

# solidarity

10p

for workers' power

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## DOUBLE ISSUE

- A.Pannekoek's PARTY AND CLASS
- Malaise on the left
- Windsor free festival
- REVIEWS: Post-scarcity anarchism (M. Bookchin)  
The failure of the sexual revolution (G. Frankl)  
Invergordon mutineer (L. Wincott)
- Industry - Cartoons - etc...



# THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Two general elections within eight months are an unusual occurrence in British politics. When moreover both elections produce a Labour victory it suggests that a shift in the locus of power, within the ruling class, may have come into the open. Why the shift? And what are its implications?

In terms of power politics the answer is clear: the dominance over British society of 'classical' capitalism (represented by the Conservative Party) has been cracked. This crack is structural. It not only affects political issues (like the question of a referendum on the EEC) or economic ones (like inflation) but also attitudes to work, strikes, productivity, permissiveness, obedience, authority, morality. Traditional Conservatism has ceased to dominate the social climate in Britain. If it aspires to win back its role it will have to transform itself. It won't be able to revert to something from 'the good old days', but will have to evolve into something so new as to lose its traditional Conservative identity. Classes, like individuals, are rarely willing, or capable, of undergoing such a transformation.

A crack in the dominance of one authority does not mean that this authority has been totally shattered. Nor does it mean that another authority has as yet fully asserted itself over society. The social forces behind classical Conservatism are still very much around. But their power is in decline. They are now forced to share it with the bureaucracy of the trade unions.

In February Heath stampeded the electorate into an election over the issue 'Who governs, Parliament or the Unions?'. The result implied a definite answer, namely: 'Parliament, but only with the collaboration of the Unions'. The trade union bureaucracy had gained popular assent to its right to veto Government policies. It is now clear that if the TUC disagrees with a decision of the Cabinet - or of Parliament - that decision cannot be implemented. This is now accepted as a 'fact of life' by both Labour and Conservative politicians. Heath lost the February election because he refused to recognise this fact. Wilson won in October because he publicly endorsed it.

For several decades now there has been a gradual change in the structure of the ruling class. The social groups associated with the management of 'nationalised' capitalism have been on the ascendancy, on a world scale. It is against this general background that one must see the growing political role of the trade union bureaucracy. The results of the last two elections only highlight this shift.

Why has this shift suddenly gained impetus? What are its roots? The main factor, in our opinion, is that working people are no longer prepared to have the economic difficulties of capitalism solved at their expense. They are no longer impressed with talk about 'the national interest', 'all being in the same boat', 'the balance of payments', etc.



Workers will no longer sacrifice their standard of living in response to calls from 'economic experts' or politicians, when all around them they see glaring and nowadays unacceptable inequalities. This is why the wages struggle today contributes so significantly to the collapse of traditional authority, a collapse which itself helped forward the wages pressure in the first place.

The system has had to adapt to this change in people's attitude to authority. It has had to switch from wielding the authority of Parliament (i. e. from legislating wage control) to soliciting voluntary acceptance of a wages policy. But who could solicit such an acceptance? Clearly not Parliament itself, and equally clearly none of the political parties. This leaves the trade unions. This is the real meaning of the 'social contract'.

The whole trade union apparatus now becomes the last bastion of exploiting society. It not only negotiates the rate of exploitation in a 'free' labour market (which it has always done). It is now moving in to control the market place itself. Its institutions, and the attitudes of the shop floor to them, become crucial to the Establishment. Shop floor struggles will henceforth have, more than ever in the past, immediate political repercussions. Jack Jones is not only the general secretary of the TGWU. He is also the underwriter of Mr Wilson's economic policies. If the authority of the trade unions is challenged and superseded by direct action on the shop floor, the floodgates could open. There will then be no card left for the Establishment to play, short of naked coercion. And that would be a very risky card indeed for them to play.

We regret the long delay since the publication of our last issue.

This has been due, in part at least, to prolonged discussions, both within the present editorial group and within the group as a whole, as to the nature and content of the articles chosen for publication. We are hoping to make up for the delay by giving you a double issue. This will be sold at 10p and count as two issues for subscribers.



# THE MALAISE ON THE LEFT

Forget for a moment the scare campaigns of the recent election: Scanlon and Jones presented by the yellow press as proselytisers of red revolution, Mr Wilson in the garb of a latter-day Kerensky opening the gates to Bolshevism or worse, bank clerks freezing (a la Portugaise) the funds of fleeing fascists, the great fear of the bourgeoisie about a 'mafia of fanatical socialists' in control of the commanding heights ... of the National Executive of the Labour Party!

The reality is less lurid - and less encouraging. What we see around us is a confident and aggressive movement, increasingly aware of the fact that real power does not lie in Parliament, but profoundly divided as to objectives, strategy and tactics - and completely at sea as to values and priorities. So divergent are its component strands that one has to ask, quite bluntly, whether one can legitimately speak of a movement. Among thinking socialists there is a deep malaise.

The purpose of this article is to explore the roots of this malaise, and to show that they lie in the transformations of class society itself. Over the last few decades - and in many different areas - established society has itself brought about a number of the things that the revolutionaries of yesterday were demanding. This has happened in relation to economic attitudes, in relation to certain forms of social organisation, and in relation to various aspects of the personal and sexual revolutions. When this adaptation in fact benefits established society, it is legitimate to refer to it as 'recuperation'. This article seeks to start a discussion on the limits of recuperation.\*

Recuperation, of course, is nothing new. What is perhaps new is the extent to which most 'revolutionaries' (whether they be demanding 'more nationalisation', more 'self-management' or 'more personal freedom') are unaware of the system's ability to absorb - and in the long run benefit from - these forms of 'dissent'. Class society has a tremendous resilience, a great capacity to cope with 'subversion', to make icons of its iconoclasts, to draw sustenance from those who would throttle it. Revolutionaries must constantly be aware of this strength, otherwise they will fail to see what is happening around them. If certain sacred cows (or certain previous formulations, now found to be inadequate) have to be sacrificed, we'd rather do the job ourselves.

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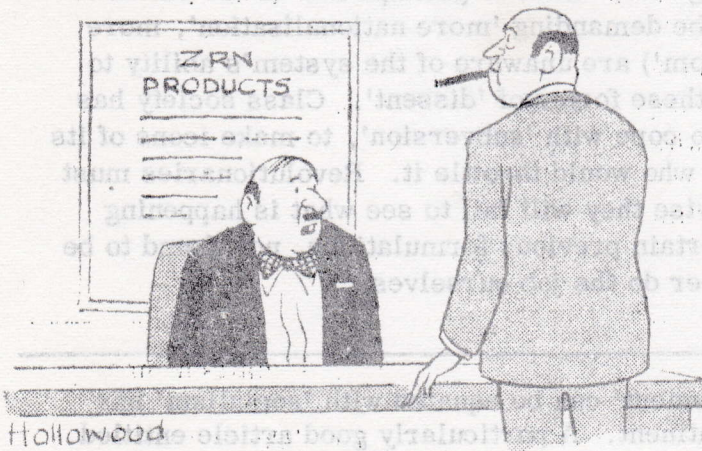
The discussion as to whether 'self-management' can be equated with 'socialism' has already begun among libertarians on the continent. A particularly good article entitled 'Autogestion et Autodestruction' was recently published in issue no.7 of 'Commune Libre' (Boite Postale 521, 31011 Toulouse Cedex, France).



## RECUPERATION OF ECONOMIC DEMANDS

Keynesian economic policies, once considered radical threats to bourgeois society, are today widely accepted as essential to the functioning of modern capitalism. The demands for nationalisation of the mines or railways, for national health insurance, for unemployment benefit and for state pensions have been totally recuperated. Despite occasional nostalgic (and largely irrelevant) glances into the past, no conservative politician, seeking to retain a shred of credibility, would today advocate the return of the mines or of the railways to private ownership - or the dismantling of the essential structure of the 'welfare' state. All socialists would agree, thus far.

But there is then a parting of the ways. We would claim that the centralisation of all the means of production in the hands of the state - the most 'radical' demand of the Communist Manifesto - has been achieved in many parts of the world without any corresponding enhancement in the areas of human freedom. In fact an exploiting society, divided into order-givers and order-takers, functions far better on this type of economic base, which eliminates many of the irrationalities of laissez-faire capitalism. Whatever the human aspirations of their rank and file, the ideologies and programmes of Social Democratic, Communist, Trotskyist or Maoist groups in the West provide the most articulate demands for this kind of social organisation. These groups are the midwives of State Capitalism. They may differ as to tempo and as to tactics. They may argue about what they consider to be (for others) the acceptable or unacceptable costs. But their fundamental objective is the same - and is moreover in keeping with the deepest requirements of Capital itself. Pace the ghosts of Hayek and of Schumpeter, pace Enoch Powell and Keith Joseph, the division of society into rulers and ruled will not be abolished by the abolition of the 'free market' or, for that matter, by anything that Messrs. Wilson or Gollan (or the 'theoreticians' of any of the marxist sects) may have in mind.



Moreover all over the Third World (from Sékou Touré's Guinea to North Vietnam, from Iraq to Zanzibar) 'marxist-leninist' ideas are today influencing the birth and moulding the economic life of many developing countries. All are ruthlessly exploitative societies, geared to the rapid development of the productive forces. Today this is only possible on the basis of intense primary accumulation, carried out on the backs of the peasantry.

"The union says that if we grant them the pay increase of 40 per cent they might be able to mount the cash flow rescue operation we need."



Here again erstwhile revolutionary ideas are becoming vehicles for new forms of enslavement.

To paraphrase Marx, it is not what men think they are doing that matters. What matters is the objective result of their beliefs and actions. Class society can well recuperate the economic demands of the traditional left. It is not of fundamental importance, in this respect, whether various ruling classes are fully aware of what is happening to them. They clearly differ from one another in the degree of insight they have achieved into their own, long-term, historical interests. The more far-sighted among them now accept the centralisation of the means of production in the hands of the State as the essential precondition for the growth of the productive forces. For most marxist socialists (and for the bourgeoisie) this growth is the fundamental issue. This is what unites them. This is where the bourgeois vision and the marxist vision coalesce. For both of them economic growth is what politics (and ultimately what life itself) is all about. There are few other dimensions to their thinking. For both of them the future is mainly about 'more of the same'. And the rest? The rest is for 'after the revolution'. At best, it will look after itself. At worst, if one speaks to a traditional marxist about such issues as women's liberation, ecology, the 'counter-culture', etc. one is denounced as a 'diversionist' in tones showing how deeply the work ethic, patriarchal attitudes and value system of the existing society have permeated their thinking.

#### RECUPERATION OF INSTITUTIONAL FORMS

Sections of the left have fortunately gone far beyond the demands for nationalisation, planning, etc. In the wake of the Russian Revolution small groups of 'left' Communists clearly foresaw the course of events which this type of 'socialism' would lead to. Slandered by Lenin, denounced by the 'orthodox' communists, they warned of what lay ahead: the rule of the Party would soon result in the emergence of a new ruling class, based not on the private ownership of the means of production but on a monopoly of decisional authority in all areas of economic, political and social life. To the hegemony of the Party and to the omniscience of its Central Committee the left communist counter-posed the knowledge and power of an enlightened and autonomous working class. They posited the institutional form this power would take: the Workers Councils. This was no genial blueprint for a new society sucked out of the thumb of a Gorter or a Pannekoek. From the Paris Commune to the Russian Revolution of 1917 the 'Council' form of organisation had been the living historical product of the class struggle itself. The warnings of these earlier revolutionaries have been fully justified.

But their vision remains limited. Despite Pannekoek's interests in science and philosophy, Ruhle's interest in pedagogy, and Korsch's stress on the need for a deep-going cultural critique, most of the writings of the left communists centered on problems of work and of production and distribution. They lived in a very different era from our own, and had little of significance to say about what have become very important areas



of social life: bureaucratisation, alienation in consumption and leisure, authoritarian conditioning, the 'youth revolt', women's liberation, etc. Even some of their institutional proposals have been partly overtaken by events.

