TOWARDS A PROGRAMME

Preface (2004)- Libertarian Communism- The Crisis- What Politics should the A.W.A. advocate- National Liberation struggles- Ireland- Women's Oppression and the Family- Public Spending, the Cuts and the Fight Back.

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Another, earlier TOWARDS A PROGRAMME text can be found on
https://www.thesparrowsnest.org.uk/collections/public_archive/15788.pdf

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This document was originally drafted by members of the Anarchist Workers' Association, (A.W.A.) following a resolution passed at the 1976 [?] A.W.A. conference, which called for the A.W.A. to agree a clearer definition of its theory and strategy. At that time the A.W.A. had groups and members in England and Scotland, and a sympathiser or two in Ireland, and published the monthly newspaper 'Anarchist Worker'. The text below was adopted as a 'provisional' rather than as a definitive text by the tendency whose members went on to publish 'Libertarian Communist', and renamed the A.W.A. as the Libertarian Communist Group.

The text below is taken from a typeset edition produced after the conference in the autumn of 1977. It should be read keeping in mind the context of the early 1970's. Britain experienced the Conservative government of the pro-European liberal-conservative Edward Heath (1970-74), which secured entry into the European Economic Community in 1973, in the face of criticism from an alternative racist-conservatism of Enoch Powell (a precursor of Margaret Thatcher). Heath also faced economic difficulties, not least the hike in the price of crude oil, and a miner's strike: both reduced energy supplies forcing the "three-day week" in the winter of 1973-1974. This era saw the relative success of some militant trade unionists at the level of local/ shop steward organisation and at the level of national action and the early years of the Women's Liberation Movement, (note the lower level of employment of women in the workforce in these times). The repression of the nationalist people of northern Ireland was highlighted by the killings of 13 unarmed nationalists by paratroopers in Derry on Bloody Sunday, April 20th 1972. Unable to reverse the decline of British capital, or to demobilise a relatively confident Trade Union movement, Heath was defeated in two general elections held in 1974 and was replaced by the Labour Governments of the Harold Wilson and 'Jim' Callaghan which lasted from 1974 to 1979.

This text has been reformatted and has been edited for spelling and punctuation. Most annotations are those added in April 2004.

TOWARDS A PROGRAMME

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

Libertarian Communism is the historic theory of the working class. It is the most complete expression of the historic practice of the working class towards self-emancipation. After setbacks due as much to economic phenomenon (new forms of exploitation) as ideological ones (the mystification of Russia and China, represented as socialist countries) the chance of revolutionary change reappears. Economic, political and social factors render more necessary than ever a social revolution leading to communism. The reappearance of revolutionary trends inside the working class enriches and makes more relevant than ever the theory of libertarian communism. Libertarian communism is the only theory that truly voices the moves towards a genuine democratic mass movement for self-management and self-activity. In this context, it becomes day-by-day more urgent to construct a revolutionary libertarian organisation on a national and international level, and to define the nature and field of activity of its role.

For this we need a revolutionary programme. We mean two things by this: An analysis of capitalist society and the forces at work in it; and an action programme responding to the most immediate problems of the working class and proposing lines of struggle and forms of organisation most practical at the present, but which can lead to revolutionary perspectives.

This programme will be open to change and modification in interaction with the developing struggles and with a dialogue maintained with the revolutionary elements inside the working class.

At Present

The practice and theory of the A.W.A. is divided and confused. There is no collective understanding of classes (what they are, which ones are in the process of disappearing, like the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie), a national attitude to the important problems of cooperatives and nationalisation. This is apparent on many other issues - what role do political parties, particularly the social democrats, play? Where do we stand on national liberation struggles? What do we think about the women's movement, the gay movement? What solutions do we have to the problems of the family, housework, urbanisation, the environment?

Our practice, too, as a reflection of the lack of theoretical positions, is confused. There is little communication between groups on the problems facing us all in particular campaigns, in industry, in education, in the home. One militant may be doing first class work in, say, NAC, in town X, and the same goes for a militant in town Y. But what contact do they have between each other, what support does the local group and the organisation nationally give them?

The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists[1] argues

> "A common tactical line in the movement is of decisive importance for the existence of the organisation and the whole movement. It removes the disastrous

[1] Available on http://www.zabalaza.net/texts/txt_platform.htm

effect of several tactics in opposition to one another, it concentrates all the forces of the movement, gives them a common direction leading to a fixed objective."

Therefore it is necessary to formulate clear positions and tactical unity. Otherwise

"The working masses ... will not work with the anarchist movement until they are convinced of its theoretical and organisational coherence. It is necessary for every one of us to try to the maximum to attain this coherence."

(Arshinov, The Two Octobers, *Libertarian Communist Review*).

THE CRISIS

In trying to sketch out the nature and implications of the crisis we have to go further than quoting sections of 'Capital' or dodging our duty of specific analysis and simply stating that capitalism is a system of crisis. Having said this we have to pick out the main features and work on them. We have to place the roots of the crisis in the 'stability' of the last thirty years. The overriding factor which enabled others to come into play was the failure of the European working class, armed in France and Italy, to seize power. The role of the Communist Parties, helping to establish 'order' in W. Europe and allow the British to destroy the Greek revolution (agreed at the Yalta meeting between Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt which set zones of influence) was crucial in this defeat, as was the rapid intervention of Social Democracy (built up where necessary by the AFL-CIO agents of the CIA). This defeat for the working class opened the way for the boom based on:

1. The enormous material destruction caused by the war

which enabled

2. US (Marshall) Aid.

The fear of revolution and competition from the bureaucratically planned regimes gave the US the will to intervene. The precondition was the 1944 Bretton Woods agreement, which set up the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to overcome balance of payments difficulties by establishing a pool of gold and currency. This itself was only possible because its cornerstone was the dollar - then exchangeable at the fixed rate of $35 to an ounce of fine gold; *and*

3. The technological advances forced by wartime needs (particularly production techniques)

with

4. The important help of state intervention established during the war and greatly expanded after it (e.g. the Labour nationalisation programme of 1945!).

to establish the conditions under which an enlarged market could be created and a higher rate of profit than previously enjoyed to be gained i.e. the precondition for capitalist development.

All this did not change the fundamental characteristics of capitalism (particularly the long-term tendency for the rate of the profit to decline but added new aspects to them. In trying to see how the contradictions reasserted themselves we should look at what is contributed by the above factors.

Bretton Woods

International financial stability rested on the US dollar. However the credit system built up to artificially stimulate the international economy could only give rise to inflation (paper money chasing itself in circles) because the system was not strong enough for all its reserves to be based on gold (75% of the pool was in local currencies, 25% in gold). This meant that while the dollar gave the system some stability, the weak currencies threatened the dollar in turn. Whilst the dollar was supreme the system was all right. The uneven - on an international scale - development of late capitalism (which we need to understand better) was probably the main cause of the growing US balance of payments deficit, although the drain caused by the Korean War, playing international policeman, and then the war in Indochina played a considerable part This created a bleed on US gold reserves which in 1950 held 2/3 of the world's mined gold. Recently this had declined to less than a quarter. This could only affect all the world's currencies. In the early '60s gold made up 60% of 'liquidity' (i.e. gold and foreign exchange) this is now less than 30%. The truth is that roughly 2/3 of the world's trading assets are *valueless* i.e. not convertible. This situation is reflected in gold reserve assets which in the '60s represented 30% of world imports and is now about 10%. In the late '50s and '60s fears of the instability of the system led to the French hoarding of gold, which in turn forced others to take out this insurance. The surface signs of the approaching crisis were a rightward turn in the US, cutting foreign aid, developing 'colonial' wars, the wave of West European wage freezes and 'anti-inflation' measures' e.g. Selwyn Lloyd[2] pay pause, 1962-3, UK recession, the Wilson 'inherited' £800m trade deficit of 1964, the Callaghan[3] 1967 devaluation, etc. The edifice cracked open on August 15th 1971 when Nixon announced that the dollar link with gold was ended. Now the vast amount of paper floating about had no basis. The key problem for the system is to re-establish a function. There is no new, young, rich capitalist power to act as guarantor. The fake cap must be destroyed, the paper burnt. So currencies must fall, assets disappear, production fall.

