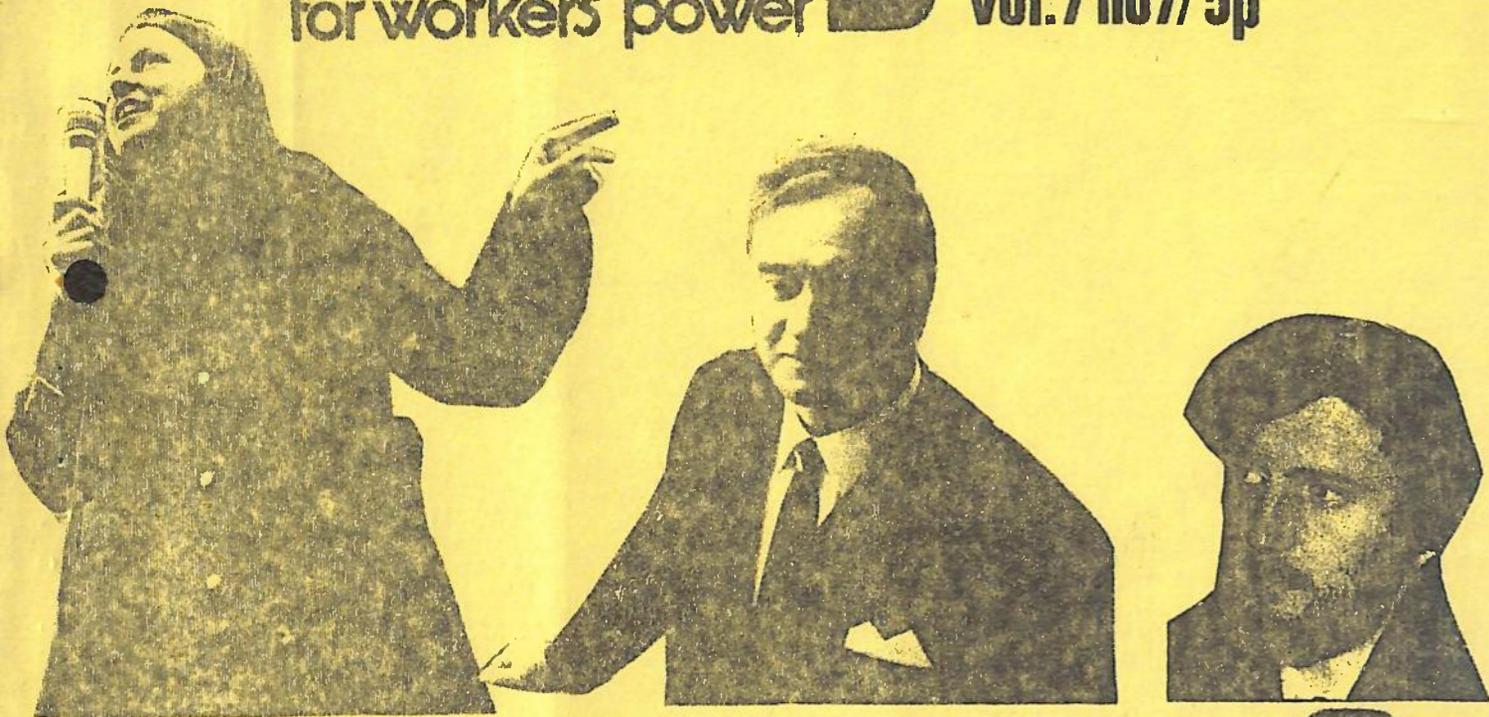


solidarity

for workers' power

- Penis Power
- Paris, May '73
- Reviews
- Ford Letters

vol.7 no7/5p



● N.Ireland

"There remains the massive task of demystification....."



NORTHERN IRELAND REAPPRAISAL

Now that the day to day news from N.Ireland makes it more difficult than ever before for even the most enthusiastic 'supporter' of 'people in struggle' to discern any remotely revolutionary potential in the situation, it might be useful to re-examine some aspects of what has been going on there.

Few people on the left in Britain would have known much about the background to the Civil Rights movement whose march in Derry on October 5, 1968 hit the headlines after being batoned into the ground by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. To those involved in left politics it is not really surprising that a state police force should behave in that way. But it was a shock to see it happening, and there was a strong inclination to identify with the marchers. At the same time, sections of liberal-democratic opinion was outraged that such things could occur in the United Kingdom.

Such reactions, as well as those of students who already supported the campaign for Civil Rights, contributed to the formation of the People's Democracy (P.D.) organisation (though it was hardly, at first, organised) at Queen's University, Belfast. For most of the 1968-1969 academic year the P.D. was a loose grouping - not a united front - of anyone who went to its meetings. The political affiliations of those involved included Young Socialist, anarchist, Republican, liberal and Unionist. It was a time when most universities were the scene of similar activities - mass meetings, demonstrations, protest - in the wake of the May events in France. In Belfast, though, students were pre-occupied with society and local politics outside the university.

Outside, the Civil Rights issue was the main preoccupation, not only for those who saw themselves as political. It would scarcely have been possible for revolutionaries at that time to ignore it, or to oppose the demand for Civil Rights. The argument that the danger of a backlash from a group who feel threatened should preclude a group who feel, and in real ways are oppressed, from doing anything about their situation, is not acceptable. However, there was a clear need to maintain class politics on other issues, as well as constant principled criticism of the orientation toward civil rights per se and Republican nationalism.

In August 1969, the spasmodic rioting, demonstrating and police repression reached a new phase, with attacks by police and Protestant extremists on Catholic ghettos in Derry and Belfast. The inhabitants of the ghettos defended their areas, set up barricades, and declared the zones 'Free Derry' and 'Free Belfast'. Revolutionaries in Britain and abroad responded with enthusiasm to what was seen as the self-defence of working class communities, self-organisation behind the barricades, exclusion of state forces*. Some

* See 'Derry: How the people fought' in Solidarity Vol.5, no.2.



hoped that the Protestants, who were doing the same sort of thing in their areas, would come to see the light through the experience of self-activity and abandon their sectarian ways. The Catholics were generally assumed to be seeing the light already, but in fact the propaganda of 'Orange Lily' on the Protestants' radio station in Belfast was matched by 'Radio Free Belfast', with Republican myth-and-martyr history and record requests featuring 'Rifles of the I.R.A.' as regular top of the hit parade. This radio was run from a house in the Falls by

members of the P.D., who no doubt tried to put over some socialist education as well. Later it became a source of some embarrassment: when there was a suggestion that an LP record should be made of its broadcasts, the Central Committee was afraid that it could not appear non-sectarian without re-writing history*. Later still, the radio was cited without qualification as one of their important contributions**.

THE IRA

The P.D. presence in the ghetto came to an end when the I.R.A. reasserted its control there, and there was a general tightening up. But the failure of the I.R.A. to justify, in their own terms, a position of power by effective defence of the area had lost them a lot of support, which was not reconciled by their methods of taking over the situation. The split in the leadership was formalised early in 1970 when the organisation divided into 'Official' and 'Provisional' wings. Both wings tend to call themselves socialist; both enjoy the declared support of many professed revolutionaries. For both, the prime aim is a united Ireland, to be achieved either through the type

* Minutes of P.D. Central Committee meeting, March 9, 1970.

** By M. Farrell in Unfree Citizen, January 7, 1972.

of military campaign waged by the Provisionals, or through the negotiation, collaboration and power-sharing more typical of the Officials. The means are interchangeable, as has been shown, for example, by the Provisionals' truce with the British Army and the Officials' bomb at Aldershot.

The Officials are influenced by the Communist Party of Ireland, and have much in common with CP front organisations, historically and today. Perhaps the main characteristic is ruthless opportunism. To cite a few instances: when M. Farrell moved a resolution about 'Civil Rights, North and South' in the Civil Rights Association executive, their representatives voted for it to be 'referred back' (i.e. forgotten about) - although it was adopted as their policy a few months later; their intervention in the Citizens' Defence Committee with instructions to 'democratise' or else undermine and abolish them; the attempt to form a National Liberation Movement (ne Front), of which the function was explicitly not to promote socialism; and the contesting of seats in the Dail, Stormont, Westminster, and recently local government and N.Ireland Assembly. In Ireland, this all takes place in the context of rhetoric about Republicanism not being sectarian, but 'the mighty struggle of the people hastening to be born into new national life in which all the children of the nation must move forward to one and the same goal, the reconquest of Ireland for the people of Ireland...' (United Irishman, July 1970).

