identical to those of any thinking revolutionary anarchist.

My first real criticism of the article is that it sets itself up as a critique of Council Communism as apparently a unified theory with no variation. Council Communism is presented as having inherent in it the advocacy of purely or "merely" propaganda producing groups. Forgive me, but I haven't understood this from my admittedly limited reading of Council Communist literature. To accuse all Council Communists of "refusing to take a role" or refusing to be active now seems to be ridiculous. Is this element inherent in their collective party line? Come on, while there may be Council Communists who refuse to be active now (or ever?) there are many others who are among the most active revolutionaries. Judging by the many self styled (who else will do it) anarchists I would have thought ideological purism and a resulting holier than thou passivity is much more an anarchist trait. Armchair anarchists are a common breed. Likewise your accusation that Council Communists do not see any difference between reforms gained by top-down hierarchical methods and those achieved by mass autonomous struggle - rent strikes, pickets etc. So show us where anyone condemns the latter as being identical to the former. To criticise them for not going far enough, seems to me to be perfectly valid, we must never stop along the way towards complete transformation of society, Yet this criticism is not inconsistent with applauding and actively supporting such struggle. To accuse Council Communists of simply criticising and not applauding and not being active is ridiculous. The only literature I've read on recent struggles

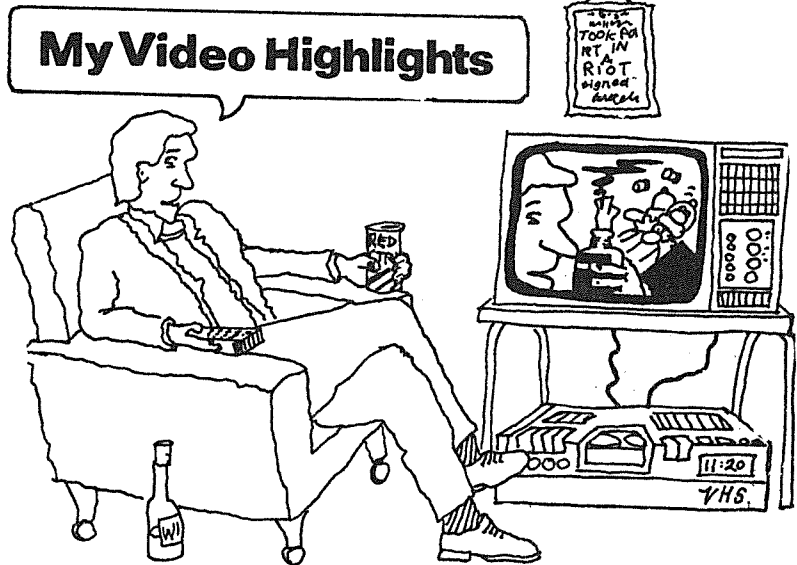
outside the official I.W.A. abroad has been by C.C.S. The assemblyist structure they advocate has been adopted (spontaneously or otherwise) by the vast majority of really revolutionary movements in Europe this Century, Germany 1918, Hungary 1956, etc.etc. as well as by current revolutionaries, such as the Spanish Dockers Coordinadora (see Workers of the World Tonight' BM Blob £1) set up after rejecting membership in the C.N.T... This doesn't make them passive or reaction-

say that this is by far the worst article I've ever seen in Virus, in general I think it's excellent. Since I don't want to miss any, I enclose a cheque for a years subscription

Keep fighting Sam.

WILDCATS

To the ACF/Virus,
You have just published an interesting and well-inform-



ary or unrealistic (an implied criticism in your article) If any of your criticisms are valid then at best they are valid against a section of the Council Communists. If so, please send me details of who it is as I'd like to investigate more closely. But your criticisms are certainly not valid against Council Communism, if there is such a unified theory or all Council Communists. Passive they ain't! All in all the article was vague, ill considered, hasty, and sectarian against a current and historical theory and practice, which is easily as revolutionary as 'pure Anarchism'. We of all people should be wary of generalisations and of tarring with the same brush' syndrome. However, after all that I must

ed discussion of anarcho-syndicalism. Interestingly some of these contributions have come close to the views of 'Council Communism'. Yet in Virus no 10 you have published just a page of ill-informed drivel in an attempt to write off the council communist tradition in its entirety! For the record, whatever the faults of traditional council communism, and there are many, these DO NOT include a refusal to get involved in the class struggle. To my knowledge there are no groups today which could be classified strictly as council communist, but there are a number whose politics have been influenced by this tradition. Besides ourselves these include, in Britain - the International Communist Current, the Communist Workers Org-



MORE LETTERS

isation and the Communist Bulletin Group. None of these groups are quoted or even mentioned in the article, but I suspect the author has based his views on a superficial and ill-digested reading of some theoretical snippets from them. You would be better-equipped to criticise council communism if you read, perhaps PANNEKOEK'S 'WORKERS COUNCILS' available from 'Echanges Et Mouvement' BM BOX 91, LONDON WC1V 6XX (about £2.50) or one of the other original authors of the Council Communist movement.