Technical Advances

The destruction in Japan and Germany gave them the chance to refit with the most advanced methods and become leading capitalist powers in a short time; indeed to compete with their benefactors. The British position was affected by its 'victory' which cost it most of its foreign investments to repay the US loans and so left it even more under-invested than in the '30s (the age of machine tools in British engineering is a clear guide to this). Also the conflict of finance capital (relic of the imperial past) interested in freer trading relations than industrial capital which needs protected markets prevented development in manufacturing (this is an 'old-fashioned' view, crudely put, but it needs investigating, for its influence on UK attitudes to the EEC, for instance). Technical advances under capitalism are either destroyed by vested interests or else spread far and wide in a short time. On an international scale their advantage lasts for a relatively short time.

State Intervention

[2] In 1962, Lloyd was Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister of Finance) in the Macmillan Conservative Government (1958-63).

[3] Callaghan was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Harold Wilson's Labour Party Government (1964-1970).

A planned communications, power, and transport system is an enormous advantage, initially, for industrial production. Many of the wartime measures were maintained and extended. European social democrats had a key role to play because this 'mixed' economy is their goal. State intervention enables production on a wider scale. State buying provides a customer for expanded production. But it does nothing to improve or hold the rate of profit. State, buying is paid out of taxes or borrowed money from funds of capitalism's private sector i.e. these policies produce government indebtedness and vulnerability to panics and crises of confidence. So if anything these policies worsen the rate of profit:

- by helping 'lame duck' industries from the taxes of the profitable sectors the average rate of profit is lowered.
- government induced production cannot be of commodities in competition with private capital so it increases the volume of non-profitable production, e.g. roads railways power systems or armaments, space research etc. This 'dilution' will also tend to lower the rate of profit.

So the expansion of production upon which the post War recovery wet built was not a sign of health for the system and contained within Itself Its own contradictions. Inflation is a product of the enormous amount of fictitious capital in circulation and a result of the expanded production created by state intervention.

The ruling class has to produce a higher rate of profit to climb out of the slump. To do this it must try to

1. destroy the fictitious capital - bankruptcies, devaluations.
2. increase the rate of exploitation.
3. avert trade war which will break the tenuous cooperation and destroy all hopes of a new foundation.

These are not easy to reconcile. Devaluation gives industrial capital some advantage, damages native financial centres, upsets competitors and places further burdens of a higher cost of living upon the working class. Increased exploitation needs a new technical breakthrough and capital to exploit it -neither exists at present - *or* it needs a thoroughly beaten working class. This defeat would have to be of a different order from that inflicted by the Labour/TUC policy of redundancies and wage cuts. The capacity to fight back still exists (for the Labour and TU leaders cannot destroy the movement they live on; mislead it, yes, dismantle it, no). This capacity to fight must be destroyed for capitalism to have a future.

The increasing pressure from the TUC for import controls[4] is contradictory to the needs for a new solid structure for capitalist trade.

The Labour Party is a particularly dangerous enemy to the working
class, because the 'mixed' economy has reached its limits and cannot resolve the crisis. The 'National' solutions lie in two directions - a National government to take on the working class or a national siege economy. We must understand clearly that both are dangerous for the working class. The return to laissez faire - the only orthodox

[4] Britain had been a member of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) that grouped together Scandinavia, Iberia, Switzerland and the British Isles, as an alternative to the 'Common Market': the European Economic Community that grouped together the low countries, France, Germany and Italy. Britain joined the EEC in 1973. After the Second World War restrictions on imports - import controls - were only gradually broken down, and within and without these trade areas. In the early 1970's "Free" trade was prospect for the future.

(Capitalist solution and the most likely -means a government dominated by the Thatcher-Joseph line. This line was what Callaghan expressed in his key' speeches to the Labour Party conference:

- Cut government spending, less controls on capital, by implication, cut living standards, let unemployment grow!
- The alternative, the 'left' labour policy of a command economy, in particular tariff barriers and control on capital movement, will signal open trade war. This cannot defend the living standards of the working class for even greater sacrifices in consumption will be called for.

A command economy under 'the social democrats would be like a General strike under the General Council of the TUC - a defeat of enormous scale. In the short run we have to beware of stop-gap measures designed to carry out parts of the long term needs of British capitalism. For instance the need for an increase in the rate of exploitation, in the face of working class resistance to wages policy, can only lead to a big sell of productivity as Wilson tried in the '60s. We may well see Phase Three[5] of the wage policy next year containing the traps of job evaluation, further measured day work, etc., etc. We have to study the lessons of the past period this tactic was applied and be prepared to meet it. The dominance of financial orthodoxy (à la 1925) in the Labour leadership must mean further cuts in public expenditure. For this to be fought a public sector workers alliance will be absolutely necessary.

A programme of demands around which the working class can be rallied is the key to this whole period, these demands must, not be economistic shopping lists (less hours, more pay) but must pose collective and independent working class solutions i.e. demands which extend beyond the local struggle. This must reopen our consideration of the idea of transitional demands such as work sharing with no loss of pay, opening the books under workers' inspection, a sliding scale of wages. We must develop further our position that 'It's not our crisis, we shall not pay for it'.

WHAT POLITICS, THEN, SHOULD A.W.A. ADVOCATE WITHIN THE WORKERS MOVEMENT?

These politics should contribute to the process of beginning the fight back, forming united class struggle fronts with other
left tendencies and indicating a way out of capitalism towards
libertarian communism. Our strategy as indicated in past copies of *Libertarian Struggle* and *Anarchist Worker* is as follows. We have consistently adopted a position to opposition to the effects of the crisis: we have urged workers to oppose the cuts, oppose the four and a half % limit,[6] etc. We have indicated the organisational methods to be adopted by workers in their struggles (basically federated rank and file committees of different sorts) and we have warned them not to set up isolated workers' cooperatives

[5] Faced with a trade deficit, the Labour government tried to implement wage freezes to preserve the productivity of British capital and to defend the Pound against devaluation.

[6] A limit of wage rises to £6 (at a time when the average wage was around £60) was followed in August 1976 by a 4.5% limit on wage rises- at the time inflation was running at over 15%.

or accept nationalisation. We have said that the 'Right to Work'[7] campaign has limitations, and stressed the need for a revolutionary movement to overthrow capitalism. We have also attempted to give coverage of and encouragement to actual struggles as they have occurred. The most noticeable characteristic of this policy has been the repeated recourse to the word 'must', not so much as an imperative but rather as a desperate and generally unheeded plea. We repeatedly say that the working class must do this or that. *We then proceed to present immediate tactical perspectives as if this attitude of intransigent opposition been wholeheartedly accepted by millions of workers!*

Our way forward is, in other words, aimed at a working class already consciously united in substantial sections in opposition to the consequences of capitalism; in our '.what to do' contributions we concentrate upon tactical and organisational observations - as if the working class' was everywhere in ferment and the battle against social democracy and class collaboration had already been won. (As if, also, we were speaking through a paper that had a mass circulation within the working class).

Let's begin a reappraisal of our approach with its pivotal point - the occupation as a resistance to one or other effect of the crisis. Firstly we must realise that however effective as a potential tactic occupation might be, it is by no means *predictable* as a widespread expression of working class struggle over the coming period. Secondly, it must be emphasised that the criticisms made below are not intended to deny the positive aspects - the main being, of course, its involvement of the assertion of workers' control over the plant or whatever concerned. What we must address ourselves to is how an occupation can relate to the immediate demands of the workers involved and the general state of the class struggle.