One of the grounds for the Provisionals' criticism of the Officials was the influence of the C.P.I. which was seen as the 'betrayal of legitimate Irish republicanism'. The Officials were denounced as 'Republican Red Guards', N.L.F., etc., accused of intimidation, of making fundamental changes in Republican policy and indoctrinating people with the 'foreign socialism' of Marx, Mao and Castro. 'Red elements' were never again to be allowed to get a grip on the movement. Instead the Provisionals would lead 'our people' to the 'National Ideal, a Free Democratic Socialist Republic acceptable to the Irish people', in the tradition of Connolly and Pearse (An Poblacht, June 1970). In a more recent examination of the national ideal, the Republican News, February 2, 1973, asserted: 'Democracy demands that Unionists take a political place in the New Irish State... Democracy will have more chance of success if fundamental unifying influences are present, such as language, race, nationality, religion... The state exists for the people, so the people should participate in the state' or else there results the 'self-inflicted dictatorship of the few over the many'. Not a prospect to entice the average Protestant worker.

Apart from these theoretical refinements, the Provisionals' practice of trying to bomb the Protestants into a united Ireland is enough to condemn them. Apologists for their campaign often claim: (a) that a particular atrocity was committed by someone else; (b) that they gave adequate warning (naively trusting to the good faith, and efficiency, of their arch enemies); (c) that the U.D.A. and/or British army have done much worse things (as if we should prefer whichever group may have caused slightly less carnage to date). An example of the double standard at work appears in Socialist Worker, June 9, 1973, under the headline 'Loyalists step up terror campaign'. The writer claims that attacks on Catholic pubs were 'clearly aimed to cause maximum

civilian deaths and injuries. This is in marked contrast to the tactics of the Republicans who always try to minimise casualties when they bomb civilian targets.' An unmystified observer might consider the best way to minimise casualties would be to stop bombing civilian targets.

In fact, none of the groups committed on the Republican side is prepared to give the Protestants much choice about going into a united Ireland, however they envisage the process of persuasion, coercion or conversion. The lapse into more or less authoritarian Republicanism occurs by default in political groups in Ireland if they make no effective critique of this tendency. It is also echoed by those to whom the background is not fully familiar and who are not alert to the implications, in the Irish context, of phrases like '32-county', 'All-Ireland', 'army occupation', and 'British Imperialism'.*

P.D. DEGENERATES

The degeneration of the P.D. into Republicanism was always probable, despite the attempts to be non-sectarian, to act on class issues, to oppose the regime in Eire and to criticise I.R.A. tactics. The Republicans did not take over everyone in P.D. - many left at various stages - but they now dominate completely what is left. M.Farrell wrote in Unfree Citizen, January 7, 1972, that of course P.D. should co-operate with Republicans, although there was still a need for it as a separate socialist party which, while participating fully in the Northern struggle, was also actively involved in class struggle in the South. Among the mistakes of the past which it was now making up for, he noted under-emphasis of the national question and Irish unity, and excessive anxiety to placate Protestant workers. Unfree Citizen, November 20, 1972, included a comment from Dublin P.D. that no parallel was possible between UDA bombs and Provisional IRA bombs. On February 5 this year, as well as designating Protestant workers as 'aristocracy of labour', it defended the practice of assassinating U.D.R. men on the grounds that it serves them right, they shouldn't have joined - like British soldiers.

One of the beneficiaries of the P.D.'s decline and the disillusionment of some political elements with Republicanism was the Stalinist (in the deepest and truest sense of the word) British and Irish Communist Organisation, and its offspring the Workers' Association for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland (W.A.). They have a different angle on the situation, putting forward the 'Two Nations' theory, to the effect that the Northern Protestants have as valid a claim to nationhood as the South of Ireland; they advocate self-determination for each nation with full civil rights for the minority in each**. To this end, the W.A. is currently engaged in helping the ruling class to solve its problems, working for the acceptance of the White Paper as being of benefit to workers as well as other classes (Workers' Weekly, April 6, 1973).

* This sort of mistake is noticeable in my article 'Occupied Ireland' in Solidarity, Vol.6, no.9; see also follow-up discussion in Vol.6, no.II.

** See letter from a member of the W.A. and our reply, Solidarity Vol.7, no.3.

It may be that the sort of solution towards which the ruling class seems to be moving would be the best possible outcome from a humanitarian viewpoint. Humanitarian instincts are not to be despised, but political positions are not adopted on the basis of gazing into a crystal ball, considering whether one outcome would involve less bloodshed in the short term than another, and working towards it for that reason. The other justification for working to establish bourgeois democracy - that it would lead to the emergence of class politics - is mechanistic and unsubstantiated by historical experience. And in the meantime the government that 'revolutionaries' had helped to instal would be doing its worst, suppressing, oppressing and exploiting the working class.

WORKERS' ASSOCIATION.

All the same, the W.A. can provide a useful corrective to the pro-IRA transports of large sections of the left. Unfortunately, it does not always avoid the converse danger of concentrating criticism on one side and making allowances for the other. To the W.A. Protestant nationalism is basically correct, so it is predisposed to take an optimistic view of Protestant organisations. Thus Vanguard is criticised for its negative stance when the S.D.L.P. came out with criticism of the Provisionals, and the U.D.A. is urged to show itself to Catholics as a genuinely democratic force, for example by not murdering Catholics who enter Protestant no-go areas (Workers' Weekly, July 28, 1972). For internationalists, the question of defining a nation remains academic. Regarding Ireland as one nation would not be grounds for supporting the I.R.A. But it does make more sense to see the conflict as between nationalisms, with all that that implies in terms of irrational identification and mythical unity of interests across class lines, rather than between religions (as escapists who prefer to keep it remote and incomprehensible prefer to think), or between classes (as wishful revolutionaries insist).

Another thing about the W.A. is that it tends, logically enough, to adopt a position of support for the use of repressive state machinery. The role of the British army is defended. Internment is accepted, because the authorities are thought to have got, on the whole, the right people locked up, so there is no question of releasing/changing the political prisoners. Such complacency is not possible for libertarians. Internment is not an aberration, or a tragic necessity, but indicates the real nature of what we are up against. Similarly, we are not obliged to disbelieve or disprove accounts of British army brutality, or to support the use of the state army. This does not mean, though, that the call for withdrawal of troops can be automatically endorsed. Even if we ignore or rationalise away the possible consequences, and the customary coupling of the demand with 'Victory to the IRA', it would still be accepting the existence of a state army, in action or in reserve, regarding the soldiers as passive instruments to be used or withdrawn at the behest of their and our masters.



On the other hand, the attempt to subvert troops is always valid, and campaigns to encourage and facilitate desertion have a place in revolutionary practice. But the aim should be to help soldiers realise and reject their role in all its aspects, not just one particular application.

Extracting the troops from the situation might at least make it more difficult to peddle confusionist slogans about the kind of struggle going on. The line about 'People are attacking soldiers, therefore we support them and those whom they support (the IRA)' would have to be changed, and the current nonsensical formulations about all the Protestants being aristocrats of labour and/or fascists would be even less convincing on their own.

We do not deny the right of either working class community to defend itself, but there is no revolutionary content in the confrontation between them. To see the development of events as at all hopeful must be to ignore most of what is going on. When individuals in the women's liberation movement talk about the active part played by women and the necessity to 'support our sisters in struggle', it always turns out to mean support for the Provisional I.R.A. The struggle of some sisters against the policies of the I.R.A. leadership, e.g. the Derry 'Peace Women'* is presumably misguided; that of our Protestant sisters just doesn't come into it.