The recuperation of the demand for working class power at the point of production and for a society based on Workers Councils has, for instance, taken on a particularly sinister form. Confronted with the bureaucratic monstrosity of stalinist and post-stalinist Russia, yet wishing to retain some credibility among their working class supporters, various strands of Bolshevism have sought posthumously to rehabilitate the concept of 'workers' control'. Although 'workers' control' was only referred to once in the documents of the first four congresses of the Communist International it has recently become one of the Top Ten Slogans. Between 1917 and 1921 all attempts by the working class to assert real power over production - or to transcend the narrow role allocated to it by the Party - were smashed by the Bolsheviks, after first having been denounced as anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist deviations. Today workers' control is presented as a sort of sugar coating to the pill of nationalisation by every Trotskyist or Leninist microbureaucrat on the make. Those who strangled the viable infant are now hawking the corpse around. The Institute for Workers' Control even runs annual conferences, addressed and dominated by trade union officials appointed for life. Those who are not prepared to allow workers to control their own organisations here and now serenade sundry simpletons with fanciful tunes as to their fate in the future. Recuperation here is taking place amid incredible confusion.

For a long time the advocacy of genuine workers' control (or, as we prefer to call it, workers' self-management)\* remained confined to small groups of revolutionaries swimming against the great bureaucratic tide. Following the French events of May 1968 the demand took on a new reality and a new coherence. People began to see self-management as the dominant theme (and Workers Councils as the institutional form) of a new society in which bureaucracy would be eliminated, and in which ordinary people would at last achieve genuine power over many aspects of their everyday life. But this again was to ignore the system's capacity for integrating dissent and harnessing it to its own advantage.

Can the demand for self-management be geared to the requirements of class society itself? An honest answer would be 'yes, in some respects'. Yes, providing those operating the self-management still accepted the values of the system. Yes, if it remained strictly localised. Yes, provided it was eviscerated of all political content. Car assembly plants seeking to obtain the participation of the workers have been operating for some time in the Volvo and Saab factories in Sweden. Under the 'with it' guise of

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\* For a discussion of the differences between the two concepts, see the Introduction to 'The Bolsheviks and Workers Control: 1917-1921.'



enriching the workers' job, employers have continued to enrich themselves. Groups of workers are allowed to manage their own alienation. The powers-that-be seek to resuscitate the anaemic institutions of existing society (increasingly abandoned by those expected to make them function) with transfusions of 'participation'. No wonder the slogan has been taken up by everyone from Gaullist deputies to our own Liberals.

Revolutionaries are in some measure to blame for this confusion of form and content. They have insufficiently warned against the dangers inherent in any attempts at self-management within capitalism. And, in relation to the future, they have insufficiently stressed the limitations of the demand. Self-management and workers councils are means to liberation. They are not liberation itself. Many revolutionaries have, moreover, tended to underestimate the complex problems of society as a whole. These have to be considered in addition to the problems of particular groups of workers. Our vision has never been 'the railways to the railwaymen, the dust to the dustmen'. We are not for self-managed insurance empires, for self-managed advertising companies, for the self-managed production of nuclear weapons.

This is not to say that self-management will not be the dominant theme, and the Council probably the institutional form of any kind of socialist society. But they are no more than that. Into those particular bottles many wines can be poured. In contemporary society self-management could very well develop on a reformist, racist, nationalistic or militaristic basis. The historical precedents are there. Many workers councils in Germany - in December 1918, and again later on - voted to surrender power to parliamentary institutions. Between 1933 and 1945 the vast majority of the British and German people identified with their respective rulers and mobilised themselves (or allowed themselves to be mobilised) in the defence of interests that were not their own. Israeli self-managed kibbutzim are vehicles for the dissemination of Zionist ideology and for implementing (anti-Arab) discrimination, i.e. anti-socialist policies.\* In Northern Ireland, amid an 'unparalleled explosion of self-management' the self-activity of a civilian population recently brought down a government... in the name of sectarian and mystified objectives. The lessons are clear. Self-management, divorced from socialist politics, is meaningless.

### RECUPERATION OF 'PROTO-MARXIST' DEMANDS

Confronted with the fact that established society has successfully co-opted both the economic objectives and some of the institutional prescriptions of those who wanted to challenge it, radicals have responded in a number of ways.

One response has been to delve deeper into Marx. The 'communist project' is redefined in proto-marxist terms. We now have Marx 'à la carte'. What is stressed is

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\* See 'The Kibbutz Experience' by Akiva Orr in Solidarity vol. VII, no. 2.



not what was the historical reality of marxism (even in Marx's day) but a vision which, although valid, seldom went beyond the realm of rhetoric. The Marx of 'the proletarians have no Fatherland' replaces the Marx of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 who supported first Bismarck's armies, then - after Sedan - the forces of the Second Empire. The Marx who denounced the slogan 'a fair day's wage for a fair day's work' (arguing instead for 'the abolition of the wages system') replaces the more prosaic Marx; manoeuvring among the Lucrafts and the Maltman Barrys in the councils of the First International. The Marx who thundered that 'the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself' erases the pathetic figure of the Marx of 1872, cooking the last congress of the International (the only one he attended in person), inventing non-existing delegations, shifting the venues of future meetings to harass the supporters of the equally authoritarian Bakunin.

But are even these proto-marxist prescriptions adequate? Is the 'abolition of frontiers' any kind of guarantee as to the type of regime that will hold sway over the new, frontierless expanse? Is the vision of an exploitative society, fusing the techniques of domination of both East and West, just a nightmare dreamed up by the writers of science fiction? Is the abolition of wage labour any guarantee against exploitation and alienation? Were there not exploitative societies long before wage labour appeared on the historical scene? Wage labour underpins and reinforces hierarchies of power. Its abolition does not necessarily abolish such hierarchies. Class society might even recuperate demands of this kind

### RECUPERATION OF THE 'PERSONAL REVOLUTION'

Another response of those confronted with the tremendous recuperative powers of established society has been a tendency to seek individual emancipation, to create in the 'here and now' microcosms of the alternative society. Some advocates of this viewpoint see the growth of social freedom as the by-product of the addition of one 'free' individual to another, rather like workers going to Ruskin College to become 'emancipated one by one'. This type of revolt, as long as it is conceived in purely individual terms, can readily be recuperated by established society. Individual revolt, whether in clothing or in hair styles, whether in food preferences or in musical tastes,







M. B.

whether in sexual mores or in philosophical attitudes, readily becomes a commodity to be frenetically exploited in the interests of Capital itself.

(Elsewhere in this issue we review an important book, 'The Failure of the Sexual Revolution' by George Frankl, dealing with this theme.)

### THE LIMITS OF RECUPERATION

In 'The Irrational in Politics' we wrote that exploiting society would not be able to tolerate 'the mass development of critical, demystified, self-reliant, sexually emancipated, autonomous, non-alienated persons, conscious of what they want and prepared to struggle for it'. We still hold this idea to be basically correct. Its core - that one cannot conceive of any genuinely liberatory movement without genuinely liberated individuals seems irrefutable. But our formulation was inadequate. We should have spoken of individuals prepared collectively to struggle for what they wanted. And we should have spoken more about the objectives of the struggle. We should have described more clearly what the vision was, in our eyes at least. The socialist transformation of society is not an automatic process, or a reflex activity. It requires a sense of direction. There may be many roads to the promised land but it can surely only help if people know where they are going.

Let us take it for granted a) that meaningful activity needs to be collective; b) that social transformation needs emancipated individuals; and c) that the institutional framework of any new society will probably be based, in part at least, on those forms which the struggle itself has repeatedly thrown up at its moments of deepest insight and creativity. What we now need to think about - and to discuss widely throughout the libertarian left - is the political content of an activity that consciously seeks both to avoid recuperation and to be relevant to the conditions of today.

Are certain yardsticks necessary to define such an activity? I personally think the answer is 'yes' - with the proviso that the definition must be seen as an on-going process. Should revolutionaries who share common objectives group together, first to discuss their objectives and then to fight for them? Again I think the answer is 'yes'. 'Political inexistentialism' is only relevant if one thinks there is some divine guidance ensuring that every struggle helps move society in a socialist direction.



It is only if libertarians speak openly about these questions that they will be able to present a credible alternative to the authoritarian left. If socialism is the creation of forms of living that will enable all - free from external constraints or internalised inhibitions - to rise to their full stature, to fulfil themselves as human beings, to enjoy themselves, to relate to one another without treading on anybody (and this is as good a definition of socialism as any other) - we should say so loud and clear. And we should not be afraid of criticising any activities - however 'self-managed' - that lead in an opposite direction. Socialism, after all, is about a specific way of socialising. In this discussion we must not forget the economic prerequisites of what we seek. Nor must we confuse them with the objective itself. Finally we must not underestimate the forces we are up against, including the recuperative powers of established society. An on-going reassessment of the degree to which one's former goals have been recuperated is the most effective antidote to the malaise on the left, and the only possible prescription for remaining a revolutionary.

M. B.

THE LIMITS OF RECUPERATION

**LIBERTARIAN ANTI-FASCIST CONFERENCE**

- The authoritarian resurgence
- The leninist reactions
- The libertarian alternative

DECEMBER 7 and 8 (Saturday and Sunday) at

WEST INDIAN CENTER, CARMOOR ROAD, MANCHESTER 13

For further information contact Ian Ford, Manchester University Libertarian Society, Students' Union, Oxford Rd., Manchester 13.

Participants will be asked to contribute 50p towards expenses (claimants 10p).



# GAS BOARD BLUES

Solidarity has published many articles dealing with work (and resistance to it) in the more advanced sectors of capitalist production, for instance in the motor industry. But similar struggles also go on in the more easy-going nationalised industries, as this amusing article written by a worker in the gas industry shows. We would welcome further contributions on this general theme, for example by workers in the power and water industries.

Having recently read in Solidarity and your Motor Bulletins about the way in which car workers are treated here and abroad, I thought I should contrast their job with mine.

About ten years ago I decided to have done with working 'inside' for a living and chanced upon being trained and employed by the North Eastern Gas Board. After the sweaty engineering shops I had been used to the job sounded quite good. It involved travelling in and around Leeds servicing and repairing gas appliances in customers' houses. At first, whilst things were strange and new, it did make quite a change.

The Gas Board operate a system whereby we, the maintenance men, clock on in the morning, hand in to the District Inspectors (foremen) our previous day's time sheets and job vouchers, collect the new day's work, draw what tackle we need from the stores and go on our merry way.

The first call for all the men (around 400) is to find a cafe, sort the work out into decent 'runs' and put their feet up for upwards of an hour. Every now and then the management, either acting of their own accord or because some nosy sod has seen loads of gas vans parked around the cafes, decide to raid these places. When this happens the event often turns into a farce. Perhaps half-a-dozen men will pretend to be in the place on Gas Board business. From sitting eating a breakfast they will jump to the other side of the counter and start servicing the tea boiler! One such cafe not only serves good sandwiches but allows fleeing gas men to hide away in the upstairs flat. It also tells management bloodhounds to piss off when they come sneaking round.

An hour later, our breakfast over, we start our day. The work mainly consists of actual repairs to , or the cleaning of, central heating boilers, fires, water heaters, etc. Once one is used to this the work becomes very boring. So we try and avoid actually gaining entry to the various premises by different means. Firstly we call, if possible,



at the A.M. jobs in the P.M., or vice-versa, hoping the customer will be out. Secondly we claim we cannot find addresses or even 'lose' the job voucher with the address on it. If all else fails, gas men can be seen creeping down garden paths with a 'not in' card written out, trying to appear as unobtrusive as postmen, and thus avoiding entry and work. Of course a certain amount of work is done. Where people are in real need the lads will leave their beds in the middle of the night to help, if need be. But the deep underlying, smouldering sense of alienation that exists within our work is so strong that we mainly practice skiving rather than working.