A struggle in all our minds at the moment when the word 'occupation' crops up is that pf, the IMRO[8] workers. We must, however, be cautious" in our evaluation of this. In IMRO we find a small workforce that has developed unity in revolutionary action over a long period of struggle, and matured into an example of a beautiful example of class intransigence. There are elements of their struggle that reveal their willingness to use it as a general didactic and propaganda organ. Because they have had a sophisticated and united consciousness of their situation they have not been prone to disillusionment: their stated objective, that of preserving their jobs, has been sustained by a mixture of pragmatism and political awareness that has seen them through nine months of occupation and eventual eviction apparently bringing them no nearer to it. Are we to expect such determination from every group of workers accepting occupation as their mode of struggle? Probably not. There is often unevenness between the form of workers' actions and the clarity and extent of their internal political commitment. Stiff though this fight may be and much as the left may give assistance and encouragement in the particular situation, in most cases the workers will be unwilling to make working class martyrs of themselves by going hammer and tongs against everything in the IMR0

[7] In February 1974 the Labour manifesto said: "It is our intention to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families." Unemployment was around half a million in 1974, and rose to 1.6 million in 1976.

[8] IMRO- the imprimerie (Print shop) of Rouen was occupied by workers - see reports in *Anarchist Worker* c. 1976.

manner. The Union bureaucracy will effectively isolate them. They will face defeat or else be involved in some attempted reconstruction of their sector. We have polemicised against both the major restructurings that can take place within capitalism - establishment of a workers' cooperative and nationalisation. It is of course correct that because both do occur within capitalism they both can and do tend to act against the workers interests. On the one hand the case of Triumph Meriden has had a sobering effect on the whole of the self-management left with regards to cooperatives. It provided a telling example of how 'an 'island of socialism' could not resist the pressures put on it by its organic links with and dependence upon the profit system. The workers had to turn on themselves to maintain the cooperative's liquidity.

The only way they could have avoided this in the short term (beyond a technological or marketing coup) would have been by demanding repeated cash injections without strings - which would have brought them back to square one. State Intervention via nationalisation, meanwhile, has repeatedly been revealed to be oriented to the overall needs of capitalism, Its effect on sectors such as coal, steel, railways and car-manufacturing has repeatedly been to assist the process of rationalisation and streamlining. But what about the occupying workers? Are we to refuse to relate to their struggle in any other way than to urge them to carry on the struggle at white heat even when the potential of the working class as a whole to assist through rank and file activity has failed to materialise despite our exhortations? We need to accommodate ourselves, in other words, to the limitations of what occupations are likely to achieve in terms of the defence of workers interests. Unless there is a take-off into sustained revolutionary growth - with other sectors of workers getting involved by a sort of chain reaction (which not even IMRO has achieved) - scattered outbreaks of workers resistance will play an ambiguous role in terms of overall class struggle. On the one hand they will serve as inspirations and examples to other workers and focal points around which propaganda can be made and towards which the fight for active support in the rank and file can be directed. On the other hand, even an occupation on the IMRO scale is likely to fail to break through the barriers to revolutionary advance created by the general conditions of class consciousness and the balance of forces
of the class struggle.

Beyond and in addition to the support and encouragement we give to such struggles there consequently remains the task of formulating general response to the state of the class struggle - a response which an be the beginnings of a matrix of class struggle solidarity, which can have relevance to all struggles, and which can indicate lines of battle within them which have the potential to prevent any retreat from 'eyeball to eyeball' situation turning into a rout. Such a response is not supplied by the historic programme of revolutionary anarchism alone. That programme is, on the contrary, only applicable as an *exclusive* political intervention at a time when a revolutionary situation has developed not only in terms of the condition and direction of the economy but also in terms of the coherence, unification and turning towards class struggle of workers' consciousness. It is to claim, however, that it is not *sufficient* to achieve it. It remains insufficient because the response of the working class to crisis is not a pavlovian propensity to be drawn immediately to

revolutionary principles, but rather depends in part on the role played by consciousness as it has already developed. The historic programme achieves a *fully* comprehensible relationship to this consciousness relating to the contemporary balance of forces only be allowing itself to be mediated by the objective situation. The process of revolutionary politics consequently becomes one of *rediscovering* historical objectives as they appear at the various levels of contemporary struggle and development. It is when this process is dictated that divisions occur between awareness of the historical programme and our responses to the myriad conflicts and activities of the working class. The former does not achieve its *fullest possible* implantation within he latter, where it acts as an agent in their development. Our intervention is not as effective a social force as it might have been; it becomes rather a standpoint explaining out sympathies. A response that is mediated by objective circumstances should above ill relate to the general political debate in the working class (especially in its mass organisations) and to the balance of class forces that this represents. It should focus on and define the main areas of class conflict - in the present situation, wages, work conditions (speed-ups etc) and unemployment. These are the basic economic indices, given that the cuts ire being dealt with elsewhere, though some aspects are relevant here. When we look at the balance of class forces we have to define which class is on the offensive. At the moment the initiative lies firmly in the lands of the capitalists as they respond to the crisis of financial credibility and profitability in their imperialist market. Alongside their economic measures, they have launched a major ideological offensive, based strongly on chauvinism. class collaboration and sacrifice: they have begun to score accesses against individual militants and militant sections of workers n plants and through the assistance of allies in the labour movement. True, the working class has not been ground down as much as necessary, but this very deadlock only worsens the desperation of the losses and their need to act drastically whilst it does nothing to clarify he workers' understanding of what is at stake. Under these conditions tie prime function of the response we fight for must be to change the direction of the struggle initiative. Such an intervention would centre around a series of demands exhibiting a willingness to preserve standards of living and employment at the same time as it challenged the social benefits and the politics of the bourgeoisie within capitalism.

On the question of incomes this involves clarifying the call for resistance to wage restraint by adding to it the rider that incomes must rise to compensate for losses through inflation. It also involves attacking the incomes structure of modern capitalist corporations - demanding that the incomes of managers, directors and shareholders be reduced to that of the best paid producers in their corporations and that the lower paid be raised up to this level. The responsibility for assessing the state of incomes with regard to inflation should be that of instantly recallable committees selected from the shop floor. To assist in the fight against the living standards of stockholders etc NO must add an attack on the 'investment strike' - a wealth tax on individual and company profits to feed a national investment fund. Another 'anti-rich' tactic is to call for the abolition of the civil list.[9]

[9] I.e. the millions paid to the family of the British head of state.

The demand 'no redundancies' is obvious. It can, however be extended by advocating 'work sharing on full pay' to be decided at branch or shop floor level (this covering both overtime and hours and introducing the ideas of cooperation and shop floor control) and 'full union rights for the unemployed' with the branch rather than the personal officer being the point of entry into work. It should not prevent us.****

The demand 'open the books' is a useful appendage to any specific conflict and to the general state of the economy. If private industry cannot meet workers' demands the state should be challenged to satisfy them. If private owners are forced into liquidation, nationalisation should be favoured to the establishment of a cooperative on the sole grounds that the latter poses the greater threat to the workforce by making its own representatives agents of capitalist forces.

The utility of such a series of demands is basically as an answer to the question 'what would you do then?' which goes beyond the vagueness of 'have a revolution' or the basically defensive 'resist this or that'. It has use in all areas of the labour movement, though the essential task remains the willing of rank and file workers so as to prevent it becoming merely the talking shop of bureaucrats.

The advocacy of such a series of demands should not obscure our commitment to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the working class and the re-organisation of production around workers and community councils. It should be presented as the line of defence of workers' interests we advocate precisely because we realise that the working class does not possess a revolutionary consciousness. It should not be presented as exclusive to A.W.A. but rather be presented as being of relevance to all workers and revolutionaries who we are able to reach with the limited circulation of our publications: it should be seen by them as a way to fight for the development of conditions where the debate about the historic programme (with which one may still disagree) becomes more relevant and pressing. We should not forget about the historic programme, though, nor cease to propagandise the basic tenets of revolutionary anarchism in a readily accessible form, but this activity should be accompanied by a greater awareness of orientation through demands to those workers already reacting to the futility of capitalism, yet dependent, despairing of their fellows and searching for some way out of the impasse.

NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES

The problems of national liberation struggles cannot be viewed en block. Each case has its own particular aspects - differing class composition of liberation movements, etc. It is important to examine the forces; at work inside a country fighting for liberation and to examine the forces at play on an international level. In most cases, the interests of the three great power blocks, USA, USSR, Peoples Republic of China, will be involved. It is necessary to analyse these interests and how they can effect the development of a national liberation struggle and the political complexion of a newly liberated country.

We recognise that it is a necessary stage on the road to libertarian communism for the peoples of the third world countries to throw out colonial powers. This will weaken the economic and political influence of major power blocks, robbing them of supplies of cheap labour and materials.

At the same time, we must be aware of the economic interests of the capitalist and state capitalist powers involved in the development of the emergent nation. Economic and political influence can still be exercised through a 'comprador' or native bourgeoisie, whose interests will be subordinated to international capitalism, and who may allow the multinationals, etc, to continue their plundering of labour and resources. National liberation struggles are usually led by sections of the national bourgeoisie, allied with intellectual and petty bourgeois elements. The working class and peasantry usually take an active part in national liberation struggles. Very often, however, their interests are subordinated to those of the native bourgeoisie, who seek state power and establishment of capitalist and state capitalist economies. We must give what aid and advice we can to forces of the workers and peasants inside the liberation movements. We must point out the tendencies towards self-management, popular assemblies, and popular militias that can assert themselves (Angola, FRETILIN[10]) while offering a critical view of the overall struggle, and the inevitable clash between the masses and the bourgeoisie. As national liberation struggles involve the interests of sections of the native bourgeoisie and the working and peasant classes, they are not in themselves revolutionary. However, these struggles can outstrip themselves by the dynamic they create, and lead to considerable advances towards libertarian communism by the masses (both the Paris Commune 1871 and the Hungarian Revolution 1956 had their starting points in nationalist sentiments).
They can create a situation of stress in the oppressor country, often leading to radical upheaval and revolutionary feeing there (e.g. Portugal, and USA to a lesser extent).

We therefore give critical support to national liberation struggles where it affects the in influence of colonial powers and where revolutionary struggle has a chance of outstripping the national liberation struggles. We are aware of the difficulties of establishing genuine socialism in the underdeveloped countries. Therefore, we regard it as essential that e we build a revolutionary movement in the industrialised countries that can assist the proletariat and peasantry of the underdeveloped countries.

IRELAND

Although the issue of our response to British involvement in Ireland was an early component of the basis for agreement in the minority tendency (around forwarding the Troops Out Movement's demands) we are in a situation where for reasons of time we have not been able to produce an extensive recapitulation of this for the present document.

[10] FRETILIN - The National Liberation Front of East Timor

Unfortunately, A.W.A. has been prevented from giving its full attention to events in Ireland because of its small size and its lack of immediate contact with the six counties[11]. One of the main failings of Troops Out Movement moreover has been in the field of disseminating contemporary information. We reaffirm nevertheless our belief that it is possible for our organisation to achieve a correct general orientation towards the Irish crisis according to the main outlines of our attitude:

[1] Present A.W.A. policy obscures the issues at hand by ignoring the unique features of the situation in favour of pious voluntarism.

[2] For any understanding of the situation we must begin by characterising the six counties. The first thing we note about these is that they are a territory over which the British parliament claims sovereignty. The second is that this sovereignty has been historically inter-related with the existence, of Protestant 'planter' communities which even before the existence of 'Ulster' as a separate political entity had enjoyed economic and social privileges expressing the special relationship of the protestant bourgeoisie with the British state and the British imperialist market, and also the special relationship of the protestant workers to this bourgeoisie. After partition, British sovereignty consolidated these privileges within the six counties by adding to them a semi-independent state power (especially in its internal military and legal aspects) which stood on a gerrymandered bourgeois democratic base. The Stormont statelet was never anything more than a blatant institutionalisation of the 'Protestant ascendancy' - sectarianism was built into it as an integral part of its structure, manifest at all levels of social analysis, from employment patterns to ideology.

[3] What we have been presented with over the last seven years is a crisis within this vicious apparatus of repression and discrimination. Consequently, one of the ways in which we characterise the forces operating in this crisis is according to their relationship with this apparatus. For workers in Britain, attention should focus on the British state and army. As the sovereign authority and through military intervention, successive British governments have adopted a policy of operating within and to preserve the sectarian structure of the six counties. Though they have been forced to suspend its independent organs of political control, its social appearance remains well rooted and the lines of caste division have been drawn more clearly by war than they were even by the electoral boundary or by lists of council employees. Meanwhile all attempts at reform or compromise have fallen foul of the contradictions maintained by the British connection itself, moves towards a solution being thwarted on the one hand by strong currents in the protestant communities (e.g. UCS strike) determined to resist the incorporation of any catholic representatives into the parochial political mechanism, and on the other hand by minority fear of the consequences of failing to defeat the ascendancy.

[4] As operating within the sectarian structure and according to its contours the British military (and ideological) intervention has concentrated upon the isolation and battering down the latter of these forces (the minority)., often blatantly. Given the cooperation of the Southern Irish State this appears as the simplest task - indeed the continuation of resistance of any kind is stunning when you consider the odds. At the moment this strategy is reaching a high point o f success. The new legislation in the South and the

[11] i.e. the six northern Irish counties that form part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

continuation of 'containment' in the North have meant that the core areas of minority resistance are again feeling the strain of their isolation and embattlement. As this was written the assassination of Maire Drumm[12] suggests that morale is so high amongst loyalists that someone from them has decided to cast a crucial testing challenge at the provisional republican movement. The more British strategy succeeds the more loyalism waxes and grows confident.

[5] Present British strategy can lead only to the restitution of some form of the ascendancy - its political mediation ranging from the maintenance of 'ghost' supremacy under the umbrella of continued direct rule, through some species of semi-independent power-sharing assembly to the restitution of a vigorous and open Orange hegemony. The latter is what substantial sections of the protestant communities have their eyes on. Those who wish to defend British policy (or refuse to challenge it) must accept that its first consequence has been and in the immediate future will continue to be the use of violent repression against the minority population of the 6 Counties. They must also reckon with the conclusion that the sort of future for the catholic working class towards which British policy is leading holds but slim chance of equal citizenship for them even in terms of social benefits and basic bourgeois democratic rights.

WOMENS' OPPRESSION AND THE FAMILY

Women in capitalist society are in a position distinct from that of male workers. The structural oppression that they suffer is centred on the family and home in particular, although in work outside the home women are usually especially badly paid and cannot win the limited rewards that capitalism does offer male workers.

Women have been defined as living and acting within the emotional and psychological field of life while men belong to the workplace. The humiliation and frustration that men suffer in the workplace is counter posed to the fulfilment and joy that women experience in the home caring for husband and family. Without wishing to say that involvement is as alienating as work in the industrial field, women suffer huge discrimination and oppression in return for their 'good fortune' at being allowed to stay at home.

First, the labour they perform at home is not considered to be real work, although it is tiring and requires a sixteen hour day when young children are involved. They are not paid for this work, nor are they considered unemployed and therefore cannot usually claim unemployment benefits. These financial and economic disadvantages render

[12] On 28 October 1976: it has been suggested that this killing was one of several in which state security forces worked in collusion with loyalists: " A key allegation as to why the authorities concealed the politically sensitive circumstances surrounding the Ludlow murder is that they were protecting an agent for the British military intelligence. Two of Seamus Ludlow's alleged killers were officers in the British Army's Ulster Defence Regiment who were also members of the paramilitary Red Hand Commandos. The gunman was also in the red Hand Commandos and has long been suspected of being an agent or informer for the British military. From Bangor, Co Down, he was allegedly involved in multiple killings, among them the 1976 murder of Sinn Fein vice-president Maire Drumm and the murder of a Comber man six weeks after Ludlow's death. A fourth man, Paul Hosking, travelled with the killers the night they crossed the border and he witnessed the opportunistic murder of Seamus Ludlow. In 1987 Hosking gave the RUC Special Branch a full account of the murder. Forget it, they advised him, it was political." From Macgill http://freespace.virgin.net/m.donegan/magill0499.htm

women downtrodden and unable to take initiatives outside the family, unless the husband, the breadwinner is sympathetic. This problem grows as the crisis deepens and women are pushed back into the home and not only have to struggle to keep the family on less money but also have almost no financial independence of their own.