In a pamphlet which did make an attempt to discuss the roots of the dominant ideologies** the Belfast Libertarian group held out a faint hope of international youth revolt making its influence felt against authoritarianism. If this is happening in Ireland, it is at present deeply submerged. For many young people the troubles have reinforced the impulse to docility, respectability, acceptance of parental authority, and the most apparently undisciplined and rebellious are those who take the traditional loyalties to excess instead of flouting them. There must be very few indeed who would deny being either a Protestant or a Catholic; most would be violently partisan.

In the long term, in Ireland as elsewhere, the youth revolt, and the self-assertion of women, will have an important part to play in the context of class struggle as a whole. Meanwhile class society continues, acting out its struggles in the industrial arena more intensively than on the streets. Not only has industrial production increased in N.Ireland since the start of the present troubles (according to Workers' Weekly, Belfast Bulletin of the

* See Time Out, 'Eire's Censored Interview', June 15-21, 1973.

** Reviewed in Solidarity, Vol.7, no.2.

British and Irish Communist Organisation, February 9, 1973) - and the latest set of unemployment figures shows a significant drop - but Whitelaw can boast of a 'record of industrial stability second to none*.

Even so, the conditions of exploitation in industrial production are such that no modern Capitalist society is stable. Workers have to react against it from time to time, and they do, even in N.Ireland. A recent example was the dispute at the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast**, played down in the British press and ignored by normally strike-happy sections of the left, no doubt because the Protestant workforce was failing to live up to its reactionary fascist image. There is a point of departure here for class politics. It is unlikely, however, that any political group on the spot will be able to intervene or influence the workers. As well as the physical danger associated with any attempt at action, there is the likelihood of being branded with the religious affiliation of the first few contacts, and therefore doomed to rejection by the other section of the class (contrary to some rumours, not every Catholic in N.Ireland is unemployed).

For revolutionaries in Britain, intervention is hardly an option with reference to N.Ireland. We can always protest against the actions of 'our' ruling class, but with the obligation of absolute clarity on opposition to other ruling classes, actual and potential. There remains the massive task of demystification, to which we have made some contribution, notably with the 'Theses on Ireland' in Solidarity, Vol.7, no.1 ; there is room for much more.

L.W.

* "Whereas the number of days lost through industrial disputes in Great Britain for the first 10 months last year was 1031 per thousand workers, the figure for the whole year in Northern Ireland was 637 and just under 80% of that figure is accounted for by one single industrial dispute" - Whitelaw, quoted in Irish Times, January 23, 1973. So much for the Irish revolution as a threat to capitalism!

** See article in Workers' Voice, May, 1973.

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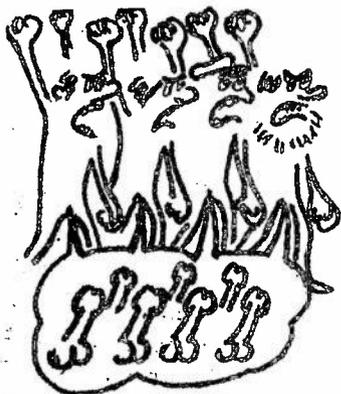
THE ORGASMIC REVOLUTIONARY

A Womens' Liberation meeting in Italy was invaded and broken up by chanting left-wing males. Their slogan was: Power Comes Out of The End of a Penis.

Revolution, for the orgasmic revolutionary, is the wet-dreamed goal. The orgasmic revolutionary is one who thinks of radical social change exclusively in terms of violent revolution. But it is important to realise that this orgasm (a male orgasm), as in real life, does not take place in a vacuum. It is related to the circumstances surrounding and producing it. Thus whilst the orgasmic revolutionary is mesmerised by the spectacle of revolution, that violent eruption is directed at something concrete and specific. Whilst not representative of the Movement, as a type he is to be found deeply embedded in it. Be he an Anarchist he might be described, depending on his brand of Anarchism, as a wanker - not that there is anything wrong with a good wank, far from it, but it does depend on the outfall and in which direction the political wind is blowing. Be he a Marxist-Leninist he might be characterised as a rapist. Whilst the former on occasions can be a positive menace, the latter, given the chance, is a permanent menace. Naturally enough every orgasmic revolutionary has a fetishism of one kind or another. What follows is a brief and unfortunately inadequate skirting of this very interesting subject.

The Badge Fetishist. The Badge Fetishist has changed his habits over the years. Badge Fetishism probably reached its peak, in this country, in the early nineteen-sixties, when motorists travelling along the A.4 in a westerly direction were dazzled by the flashing of sunlight bouncing off the badges of the Badge Fetishists marching towards the womb, that is to say, London. Somewhat of a convention for these types, Aldermaston boasted their anoraks and duffle-coats bedecked with their fetish. Particularly keen acquisitions were the various anti-bomb badges, especially manufactured for them in a back room in Wardour Street. These days Badge Fetishism manifests itself not so much with the quantity of badges worn, but with the size and quality. Take, for example, the Armed Love badge. An interesting example this, with its monster size and blunt orgasmic symbol - the sub-machine gun. The badge, as part of the orgasmic make-up, is obviously an indispensable item for the would-be orgasmic revolutionary.

Next we come to the Black Leather Coat Brigade, not to be confused with the below-the-knee style of a certain pre-war German group. That style is rather unpopular these days. The present trend is a nifty jacket length black leather coat - brown is a permitted variation. The wearing of such apparel instills a strong sense of orgasmic potency in the wearer. From my observations these types, who are the real hardcore orgasmic merchants, can be seen propping up a bar in any town after an orgasmic meeting, discussing such classics as Trotsky's Theory of the Permanent Erection and Lenin's How Not To Do It, or, Premature Ejaculation and Other Infantile Disorders.



Group Fetishism is perhaps the most rewarding phenomena to study, and can usually be observed on demonstrations, which tend to act as a strong magnet for such activities. Group Fetishism is best understood if the reader thinks of group sex, without multiple orgasms, or any orgasm, come to that, because the mistress, the much-wooed working class is invariably missing on such occasions, or, if present disdains the rustle of black leather coats rubbing up against it. It is on occasions such as these that trousers are bursting, so to speak, as the orgasmic adrenalin courses through the veins.

To help whip up the desired frenzy various articles are required, which from my observations, have an unmistakable fetishist quality about them. Foremost of these is the 'banner'. The bigger the 'banner' the better. To hold the 'banner' is, for the lucky orgasmic revolutionary, a great personal thrill, even greater if his group's 'banner' is bigger than a comrade group's 'banner', greater still if even bigger than a rival orgasmic group's 'banner'.

Group Fetishism is usually most spectacular in the womb of wombs, London, when on occasion, orgasmic revolutionaries start arriving by the busload. Assembling as an orgasmic mass, with the other marchers, they set off from Hyde Park or Tower Hill holding their 'banners' and a few wearing a 'crash-helmet' - a sort of inverted jock-strap to contain the excitement. Thus equipped they make their way in a long thin orgasmic line to a dubious erection called 'Nelson's Column' in Trafalgar Square.

Though ideological differences occur amongst the orgasmic groups marching - over, for instance, the best position in which to achieve the orgasm - on a demonstration these differences are forgotten as they rally together for the sake of orgasmic unity, uttering a strange rhythmic chant that ebbs and flows, depending on the effectiveness of their fetishist crutches. One of these crutches are blue uniformed individuals known as 'police', who can be guaranteed to push up the orgasmic adrenalin quite spectacularly. Thus steamed up every Saturday afternoon, the streets of London echo with a wondrous orgasmic wail, whilst their dreamed of mistresses, the cause of all this, are at Highbury or West Ham watching a more interesting game called 'football'.

From studying the orgasmic revolutionary and his antecedents over a period of eleven years I have come to the regrettable conclusion that castration might be an effective cure for their malady. Had not Lenin dreamed of waving his weapon (which he fetishised into what he called 'The Party') over the world, he and they might have been a lot better off. As it is, these types are a real problem, because unable to inject their seed into the mass of the population, given the chance they end up by imposing it on them. Which strikes me as being a clear case of rape.

MAY-JUNE '68

IT WAS ONLY A BEGINNING...