REFORM VS REVOLUTION.

Dear Virus,

There has been a lot of argument in Virus between those supporting compromise and fighting for concrete reforms, and those calling for an ultra-pure no-compromise revolutionary position. Surely in practice the path we follow is not something we can choose in abstract but is going to be dictated to us by the material situation we are in and whether that situation lends itself to a revolution.

There are three main conditions necessary before a revolutionary situation can occur: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: The majority of people must be discontent with their material conditions and have rising expectations and demands that the system cannot deliver. PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS: There must be a conscious mood of revolutionary optimism sweeping the population. POLITICAL CONDITIONS: The ruling regime must be weakened by internal conflict and collapse.

The economic conditions necessary for a revolution simply do not exist in this country at the moment. Despite mass unemployment the majority of the public are in fact doing quite comfortably and their incomes are rising in real terms. For the majority 'Popular Capitalism' is booming and as long as they materially benefit from the world imperialist economy, the majority of the people in this part of the world are always going to identify their interests with the interests of

the ruling class. They will side with reaction.* While Britain remains an imperialist power it will always be able to buy off and passify the majority of its workers with material prosperity. For Britain to be undermined internally by class struggle it will first have to be undermined externally by anti-imperialist struggle, That is a process that could take decades.

Meanwhile for the minority in this country who do feel discontent with their conditions, the unwaged, the low paid, the bulk of the ethnic minorities (Ed's note 'Ethnic Minorities ??? If you mean people of "Third World" origin then they are a majority not a minority, etc), alienated groups etc the mood is not one of revolutionary optimism. Despite powerful struggles in recent years, such as the miners strike. Uprisings. Wapping, many of these people are demoralised, resigned and apathetic and they don't have much will to fight. When they do strike or take actions they find themselves isolated without support and there are too many scabs.

And as for our rulers; the British state looks firmly entrenched as ever, with most of the establishment fully behind the government and the political system. There doesn't seem to be any major constitutional crisis, institutional collapse, or crisis of power and the machinery of the police state is quite able to contain our resistance.

Calling for a revolution today when the conditions are not favourable for it is a futile exercise. And when Ultra-leftists and purist-anarchists mindlessly preach spontaneous insurrections and instant uprisings, regardless of the situation, they are not only being silly, they are being irresponsible. If we rush into the streets, expecting instant utopia when we are simply not strong enough to fight them, we will be disappointed and find ourselves demoralised, we will just be falsely raising our hopes to have them smashed down again. While the balance of

class forces in this society is heavily in the capitalist system's favour we cannot achieve instant utopia. Instead we concentrate on rank and file organising in the workplace and in the community to defend our basic material interests on a day-to-day basis. We organise to defend ourselves from the system's attacks, win concessions and build our bargaining strength for future struggles. If we live under the system and we are not strong enough to openly resist it in mass confrontation then we have no choice but to compromise with it and bargain for concrete reforms, we compromise to survive. Adopting an "ideologically pure" position of no compromise is just a pose, which if carried out in practice, means committing suicide (which is a form of compromise). Organising today to force material reforms, like a wage rise or better benefits can strengthen us for revolution in the future.

Paul Petard

WHO, WHAT, WHY ?

Dear Virus, I've just read your issue no 10 of Virus. It's an interesting paper and it seems able to present diverse views which is very useful.

But I still don't understand the 'splits' What are 'council communists'? Who are they? 'Class War'? 'Black Flag'? 'Direct Action'? Are there really groups who advocate nothing but propaganda? Is a Council Communist an Anarchist? An Anarcho syndicalist? And where do Anarcho Communists stand in all this? I've read your 'Where we stand' It doesn't mention council communism. I'm sure somewhere there's a phrase or a sentence which excludes it. But it's too hidden for the uninitiated to find. Presumably you differ from Black Flag, Class War, Direct Action, but I simply don't understand how.