Secondly, women suffer enormously on the emotional side of life as well. Freud divided life into work and play - the latter being defined as the area outside work where the individual psyche developed. The family is presented as the area of free activity where each person can, if lucky, reach fulfilment through tender loving relationships and by together weathering the storms of lift and economic crisis. Not only is the family thus completely turned in on itself and incapable of looking to the community for .

collective support, but individual women are completely trapped within their own families and are on their own at home most of the day. To set up community crèches is almost impossible at the present time because women are so physically isolated and because to move out into the community for help is to betray their family and imply that it has failed.

Thirdly, women are greatly put upon by men. The alienation and humiliation of industrial life leads men to need to feel superior in the family situation. They counter-balance their shame at the meanness and meagreness of the work they perform and their social inferiority by emphasising their importance to the family and to women. Usually this is expressed simply in a belief that women tend to accept, that work done outside the home is solely responsible for the well-being of the family and that women's work at home is not significant as work. This leads to a psychological dependence on feeling more important, influential, sensible, etc, than women which stifles the woman's ability to express herself at home: this leads to physical outrages performed upon women by men who do not want to face up to them as real people or who need to assert then superiority physically to shore up their growing feeling of being dispensable. Wives are beaten up, their arms and noses broken and sometimes they are murdered and women are raped; in such cases society implies that 'it is their own fault.

Finally, all this is surrounded by a massive oppression at the level
of sexual relationships which in some senses is the lynch-pin of all the rest. In that it is the medium whereby women are brought to absorb the theory of their own inferiority. In all spheres of society the image of woman that one meets is that of the inferior half of a sexual relationship which is the model for all relations between men women and children and is the process whereby homosexual relations are defined as unnatural and pushed outside 'normal' society. Hence also the particular oppression of the unmarried woman or 'spinster'.

<u>Women's Liberation</u>

Having said this we must discover ways for those in a left revolutionary organisation to approach those layers of society, this half of the class, which strike directly at the core of

women's oppression and which could be effective in drawing women into a critique of their own situation. The women's movement did this for a large group of women who had not thought of themselves as particularly oppressed or defined to themselves the position they were in before. It produced interesting ideas about orientation and suggested alternative structures for activity which related more directly to the situation that women found themselves in. This process of the awakening of a feminist consciousness demanded a headless, open form of organisation in order for as much energy as possible to be fed around for the movement. This became more significant with the connections that feminists made between patriarchy, authoritarianism and sexism. The connection between these is worthy of consideration for revolutionaries, but as a revolutionary organisation we have correctly rejected the over-loose form of organisation and seek methods of avoiding authoritarianism by well-defined organisational forms. However, we must ensure that the full impact of feminist ideas is fused into our approach to politics.

Women's Liberation particularly emphasised the importance of bringing personal and psychological life into politics. While criticising an outlook that seeks a revolutionary response solely by an appeal to emotional distress and alienation we should not underestimate its importance. Women can only be drawn into political activity through campaigns organised around demands they can see might be met, and meet their own needs: the National Abortion Campaign, demands for refuges, better medical care, changes in the laws on rape and ways of helping its victims etc.

However in such campaigns women will raise the personal and emotional because they have been told that this is the sphere of life particular to them. The lessons they learn from talking about their situations with other women will draw them inevitably into a critique of their own emotional/ family relationships. The attempts they make to change their lives will cause distress to themselves and to those they are involved with. The women's movement has always stressed the importance of consciousness raising groups to help direct the efforts they make and to keep the personal emotional problems that arise within a clear perspective of women's general oppression.

As revolutionaries we must raise demands that can adequately be used as the basis for campaigning politics and as organisational foci and which encourage the development of self-help groups as a method of exposing the mystification which surrounds education, medicine and child-care and which can bring women into contact with each other and towards an understanding of their oppression. The role of revolutionaries in the women's movement and campaigns springing from it lies largely in drawing out the connections between all aspects of the class struggle and in developing a revolutionary class-consciousness within them.

[1] The demand for abortion and contraception on demand raised by the women's movement clearly must be taken up by revolutionaries. As abortion comes under attack the working class must be induced to see this as an attack on itself, not simply as an attack on a few women who deserve what's coming to them anyway. Let's not be

moralistic or falsely emotional about childbirth. For women with little help from the state, the community or the man bearing a child can be a crushing burden and it is as wrong to force this on a woman, as it is to force slave labour on a man. A woman's right to choose will be realised in the context of not only a decisive change in availability of abortion but through a process of socialisation of child rearing. We can campaign for nurseries and crèches while realising the fundamental importance of the demand for abortion, and vice versa.

[2] We must demand that nurseries and crèches are provided free for all women to make use of. The absence of any national campaign around this issue, despite the inroads that the crisis is making on the limited gains that women have won in regard to child care from the National Health Service, social services, etc, is a considerable gap. This is perhaps best filled by encouraging activity by women around the cuts in general and around how they affect women in particular Specific political organisation of women into caucuses to resist the cuts and to expose the particularly severe way they reinforce women's oppression, mobilisations which occur with the emergence of feminist consciousness, can provide avenues for creative political development.

[3] The problems of straight sex discrimination in schools, further education and jobs is being most successfully raised by women's caucuses in the unions around the basis of the Working Women's Charter (WWC). While recognising the inhibiting effects of bureaucratic formalism in the Trade Union hierarchies' response to the initiative of the WWC, the Charter, conceived as a rank and file programme for action is a good focus for organising women trade union militants and posing as an alternative to the sexism of the authoritarian male union bureaucrats. The WWC has successfully brought the principles that emerged from the Women's Movement into contact with women actually working at the point of production and raised these questions within unions.

[4] Women fighting all aspects of their oppression through campaigns and support groups around rape, battering, nurseries etc. should be encouraged. The function of many of these groups lies mainly in providing direct aid and solidarity and demanding that the state should provide assistance. At the moment this depends almost entirely on the time and energy of small numbers of people who are prepared to put their concern into practice, either because they suffer themselves or because they understand the need for the community to rally round those whom society has no room for and who officially aren't there at all. This kind of activity, while important in actually providing something women urgently need, is inclined to function as little more than a charity unless it is accompanied by real efforts to mobilise these women into actively campaigning for treatment they deserve and need and to ensure that a clear political understanding of their situation emerges. Alone, the setting up of a refuge or demanding a refuge from the council or state will not raise the revolutionary class consciousness of women but they have some success in imparting to women a greater understanding of their situation and add to the swell of feminist revolt against capitalist patriarchy. The isolation of particular projects hinders the development of mass political consciousness around these issues and tends to encourage a degeneration of these ideas into simple

charity. This tendency is being fought against by attempts to establish campaigning links between particular projects, though with limited success. Women's Aid has held national conferences and attempted to give the movement more organisational coherence so that a more formalised attack can be made on the social services. This is the kind of development that we should support and while supporting efforts to solve or raise problems through self-help the drawbacks of this as a political method on its own should be recognised and resisted.

[5] The central issue, around which an adequate campaigning position must be found, is that of women's unpaid labour in the home. As long as women suffer the financial and hence political disabilities resulting from labour at home the other problems of women's oppression cannot begin to be solved. Moreover, without financial independence, women who have to stay at home to care for children and keep the house will continue to have to devote what spare time they can create to what wage labour they can find, and will have little energy left over for political activity.
trade union militants and posing as an alternative to the sexism of the authoritarian male union bureaucrats. The WWC has successfully brought the principles that emerged from the Women's Movement into contact with women actually working at the point of production and raised these questions within unions.