We do face a cleft-stick though, for we work a union (GMWU)negotiated bonus scheme whereby the only way to earn anything above the basic wage is to complete jobs. We found a way round this when the 'time and motion' men were sent round with us. One such creep told me he had just graduated from Hull with a politics degree. We soon realised they knew nothing about the job and that we could deceive then like children. Jobs like cleaning central heating boilers were allowed one hour, whereas no self-respecting gas man need take more than ten minutes. We also found that to claim full bonus we had to put a certain number on our time sheet. Well, the poor management were just asking for trouble. Later the scheme had to be altered.

It seems as if a real change is now occurring in the gas industry since it has become the British Gas Corporation and since the trendy much vaunted North Sea Gas is in vogue (till the bloody stuff runs out, as in America, and the planners have to start re-building gas manufacturing plants again). There have been changes for the worse for the ordinary worker. In my depot we are now checked up on our time sheets more often. We may be suspended for 3 to 7 days for fiddling or for leaving a gas leak, however small. Also the management have called the auditors in. Those little men found we had the highest productivity payments (but the lowest productivity) for the whole north-eastern area! Of course 'our' union will not defend us on these matters. It seems more concerned in actively urging its members to help the Gas Board salesmen to sell more appliances.

In spite of all this, the job, compared to a car worker's, is soft and easy. But when the social transformation comes any decent society will have to realise that one doesn't have to work on an assembly line to know that one's life is wasted.

D. Tate



# BEWARE THE WILY BOSS!

'Revolutionaries' constantly demand that the workers 'learn from history'. These same 'revolutionaries' often forget that ruling classes can also learn from history.

An obvious example is the attitude of employers to working class organisations. Whereas in the early days of capitalism the bosses' reaction to the young trade union organisations was to ban and persecute them, and indiscriminately subject working class militants to imprisonment and exile, recent decades have seen a complete restructuring of society, with trade unions accepted and integrated into the bourgeois state. The boss has learned that for the time being his bitter enemy the trade union, handled correctly, can become the very best means of disciplining the working class. In many firms management insists on union membership, encourages union meetings on company premises, and collects union dues through the payroll system.

The process of integration goes even further. Employers condition the worker to view the Company as a giant family concern, his immediate boss as a father-figure.

Revolutionaries in this country are shocked and horrified when they learn of the 'paternal' (and 'maternal'!) role of the Company to its employees in Japan. (A series of frightening social documentaries on Japan have appeared in recent months on television and in the quality newspapers.)

The traditional left reacts to the 'Japanese experience' in two ways. Firstly, and quite correctly, it is pointed out that these horror stories ignore the massive militancy of a wide spectrum of workers and students which from time to time vigorously opposes the bureaucratic state.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, and more questionably, it is claimed that what we are witnessing is the fruition of a development 'peculiarly Japanese'.

It is this second assertion which I would challenge. Capitalism does not confine itself to national frontiers, and what is far advanced in Japan already exists here in embryo. Total psychological domination is the goal of the ruling bureaucracy everywhere.

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<sup>1</sup> See Solidarity vol.II, no.5 (News from Zengakuren), vol.II, no.6, and vol.III, no.11 (A maoist party in action).



It could well be that as the Soviet Union, a comparative late-comer in the establishment-of-capitalism league which, because of this, became in 1917 the first state capitalist economy (i.e. the most highly developed form of capitalism in marxist economic terms), so Japanese capitalism, following her pulverisation during World War II and re-creation 'in the American image' now represents the most advanced capitalism in a 'philosophic' sense.

To summarise, capitalism's ideal, the object of its development, is an economic structure like that of the USSR and an ideological structure like that encouraged (successfully to some extent) by Japan's post-war leaders.

Management's 'battle for the mind' of its workers is apparent in 'my own' company. It is one of a group of building companies with an annual turnover of £ 36.4 million. Group profit last year (after tax) was £4 million, and for the past ten years it has regularly been listed among the 'top twenty' British companies for 'efficiency'.

'Personnel' permeates the entire organisation with the maximum support of management. Department head is 'Geoff', and all staff at all levels are encouraged to address him and all other managers and directors by their first name. This 'familiar' mode of address is reciprocated at all levels.

Geoff spends most of his time floating around the branches and depots, chatting to one and all, spreading the happy philosophy of 'love your boss' because, after all, we are all part of one big happy family, each of us having exactly the same aspirations.

Annually, all staff are 'requested' to complete a four foolscap-sized document called a 'Job Development Guide'. When completed this form is the basis of a little chat, each worker with his immediate superior. Some of the questions to be answered are:

'In your opinion what are the most important duties in your present post?'

'Do you feel your job fully uses your abilities? If not, which of your abilities could be more fully used, and could your job be changed to achieve this?'

'Consider your job. The things you have achieved and how efficiently they were done. Have you encountered any difficulties? What could be done to make your work more effective?'

Every year there are as many friendly little chats as there are personnel employed. These 'man to man' discussions, focused on the job, cleverly create the illusion that 'we' are all members of one great team. The



building materials and service provided become 'our' materials and 'our' service.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of this management policy, but more than 98% of the staff complete the Job Development forms. ('You do not have to complete this form unless you want to ... however by completing it and bringing it with you to the discussion, you will be able to put your point of view more effectively'!)

This managerial 'brainwashing' leads directly into the philosophy of 'job enrichment'. Now widely accepted as the best way to get the most out of labour, it is the systematic and thorough examination of every job so that the operator can achieve a high degree of 'self-fulfilment' from his work. Successfully operated this leads to short-term increased productivity and long-term 'satisfaction'.

'Job enrichment' is the recognition by management that workers' resistance is not simply a question of bread and butter demands for more wages and shorter hours, but a demand for more say in the running of their own lives. 'Job enrichment' is management's recognition of the demand for self-management.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This is not the place for a treatise on language. It would, however, be a great mistake to imagine that 'words' and 'thought' are exclusive categories. By and large we 'think' in 'words', our 'philosophy' is created from these elements. The inculcation of the belief that the bosses' interests (material and spiritual) are 'ours' comes from learning the right 'language'. The identification of the worker with the means of his exploitation is very common. During a spell with London Transport I met scores of conductors who spoke and acted on the basis that it was 'their' bus.

<sup>3</sup> A distinction must be made between workers' control and workers' management. Workers' control in one form or another is currently advocated by every section of the traditional left, from I.S. to the C.P., from I.M.G. to W.R.P. Even the T.U.C. timidly proposes measures in this direction. Workers' control means just what it says - that workers watch (and may be 'modify') managements' decisions. It may include demands for 'nationalisation' (as demanded by Trotskyists and Fabians) and it may demand that workers sit on the nationalised 'board' (the T.U.C. currently suggests 50% of the places). Workers' management also means what it says, in that workers alone decide policy.

Most revolutionaries advocate workers' control. Some advocate workers' management. My contention is that both could become the operational method of the capitalism of the future.



'Enrichment' aims to give more discretion to the worker and, within the terms of reference decided by management (hence the need to have previously convinced the worker that management's and his aims are identical), groups of workers are encouraged to organise their own job.

This is not now as revolutionary a suggestion as might at first be thought. It is no secret that with the increasing complexity of modern industry, management everywhere depends upon the worker from the bottom up 'poaching' (?) in fields previously regarded as the province of management. But it would be a mistake to imagine that this process could not in the future completely transform labour relations. As capitalism advances to complete state ownership and the abolition of private capital, workers' management of production would cease necessarily to be a revolutionary demand.

Let's return to 'my own' company. The firm consists of more than 100 depots scattered throughout the country. Each depot has a target - essentially a percentage rate of profit, rather than an amount of profit. (Bonuses, for example, are calculated on profitability!)

Provided a depot (like 'my own' for instance) produces a high profitability, there is virtually no interference from head office. Visits by personnel above depot management level to this depot average one every six months! Depots with lower profitability, even if producing a higher turnover and profit figures, are subject to much greater supervision and control. The process doesn't stop here. Inside the depot tasks are broken down and again, provided profitability is at a high level, there is no interference from above. For example the depot runs a transport service. The transport 'supervisor' has complete control in his field of operation. A comparison of several depots shows quite clearly that the 'job satisfaction' provided in this way ('job satisfaction' is measured by staff turnover) not only 'keeps workers happy' but, more important to the boss, provides high profitability.

Unintelligent and backward employers fear self-management, agreeing with 'traditional' revolutionaries that it must be a threat to their existence. (Once upon a time they feared trade unions and nationalisation in the same way.)

Capitalism does not stand still. Capitalist ideology does not stand still. Revolutionary concepts today have a nasty habit of being reactionary tomorrow. Nothing is permanent. The fact that workers' management (not just workers' control) is already being discussed in many boardrooms must be a sobering thought to the thinking revolutionary.



## AMAZING... BUT TRUE!

Cambridge, Mass.,  
U.S.A.

Dear Solidarity,

The article 'UWC General Strike' in the latest issue of your periodical (vol. 7, no. 11) was unquestionably the most outlandish piece of rhetoric that I have ever encountered on the libertarian left. This example of organised bigotry, of fanatical hatred, you hail as an example of the 'creative potential of the working class'. You claim that it is 'too easy to overstress the reactionary character of the May mobilisation'. The UWC strike was from beginning to end an attempt to keep the Catholic population of Ulster in an inferior social, economic and political position. In fact, it would be difficult to overstress the completely reactionary, neo-fascist nature of the sectarian mobilisation. It would be analogous to a strike by white workers in this country against the social advancement of blacks (as may soon occur in South Africa. Indeed it must have warmed Gen. Walker's heart to see such an expression of loyalty to Church and Queen opposing the forces of atheistical communism-Papism. One might as well admire the efficiency and bravery of the German proletariat mobilised into Hitler's army during the Second World War.

Your mechanical application of the ideology of workers' self-management has ceased to be merely a tendency within Solidarity and has taken over your perception of social reality and, as usual, reality is more complicated than slogans.

And, while you are on the look-out for examples of religious obscurantism in Ireland, I would like to refer you to the 'sermons' of the Rev. Ian Paisley, who unlike the anonymous scribbler of the Republican News, has a mass following of tens of thousands. I think that you would find Paisley's attitudes toward communism, materialism, women's lib, etc, not to mention sex and the family, most instructive. Of course, since Paisley waves the Union Jack at every opportunity, you would have to title his contribution 'No Sex Please, We're British'.

Martin Comack





# 'PROGRESSIVES' INTO OPPRESSORS?

Ever since 1961 the 'Portugal and Colonial Bulletin' has provided information useful to those struggling against the Salazar and Caetano regimes. The Bulletin has reported strikes, demonstrations, torture, imprisonment, which the 'respectable' English-speaking press chose to ignore. The information has helped the anti-colonial struggle too.

The 'Portugal and Colonial Bulletin' now closes down, in triumphant mood, following the downfall of Portuguese Fascism and its colonial empire. The struggle against the old regime is over and the main struggle for a new society remains. This is the time the 'P. & C. Bulletin' has chosen to come out with the following gems, under the headline 'REACTION IS MANOEUVERING', thereby showing their real political colours :

'... Reactionary attacks have been opposed by the progressive forces and the majority of the people, who have kept up their splendid tradition of struggle, tempered and tested through the years of fascism. Side by side with the attacks of an openly reactionary character go the provocative activities of pseudo-revolutionary and ultra-leftist groupings, who are always playing into the hands of the enemies of the people. The opening offensive of the reactionaries, launched in May, took the shape of unreasonable strikes and wage demands, fomented by the employers themselves and encouraged by the ultra-leftists. The purpose was to create economic chaos with all the consequences of widespread discontent and also, by establishing a scale of wage increases which only the great firms could afford, to bankrupt the small and medium enterprises which are still quite numerous in Portugal. ... The strike of the Lisbon transport workers and bakery workers in May, followed in June by the strike of the Post Office employees, were the outstanding skirmishes in this offensive.'

'P. & C. Bulletin' vol.14, no.3, October 1974, p.26.

So now you know. The strike of the Portuguese Post Office workers, and of Lisbon's transport and bakeries workers were 'the outstanding skirmishes' in 'the offensive of the reactionaries'. This is in the worst tradition of Stalinism and shows the dangers of 'broad political alliances'. In every struggle 'against', be sure you know what your allies stand 'for'. They could become tomorrow's oppressors.