If I don't it's probable that our readers don't either, Would you be interested to write an article for G.A. helping us country bumpkins to understand the debate, particularly where Virus stands.

Cheers Richard Hunt.



THE RIGHT OF RECALL: WE CAN DO BETTER

This is a condensed version of an article by Don Fitz which first appeared in 'The Discussion Bulletin' no.19, an American publication for 'third force socialists' - ie those who are not Leninists or reformists.

Many unions and left organisations loudly applaud the right of recall in their constitutions. We are told that having this right written down on a piece of paper somehow guarantees rank and file control. Yet, if we look closely, an amazing fact emerges: not one of these organisations regularly exercises this 'right'. In extraordinary circumstances, an isolated person may be recalled... once every twenty or fifty years. Personally I've never seen it happen. Have you? The right of recall is fundamentally impossible to apply at the point of production, but the contradiction remains that the right to replace officers is indispensable for democratic industrial unionism. We have to bear in mind that every political organisation has two simultaneous programmes.

1. What it preaches.
2. What it practises.

The first can be thought of as the 'formal' programme, the second as the 'informal' programme. While most schizophrenics perceive things that do not exist, socialists are prone to hallucinating the non-existence of the informal programme, but ordinary workers are more influenced by how socialists act towards each other (ie their informal programme:) than the way their formal programme says they are supposed to act.

If the formal and informal programme are consistent then they buttress each other. Part of the strength of vanguardism is that their

ideological justification of party hierarchies is perfectly in line with the way they spend all their time figuring out how to dominate people. In organisations such as the Socialist Labour Party it can only create difficulties when people are recruited by democratic phrases then find an atmosphere where no one can voice differences of opinion.

Industrial unionists tend to slip into a ridiculous fetish with the legalistic form of rights while ignoring their substance in practice (or lack thereof). IF YOU DO NOT PRACTISE RECALL IT IS ABSURD TO FANTASIZE THAT WHAT IS WRITTEN ON A PIECE OF PAPER SOMEHOW GUARANTEES IT TO YOU AS A RIGHT.

Actually being able to remove people from office is the key to a total reorganisation in relations of power and subordination, as bureaucratic class relationships in Soviet-type societies could not survive without the same people having positions of power year after year. If we can nip that practice in the bud during a revolutionary crisis we will have gone a long way towards developing a true democracy.

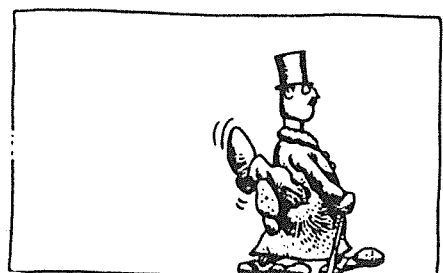
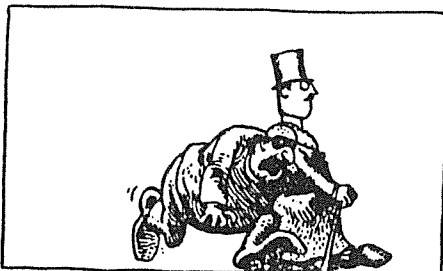
Removing Without Recalling

If political democracy is threatened by power-mongers holding on to office, industrial efficiency is devastated by incompetents being in responsible positions year after year. The central problem with the right of recall goes beyond the fact that political organisations DON'T use it - the problem also arises that industrial organisations CAN'T use it. This is because the act of recall simultaneously has two effects:

1. Removal
2. Humiliation.

Most of us are familiar with a supervisor or bureaucrat

who gets along well everyone, but just can't get the job done. If the person could simply be removed, the boss would do just that, but the workers wouldn't stand for it. This is partially because they wouldn't want a slave-driver instead, but at least as important is the fact that the overwhelming majority of workers will not tolerate a basically nice person being publically dragged across the coals. Democracy at work and the 'right' of recall would not change this - most workers would rather produce below quota and endure the wrath of the 'council of councils' than humiliate a person they like for not working efficiently. The realisation that recall involves both removal and humiliation provides a solution: split the removal/humiliation process so that it is possible to remove without humiliating. This could be done by a system of automatic rotation, with continuity being maintained by investing decision-making power in committees rather than individuals. Part of the committee could be changed each rotation period while the majority remains in office. For example, suppose that a Co-ordinating Committee (CC) of 8 people is elected at a congress for one year with one quarter being removed every 3 months. Each 3 months 2 new members would be elected, but 6 would remain, with those removed not allowed to stand for re-election. This would give the membership at least 3 months to decide whether they wanted to re-elect either of them. In this way 'recall' can be replaced by 'not re-electing', which would have several advantages. First, a number of people would probably be available as candidates for election, so those who were not elected or re-