Socialising Housework

A clear strategy for provoking struggle around housework must be developed within a general approach to the current situation. This is especially true as more and more women are forced out of what employment has been available to them as unemployment grows.
As the crisis deepens women in particular become poorer, more dependent on the dole if they are entitled to it at all, or to the pay that the men bring in. In this situation they are less likely to be drawn towards a revolutionary analysis but more in need of an alternative to what is presented by the bourgeois press or fascism.
The Wages for Housework (WFH) campaign fulfils the function of raising a demand that cuts straight to the heart of this central matter of the oppression of women. However it is criticised for reinforcing the role of women in the home rather than questioning it. We do not want to institute wages for housework through workers power, but to socialise housework and remove the need for such a demand. Nor is it an adequate 'transitional' demand in that it does not point in a direction that we conceivably want to go except as a romantic/symbolic expression of a desire for female emancipation in general.

However this perhaps dismisses too easily a demand that has a wide general impact on women, has some international organisation, and considerable support. Have we anything else to offer which achieves the ends that WFH sets out to achieve? A demand for a minimum weekly allowance, say £20 (plus a substantial allowance for each child?) work or no work is a possible alternative and has advantages in that it demands that women should be financially independent without implying that they should stay at home and because it avoids the problem of the difference between women's labour at

home and wage labour, while combining the two in a single campaign. This however does lack a direct relationship to the problems of unpaid labour at home and so has less immediate appeal to women in; that situation It seems that a demand for £20 a week, work or no work is a better starting point than wages for housework. As this area is so important, and debate so far has not succeeded in fully clarifying a position a working group should be set up to examine the arguments clearly and politically and produce a paper on this for inclusion in the Internal Bulletin in as short a time as possible.

The A.W.A. must develop a coherent approach to women's oppression and understand the particular position that women find themselves in with regard to the crisis. Women must be mobilised around a programme of demands that relate their problems clearly to the problems of the class and which will encourage militant activity against the cuts and against all attacks on working class women, while developing consciousness towards a revolutionary solution for the class. Some of the demands which should be included in such a programme have been suggested above; other must be formulated more clearly and time given to the debate around these issues on which A.W.A. has not yet succeeded in making clear positions and action.

PUBLIC SPENDING, THE CUTS, AND THE FIGHT BACK

We need to understand the recent history of public spending and attempt to present a libertarian historical materialist analysis of developments, not only to be able to work out a strategy and attempt to predict its effects, but to be able to understand how the rest of the working class views the crisis, and therefore to be able to communicate on common ground.

This document is a first attempt to demonstrate such an approach; hopefully we can develop a clearer understanding particularly of the role of the working class. There are many omissions and generalisations, both in economic background and in the different characteristics of the various fields of welfare and administration. This calls for more detailed documentation, a more detailed strategy, and more facts and figures, especially if we are to appear convincing to workers. A comparison with the situation in other countries would also be useful.

[A] The Recent Development of the Welfare State

Prior to the end of the Second World War, welfare provisions tended to be primarily for 'the relief of the poor', subject to means tests and based on the assumption that everyone should be able to pay their way. Those too idle (or unfortunate) to provide for themselves were aided out of a desire to avoid disease and discontent spreading from the slums (or out of conscience and kindness). With the partial exceptions of education and council housing even most workers felt some stigma attached to accepting aid. When the war effort was turned to peace time production, state intervention in the

economy had become more acceptable and sections of both classes put the case for increased state intervention over previous peacetime levels.

[1] Keynesians (enlightened Tories and right social democrats) wanted to stabilise the economy by directing production and consumption (though they tended to prefer incentives and taxes to direct government control) and to increase the capability, mobility and placidity of the workforce. Some industries could only be run 'efficiently' on a national scale and their nationalisation might be desirable to avoid monopoly profiteering at the expense of other sections of capital.

[2] Socialists wanted to provide certain essentials to everyone regardless of income to even out differences (in time) and to bring industry under public ownership as an improvement leading beyond private competitive organisation. The balance of these forces (against those of committed laissez-faire right-wingers) led to increased public spending and government attempts to manipulate the economy:

a- Waste production:- armaments, subsidies for stockpiling goods, destroying or dumping them, white elephant production. The state apparatus - the courts, the police, the army, etc.

b- Nationalisation of 'key' industries. Basically this was to regulate and be regulated by the capitalist sectors of production, but the original Acts contained some references to taking social costs into account. For example, British Rail was to subsidise rural routes; however this was more in order to get workers to work and shoppers to the shops than to cater to all real social needs.
Provisions for job security and working conditions were made, and for limited consultation with TU representatives; however the government recoiled in horror from any suggestion of control by workers in any specific industry over that industry (as opposed to control by all workers through their 'democratically elected government'). Threats of non-cooperation from the (largely unchanged) managements ensured that few drastic changes were made, and it must also be noted that the nationalised industries continued to buy and sell on the 'free' market, and to subcontract.

c- Health, Education, personal social services, the Factory Inspectorate, and other welfare industries, promised to be free at point of use, provided according to need. Housing - not so freely available, but intended to be within the reach of all the 'deserving'.

d- Repayment of the national debt, interest repayments, subsidies to private industries, and other payments directly to capital. Apart from the industries producing goods for sale, all this required taxation and borrowing. Thus it depended on the willingness and the ability of the worker to pay taxes and more important on the willingness of industry and finance to part with or not compete for the fruits of some of the surplus value they were extracting.

Socialists saw taxation as a way of evening out wage inequalities (but this assumes initial inequalities continue to exist) and of allowing the state to carry out tasks that it could perform more efficiently and fairly than individuals and small concerns could. It is tolerated so long as they are convinced of this or remain socialists.

Capital, on whose continued existence (whether private or state owned) the non-profitable welfare spending depends, tolerates taxation if it is convinced by Keynesian arguments about greasing the wheels of the economy, of increased wages generating extra consumption and so more scope for production - *and if it is facing threats of worse working class militancy if it doesn't grant concessions.*

Although it can be shown that the increased public spending temporarily benefited capital the benefits to the working class were not purely incidental, and, important to get across, were not granted out of kindness or common interests either. Divisions of interests, whether real or subjective, within classes, as well as class differences, led to criticisms and attacks on the welfare spending.

The Interest of the Bourgeoisie:
1. Large companies would prefer to regulate capitalism where necessary to them by collaboration rather than via the mediation of the state when the state is more vulnerable to the demands of other sections or to workers and/or less effective. They value the state as a safety net (especially the less prosperous) and as a protector of imperialist and general foreign interests.
2. Whilst the working class must be kept alive physically and psychologically, they must not become allowed to be too choosy about their conditions of exploitation or too confident in their power.
3. Keynesianism, though staving off immediate economic crises, hinders the long term accumulation of capital, and some capitalist realise this without realising also the failings of laissez faire, corporate state fascism or etc.
Attacks include:

a- Announcements of increased welfare spending or lack of cuts are met by 'runs on the Pound'.

b- If the declining rate of profit is worsened by taxation and market manipulation and there appears to be an increased share of income going to the working class there may be an investment strike, hoping to provoke the government into subsidies and lowering borrowing rates and increasing the ease of making profits.

c- Claiming that if allowed to have free rein they would produce a boom, they demand release of resources for private industry - i.e. unemployment and less consumption to cheapen labour and material costs.

d- The petty bourgeoisie uses the existence of private facilities in health, education and building as shining examples and calls for 'freedom of choice'.

e- Within welfare and social services, as a hierarchical structure of management based on economic differentials has been maintained, the managers and senior civil servants align themselves with the ruling class and use their skills to safeguard their positions. As exploitation and alienation are retained workers also have neither the inclination nor the opportunity to be particularly efficient either. Lack of community consultation also weakens the effectiveness of even the best intentioned.