A.O.



# REVIEWS

INVERGORDON MUTINEER by Len Wincott (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974). £2.95

I got to know Len Wincott soon after the mutiny, and saw him off when he went to the Soviet Union in 1934. I was pleased to be among those who met him again during his recent visit to Britain to promote his book.

From the very beginning of his visit Len made it clear to all concerned that he was not here to talk about his experiences in Russia over the last 40 years. A circular handed out by his publishers stated:

'During the Second World War he served in the Red Army, but later was arrested as a "British spy" and spent 11 years in a labour camp in the Northern Urals. In 1957 he was released and cleared of all charges when the gates of the labour camps opened after Khrushchev's denouncement of Stalin'.

Len Wincott, now aged 67, lives in Moscow with his fourth wife Lena whom he married in 1965. He decided to return to the Soviet Union because (as he explained to the assembled newsmen at a press conference) he had no intention of trying to start a new life at his age, in his very bad state of health, when his wife had all her friends and relations in Russia where they were quite comfortable, with access to good medical and other facilities. This meant he could not talk about those things which the press would have dearly loved to report. If he wanted to go back it meant they would be deprived of their stories and, incidentally, so would we. That he was unable to tell us about the Soviet Union says a great deal about the state of affairs existing in Russia today. His silence made a very loud noise!

Len Wincott's book is a forthright statement of the facts of the mutiny. It contradicts much of what has been written about it by 'official' historians and others. It begins with a description of his childhood. He was one of a family of eight with a drunken, brutal father and a long-suffering mother, and was brought up in the dire circumstances of working class life in Leicester. He joined the Navy when he was 16. As he puts it: 'no one will suppose that a 16-year old boy was moved by the ideas of heroism to read a pamphlet on how to join the Royal Navy. In my case the urge was certainly the ominous spectre of unemployment'.

Len's background is an adequate recipe for what went into his actions during the mutiny. The gulf which separated the men from the officers, those who gave the orders and those who were expected to carry them out,



was so great that the mutiny had to take the course it did. The officers never had a clue about how the men felt - and they cared even less. Maybe there were one or two exceptions.

The publisher's blurb says: 'the book tells the story of the famous naval mutiny of 1931 at Invergordon when the men of the lower ranks spontaneously - and successfully - rebelled against the Admiralty's decision to make drastic cuts in their basic pay. It was an event unprecedented in naval history with far-reaching consequences for both the Navy and the country in general'.

I personally well remember the Invergordon Mutiny. Two leading members of the Communist Party went to prison, one for 3 years, the other for 18 months. They were trapped by government agents in a compromising situation. The Party was quite willing to present them as victims of the government's actions, without making it quite clear it had nothing to do with the mutiny. It suited the government to produce these 'reds under the bed' in order to hide the true character the mutiny which was started, managed and carried through by the ratings of the Atlantic Fleet. The mutiny was self-managed and reached a degree of success which no amount of 'leadership' from the Communist Party could have provided.

As Tony Carew said in a letter to Tribune (August 23, 1974): 'Far from being a model strike such as the Communist Party might approve, it was a relatively spontaneous and loosely organised affair, in which a predominantly conservative body of men showed their ability to take effective collective action without being led by the hand. And it was nonetheless radical for that'.

Some retired naval officers and others have tried to knock Len's account of the Mutiny. Whatever differences may arise in various accounts of this historical event, it cannot be denied that it was a great example of ordinary people taking matters into their own hands. There is no evidence that the rank and file sailors ever had any contact with any outside person or body (such as a trade union or political party) during the course of the mutiny. All decisions were made by the men on all 8 ships independently, after the initial mass meeting on shore where it had been decided to 'strike'.

If you want to know the form and content of a self-managed struggle, in which the rank and file never surrendered the decision-making to any outside, self-appointed leaders, then read this book. It's a practical lesson on many levels - even if, like me, you don't share all the author's views. But remember that many of Len's views are coloured by the fact that he suffered a great deal more from some of those he came to regard as his 'friends' than he ever did from his known enemies.

J. J.



THE FAILURE OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION by George Frankl (Kahn and Averill, London, 1974). 190 pages. £2.50

This is an important and yet a disappointing book. Written by a psychotherapist deeply versed in Marx and Reich, its main theme is that to be effective 'the sexual revolution must be aware of its radicalism' and that 'we must differentiate between permissiveness and a revolution in fundamental sexual attitudes'. According to these yardsticks the current sexual revolution is diagnosed as having failed. 'Sexual liberation was intended to be a catalyst for social change that would go to the roots of authoritarian society and transform it. But the sexual revolution has got stuck in an advocacy of permissiveness and has not touched the deep structure of society; it has only produced attitudes of defiance and rebelliousness which emphasise a negative dependence upon the superego establishment. Liberation from pleasure-anxiety has been transformed into a worship of alienated sexuality in the form of a commodity. The superego is managing quite nicely to use the superficial aspirations of permissiveness for its own purpose by making a business of it, and our 'revolutionaries' are falling for the deception'.

The author starts with a devastating critique of 'the scene' today. 'The uncompromising and critical evaluation of all that exists, the urge to understand reality in order to change it according to consciously-held values is being replaced by petty rebellions and revolutionary posturings'. What we have is a worship of naked slogans, raw emotionalism, 'the illusion in the omnipotence of impulses, the belief that through acts of violence the establishment will disappear or that by negating it in fantasy it will crumple up and vanish'. Today 'the search for a revolutionary alternative takes the form of a flight from reason, a regression to the irrational, while rationalism has degenerated into expertise in the service of the technological establishment'. 'In their retreat from reason and in their search for surreal experience (the pseudo-revolutionaries) weaken human autonomy and leave real decision-making to others'. In all this there is little I would disagree with, although I don't necessarily endorse the author's attempt, in later chapters, to provide a psychoanalytical interpretation of these phenomena.

The book contains important sections on the sadism that pervades so much 'liberated' literature (interpreted in terms of people living out 'their perverse secondary drives'), striking examples being drawn from the now defunct journal OZ. The pages dealing with women's magazines, with pornography (including political pornography) and with women's liberation are all well worth reading. Discussing 'sex as a commodity' the author claims that 'now that the sexual revolution has released us from the compulsions of secrecy, sexual commodities are flooding the market and are becoming the most profitable area of capitalism next to the market of aggression'. Perhaps the theoreticians of International Socialism should now start talking about 'the permanent sex economy'?

Of particular interest to the reviewer was the author's attempt at a psycho-analytic analysis of the phenomenon of alienation. Social authority is seen as the



'institutionalisation of the superego'. 'Alienation is only possible if economic forces can utilise a psychic readiness in men to be estranged from themselves and from the products of their labour'. It is argued that 'the conversion of man's creative ability into a commodity is based upon a compulsion of making a gift-offering of himself and his product to his superego, to God and the social authority'. The whole attempt at a synthesis of Marx and Freud is taken further than has been attempted hitherto.

Scattered among heavier stuff are a number of interesting and amusing insights, often described in telling phrases. I particularly enjoyed the author's account of man as a 'purpose-following animal', of the 20th century as 'the graveyard of revolutionary hopes', of the contemporary trend towards mysticism as 'a great rummaging in the historical lumber-room of dead cultures', of the supermarket as the modern temple '...where cathedrals once stood and men gathered to worship the visible or invisible God, now the shops are places of worship and the commodities displayed take the place of the Altar and the Cross. Communion is now through the cash nexus and buying and selling the ritual of salvation'. There are also intellectually stimulating explorations of 'patriarchal paranoia', of the significance of drama and ritual in various cultures, of the significance of circumcision, of romanticism in literature and of the growth of Madonna worship in the 12th century. Few would disagree with conclusions to the effect that 'commercial and pseudo-revolutionary sexual liberation promotes a depersonalised and regressive sexuality, leaving the fundamental unconscious repressions intact'.

Yet despite these insights the author seems trapped, in my opinion, in marxist and reichian ideas and formulations which repeatedly strike a jarring note. His political outlook is at times quite naive. He speaks of the Popular Front regime in Spain as the 'Spanish Socialist Republic' and of the emergence of Stalinism in Russia as 'a betrayal of communism' (rather than as the perfectly legitimate and totally coherent ideology of a new ruling class). The alienation of modern workers in production is described as 'not confined to capitalism' - thereby implying that there exist in the world of today societies that are other than capitalist ones. Lenin is stated to have advocated a 'semi-authoritarian (sic!) centralism'. We are told that there is nothing to indicate that Marx predicted the future world revolution 'on the ground of its presumed inevitability'. (Has the author never heard of the famous passage in Capital where we are informed that 'with the inevitability of a law of nature, capitalist production begets its own negation'?)

The author's uncritical endorsement of Reich also strikes a jarring note. We are told that 'Reich drew attention to the sympathetocoenic (sic, twice) processes of the musculature' but not that (as was well known even in Reich's day) the sympathetic nervous system exerts no influence on striated muscle. We are told (and it is true) that sexual disturbances can create somatic disturbances - but also (and it is meaningless) that the 'respiratory, gastric and urethral organs - including the kidney and gall bladder - can become sick if the libido connected with them is disturbed'. Some of the author's other ventures into the medical field are equally bizarre. We are informed that Byron,



who 'had had to key up his life to a high state of tension', was found at post-mortem (at the age of 36) to have had 'sutures of the brain' that were 'entirely obliterated'. Now there are no sutures in the brain (only in the skull) and if skull sutures are not fused by the age of 36 there is something profoundly the matter with the person concerned (probably hydrocephalus). We are also told that, before Freud, 'neurotic symptoms' were considered 'as neurological pathologies, to be treated electrically or chemically'. Chronologically, this is nonsense. ECT was only popularised by Cerletti and Bini in Rome in 1938. It was first used in the USA in 1940.

Two final criticisms are of a more substantial nature. When it comes down to practical prescriptions the author calls for the 'abolition of the Oedipus complex' and the 'creation of a new culture'. This is to be done through education, through the inculcation in parents of healthier attitudes to child upbringing (in particular towards the manifestations of the infant's 'polymorphous erotic sensations' and the later more explicit demands of the child's genital sexuality). Fair enough. But surely this is not sufficient. To confine oneself to such an attitude would be to restrict oneself to the role of a sort of SPGber of the sexual revolution. The sexual revolution is not just a question of education. It is also a question of struggle, of the struggle to transform all aspects of social reality.

Finally, and this to my mind is its most serious defect, the book as a whole seems to lack balance in its assessment of contemporary changes in sexual mores. Only the negative aspects of the current state of play are dealt with in any detail. On this score there are few grounds to dispute the author's conclusions. But the author fails to stress many of the positive aspects of the breaking up of the old taboos. He lacks patience and empathy with the young, while correctly taking issue with many exaggerated claims. His somewhat strident condemnation of certain aspects of today's sexual practices sounds, at times, almost puritanical. Is he echoing here some of the later writings of Reich who, towards the end of his life, not only repudiated (as is well known) his earlier political writings but also (which is less well known, even to 'reichians') some of his earlier sexological writings, fearing they would be invoked to unleash, in Reich's own words, 'a free-for-all fucking epidemic'. Frankl is also deafeningly silent on the whole issue of homosexuality and of 'gay liberation'. Is he here too being a faithful disciple of Reich\* at the expense of neglecting an important dimension of the current sexual revolution?

M. B.

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\* According to Charles Rycroft (Reich, Fontana/Collins, 1971) Wilhelm Reich, when asked to accept a homosexual for treatment, stated: 'Ich will mit solchen Schweinereien nichts zu tun haben' ('I don't want to have anything to do with such disgusting matters').



POST-SCARCITY ANARCHISM by Murray Bookchin. Wildwood House, £1.40 and £2.95. Pp.288.

This book has been much discussed in anarchist and libertarian circles. Many of the essays it contains have been widely distributed in Britain. Their publication in book form now gives one an overall view of Bookchin's whole approach to revolution.