Recently most of the 'leftist' press celebrated the anniversary of the 'aborted revolution' of 1968 in France. For them it was but a rehearsal for a revolutionary uprising which will come 'when the conditions are ripe'. Looking back at this brief hour of sunshine in the tedium of capitalist dreariness, one amazing characteristic springs to mind. The whole outburst took every single person, group and organisation by surprise - trad revs, libertarians, sociologists, economists, the lot. Everyone in the big industrial cities, particularly in Paris, was carried away by the tidal wave of events. Many sank; some floated. But many rode the wave, were the wave. They blew their minds. They stopped being scared of the unknown. Almost from one day to the next, their hang-ups and taboos disintegrated. People started a trip into human possibilities, creating an explosion of musical, poetic, sexual and political activity. Things were going a thousand times faster than the grinding work-eat-sleep routine.

Then things apparently stopped. People did not have the courage to break down deeply enough the barriers in their minds. People became scared again of too much disintegration. But nevertheless they had time to catch a glimpse of what it could be like. From then on things could never be the same as before. This glimpse started a chain reaction which broke down social taboos, attitudes and values. It was like a trigger. True, there had been sparks before, and plenty of explosive situations, but somehow the fuse had never been properly lit.

A new characteristic of this development emerged later. There was no explosion, nothing spectacular. There have been no militant mass strikes or mass demonstrations since 1968 in France, only localised ones. The movement has bubbled away underground. For how long it will continue no one can tell. The eruption could take place next year - or tonight.

On the surface everything seemed to have 'gone back to normal'. A lot of people who were active in 1968 became bitter and disillusioned in 1969. People accepted union agreements, and went back to the work-eat-sleep routine. What else could they have done? But here and there things started to happen, especially among the young. School classes and university lectures were interrupted. In some instances, students challenged everything they were being taught. Many teachers in Paris asked for transfers to quieter country towns. Not only are students refusing to be taught irrelevancies, but some lecturers don't want to teach them. Whole departments are just doing nothing, like in the new University of Vincennes just east of Paris. At the end of the year universities just give degrees to whoever can be bothered to take exams. They don't give a damn, in Arts as well as in the Sciences. Whole laboratories have virtually stopped doing any kind of scientific work. Instead people play the guitar, write political leaflets, spray slogans or drawings on the university walls.(1)

(1) Two University Professors of Mathematics and Physics in Paris were arrested in 1971 for doing just that.

The same sort of phenomenon is taking place in many areas. In the winter of 1970-71 one of the largest car factories in France had an order from the French riot police for 70 special coaches fitted with all sorts of extras, such as fast reverse speed. Fearing that something might happen to the coaches on the assembly line the management posted nearly as many inspectors and supervisors as there were workers, to make sure that the latter did not use their creative (or rather destructive) initiative. The chaps could do nothing at this stage. But the electrical installation was much more difficult to keep an eye on. The workers fixed it so that all the electrical systems short-circuited when the coaches were fully operational. The coaches had to be brought back to the factory one by one. This time there were two inspectors per worker and only one worker per coach, so that he could be identified if anything funny happened. Needless to say, the chaps took their time. No one was victimised but that contract must have cost the firm (and the police) a packet. (2)

The Women's Lib Movement was unknown in France at the end of 1968, apart from a few individual militants. In 1969 groups began to emerge. In 1970 some groups, various individuals and a number of doctors got together and decided to create centres where women could obtain abortion on demand for whatever fee they could afford. This was done under the cover of legal advice and the centres had to stay underground at first. Early this year a group of 350 French doctors declared publicly that they had been performing abortions, that they were currently performing abortions and that they would continue to do so. Under French law this was not only a criminal offence, but the doctors involved should also have all been struck off the medical register. In fact no one was prosecuted, no one was struck off. New centres are now being created. They are still free, or you give whatever you can afford to keep them going. They all use the vacuum method. The consequences of the doctors' action were so deep and widespread that only a few weeks ago, during the morning 8 o'clock news, a major radio station (Europe no. 1) broadcast interviews with women coming out of one of those centres in the middle of Paris. Although the address of the centre was not given, a lot of details were provided - how quick the operation was, how it could be done during your lunch hour, it wasn't painful, it was free, etc.

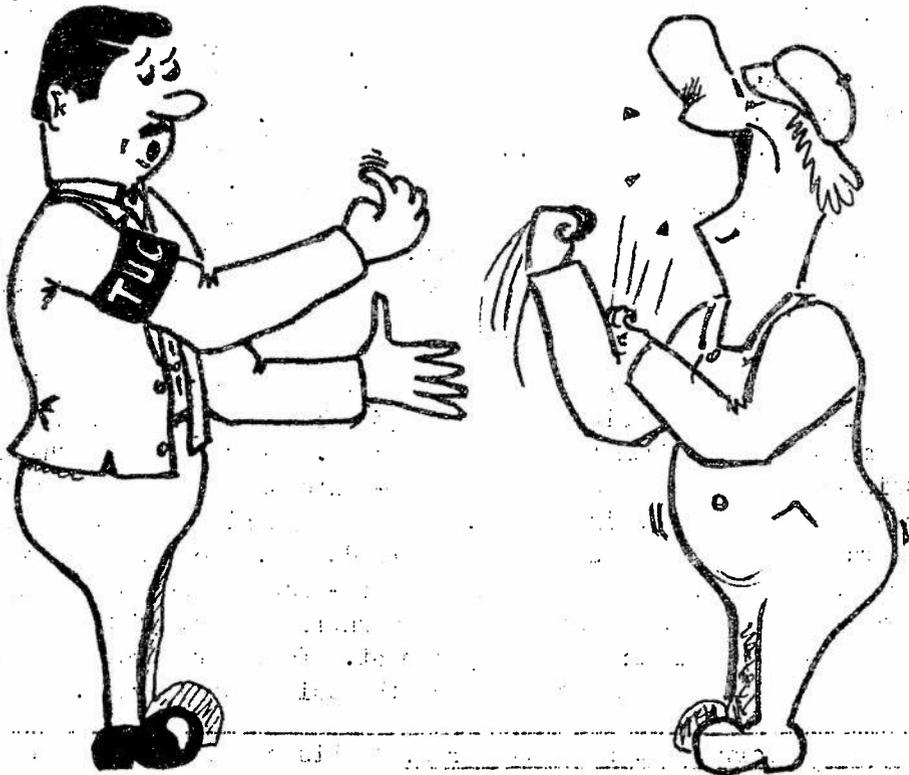
In 1970, coffee machines were installed for the use of the staff in one of the largest French insurance companies in Paris. (3) Young employees, male and female, spotted a machine away from the busy corridors. They got into the habit of meeting around this machine morning and afternoon - although there is no official tea or coffee break in most places in France. At the beginning they were only a handful but the word got around and soon there were dozens. Someone brought a guitar and the breaks became longer and more regular - especially the afternoon break. It started at 4 p.m. and was soon extended until the end of the day at 5.15 p.m. Up to 50 people would come from all department. They were breaking down the barriers imposed upon them by the management and the union bureaucracy. One after-

(2) From Informations Correspondance Ouvrieres, 13 bis rue Labois Rouillon, Paris-19. no. 106-107, June-July, 1971, p.30.

(3) Assurances Generales de France, also from I.C.O., no. 106-107, pp. 19-20.

noon they even tried to hold a pop concert in the basement of the building. Unfortunately, when it got a bit noisy (people were drumming with anything they could lay their hands on), a group of managers decided things had gone too far, and stopped the concert. The guitar player got the sack. The management found its own way to stop the daily gatherings: the coffee machine was found wrecked the next morning and was never repaired.

The management might find ad-hoc measures to try and counter rank and file struggle and organisation, but it becomes more and more difficult to stop peoples' imagination. Attitudes, especially those of young people have changed drastically since May-June 1968. This is no accident. A lot of people realised in this period that it was possible to do things which previously were only part of a dream. The uprising did not bring about a social revolution but it may be the prerequisite for one, namely a revolution in young people's attitudes. They are no longer scared of losing their jobs. They are not tied by their 'family duties'. They don't give a damn for the authorities. They have turned away from traditional channels of struggle, of making demands through union stewards and delegates.