The interests of the Working Class:

a- Although mostly in favour of equal opportunity etc in principle, they resent the unevenness of its application both in geographical and sectional divisions and in priorities of allocating e.g. council houses.

b- They think too much goes on scroungers and immigrants.

c- Relying on the labour and Trade Union leaderships to understand and cater to their needs, they think that the existing provisions at any given level of resource allocation re the best possible, and that the bureaucratic inefficiency and orientation towards servicing and pacifying the labour force is inevitable.

d- Public sector workers have comparatively good job security and conditions won as part of the socialist planning pressure that went into setting up the welfare industries, which makes them keen to defend their jobs but causes resentment from other workers 'my tax going on idle civil servants' etc.

These forces, and the tendency towards complacency on the part of the working class, regarding welfare as a fundamental and un-removable part of the system, sabotage the socialist and liberal forces supporting welfare, at a local and national, political and economic level. No public service has expanded at the promised rate, and many have been declining for some time as the original gains are eroded. Budgets are worked out on the basis of past expenditure, maintenance, expansion and predicted inflation and wage claims. These are usually ludicrously underestimated and then can be cut. The government lays down the guidelines for local and sectional administration; there is some TU and professional body consultation, but no means of control.

[B] Working Class Reactions to the Cuts

This is presented as a dialogue between the generally 'trade union conscious', labour voting &/or community minded, but politically conventional or apathetic sections of the working class, and the libertarian communist approach to developing class consciousness. Self-managed struggles against the cuts can be encouraged and proposed as a bridge to attacking capitalism as a whole and realising the possibilities of self-management of welfare and all industries. Some issues not specific to fighting the cuts have not been taken up but are or should be dealt with elsewhere in this document or existing A.W.A. discussion and practice - anti-racialism and -nationalism, the particular intensity of women's oppression, unemployment, the role of the Trade Union and labour leaderships, and a more detailed explanation of the instability of capitalism.

The bankers' reactions to increased or insufficiently cut public spending shows they know it isn't really good for the country It may not be good for their part of the country but that doesn't mean it isn't good for working people, just because it hits the coffers of bankers and businessmen. The economy - the total level of material production -is measured by them as profits, as overseas balance of payments. It has slumps or booms but not because the workers are too greedy or unwilling to work, nor by acts of God, but because sometimes they can get richer in a boom but sometimes they can't go on making increasing profits; they prefer to let resources stand idle than to let them be used.

They control the system; they are in a mess; let them pay for it - they can best afford to. Besides, they aren't just trying to force gifts from the government through legislation. A run on the £ forces the state to borrow and so to run up a bigger interest debt to be paid from public money to the bankers.

But this country is in debt; we can't afford it.
Who can't afford it? We are talking about the total government income from tax, borrowing, investment, etc, and the proportion of it that is spent on welfare. The ways and means of raising taxes are notoriously easy to avoid - if you are rich enough to begin with.
The one thing the government seems to think is untouchable is interest repayments. The token protest to the bankers only come when the details of the cuts to be made are specified and the government's area of decision making is infringed. While public spending is down £4 billion, interest payments are up £3 billion, and the 'advice' of the financiers is usually followed - the raising of the Minimum Lending Rate, cuts in welfare, rather than increased taxes or decreased concessions to the rich. Defence, subsidies to and purchases from private industry (paying prices that includes their profits) and all the top salaries and extravagant prestige functions get their share. The knowledge, the skill and the workforce to provide much better public services exists, so why not make use of them? With two million (including married women not registered but able to go out to work if conditions suited them) unemployed, and even existing facilities, both welfare and industrial standing idle, there's no excuse for saying resources have to be taken away from welfare to free them for industry.
The government and the bosses just don't seem to be able to put them to use. The welfare of the working community should be the priority and a system of spending which will meet their needs sought. When businessmen make the government say 'we can't afford it' what they mean is that they want anything that is going, to help them increase their profitability. They are saying that unless their real wealth increases each year (while workers' incomes are always lower, and at present going down) they will just sit on the wealth and resources that they control.

Productivity per worker is higher now, yet total production lower than it was during the three day week[13]. Why should they be able to demand incomes increasingly higher and higher than those of the workers? That's what's happening as inflation and prices rise faster than wages and welfare spending. The government should cut off interest repayments for a start and make welfare spending the first on the list, not the crumbs that remain when everything else is done.

If firms threaten to go out of business in protest, let them, and let there be public ownership, and/or a subsidy to the workers to take over, with a say in what they produce and why as well as how, on fill wages, with no redundancies. Why can't our economic system produce goods directly in response to the needs of the producers, on

[13] Following a miners' strike (which reduced coal output) and a hike in oil prices the Conservative government imposed a three day week to protect energy supply in January 1974.

wages to allow them to live as well as is possible for everyone? If this is impossible, then what use is the system and how can we change it? The existing welfare industries show work and production can be organised (though of course they could be improved) without marketing a product for a return on capital as the direct motive.

But we need to make profits and improve our balance of payments in order to buy the imports everyone needs.
What businessmen mean by this is that they want to trade internationally because they can (or think they can) make more money that way, not out of concern over the cost of imports to the ordinary person. (There ought to be an analysis of international capitalism and how to attack it here, without expecting workers to show international solidarity at their own expense. But the A.W.A. hasn't discussed this much, except to affirm the need for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and to oppose the idea that a satisfactory solution in a single country can be found. Suggestions for how to meet the working class's present perceived needs, or at least to begin to, in attacking the international market while it still exists, are needed.)

But welfare services are impersonal, bureaucratic, and inefficient. Even so if they weren't there most of us wouldn't be able to afford anything at all. There are three main reasons why they are bad at present: firstly, lack of resources allocated to make improvements like smaller classes, less patients per nurse, more houses built to higher standards, public transport efficient enough to make a car unnecessary, cheap enough for everyone. All these could be provided if available labour and know-how was combined, but instead things are getting worse because of the cuts.

Secondly, the services are run without any proper community consultation - at best we are presented with a set of alternatives, none of them adequate, with no practical encouragement to work out our own plans, no guarantee that anything we decide will be implemented (if we stick to the proper channels, that is). Workers have no chance to have any say in their working conditions in order to improve ways of doing things without the danger of finding that they've doubled their workload or done themselves out of the job.
Managers want to make it look like they are the only ones who are able to understand or plan anything, because only then can they continue to command privileged positions. But as they are usually a cut above the rest of us they are the least likely to understand workers' needs even if they wanted to. There are plenty of examples of groups of workers, tenants, mothers, etc being able to organise cooperatively to get things done. The offices are not mostly overstaffed, though; its not a matter of needing to cut them out to save other things, but of using the apparatus of the bureaucracy to provide the information that workers and the community need to decide1 what to do, not using it to account for every scrap in triplicate. We don't need to rely on top salary earners at all.

Thirdly, services aren't being provided to do the best for every individual, as part of her/his needs in eating, sleeping, working, relaxing, etc, but, as they are reduced, only those which keep the workers working (education for engineers, getting people with

industrial diseases just fit enough to work) are given any importance; the old, the very young, the chronically disabled, and the non-crippling discomfort like tonsilitis just nave to wait.

[C] A Strategy for Action

Following on from these and other arguments and from examples of workers taking direct action, we must encourage people to realise that while forced to make demands on the state and the bosses because they at present control the means of production, the only way to secure use of them to meet the needs of the working class is by specific demands backed up by proof of mass support and involvement. We must attack their use of resources wastefully, for their own ends only. Withdrawing labour and causing disruption is not only an essential part of getting them to return to us the benefit of what they have expropriated but a way of developing self-organisation that can be carried over into situations where workers are able to run things themselves.

In order to be able to point out the exorbitant costs even within welfare spending on top salaries, interest repayments, and profits to outside firms, we need access to the accounts and plans of hospitals, schools, bus companies, local authority housing departments, etc. This gives warning of proposed future cuts too, and allows workers to work out what is available, what is lacking and what plans should be made, what resources demanded. OPEN THE BOOKS!