Bookchin approaches the idea of revolutionary change in a chaotic and romantic manner. The romanticism is seen in his search for 'revolutionary' ancestors: the Enragés, the early French syndicalists, the FAI-CNT, etc. But even here reality is seen through distorting spectacles. We are told that 'In Barcelona the CNT workers seized the factories ... the experiment finally collapsed in shambles when the Central Government's assault troops occupied Barcelona in May 1937' - but not that this Government had contained CNT ministers who had taken a pacifist stand over the workers' struggle against stalinism. What was probably the most profound movement to date of workers struggling against the bourgeois state and for their own society is dismissed by Bookchin in a flourish of the pen: 'The German Councils of 1918 were hopelessly perverted; the so-called "majority" (reformist) social democrats succeeded in gaining control of the newly-formed Councils and using them for counter-revolutionary ends'. No mention of the experience of the Ruhr Red Army, of the Hamburg Council, and many others.

Leaving aside these 'anarchist' simplifications of history and the attempt to establish the divine succession, let us look at what the author sees as revolutionary today. Bookchin considers the working class to be a 'myth' (p.145 fn.) and yet the outcome of its struggle (in the form of Workers' Councils) is seen as creating 'Class structure' (no 'myth' here). What type of class structures, one may ask? Are workers going to retain class structures in which they are exploited? Bookchin sees the Councils as 'revolutionary means of appropriating the bourgeois economy'. Why should they not also be the means of destroying exploitative society? In whose class interests would workers, when in power, perpetuate bourgeois society and bourgeois economy? If the Councils do not destroy bourgeois economy the 'sweeping transformations in the environment of the work place' advocated by Bookchin would not fundamentally alter society - or prevent the Councils from competing against each other.

What does Bookchin propose as an alternative to the Councils? He proclaims that the 'social forms (that) will replace existing ones depend on what free people decide to establish between themselves...'. What is a 'free person'? Rameses II, Robinson Crusoe, Stalin, Hitler were all free of restraint, in legal terms. These concepts of freedom or equality, right, justice, are all the ideological garbage of bourgeois society. To



demand just freedom or equality is to root through the dustbin of bourgeois philosophical history. In fact these ideas are very much the last radical strivings of the bourgeois revolution, just as Proudhon's demand for interest-free capital and equal exchange for small-scale producers was the last attempt of the petty-bourgeoisie and craftsmen to achieve social domination over society.

The bodies that Bookchin alludes to (the FAI, etc.) were all the products of their own period. They were not chosen 'forms of freedom' that somehow transcended history and various other limitations. When we start believing that 'all the major revolutionary upheavals began spontaneously' we have problems. If a revolution is spontaneous but, as the author states, the desire for freedom existed beforehand, we are left with an ideological continuity in the fulfilment of desire stretching from wanting to sleep to making a revolution. Such a view identifies no structure and dynamic of society at all, especially concerning the struggles within it. One might as legitimately use the word 'spontaneous' to describe an explosion generated by too much pressure, in the fashion of diesel fuel in an engine. The fuel has no prior perspectives of its own. It only has properties, related to its previous state. There is nothing conscious or creative in the explosion.

We are told that 'anarchism is the libidinal upsurge of the people', 'a stirring of the social unconscious that reaches back, under many different names, to the earliest struggles of humanity against domination and authority...'. Surely the first struggle against domination was that against nature. This aside, the sentence seeks the key to revolution in the earliest human experience. Is the failure of revolution, then, due to some form of repression of this 'stirring of the social unconscious' so that people become reluctant to revolt against authority? Do revolutionaries choose to dislike the society of today because of something that happened to Homo erectus? The author is here quite inconsistent. One cannot choose one's history ... or one's libidinal upsurges.

For us the explanation is different: 'the proletariat constantly makes its own history, within given conditions. The class struggle constantly transforms capitalist society. And in the course of its struggles the proletariat itself is changed'. (Cardan, 'Redefining Revolution', p.6) Bookchin's own summation is in fact very similar to Leninism or to bourgeois positivism: everything, including the 'laws' of nature and patterns or systems, is there, waiting to be 'discovered', instead of created by conscious human thought and activity.

The revolutionary project today is not another choice, to be foisted on infrequent visitors to some 'revolutionary' art gallery. It is not utopias or dreams (as dreams contain nothing new, they are not at all utopian). It is not even the utopia of at last discovering the (one and only) method. It is understanding, as far as possible, the general movement of society, its contradictions, grasping what is new and significant, and perhaps extrapolating from certain actions and struggles under



way. The problem of traditional revolutionary demands is that they are both non-revolutionary and utopian. Concepts such as 'class consciousness', 'the Party', etc. are like dead dogs around the bourgeois trash-can. Sleeping dogs can be woken, dead dogs fortunately cannot be resurrected. Today all the terms of the traditional left become more and more reactionary and unreal. The alternative is not new utopias, but understanding this society as a precondition to changing it.

If we reduce historical change to a question of desire, or choice, we find no room for anything new (except as the object of a choice). Here again Bookchin has something in common with leninism. The situation is far more complex than this. The basis of change is the creation and resolution of contradictions, both known and unknown. At times very far-seeing thinkers have tried to explain their ideas, usually without success. This is not to deny the reality of such ideas, but ideas alone never made a revolution. However to state this is in no way to accuse these thinkers of dreaming, or of utopianism. It is merely an assertion that these views are limited by the pressures in society. To take a concrete example: the British working class during Marx's time did not refuse Marx's ideas because they were wrong, but largely because long working days, illiteracy and political repression prevented it from hearing of them. Today other strong pressures exert themselves. Almost inevitably 'revolution' will not be chosen as a basis for solving problems, but will break out as a moment in the resolution of contradictions (social, economic and even between 'necessity and freedom').

Bookchin's book is hugely superior to the leninist 'explanations' that run the full range from ideological dogma to environmental determinism and fatalism. Bookchin, however, shares some of these shortcomings (no amalgam or libel intended). It is perhaps bizarre that anarchists now use much of Marx's language and that many 'marxists' use Proudhon's ideology in certain cases (for instance relations between state capitalist countries). This 'unity of opposites' however throws up further contradictions.

D. B.





# windsor free festival

The Windsor Pop Festival has been an annual event for the last three years. In 1972 only 200 people turned up. In 1973 over 5000 people attended and there was a lot of police harassment. Here is the story (told by a participant) of what happened during the last week of August 1974, when this year's Festival was broken up, amid great police brutality. Beyond the hassles to which all those attending were submitted emerge both their capacity for self-organisation and their attempts, on site, at democratic decision-making.

By Saturday, the first day of the Festival, over 25,000 people had arrived, ensuring that the fest would happen. As people arrived they were subjected to arbitrary 'stop and searches' and to general police intimidation. Owners of cars and vans entering the Great Park by the Windsor gate seemed special targets. While people were setting their tents and makeshift shelters they became aware of the immediate problems of water supply and lack of bogs. Through talking with neighbours they also found out about the various other hassles on the site, mainly bum acid, rip-off food and drink prices and deceitful police tactics (many people in Windsor were arrested by members of the D.S., posing as Release members).

Late Saturday afternoon the first edition of Windsor Freek Press (a daily news sheet written and produced on the site, and distributed widely) hit the pathways, carrying news and info. on coming events, pig activity, water supply and the Leicester anti-National Front demo.

A useful comparison can be made with the Reading festival, which was held simultaneously less than 15 miles away. Whereas the Reading festival was a commercial enterprise, held on a rented field with water and toilets laid on, fenced in, with food, etc. at exorbitant prices and big groups playing, Windsor was almost the exact opposite. The festival was free. It was held in the cavalry exercise field at Windsor Great Park, with small but numerous acts of varying styles (music, poetry, drama, dance and the various activities of religious sects).

All sorts came to Windsor, from politicians to the religious, with a liberal sprinkling of purely stoned freaks. The majority could only stay for a few days, although some intended to stay for the full nine days. Friendships were formed quickly as most had experiences and aims in common. Soon small communities emerged, consisting of about 20 people, with their tents clustered around a fire.



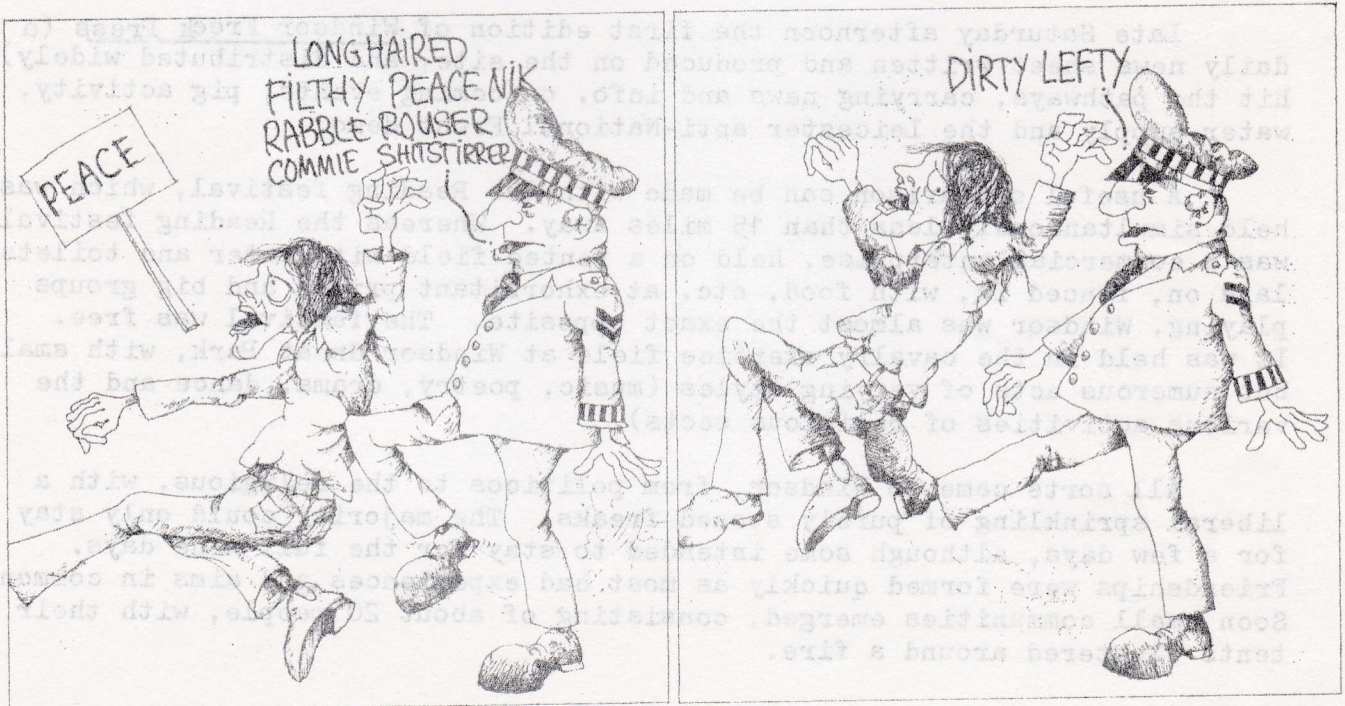
# MONDAY

On Monday many people left. Most of those who remained intended to be there for the rest of the week. Things seemed more together, as people moved closer in for fear of more police activity. The site became more permanent. Bonds were strengthened as a feeling of solidarity prevailed. People began, without prompting, to offer shelter, food and information to others, to collect litter, and to distribute leaflets and the Freek Press. Some organised water runs to collect water from the town.

On Monday morning we were greeted by a deluge of rain which soaked a hell of a lot of tents, sleeping bags and people. As a result, the wet were given shelter by others who had room. This served to bring people together more and increased collective community feeling. However, it was not the 'Instant Embodiment of the Alternative Society' that some people seemed to think it was. For instance on Sunday night there was an attempted rape. There were also some rip-offs, bum dope and dangerously bad trips, along with high prices for hot dogs and drinks.