In the insurance company there was no strike for an official coffee break, people merely took it, and worked a six-hour day. In the car factory workers did not demonstrate against the manufacture of police coaches, they sabotaged production. There were no big demonstrations to legalise abortion, people created their own abortion centres. These examples are not isolated actions, but symptoms of deliberate and organised movements on a very wide scale which now affect the whole of French society. One rarely hears about them - they don't make nice headlines in 'workers' papers'. Yet they are no less important than a strike for a 10% wage increase. They are part of the daily life of work in factories, offices and schools. It is in everyday life that there has been a collapse of traditional authority. People, especially the young, do not rely on others to do things for them - they organise and do it themselves; not only because it is their only way to survive the absurdity of work, but also because for them it is a meaningful creation which in a way heralds new types of social structures and relations where people and life make sense.

C.S.



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(Next month's Historic Photograph: A specially commissioned photograph of the painting 'The Unacceptable Face of Capitalism' by B.Heath, by courtesy of the trustees of the Confederation of British Industry, plus, a moving study of the 1973 U.S. president on his viral pneumonia sick-bed)

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SORTING OUT THE POSTAL STRIKE by Joe Jacobs. An ex-postal worker describes a bitter, prolonged and unsuccessful strike. How NOT to wage the industrial struggle. 5 p.



on the Solidarity Wavelength



This article is the third in a series dealing with the development of Solidarity-type ideas in different parts of the world. It is with the various European groups, discussed in this issue, that Solidarity has had the deepest and longest association and exchange of ideas.

Some European groups were 'on the Solidarity wavelength' long before the existence of Solidarity. In fact some of the earliest opposition to Lenin and Leninist philosophy came from the Dutch council communist movement. Their best known spokesman and theoretician was Anton Pannekoek, who did more than just attack Leninism in its concrete Russian realisation. He tore Lenin's philosophy, as expressed before the Russian Revolution in Materialism and Empirio-criticism, to pieces.* Pannekoek showed that bolshevism had not degenerated for some obscure reason, but that its whole ideology was from its outset essentially bourgeois.

The influence of the council communist movement was widespread - first in Holland, Austria and Germany, later in Belgium and France. On the whole it has always remained a Marxist movement insofar as it has accepted Marx's economic and social categories. This fact could partly explain why the council communist movement, which was very active before the Second world war, did not develop, and why it has in most places practically gone out of existence. There are some survivors from the heroic days but few organised groups. One of the most important of these, Thought and Action (Daad en Gedacht) in Holland has managed to survive because it has remained open to new ideas; ideas which came from the anarchists, and after the Second world war, from the French group Socialisme ou Barbarie, from the Dutch Provos and eventually from Solidarity. This open-mindedness has brought Thought and Action closer to Solidarity than any other remaining council communist group. Although they are a very small group, they have helped us develop contact with German groups and have translated many of our publications, mainly industrial articles from the magazine, into Dutch and German. Solidarity has translated C. Brendel's Theses on the Chinese Revolution, originally published by Thought and Action, into English.

Parallel to the council communist movement, a group called Socialisme ou Barbarie (S ou B) was formed in France in 1949 after a break from the French Trotskyist organisation Parti Communiste International. The contribution of this new group to the development of revolutionary theory was immense. For the first time it developed a detailed revolutionary critique of Marxism - not just of Lenin's interpretation of it. Socialisme ou Barbarie took revolution-

* See Lenin as a Philosopher, to be republished soon by Merlin Press.

ary theory several steps further on from where the council communists had left it, and the group had in turn an influence on the development of several council communist groups, particularly in Holland and France.

In the late 1950's most of the political activity in France was focused on the Algerian war. At this time many young people who were dissatisfied with the attitude of the traditional organisations towards this particular problem were attracted by Socialisme ou Barbarie. Although the group continued to develop its ideas, it was composed of widely differing political tendencies, ranging from ex-Bordigists to near Anarchists. These political differences were brought into the open in 1958 over the question of revolutionary organisation. The majority of S ou B (and Cardan) felt the need for a revolutionary organisation of a non-Leninist type. A minority thought that any organisation would eventually end up like all previous ones, as some kind of leadership, and this irrespective of its internal structure, aims and methods. The minority subsequently left the group and formed Informations Liaisons Ouvrieres which was later to become Informations Correspondance Ouvrieres, (I.C.O).* In 1963, the ex-Bordigist tendency left, and published a paper called Pouvoir Ouvrier which ceased to appear in 1969. In 1967 Socialisme ou Barbarie itself "suspended its publication for an unknown period" and the group stopped meeting.

Since the first appearance of Solidarity, in 1960, close relations were maintained with S ou B. Their articles were translated and published in English because we felt the challenge to traditional revolutionary ideas - and later to Marxism itself - expressed in them was (and still is) badly needed in Britain.

Here, in the order of their appearance in English, is a list of articles translated from the magazine Socialisme ou Barbarie and published in Solidarity.

<u>Date of publication in English</u>	<u>English Title</u>	<u>Original French reference in Socialisme ou Barbarie</u>
July 1960	<u>Socialism Reaffirmed</u>	no.I (March-April 1949) 'Socialisme ou Barbarie'
September 1960	<u>The Socialist Program</u>	no.I0 (July-August 1952) 'Sur le Programme Socialiste'
April-May 1962	<u>Working class Consciousness, in Solidarity</u> vol.2,no2-3	no.27 (April-May 1959) extracts from 'Proletariat et Organisation'

* Informations Correspondance Ouvrieres, 13 bis rue Labois Rouillon, Paris 19, France.

** 'Aux abonnées et lecteurs de Socialisme ou Barbarie', (to the subscribers and readers of Socialisme ou Barbarie), June 1967.

May 1965	<u>Modern Capitalism and Revolution</u>	nos.31,32,33 (Dec 1960-Feb 1962) 'Le Mouvement Revolutionnaire sous le Capitalisme Moderne'
August 1966	<u>The Fate of Marxism in Solidarity</u> vol.4, no.3 (later produced as a pamphlet)	no.36 (April-June 1964) 'Marxisme et Theorie Revolutionnaire' Part I: 'La Situation historique du marxisme et la notion d'orthodoxie'
August 1971	<u>History and Revolution: a revolutionary critique of historical materialism</u>	nos.36-37 (April-June 1964, July-Sept 1964) 'Marxisme et Theorie Revolutionnaire' Part 2: 'La Theorie Marxiste de l'Histoire'
March 1972	<u>Workers Councils, and the economics of a self-managed society</u>	no.22 (summer 1957) 'Sur le Contenu du Socialisme'

Solidarity has also published two texts by P.Cardan which have so far not appeared in French. They are The Meaning of Socialism (published in September 1961) and The Crisis of Modern Society (published in June 1965).

The flow of ideas also worked the other way. I.C.O. has been in close touch with Solidarity for nearly ten years. I.C.O. has published numerous articles from Solidarity in its magazine and also several pamphlets. These comrades published mainly industrial articles from Solidarity because they felt that the (relatively) high level of struggles in Britain was of great value to French militants who were acting in a more backward capitalist set-up: they could learn the lessons of the British struggles and try to avoid the same mistakes. Here is a list of those articles in order of their appearance in I.C.O.