elected would not stand alone and humiliated. Secondly 'non-election' is not a black and white affair, like recall, as the 'non-elected' candidate has another opportunity 3 months later and 3 months after that, etc. As things stand, to recall someone would be so devastating to them that they would probably not stand for election for years afterwards, or drop out of the organisation altogether. Knowing this, members voting in a recall election must choose between losing the talents of a good organiser or suffering his/her arrogance indefinitely. Non-election offers the milder reprimand of telling candidates to mend their ways if they want another shot at election in 3 months time. So, automatic rotation would give the membership a genuine right of recall because they actually would be exercising removal in practise. The greatest danger to any rotation system is the decrease in efficiency from loss of talented people. However, the balance between rotation and efficiency from loss of talented people. However, the balance between rotation and efficiency could be achieved by altering the length of time a person must be out of office before standing for election again. If an organisation is small or the necessary skills are not widespread, there may be only 10 people with the ability or energy to serve on the CC. In this case members of the CC would be off for 3 months then have to be re-elected because of a lack of alternative candidates, so the membership would only be able to go through the ritual of removal in the full sense. In contrast, a healthy organisation would have dozens of members willing and qualified to serve on the CC. In that event the organisation could require people to wait 36 months before standing for re-election, so it would be very difficult for any clique to gain power and a large proportion of the membership would pass through

the CC, thus greatly improving the chances of genuine rank and file control. The most common difficulty in getting from ritual to reality would be not having

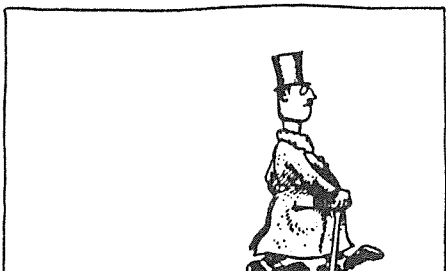
period needed before a person is eligible for re-election. Then, if there are too few qualified people in the organisation to make genuine rotation of delegates possible when the CC is elected, it could be made a condition that they must train enough people during their term in office for the period of rotation to be extended from 3 to 6 months within say, a year. As the waiting period gradually expanded from 3 to 6 to 9 months etc, an increasingly large number of people would be willing to stand for election as it became clear that the temporary posts were no longer really going to end up as lifelong obligations. In other words more and more ordinary people would come forward, while the power-mongers and careerists would feel increasingly uncomfortable in an organisation that prevented them from holding office continuously. These developments would also create enormous possibilities for involving new people whose abilities were untried, once there were genuinely temporary posts it would be possible to give people a try out and see how they got on, rather than being stuck with a minority who are definitely able to get things done.



EFFECTS ON REVOLUTION

If socialists never practise removal but only wave pieces of paper that profess empty abstractions about the 'right' to recall, then this is the practise they will bring into any new society. Taking this as a cue, workers would reorganise the shop-floor so that they would be 'gauranteed' the 'right' to recall those elected to coordinate production. However no wheels would be set in motion to actually rotate or remove officers and there would be no-one with any experince of doing so. The stage would be set for the 'democratic' election of lifetime officers who would gradually evolve into a new bureaucratic ruling class. On the other hand, if rotation is put into effect

enough people to stand for election. However this could be resolved by adopting the principle of automatic rotation, even if only in a ritual form to begin with, then allowing a flexibility in the length of waiting



(CONT..) (CONT..) CONT..)

in political organisations this will create a body of people who have practised real democracy, know how to

argue for it convincingly in public and have had the necessary practise to put it into effect during work place occupations, etc. This is our best safeguard against the

growth of a new bureaucratic elite.

In contrast a system of recall (rather than automatic rotation) would mean people would be unwilling to remove anyone from office except under the most extreme circumstances (by which time they would probably have lost the right to do so). Even if recall ever was applied it would cause so much chaos through resentment or the non-co-operation of those who had been snubbed, that people would welcome the return of professional bureaucrats as a way to gain some stability.

CONCLUSION

A right of recall which is not practised does not exist and the organisation has a 'de facto' anti-recall programme. The informal programme is much more important than what the organisation calls for, as it is the former which will be the model for how people act in any revolutionary situation, and thus helps make genuine change a realistic possibility.