From Monday the police started getting heavier. As the Freek Press put it:

'They could stop this festival if they weren't afraid of sensational news stories - police and hippies in pitched battles. Besides we'd be quite a match for them. So cops are operating in their usual way, picking on isolated groups. Already over 200 people have been arrested, may be more. During the week it





will get heavier when there are less of us. We'll be harassed travelling to and from the site for supplies. Remember - the cops are strategically attempting to fuck us over. Arrests are not just for dope.

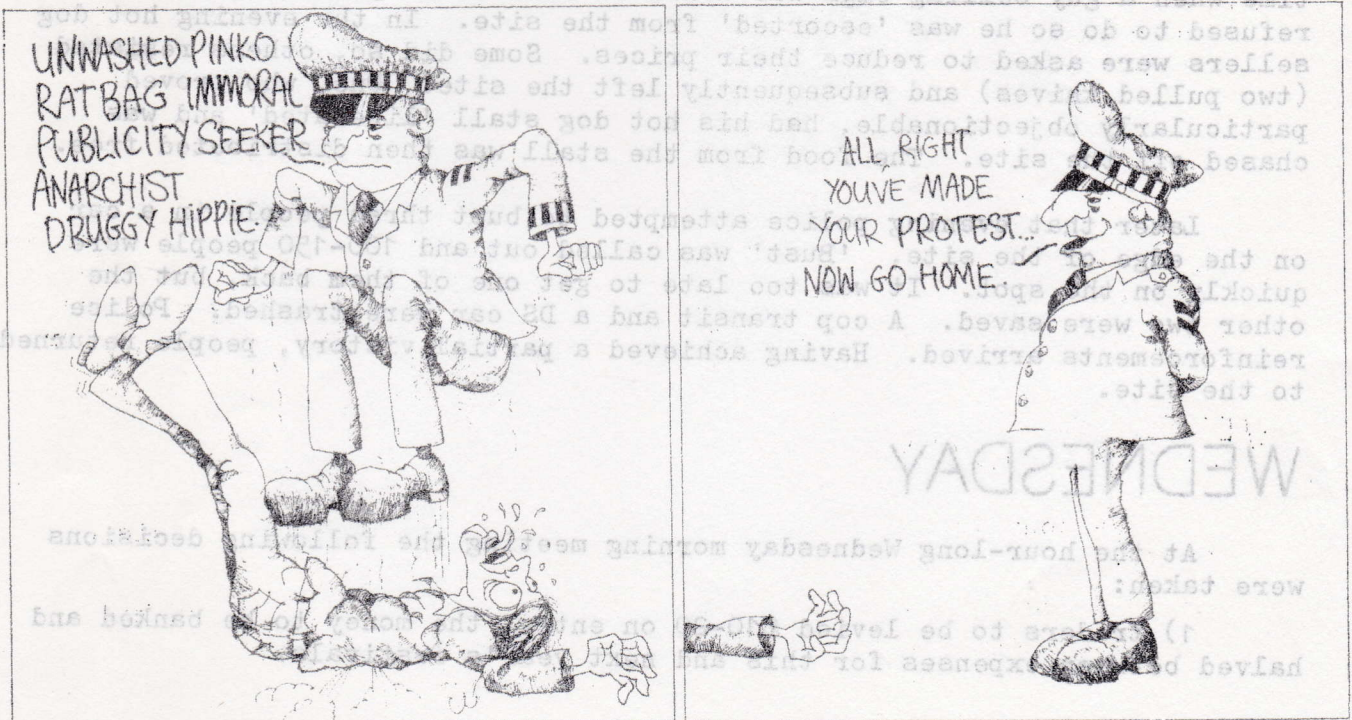
For instance the water supply we recommended yesterday, a tap on the Windsor edge of the site, has been cut off. Another tap in a nearby rugby field was soon guarded by cops.'

By Monday night around six or seven thousand people were still on the site and the music played till dawn.

## TUESDAY

At 11 am a meeting was called at stage A by reps. of various organisations who had met the previous night. This meeting signalled the passing over of power from the 'organisers' to the people. We feel this was due to 3 main factors:

- 1) the existing organisation could not continue without increased participation by the mass of those present;
- 2) this participation implied a more direct control of decisions and events by the people. The organisers recognised this fact;
- 3) one of the main organisers had 'flipped his lid'. This meant that the remaining organisers had to get the active cooperation of those around to put an end to the havoc he was creating.





The meeting finally came together around noon, with approximately 500 present. It opened with the reading of the minutes of the previous night's meeting. Various decisions were taken, including that the building of bogs on site by volunteers should begin, that a Fair (not free) that the flipped organiser had ordered for the festival would be turned back at the gate (which was done immediately by 100-150 people), and lastly that the extra stage that the said organiser had planned to set up between stages A and C would not be allowed.

Many people spoke on widely differing subjects, ranging from sexism on site to a request from the HARE KRISHNA people for ten minutes' chanting time on stage A per day. A decision-making structure was also set up. It was decided that each night at 9 pm representatives of all stages, Release, UPAL, info tents, medics and all others wishing to be present would take place. This grouping would only have power to make suggestions. The minutes of each meeting would be read at the next site meeting which would be held daily at 11 am at stage A. All decisions would be taken by a show of hands and would be final.

After the meeting volunteers started digging bogs. Interested groups started to produce the first issue of a new permanent newspaper called MAYA (now at BCM-Free Festival, London WC1 6XX, 5p + postage), which would carry throughout the year articles and features of relevance to the ideas, politics, philosophy of the Windsor nation. Another group decided to get to work on a film about and for the people of the Windsor Free Festival.

Throughout Tuesday afternoon the festival trod its heavily stoned and lightly headed way. The first direct action was taken at about this time when a guy selling cigs was asked to reduce his prices. After he refused to do so he was 'escorted' from the site. In the evening hot dog sellers were asked to reduce their prices. Some did so, others resisted (two pulled knives) and subsequently left the site. One, who proved particularly objectionable, had his hot dog stall 'liberated' and was chased off the site. The food from the stall was then distributed free.

Later that evening police attempted to bust three people in a car on the edge of the site. 'Bust' was called out and 100-150 people were quickly on the spot. It was too late to get one of them back, but the other two were saved. A cop transit and a DS car were trashed. Police reinforcements arrived. Having achieved a partial victory, people returned to the site.

## WEDNESDAY

At the hour-long Wednesday morning meeting the following decisions were taken:

- 1) traders to be levied £10-20 on entry, the money to be banked and halved between expenses for this and next year's festivals.



2) maximum prices were set for food and drinks. All traders refusing to reduce their prices to this maximum level would be evicted and their goods appropriated for free distribution.

A collection for free food amongst the 300 people present raised £37.

At 2.30 pm a plain-clothes DS was identified and chased off the site by 300 people, followed by bottles, beer cans, and a growing crowd. He was met at the road by a police transit containing two cops. Before the transit could move off it was turned over by the crowd.

# THURSDAY

On Thursday morning we were woken at 8 am by a cop INSIDE our tent (without a warrant!) who said in dulcet tones 'Good morning, chums, this is your local friendly policeman, get all your gear(?) together and leave as soon as you can'. After recovering from our rude awakening we all decided to have a look around. After finding over 400 fuzz on site (we later learned that there were 630 uniformed and 50 plain-clothes there) we decided the best course of action was to pack our gear, roll a 'j' and stay where we were until something happened.

After packing up we roamed around the site and became involved in several incidents. Small groups in uniform were moving from tent to tent, trying to pull them down. One such gang converged on a large white tent and were quickly surrounded by 50 people, including some of our group. Scuffles broke out and helmets were knocked off. The numbers of particularly vicious cops were chanted by the crowd, in order to intimidate. During the scuffles one copper (PC 2432

Say... George...  
Want somemore  
grass?



Ah... I dunno... it's  
all startin' to taste  
the same...



Not this! this is  
new stuff... try  
it man...



Dooooohhh... Wow!  
Really nice!  
Wow...really makes  
it!



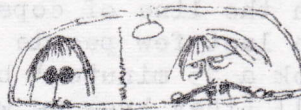
Duck... here comes  
a squad car....



Whew...man...that  
was close....



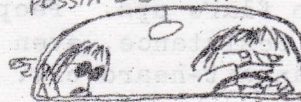
Hey... the red lights  
mean stop... don't they?



Wow.... Well we made it...  
I'm really stoned!!  
Wow?



Hey... lookit that!  
A bunch of High School kids!  
passin' a joint!!



I'll get the lights...  
You turn on the  
siren!



from our rude awakening we all decided to have a look around. After finding over 400 fuzz on site (we later learned that



pushed the owner of the tent away and courageously broke an offending guy rope. At this he and his sergeant were kicked to the ground and got several blows to the face, body and genitals. The police then rescued their injured and retreated. At the same time, nearer the road where the fuzz were stronger, a freak was being dragged along by 3 defenders of the law when one dropped his hold and kicked the freak in the stomach - just before his senior officer, seeing newsmen only a few yards away, physically restrained him. At 11 am the Freek Press issued a circular:

'Stay here together. If you leave you are going to be searched, hassled and planted on your way out. We need to stay to help each other. If the police advance, link arms. They shall not pass. We are stronger. Leave today and Windsor dies. We'll never get back. Stay here. With love'

The Freek Press also issued a warning note to the fuzz:

'POLICE WARNING. Under the bylaws you can ask campers to remove tents and stop playing loud music. But ANYBODY has the right to be in the Park in a peaceable manner and you render yourselves, as police, open to prosecution if you break the bylaws and remove people by force. With love from the people of the Windsor Free Festival'

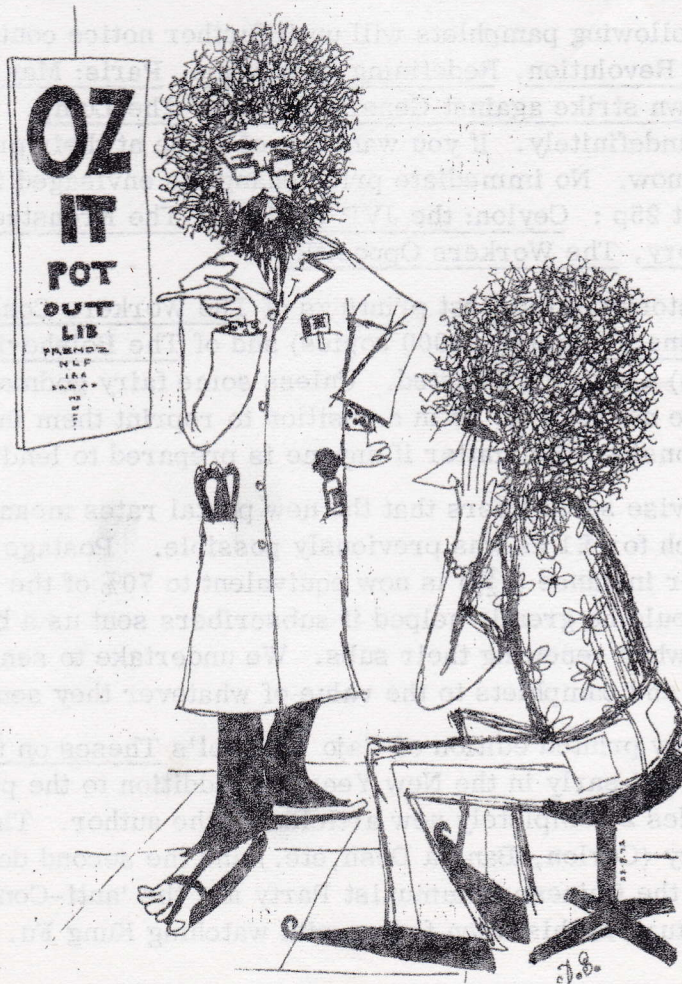
Messages advising passive resistance were issued from the stage before it was forcibly prevented from broadcasting. This admittedly confused and naive message to the police was, it goes without saying, completely ignored. By midday our numbers had dwindled to 2000 and most of those remaining had regrouped around stage A (the last stage to fall). A group of 200 police then attacked the stage from the side and rear, using truncheons quite freely and arresting people indiscriminately. After they had taken the stage (quite violently - one freak had his head split open from forehead to crown) they surrounded it, leaving 10-15 freaks on the scaffolding (where they had climbed to prevent the fuzz from dismantling it). The main group of people (by now down to 1500) sat in front of the stage, while some groups in front of the police cordon chanted Hare Krishna mantras and danced. Some of these later received severe injuries for their aggressive provocation of the Thames Valley Police Force. While all this was going on the line of cops by the trees had slowly moved forward, clearing the last few people as they advanced. A hundred yards from stage A they took a 15 minutes' break (the audacity of it) before moving in for the kill (they knew we weren't going to run away). After their well-deserved rest they rose and moved into the crowd with their usual savoir faire, kicking and pushing in order to disperse the crowd. It took them about 30 minutes. Most defence was passive at this stage, apart from one or two flare ups. People were too shocked and confused to offer any genuine resistance, even had they wanted to. ('Violence is not the answer' was an oft-heard cry. Hmmm.)