<u>Date of publication in ICO in French</u>	<u>Reference in ICO</u>	<u>Original Solidarity reference</u>
November 1964	no.33 'Greve Sauvage des Bus a Glasgow'	pamphlet no.17 ' <u>Glasgow Busmen in action</u> '
December 1964	no.34 'Les dockers et la greve du zele'	vol.3,no.6 'News from dockland' Oct.1964
July 1966 to April 1968	nos.51,53,54,55,57,65,66,67,69,70	pamphlet no.25 ' <u>The rape of Vietnam</u> '
February 1968	no.68 'Greve et action'	vol.4,no.10 'The CAV strike' Nov.1967
March 1968	no.69 'A propos de la bureaucratie'	vol.4,no.II 'Two leaflets' + 'The new Vauxhall agreement' January 1968
December 1968	no.76 'L'empire Lucas en prend un coup'	vol5,no.5 'The Lucas empire takes a bashing' Oct.1968

April 1969	no.80 'La revolte des etudiants a la recherche de sa conscience propre'	vol.5,no.8 'Student revolt: in search of positive self-consciousness' March 1969
April-May 1969	no.80-8I 'La grève aux usines Ford'	vol.5,no.8 'Fords:the implications' March 1969
July 1969	no.83 'Grande Bretagne'	vol.5,no.5 Extracts of various articles
January 1970	no.89 'Les eboueurs de Brent'	West London Solidarity, no.I 'Brent dustmen'
February 1970	no.90 'Une greve "gestionnaire" avortee'	South London Solidarity
May 1971	no.I05 'Pour faire le tri dans la greve des postes'	pamphlet no.36 ' <u>Sorting out the postal strike</u> '
December 1971- January 1972	nos.II2-II3 'Deux mouvements de lutte contre les licenciements: les contradictions de la lutte de classe'	vol.6,no.II 'UCS and Plessey' Oct.1971
May 1972	no.II7 'L'occupation de Fisher-Bendix'	pamphlet no.39 ' <u>Under new management?</u> '
October-November 1972	supplement to no.I20 'L'Irrationnel en Politique'	pamphlet no.33 ' <u>The Irrational in Politics</u> '

Solidarity has published relatively few articles translated from ICO. The 2 articles we have been able to trace were published in Solidarity vol5,no.3 'Horse and coach' (about the May '68 events) and vol.7,no.5 'What next: the lock in?'. .

The Belgian group Liaisons* has a similar political basis to ICO. They are essentially libertarian and influenced by the council communist movement. They have just finished a translation into French of our pamphlet Hungary '56 which ICO intend to produce as a book as soon as their financial position allows them to do so.

There have been several international conferences of Solidarity, ICO, Thought and Action, and Liaisons, not only a regular correspondence and exchange of information. The first meeting between ICO and Solidarity took place in October 1964. Since then there have been conferences in July 1966, July 1969, March 1972 and October 1972. Those conferences have had basically the same role - and the same form - as the national Solidarity conferences - to which, by the way, ICO, Thought and Action and Liaisons are usually invited. The discussion has usually concentrated on exchanging and analysing our respective experiences, and trying to develop our ideas and perspectives.

* Correspondence to S.Wauty, Boite Postale 208, 4000 Liege-1, Belgium.

This embryo of an international network of autonomous groups who are committed to the same ideas as Solidarity is not a product of pure chance. The existence of such groups does not depend either on the will of a few individuals to build 'THE' organisation. This encouraging situation expresses a certain level in the class struggle in Europe - level in forms of organisation, level in content of struggles, level in people's consciousness. Individuals and organised groups can nevertheless influence this process by analysing forms and content of struggles in all areas of modern society and publicising them and their relevance to a development of a revolutionary practice and theory. This is precisely what Thought and Action, Liaisons, Informations Correspondence Ouvrieres, and Solidarity are trying to do as autonomous groups and as part of a network of groups committed to the same ideas.

C.S.

P.S. Since this article was written, there have been developments in I.C.O. As we said the group left S ou B on basically anarchistic grounds (any organisation is a leadership), tinted as they might have been with council communism. After 1968 the whole 'left wing' of the March 22nd Movement joined I.C.O., tilting the balance strongly towards 'classical' anarchism. This was felt more and more in the contents of the paper (e.g. long articles on the Angry Brigade).

At the same time a small group of people were more and more dissatisfied with those politics and were moving closer to Solidarity's views. This group of seven or eight people has now left I.C.O. They have not formed another group yet. They are preparing a French version of Strategy for Industrial Struggle. They have just published -may be as a fresh political basis- a French translation of Solidarity's As We Don't See It.

the day after elections

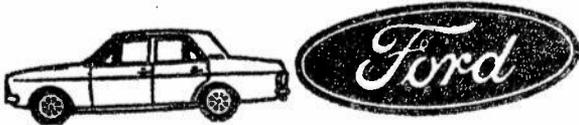
Rain falls today as ballots did yesterday.
Shadowed drops swell and fall
Watery meteorites with uncertain trails
Zigzagging down the sloping windshield.
Another election is done.

Three men in a pickup on their way to work
Hunch against the radio's final counts
Knowing votes won't up their pay, or end the dulling grind.
Voting is an unfulfilled democracy's illusion
Letting the powerless think they have a say.

Three tin pails bounce half full. Spam and Pepsi.
Same as yesterday. Probably the same tomorrow.
Maybe the losers will see the folly.
The winners certainly won't; public troughs being full.
Pork in the ballot box means no bread on the workers' tables.

Their life breath condenses over chilly glass
Helping them fog out the grey work ahead.
Beclouding mist hampers their eyes, but not their minds;
Don't be deluded, you, who have nothing but your labor to sell.
Affirm life, not the system.

Frank Adams



LETTERS

The article Ford Fiasco in the last issue, Solidarity, Vol.7, no.6 brought in various comments from Ford workers.

"You are absolutely right with your criticism and blame for the fiasco at Ford in 1973. The shop-stewards committees and particularly the combine convenors committee must take the whole of the responsibility for what happened..Having said that, however, your solutions of 'ordinary workers dominating and directing their own struggles' and the formation of production workers committees is pretty hard to see in the large motor plants. It presupposes that workers want to be involved in struggles which largely is not so - let's face it, they are diverted by things like football, racing, pools etc., from what we consider the important issues of life and without prompting they would be staisfied with a good moan about their situation.

It also assumes that they could, if so desired, co-ordinate their activity in some vague way without an overall organisation. In reality they would probablydecide on different activity at different times. I have seen many good militants give up with the frustrations involved in trying to mobilize activity on the basis of involvement without control. Not that I am saying you are entirely wrong, but I think we have some other stages to go through before we can expect workers to go far without leadership.

I still believe that good shop-steward organization is at present our best basis for successful industrial struggles, but with plenty of involvement and exposure to the shop-floor of the issues, intentions and actions of the stewards and by involvement I mean in both decisions and actions. I am not too bothered about union officials coming back with the goods. A victory through struggle is worth far more than one negotiated without."

A.B. Halewood.

"...(The article) is so true and so exactly mirrors the feelings of both myself and many, many others on the shop-floor. The point made about overtime has been emphasised by recent developments in the Foundry. In one department, constant representations were made about bad working conditions and full-time Officials were called in. The men, through their steward, complained of smoke, dust and noise; all excessive. After the Officials left, schedules increased and the men were offered extra overtime. They accepted. All in the same smoke, dust and noise."

H.F. Dagenham.

"...(The article) claims that the majority of Ford workers refused to support the unlimited strike proposed by the National Ford Convenors Committee. This is not strictly correct, the retreat had already been started by the convenors themselves, (most of whom lacked confidence in their own rank & file), so that the

recommendation put to the mass meetings was for a limited strike of three days.

The lack of confidence of the convenors may have been a reflection of the views of their members, if so, it was because there was no propaganda and information campaign similar to that of the I97I wage claim. If the original recommendation for an all out stoppage had been put, there would have been a chance of it being carried, at least in the Dagenham Body and Halewood plants. The workers saw that the change to a three day strike showed a lack of confidence in the successful outcome, by the leadership.

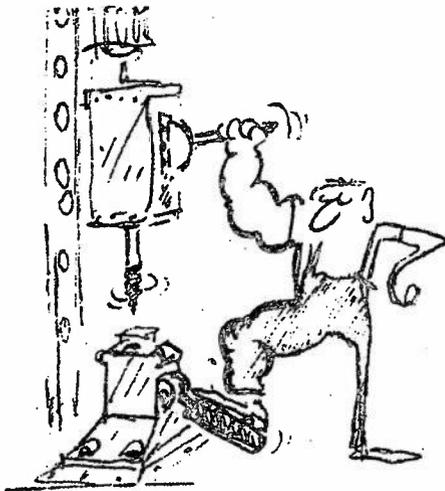
On March I, the only action in the Dagenham Body plant was a three day walk-out by most of the door-setters in the body shop. Those who stayed at work refused to touch any job that was previously done by the men who had walked out. Production was therefore cut by 5/6th although only about 7% of the labour force were absent from work.