Some things, such as crèche facilities or women's health centres or lower fares can be organised directly without first explicitly raising demands for the expropriation of state controlled recourses. But such things should not be possible solely if people are giving time and money to patch up holes in the welfare state. Facilities directly run by the users, any moves towards self-organisation, should be supported, but every possible way of getting money and equipment back from the state and capital should be tried (e.g. crèche workers could apply for a job creation scheme or refuse to pay rates, as well as getting the support of workers and the community
for direct action against councils and employers). We should explain why capitalism cannot provide the facilities in question and how this failure is linked to other attacks on the working class and so how it is important to take a general economic offensive against capitalism in the process of meeting immediate needs.

In some cases volunteer labour however well-meaning is scab labour like the use of women (usually) who are used to working unpaid to supervise in schools; we should try to get the people involved to develop more effective ways of getting the jobs done, by forcing the school or whatever to employ enough trained staff at a proper wage. The involvement of the community in the public services should be encouraged as a way to make sure that they are adequate and well run, by increasing the strength of those working in them, helping them organise their work and the pressure on employers, and the authorities, and if they want to work in a public service and are needed demanding proper training and proper employment on full pay. The pressures at present on public

employees to take real wage cuts and more work must be fought, not only on economist grounds but because also the quality of the service they provide and their own physical and mental health will suffer. Until we can force the building of enough schools, hospitals, etc, to employ all those at present unemployed and seeking or needed for jobs as teachers, nurses, etc, we call for FULL AVERAGE EARNINGS FOR ALL AVAILABLE WORKERS ON REDUCED HOURS

A great increase in public spending is needed and in demanding this we must also call for the setting up of workers and community committees (based on recallable etc union etc delegates) to decide how it is to be spent and also to asses the rate of increase of the cost of living; for a start, REVERSE ALL CUTS! This must include cuts in spending power due to inflation and we must explain that the causes of crises and inflation lie outside the working class; to safeguard public spending it must be based on a minimum of a SLIDING SCALE OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE and we should prepare for the end of the present wages policy by calling for increased basic rates, then also linked to a minimum of a sliding scale.

There are many mote specific issues to educate and mobilise around and, as a parallel process to getting discussion and planning going lies the unification of people around common interest groups - unionisation, forming women's, passengers, tenants, parents, students groups, and encouraging those that already exist to link up across boundaries and with existing campaigning bodies. These are forums for discussion as well as mobilising bases for action and we must point to the existing policies that have been successful and to the failures and frustrations and point out how the latter can be lessened by taking power back from bureaucratic leaderships which act in concert with employers and the state. Initial fears of reprisals and victimisations can be overcome by building solidarity and showing divisive demands (e.g. cut education not health) shown to be self-defeating.

The initial protests and actions against the cuts are coming from both outside and inside the unions; we must recognise which groups are capable of mounting the major attacks on capitalism, and which, though vital, ultimately rely on the actions of others to succeed. To generalise broadly, groups with economic power, either customers paying or not paying the money (e.g. fare fight passengers[14]) or the producers of wealth are those who can really force concessions; those most immediately affected and with an easily used organisational link are the first to take action. We need to examine these considerations, along with the existing situations and experiences of A.W.A. members, in order to see what would be most useful to put energy into. Campaigns like Fare Fight and tenants rent strikes fulfil both requirements, and once established can try and take the struggle to transport and housing and local government workers. In health and education the main initiatives are coming from the workers in most places; through their unions they need to try to involve the community as consumers and draw them into

[14] Campaigns against the increase of bus and other transport fares. In the 70's in Sheffield the 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire' used to provide bus services for 2 or 3 pence, compared with current fares ten or twenty times these prices.

action as industrial workers with economic muscle. This will happen when the cuts are more generally understood as part of the same process which involves redundancy and unemployment, alienation and danger to health and safety at work, and so on, and the inadequacy and wastefulness both in the present welfare industries and in production for profit.

[D] Tactics for the A.W.A.

a- Campaigns and unions and other groups activities.

Situations vary widely from active unions to none at all, from militant tenants groups to largely social residents associations. But in any such situation we can and usually do work to increase involvement and challenge the stranglehold of reactionary leaderships. What is often lacking is the support by the apparatus of A.W.A. for communications and mobilisation and for channelling its resources to greatest effect for the individuals or even groups involved. We must look at areas where we already have some strength, asses our impact so far and see if anyone else is able to enter these profitably. Comrades in the same field, with the help of the rest of the organisation, can discuss what lines of action, motions etc to introduce or support or introduce and so by coordination increase effectiveness, and enable others to distinguish in some cases A.W.A. practice and (hopefully) learn from or constructively criticise it. In discussing the state of action in a union we can discuss why a particular set of views prevail and why there isn't more involvement, and how to lead on If possible from existing proposals or break with them if not, on the criteria of what will go towards meeting both immediate perceived needs and revolutionary perspectives. These include combating fragmentation and provoking attacks from a class base and increasing confidence in self-organisational abilities. This is not a call for every action of every member to be determined by the A.W.A. as a whole; self-organisation applies here as well, and e.g. teachers are usually the best judges of what is going on in National Union of Teachers, but they should be able to draw on collective experience and on the successes and failures of other revolutionaries' experiences also through discussion of the work of other anarchists and the International Socialists[15], International Marxist Group[16], etc.

We must be prepared to tactically adopt positions we are critical of and enter united fronts if, as at present is often the case, 'pure' positions meet with a limited response while limited issues at least give the rank and file involved experience and keep them together, gives them confidence and weakens management if demands are won; gives us a platform within the union and an opportunity to influence the lead given by a united left. We can go on to prove in practice the effectiveness of any particular A.W.A. suggestions which are adopted, or the inefficiency of those we criticise (or vice versa and learn from our mistakes). We must also of course oppose any moves we think are in balance reactionary and worse than nothing, and if we have a chance of winning support for a controversial position fight for that. We are after all trying to take the class struggle

[15] International Socialists- now the Socialist Workers' Party (GB).

[16] Supporters of this tendency - The Forth International publishing the journal International Viewpoint- can now be found in the International Socialist Group.

forward, not lust prove we can maintain a coherent libertarian communist organisation; the two are dialectically related.

b- Campaigns, pressure groups and so on, such as rank and file groups, anti-cuts committees and groups, squatting groups, etc

Our attitude should be on a similar basis; if possible, and in area which we think important we should become involved in any initiative with any potential and if at first it sticks in our throats we should ask ourselves what alternatives are open - to back out of that kind of work? not, is there any alternative? If not, we should then identify what is wrong and try to change it. The main faults tend to be:

1. Another group is trying to use it to further their aims not those of the class. This can be fought by insisting that if it is a delegate body all delegates are fully accountable, any non-delegates have a good reason (e.g. a minority of militants in a rightwing union branch) and are acceptable to all the delegates as fully active supporters working to achieve enough interest from their parent body for delegation - i.e. are not just political commissars. We can stress the need to attack the state and capitalism (or a particular section thereof) on the basis of fundamental inability to meet through its structure the demands placed on it to a permanent and full extent, and consequently the need for workers to develop their own organisations in struggle, not just replace the personnel at the top of existing structure.
2. Domination by the bureaucracy of the TU movement. This is harder to fight but the number of people and resources they can mobilise if attacked in the right way is great. We should try and use their drawing power, recognising that they were (mostly) elected because people thought that they represented their interests, and supporting their limited demands on the above criteria, and try and expose their betrayals when we have something better to offer than total disillusionment.
3. Poorly and undemocratically organised campaigns - see 'Tyranny of Structurelessness'[17]! The local group and the organisation as a whole should be prepared to offer practical help in producing leaflets and shit workers[18] where needed and should constantly try and asses the effect of particular interventions) in order to judge what to concentrate on or scrap in future. On the basis of past performance and our size and capabilities, at present A.W.A. is best aimed at the periphery of the revolutionary movement and at convinced class-strugglers; single topic leaflets, broadsheets and maybe future pamphlets at a wider audience.

[17] This is the title of a pamphlet originally written by Jo Freeman drawing on campaigning experiences in the Women's Movement in the USA, and re-published by the A.W.A. in the UK.

[18] Persons to do back office and support work for campaigns, leafleting, etc.