# EPILOGUE

Chief Constable David 'Porky' Hobworth said: 'In my view the Thames Valley Police Force acted with great restraint and patience'. In our view he must have been suffering from more hallucinations than the average freak. But why did his men act when and how they did? It's all a bit hypothetical, but when huge numbers of people arrived on the first day the fuzz presumably decided on a massive harassment tactic rather than direct attack. While this worked off site (5000 stop searches, many cars and vans completely stripped, 400 arrests before Thursday) it proved unworkable on the site itself, even after numbers had dropped, and any cop on site was exposed to considerable danger. They had not realised there would be such a collective spirit.

This situation, taken in conjunction with the fact that the Army had withdrawn the use of their barracks and that police reinforcements had become available after the end of the Reading Festival, meant that the cops could either admit defeat or play at Wonder Warthog. They chose the latter. Their motives were probably the terror of losing control of the situation, together with a gut-churning hatred of hippies. The next Free Festival promises to be interesting.





# SORRY, FOLKS ...

Rising costs of paper and ink - and rising printing costs - have obliged us radically to change our pricing structure. This step, which we have postponed for as long as possible, has now proved necessary if our production of pamphlets is to remain economically viable. The following decisions have had to be taken (they are our own specific contribution to revolutionary inflation) :

a) most currently available pamphlets, previously sold at 5p, will henceforth be sold at 10p. This applies to The Meaning of Socialism, Socialism or Barbarism, The Crisis of Modern Society, GMWU: Scab Union, Under New Management, LSE: a question of degree, As We Don't See It, From Bolshevism to the Bureaucracy.

b) we haven't had the nerve (at least for the time being) to increase the price of the following short pamphlets costing 5p : The Fate of Marxism, The Postal Strike, Kronstadt 1921, and the various Motor Bulletins.

c) the following pamphlets will until further notice continue to cost 15p : History and Revolution, Redefining Revolution, Paris: May 1968, The great Flint sit-down strike against General Motors, The Lump. But don't expect this to last indefinitely. If you want any of these at their present price, better order them now. No immediate price change is envisaged for the following pamphlets at 25p : Ceylon: the JVP Uprising, The Kronstadt Commune, Vietnam: Whose Victory, The Workers Opposition.

d) our stocks of the first printings of The Workers Councils and the Economics of a Self-managed Society (3000 copies) and of The Bolsheviks and Workers Control (5000 copies) are now exhausted. Unless some fairy godmother appears on the scene we are not going to be in a position to reprint them in the foreseeable future. We will reconsider the matter if anyone is prepared to lend us several hundred £s.

e) we advise subscribers that the new postal rates mean that we can't send them as much for £1 as was previously possible. Postage on a single issue of Solidarity for instance (3½p) is now equivalent to 70% of the cost of the material sent. We would be greatly helped if subscribers sent us a bit more than £1 (£2, if possible) when renewing their subs. We undertake to send them further issues of the paper and pamphlets to the value of whatever they sent us.

f) our new printed edition of Cajo Brendel's Theses on the Chinese Revolution (25p) will be out early in the New Year. In addition to the previously published text it includes 2 completely new articles by the author. The first concerns Chinese foreign policy (Ceylon, Bangla Desh, etc.) and the second deals with the Tenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party and the 'anti-Confucius' campaign. We suggest you turn to this when fed up with watching Kung Fu.



# thou shall not laugh

The trad. left lacks a sense of humour. This is a deeper point than it might seem. Lack of humour and lack of imagination reflect a long-standing ideological constipation. This article, written by an old Clydeside militant, brings to readers another aspect of working class experience.

Ridicule is a powerful weapon and should be exploited by all who claim to be socialists. If there is one place on earth where all aspects of humour abound, it is the shop floor. Yet it sometimes seems that the seriousness of the struggle does not permit us to knock off for a moment - even to smile.

Today it is fashionable to wonder why previous generations tolerated the economic and social conditions of their time. It never seems to occur to the wondering ones that those they criticise were (as they are themselves) the inheritors of thousands of years of mental conditioning by confidence men. It is true that our fathers and grandfathers accepted, as do their descendants, the dictates and guidance of leaders, but some among them at least had reservations. Here is an example:

'In 1889 the organised dockers of Glasgow demanded a 10% increase of wages, but met with the refusal of the employers. Strike breakers were brought in from among the agricultural labourers and the dockers had to acknowledge defeat and return to work at the old wage scale. But before the men resumed their work, their secretary of the union delivered to them the following address:

"You are going back to work at the old wage. The employers have repeated time and again that they were delighted with the work of agricultural labourers who had taken our places for several weeks during the strike. But we have seen them at work; we have seen that they could not even walk a vessel, that they dropped half the merchandise they carried, in short that two of them could hardly do the work of one of us. Nevertheless, the employers have declared themselves enchanted by the work of these fellows; well, then, there is nothing left for us but to do the same and practice *ca'canny*. Work as the agricultural labourers worked. Only they often fell into the water; it is useless for you to do the same."

'This order was obeyed to the letter. After a few days the contractors sent for the general secretary of the dockers and begged him to tell the dockers to work as before and that they were ready to grant the 10% increase'. (From Sabotage: Its History, Philosophy and Function by Walker C. Smith, I.W.W., 1913. Reprinted by Solidarity Bookshop, 745 Armitage, Chicago, Ill. 60614.)



During the premiership of Lloyd George - who had won the first world war, as Churchill did the second (with the aid of several million labourers) - John S. Clarke in his Lyrics and Poems described the funeral of the Welsh Wizard :

Not a drum was heard;  
Not a funeral note.  
We buried him at dead of night  
And mistook the graveyard for the Midden.

\* \* \*

As early as 1925 Glasgow was revelling in a story about an ex-miner who had been elected to the House of Commons. His new affluence drove him into a council house containing the then luxurious equivalents of today's fitted carpets and coloured television set. His wife naturally acquired a new social outlook. During the first parliamentary recess, two of his erstwhile fellow-miners called at his new home. Mrs new MP answered the door knock. She, her husband and the two callers had known one another from childhood. Conscious of her new social status, the lady gave her visitors the haughty stare reserved for strangers from the lower orders. 'Yes?' she enquired. One man asked: 'Is Wullie in, Lizzie? We'd like to speak to him'.

Now there are limits to the tolerance of the best people, when subjected to impatient proletarian familiarity. 'Do you mean Mr Exalted One, MP?'. 'Aye' said one of the newly-discovered strangers. 'I'm sorry, but he's extremely busy in his study. If you care to call back later, perhaps he may be able to see you'. The other miner then spoke: 'Aw, weel,' he said, 'just you go awa' back into the hoose, Lizzie, and tell Wullie that we'll sit oot here on the doorstep, and wait tae he pulls the chain'.

\* \* \*

Not long after the first world war the Scottish Labour Housing Association contended that owners of rented houses had, for years, been over-charging their tenants. The Association fought a successful court action. The judge ruled that according to the then Rents Act all over-charged tenants were entitled to withhold payment of rent for nine months.

Following this, an Association meeting was held near my home. Their speaker went into great detail during his explanation of the why and wherefore of the successful court case. After he had answered questions and resolved all doubts, the meeting was closed. The local peasantry gathered themselves into small groups, to assure one another that the impartiality of the Law (and the justice it dispensed) were real and not mythical, as alleged by the reds whose only claim to recognition was their peculiar preference for sleeping under the bed rather than on top of it. In the group I listened to was a constitutionally minded Labour stalwart. After pontificating for some time he summed up: I shall, of course, continue to pay my rent. But I shall pay it under protest'.



As the peasants, like Christ, looked and wondered over this devastating declaration of revolutionary intent, a prole took his pipe from his mouth and said: 'They don't care a bugger, Jock, how you pay it, so long as you pay it'. I was only 16 at the time but I never forgot it. For me it was the socialist answer to every fairy tale handed out by the head-fixers. And still is.

\* \* \*

Around the time of the General Strike, Joe Corrie's 'Image o' God and Other Poems' appeared. Corrie, I always understood, was a blacklisted miner. In his 'Image o' God' he described the body and mind destroying conditions of miners' work and wound up by saying:

So ah gie mah life tae the Nimmo squad  
For eight and four a day  
Me made efter the image o' God  
Christ but its laughable tae

Corrie's 'It's Fine Tae Keep In Wi' The Gaffer' is the philosophy and autobiography of every Labour MP and councillor, and all trade union officials, as the last verse tells us:

You young men wi' ambition just take my advice  
No matter who says tae the gaffer be nice  
Just do what he tells you, and never think twice  
'cause it pays to keep in wi' the gaffer.

\* \* \*

During the mid-thirties Glasgow's magistrates decided that public meetings would not be permitted without the previous consent of the city's rulers. This was aimed principally at those who congregated nightly at the bottom of West Regent Street, there to debate every subject known to man until 2 and 3 o'clock each morning. Most of them were unemployed. They were also self-graduates of the Mitchell Library, and were admired or regarded as an affront according to one's interpretation of conventional wisdom and sociology. All claimed to be socialists, although it was difficult to find two of them who fully agreed. There were, for instance, those who talked learnedly of how the worker was robbed at the point of production and yet had problems in answering difficult ones like 'how is a fireman robbed at the point of production?'

West Regent Street's reply to Glasgow's proclamation of Bumbledom was unanimous, instant and to the point. Each evening a portable platform was placed in the middle of the street. On one side was a queue of speakers; on the other, a police van guarded by a posse of uniformed guardians of law, order and democratic freedom. As each new speaker mounted the rostrum he was warned of the consequences of addressing the crowd. Two words of the potential speech 'fellow workers...' were enough to see him bundled into the van. Among those taking part in the protest were Peter MacIntyre, who had



been a staunch friend and supporter of John MacLean, and the tramp preachers. All of them had been ordained ministers of the Church of England but had resigned their charges because they believed that the Church, by its devotion to capitalism, had forfeited its claim to be Christian. (Marx's remark that the Church of England would give up 38 of its 39 articles before it would yield one thirty-ninth of its income was probably conceded by the preachers.)

Night after night the Gilbert and Sullivan show continued, with the police playing their parts according to the scenario written by Glasgow's civic rulers. When the Black Maria had its full complement of recalcitrant proles, it would hurry to the Central Police Office, where its inmates would be charged and then thrown out. The police could not allow the comedy to go on for ever. A day was arranged for Justice to demonstrate its determination to pursue impartiality to its logical conclusion.

On the Sunday prior to the trial Peter MacIntyre, who had already collected a number of summonses, held a meeting at the Nelson monument in Glasgow Green. On each of the spikes topping the railings he had stuck a summons. A large crowd appreciated the decorations and his explanations of their origin.

The following day MacIntyre and the preachers duly appeared at the Central Police Court. Glasgow knew its Glasgow and the place was packed when Stipendiary Smith walked on stage to the cry of law and order: 'Court. Court'. Everyone got to his feet, except the tramp preachers and MacIntyre. This was unprecedented. The police, trained only to act on orders, did nothing as no order had been given. In any case they could not beat up those staging this exhibition of defiance, for many in the court might have intervened.