As to the type of propaganda campaign that would have led up to a national Ford stoppage this would have meant a political commitment by all of the convenors to fight the government. It was this lack of commitment that led to the retreat from the Coventry decision.

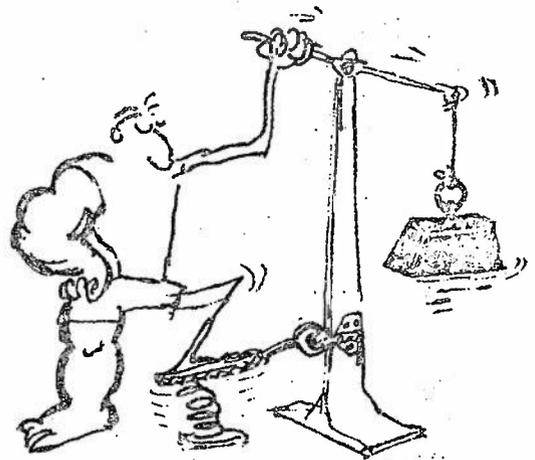
The letters from Cologne and Genk (in the same issue) show the need for an international Ford news bulletin, the mechanics of producing such a journal would appear to be beyond the capabilities of a rank & file organisation and would have to be left in the hands of the research department of one of the major unions*. There is, of course, no reason why there should not be a rank & file editorial committee.

T.C. Dagenham.

(* Solidarity footnote: Whilst agreeing absolutely with the need for an international Ford bulletin, we reject that such a bulletin is beyond the capabilities of a rank & file organisation, and particularly that such a bulletin should be left in the hands of any department of any union.)



WORK



LEISURE

CONTROVERSY

REVOLUTIONARY CLASS

In volume VII, no. 3, we published a review of the pamphlet The right to Work? or the fight to Live!. The author of the pamphlet, Keith Paton, replied to some of the issues raised by the review in vol. VII, no. 5. Below we publish a further contribution to the discussion.

The romantic pluralism of K.P.'s revolutionary outlook (Solidarity, vol. VII, no. 5) seems to demand a few answers - or questions. 'Traditional class analysis is hopelessly inadequate and unsubtle' - O.K. But must we, can we abandon the sort of view implied in phrases like 'class realities', 'class struggle', when we look at society - even 'class position' with reference to politics? It is one thing to use these words as jargon, in the context of a set inflexible theory, another to adopt them as a valid description of the social set-up which makes us revolutionaries. K.P. himself talks about 'different sectors/groups "beneath" the ruling class', and 'ultimate non-oppressive revolutionary unity of all the non-ruling-class forces'. We get no definition of this ruling class, what sets it apart, and how it relates to the various categories of oppressed. From some of his statements we might easily assume that it is and must always be exclusively male, white and of a certain age.

To me, from a position within though not defined by one of these categories (women), S.P.'s comment about 'revolutionary prodigies' (Solidarity, vol VII, no 3) does not come as an insult, more as fair comment on the current insulting practice of listing different sorts of social groups in an undifferentiated amalgam of revolutionary potential. Instead of just saying they have different strengths and weaknesses, it might be more to the point to make some observations about what sort of group they constitute. For example, women comprise about half of humanity, participate in society at all levels, play a prime role in the early conditioning so vital to authoritarian society...

In our attempts to analyse society with a view to changing it, there are several ways in which workers, in a fairly broad sense of the term, can be seen as constituting a different sort of category. One, modern industrial production is organised in such a way that not only are the alienating, dehumanising tendencies of imposed authority

here most intensely and continuously apparent, but there is also a simultaneous necessity to resist those tendencies and organise together in alternative ways to get the job done. Two, the locus of power to paralyse and reactivate existing society must be of concern, unless we envisage the ruling class sitting back while we all 'live differently' and build an alternative society to which they gracefully give way. The point is not to pander to workers who have this power, but unless we envisage them being pressurised by other groups, their consciousness and capabilities will be crucial. Three, whatever the long term prospects of automation, diversification, etc., any future society is likely to need a great deal of production of goods and provision of services, not readily achievable by ad hoc groups of community activists. Here, too, the conscious realisation of what is to be done must be present in all those involved. Similarly, of course, we cannot ignore the importance of life outside work in contributing to a multi-dimensional future.

Indeed S.P.'s statement about the working class being the only section of society where revolutionary self-organisation can meaningfully be encouraged, can only be endorsed, in my view, if the working class is taken to mean more than the strict economic definition of producers of surplus value, sellers of their labour power to those who own the means of production. It must include, as fully integrated components, many neglected groups of workers, non-industrial workers, unemployed, and many who have never been in employment - all at the receiving end of irrational authority in class society. This does not mean we all become frantically active in our immediate situations without consideration of priorities (nor, of course, should we assume that the main action is always somewhere else).

It is only in the process of trying to assess our situation relative to others, transcending our specific oppression by generalising our awareness, that we can move towards liberation. In this context, I see the consciousness of the industrial militant who may retain lots of racist assumptions and sexist hang-ups, as being limited, not false, as with those integrated individuals who fully internalise the ideology of the system with no redeeming impulse to subvert and sabotage. I don't think it makes me an honorary male chauvinist to be ready to 'forgive' a million wolf whistles from pickets sooner than, for example, deeply reactionary anti-working class views from the sort of middle class women who write to P.M. Postbag and the newspapers. I have more hope that the consciousness of the militant will be extended eventually to all who share his (class) interests, than that the fact of being female can become the basis for rejection of this society.

If we remain limited to our specific oppression, our oppression will remain. Those who uncritically 'support' all manifestations of

women's lib., black power, etc., actually do a great disservice to many people in these movements. It is deeply patronising to assume that divisions of race or sex are so fundamental and insuperable that those on the other side cannot be understood, and therefore must not be criticised as equals. The separation along such lines is reinforced instead of being overcome.

At the same time, the vaunted sensitivity and sympathy of the sycophantic outsider becomes very restricted in application, and leads to serious distortions of reality, large sections of which it ignores. Thus K.P.'s one sided view of male domination fails to acknowledge that both sexes have been subject to sexual repression, those who wolf whistle as well as those who are irrationally flattered or outraged by them. Slogans about 'domestic colonialism', 'the patriarchal nuclear family', mask the processes by which the search for a supporting relationship results in people compounding each other's alienation.

Both male and female parents impose authoritarian conditioning. Both will themselves have been conditioned into psychological dependence on authoritarian structures, which is unlikely to be overcome by a decision (from where ?) to live differently. The process of dissolving those structures will indeed be complex, as must be our attempts at analysis. But the decisive factors must be those which unite us - the non-ruling-class forces - not those which divide.

L.W.

NOW AVAILABLE !

THE KRONSTADT COMMUNE by Ida Mett. (25p plus postage). This pamphlet, which has been out of print for well over a year, is now available again in a new edition (new cover, map of Kronstadt, and some further bibliographical references).

REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION (5p plus postage). This new pamphlet comprises the articles on this subject published in vol. I of Solidarity (in 1961) and the Open Letter to I.S. (The struggle for self-management) which deals with the organisational question and was produced in September 1968.

AS WE DON'T SEE IT (5p plus postage). This pamphlet was specially written to eliminate certain ambiguities in previous statements of our views. It tries to answer questions put to us concerning our analysis of various types of contemporary societies; our concept of socialism; our view of the trade union and political bureaucracies; and our attitude to other political tendencies on the 'left'.

REVIEWS

RAT, MYTH AND MAGIC a political critique of psychology. 24p from Keith Venables, Flat 3, 19 Forest Road, Nottingham.

Certainly one of the most refreshing and original publications I've seen for some time, Rat, Myth and Magic consists of 18 articles (63 large pages) "intended for first-year psychology students and others caught up somehow in the weird world of academic psychology". The contributors do not share an identical point of view, with some of them I would differ in a few particulars, others certain inaccuracies, but overall the pamphlet should have a much wider appeal than that claimed by the publishers, and is a must for the libertarian.