When Stipendiary Smith took his seat, and all those standing had resumed theirs, MacIntyre and the preachers rose to their feet. The preachers unfurled their Gospel banner and sang 'Stand up, Stand up for Jesus'. After this the charge was read out. The defendants were asked 'Guilty or not Guilty?'. Tom Pickering spoke for them, explaining that there was no charge to answer. 'Glasgow's motto', he said was 'Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word'. Their presence in court, he went on, was because of the attempt by Glasgow's magistrates, the police and Stipendiary Smith to repudiate the town motto, and deny his right and that of his colleagues to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the City of Glasgow. (The word preached by Peter MacIntyre had in fact been that of Karl Marx.)

Smith, a pillar of the Presbyterian Church, angrily denied and rejected Pickering's claim and insisted that the charge was in order. From then on the case was a struggle between Pickering and Smith. It was a hopelessly unequal struggle, because Smith was confined to the bow and arrow whilst Pickering's shield and weapon was the Bomb. Not one word was missed by the reporters present. Finally Smith adjourned the case. He



must have adjourned *sine die*, because the Council of Action formed to fight Glasgow's magistrates' attempt to ban free speech was soon in a position to dissolve itself. On the day of the trial, the evening papers gave full front page coverage to the case. The West of Scotland, at least, laughed its head off.

According to historians, there never has been anything of interest, peculiar to the common people, that merited recording. That any worker could ever compete with leaders in the world of ideas is anathema to them. Socialists are aware of this, of course, and their opposition to capitalism stresses just why the history books omit any mention of working class initiative.

Yet all progress and gains achieved by the working class have not been due to leaders, but have occurred despite them. This fact should be in the forefront of our advocacy of socialism. We should remember that, times without number, workers in every part of the world have, by their thinking and action, demonstrated their ability to recover from defeat. Humour, sarcasm and satire played their parts in each recovery.

The factory, mine or office shopfloor is where the struggle for socialism is fought out. When arguing for a sane society socialists should not forget that each new shopfloor generation is the inheritor of unlimited humour and is fully capable of making its own additions to this inheritance.

Stuart Henderson





# PARTY AND CLASS

The article reprinted below was first published in 'International Council Correspondence' (Sept. 1936) anonymously. It is probably the work of Anton Pannekoek as it is similar to his later work 'Workers' Councils' and other writings. Pannekoek was an extraordinarily varied author. From his early books that attacked the reformism and bourgeois philosophy and science of the Second International and from the experiences of the Russian and German revolutions, he developed a critique of the workers' movement. He often returned to workers' councils after 1920 as well as to a superb critique of bourgeois ideology in Lenin in 'Lenin as Philosopher' (1938). Pannekoek was also a leading astronomer and his books 'History of Astronomy' and 'Anthropogenesis' show this. In fact he wrote about a wide range of subjects over a long period (70 years). 'Party and Class' comes from the middle of this time and demonstrates both his depth of historical understanding and his grasp of the dynamic of society.

The first traces of a new labour movement are just becoming visible. The old movement is organised in parties. The belief in parties is the main reason for the impotence of the working class; therefore we avoid forming a new party - not because we are too few, but because a party is an organisation that aims to lead and control the working class.

In opposition to this, we maintain the working class can rise to victory only when it independently attacks its problems and decides its own fate. The workers should not unquestioningly accept the slogans of others, nor of our own groups, but must think, act and decide for themselves. This conception is in sharp contradiction to the tradition of the party as the most important means of educating the proletariat. Therefore many, though repudiating the Socialist and Communist parties, resist and oppose us. This is partly due to their traditional concepts; after viewing the class struggle as a struggle of parties, it becomes difficult to consider it as purely the struggle of the working class, as a class struggle. But partly this concept is based on the idea that the party nevertheless plays an essential and important part in the struggle of the proletariat. Let us investigate this latter idea more closely.



Essentially, the party is a grouping according to views, conceptions; the classes are groupings according to economic interests. Class membership is determined by one's part in the process of production; party membership is the joining of persons who agree in their conceptions of the social problems. Formerly it was thought this contradiction would disappear in the class party, the "workers' party". During the rise of the Social-Democracy, it seemed that it would gradually embrace the whole working class, partly as members, partly as supporters. Because Marxian theory declared that similar interests beget similar viewpoints and aims, the contradiction between party and class was expected gradually to disappear. History proved otherwise. The Social-Democracy remained a minority, other working class groups organised against it, sections split away from it, and its own character changed. Its own program was revised or reinterpreted.

The evolution of society does not proceed along a smooth even line, but in conflicts and contradictions.

With the intensification of the workers' struggle, the might of the enemy also increases and besets the workers with renewed doubts and fears as to which road is the best. And every doubt brings on splits, contradictions, and factional battles within the labour movement. It is futile to bewail these conflicts and splits as harmful in dividing and weakening the working class. The working class is not weak because it is split up - it is split up because it is weak. Because the enemy is powerful and the old methods of warfare prove unavailing, the working class must seek new methods. Its task will not become clear as the result of enlightenment from above, it must discover it through hard work, through thought and conflict of opinions. It must find its own way; therefore the internal struggles. It must relinquish old ideas and illusions and adopt new ones, and because this is difficult, therefore the magnitude and severity of the splits.

Nor can we delude ourselves into believing that this period of party and ideological strife is only temporary and will make way to renewed harmony. True, in the course of the class struggle there are occasions when all forces unite on a great achievable objective and the revolution is carried on with the might of a united working class. But after that, as after every victory, come the differences on the question: what next? And even if the working class is victorious, it is always confronted by the most difficult task of subduing the enemy further, reorganizing production, creating new order. It is impossible that all workers, all strata and groups, with their oft-times still diverse interests should, at this stage, agree on all matters and be ready for united rapid and decisive further action. They will find the true course only after the sharpest controversies and conflicts, and only thus will achieve clarity.

If, in this situation, persons with the same fundamental conceptions unite for the discussion of practical steps and seek clarification through discussions, and propagandize their conclusions, such groups might be called parties, but they would be parties in



an entirely different sense from those of today. Action, the actual struggle, is the task of the working masses themselves, in their entirety, in their natural groupings as factory and mill-hands, or other natural productive groups, because history and economy have placed them in the position where they must and they only can fight the working class struggle. It would be insane if the supporters of one party were to go on strike while those of another continue to work. But both tendencies will defend their position on strike or no strike in the factory meetings, thus affording an opportunity to arrive at a well-founded decision. The struggle is so great, the enemy so powerful that only the masses as a whole can achieve a victory - the result of the material and moral power of action, unity and enthusiasm, but also the result of the mental force of thought, of clarity. In this lies the great importance of such parties or groups based on opinions, that they bring clarity in their conflicts, discussions and propaganda. They are the organs of the self-enlightenment of the working class by means of which the workers find their way to freedom.

Naturally such parties are not static and unchangeable. Every new situation, every new problem will find minds diverging and uniting in new groups with new programs. They have a fluctuating character and constantly readjust themselves to new situations.

Compared to such groups, the present workers' parties have an entirely different character, for they have a different objective; they want to seize power for themselves. They aim not at being an aid to the working class in its struggle for emancipation, but to rule it themselves and proclaim that constitutes the emancipation of the proletariat. The Social Democracy which rose in the era of parliamentarism conceives of this rule as a parliamentary government. The Communist Party carries the idea of party rule through to its furthest extreme in the party dictatorship.

Such parties, in distinction to the groups described above, must be rigid structures with clear lines of demarcation through membership cards, statutes, party discipline and admission and expulsion procedures. For they are instruments of power, fight for power, bridle their members by force and constantly seek to extend the scope of their power. It is not their task to develop the initiative of the workers; rather do they aim at training loyal and unquestioning members of their faith. While the working class in its struggle for power and victory needs unlimited intellectual freedom, the party rule must suppress all opinions except its own. In "democratic" parties, the suppression is veiled; in the dictatorship parties, it is open, brutal suppression.

Many workers already realize that the rule of the Socialist or Communist party will be but the concealed form of the rule of a bourgeois class in which the exploitation and suppression of the working class remains. Instead of these parties, they urge



the formation of a "revolutionary party" that will really aim at the rule of the workers and the realization of communism. Not a party in the new sense of those described above, but a party as those of today, that fights for power as the vanguard of the class, as the organization of conscious, revolutionary minority that seizes power in order to use it for the emancipation of the class.

We claim there is an internal contradiction in the term: "revolutionary party". Such a party cannot be revolutionary. It is no more revolutionary than the creators of the third Reich. When we speak of revolution, we naturally speak of the proletarian revolution, the seizure of power by the working class itself.

The "revolutionary party" is based on the idea that the working class needs a group of leaders who vanquish the bourgeoisie for the workers and to construct a new government - (note that the working class is not yet considered fit to reorganize and regulate production). But is not this as it should be? As the working class does not yet seem capable of revolution, is it not necessary that the revolutionary vanguard, the party, make the revolution for it? And is this not true as long as the masses willingly endure capitalism?

Against this, we raise the question: what forces can such a party raise for the revolution? How is it able to defeat the capitalist class? Only if the masses stand behind it. Only if the masses rise and through mass attacks, mass struggle, and mass strikes, **overthrow** the old regime. Without the action of the masses, there can be no revolution.

Two things can follow. The masses remain in action, they do not go home and leave the government to the new party. They organize their power in factory and workshop, prepare for the further conflict to the complete defeat of capital; through the workers' councils they establish a firm union to take over the complete direction of all society - in other words, they prove they are not as incapable of revolution as it seemed. Of necessity, then, conflicts will arise with the party which itself wants to take over power and which sees only disorder and anarchy in the self-action of the working class. Possibly the workers will develop their movement and sweep out the party. Or, the party, with the help of bourgeois elements defeats the workers. In either case, the party is an obstacle to the revolution, because it wants to be more than a means of propaganda and enlightenment; because it feels itself called upon to lead and rule as a party.

On the other hand the masses may follow the party faith, and leave to it the further direction of affairs. They follow the slogans from above, have confidence in the new government (as in Germany in 1918) that is to realize communism and go back home and to work. Immediately the bourgeoisie exerts its whole class power the roots of which are unbroken; its financial forces, its great intellectual resources, and its economic power in factories and great enterprises. Against this the government party is too



weak. Only through moderation, concessions and yielding can it maintain itself. The excuse is given then, that more can not be secured at the moment, that it is insanity for the workers to try to force impossible demands. Thus the party, deprived of class power becomes the instrument for maintaining bourgeois power.

We stated before that the term "revolutionary party" was contradictory in the proletarian sense. We can state it otherwise: In the term "revolutionary party" "revolutionary" always means a bourgeois revolution. Always, when the masses overthrow a government and then allow a new party to take power we have a bourgeois revolution- the substitution of a ruling caste by a new ruling caste. It was so in Paris in 1830 when the finance bourgeoisie supplanted the landed proprietors, in 1848 when the industrial bourgeoisie supplanted the financiers, and in 1870 the combined petty and large bourgeoisie took over the reins.

In the Russian revolution the party bureaucracy came to power as the ruling caste. But in Western Europe and America the bourgeoisie is much more powerfully entrenched in plants and banks, so that a party bureaucracy cannot push them aside. The bourgeoisie in these countries can be vanquished only by repeated and united action of the masses in which they seize the mills and factories and build up their councils.

Those who speak of "revolutionary parties" draw incomplete, limited conclusions from history. When the Socialist and Communist parties became organs of bourgeois rule for the perpetuation of exploitation, these well meaning people merely concluded that they would have to do better. They cannot realize that the failure of these parties is due to the fundamental conflict between the self emancipation of the working class through its own power and the pacifying of the revolution through a new sympathetic ruling clique. They think they are the revolutionary vanguard because they see the masses indifferent and inactive. But the masses are inactive only because they cannot yet comprehend the course of the struggle and the unity of class interests, although they instinctively sense the great power of the enemy and the enormity of their task. Once conditions force them into action they will attack the task of self organisation and the conquest of the economic power of capital.