Most articles are written with the specific object of demolishing "behaviourist philosophy" as the "ideology of capitalism", for "reducing man to a mechanical thing" and "banishing ethics and politics from the realm of philosophy". Some of these points are fair comment on some exponents of behaviourism, but often the point has been missed. From Pavlov on, there has been an attempt made to 'measure' in the fields generally classified as 'mental'. 'Consciousness' as such is not something measurable, 'behaviour' is.

The most popular expositions of this way of looking at things are to be found in the contemporary writings of people like B.F. Skinner, who attempts to base his theorization on laboratory research, or Gilbert Ryle, who tackles these problems from a purely analytical point of view. These theories do not deny "consciousness", what they do say is that as a concept it may be useful, but it does not necessarily add to our knowledge of the world. In practical life we are all "behaviourists". All our communications and contact with one another is essentially a "behaviour" contact.

Rat, Myth and Magic goes on, and here quite validly, to point out that psychology today, especially as covered by university curricular, makes what should be the method of the research (ie. the 'measuring') the object of the research. This means that psychology has less and less to do with real people living in a real world, and increasingly becomes an accumulation of graphs and statistics. It can be a short step leading from "statistics are about people" to "statistics are people".

Other articles deal with the ever-widening gulf between theory and experience (How Psychology Fails the Teacher) and the role of the industrial psychologist in capitalist industry (Psychologist and the Factory). Especially to be recommended are some very well written pages by Keith Paton discussing the dialectics of knowledge and the origin of experience (Perception). I felt that Paton would do well to look at the positive contribution made by that 'bourgeois' philosopher Immanuel Kant, and his sarcastic and quite unjustified attack on Wittgenstein in his last paragraph only weakens a point he has pre-

viously made so effectively. Nevertheless, if you read only one contribution in the pamphlet, Perception is a must.

The one really disappointing article carries the title History of Positivism. It is appreciated that any attempt to cover the history of a whole school of thought (over a period defined by the author as having been no less than 1400 years!) in a mere four pages must be a miserable failure. After a four-point summary of the essence of positivism, a cursory glance at its "capitalist origins", the contributor, Ted Nimnes, launches into an attack on Mach, Avenarius and Empirio-criticism. The tragedy is that he bases his knowledge of this movement entirely on Lenin's Materialism and Empirio-criticism, a book to which most sophisticated Marxists (and Lenin himself in his later life) admit an acute embarrassment. Like Lenin the object is to destroy the opponent, not to understand him,* and the ideas attacked in both cases bear little resemblance to those held by the empirio-criticists.

Significantly no mention is made of Dietzgen, the founder of empirio-criticism, and an accepted disciple of Marx. Mach's really great contribution to philosophy and science was his formulations that "laws" are man's "rationalizations of experience", his final abolition of Kant's "thing-in-itself", ideas which formed the acknowledged basis of Einstein's relativity physics, and which finally resolved the so-called 'contradictions' of descriptions (ie. can you simultaneously measure mass and velocity?).

The comrades who wrote Rat, Myth and Magic can play a vital role in the libertarian movement. Their contributions will be the greater if their researches take them to the actual sources rather than a reliance on the 'summaries' provided by the academic authorities; summaries obviously based on the need to preserve all that is most valuable in these works for the preservation of bourgeois society.

Bob Potter.

* A method hardly alien to Karl Marx himself. Popular knowledge of Max Stirner (The Ego and His Own) is based on the much more frequently read German Ideology, which gives a complete misrepresentation of Stirner's views. I can think of no better education in Leninist tactics than for the student to read Mach and Lenin's criticism concurrently. Marx, Lenin and their latter day disciples are quite consistent in their method of dealing with opponents in politics and philosophy!

Solidarity (Swansea) Vol.3, no.1 is now out. It contains some particularly interesting articles, of these The Lump - which takes a libertarian look at Lump organisation - is recommended, and will no doubt cause some controversy. Cost 5p, plus p&p, available from SOLIDARITY (London).

REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL EUROPE (1918-1919) by F.L.Carsten. Temple Smith, 1972.
£4.50. pp360.

This book by Carsten is a valuable addition to information already available in English on the 'Central European Revolution' of 1918-1919. Of particular importance are the three chapters on the workers', peasants', sailors' and soldiers' councils, and the chapter on the 'extreme left' and this section is the main concern of this review.

The collapse of the Kaiser's Reich and the instrument of maintaining German society, the Prussian military organisation, left a huge vacuum in German political administration. The spontaneous actions of many workers, soldiers and peasants was to elect councils to assume local power and continue administrative functions. However the old governments continued in Baden and Prussia (dominated by the Kaiser's 'loyal opposition', the Socialist Party, SPD) and Bavaria (run by the 'pacifist' Independent Social Democrats, USPD, under Kurt Eisner). This did not prevent the SPD and USPD from taking part in and usually dominating local workers' councils and so gaining control of the National congress of Workers' Councils. However the SPD had a policy of parliamentarianism and all organisational forms under the SPD, Governments, local town councils or workers' councils, tried to fulfill this sole policy.

The way Carsten explores this is very unclear. Basically he accepts the term 'council' for any organisational form that had no parallel in the Kaiser's Reich. For this reason the Essen Miners' council*, in which pit-face workers and technicians took over the Ruhr mines and established a system in which all decisions emanated from the workers themselves, is equated with the Bavarian Central Peasants' Council** set up by Kurt Eisner under the chairmanship of the brother of a friendly non-catholic peasant union leader, who in turn chose his own 50 man executive. The point in both cases was: who was deciding? As history has proved, only councils totally controlled by their membership have a revolutionary role. The Bavarian Council was merely an executive organ of Eisner, but the Essen Council was a real attempt to replace the bourgeois method of rule with workers' democracy, and as such could make no concessions to pre-existing forms of administration. As it was the Essen Council was crushed militarily in 1919 by an alliance of trade unions, SPD run Reichswehr units and certain semi-legal reactionary armies (the Freikorps).

This was the fate of only a few councils (others were Bremen and Braunschweig). The vast majority had no aspirations to revolution beyond the 'gains' of November 1918, and the SPD often had control of both the workers' and the town council (e.g. Kassel). Through control of workers' councils the SPD ran the National Congress of Workers' Councils which adopted a caretakers approach to administration, concerning itself mainly with a rapid return to parliamentarianism and 'free' elections.

* Chapter 6, p.154-155.

** Chapter 7.

itself was split over the issue of the councils and this can have no small effect on the development of councils. Carsten talks of a "semi-syndicalist, semi-anarchist elements"* in the early KPD but does not clarify this by explaining the relationship between syndicalism and workers' organisations.

The syndicalists of the FAUD (Free Workers' Union) are not mentioned despite the continued existence of this syndicalist tendency that had split from the SPD dominated unions in 1897 and had worked in opposition to trade unionism and reformism**. This is not a mere academic quibble. The FAUD in 1920 had a membership of 100,000-200,000***, and so in 1919 may have outnumbered the KPD and the KAPD. Also many KAPD members eventually moved completely away from leninism and joined the FAUD or formed a similar union, the AAUDE (United General Workers' Union) in December 1920****. These two bodies, the FAUD and AAUDE consistently advocated organising in factory committees against the trade unions, the various reformists (KPD, USPD and SPD) and the bolshevik KAPD. These were the organisations which stood for workers' councils, but Carsten refrains from commenting on them or the idea that lay behind them.

Carsten quite correctly states "This was not the dualism which had developed between the Russian Provisional government and the Soviets, but it contained the germs of such a dualism." This was written of November 1918. However the inadequate discussion of what lay on either side of a dualism, when the KPD changed policies over unions and councils, and what went on inside the USPD which caused it to split not much later, leaves us with the question totally unanswered. We can see the 'dualism' in the 'revolutionary' councils and in aspects of the KPD policy, however the resurgence of parliamentarianism by the KPD, USPD and SPD tends to obscure the existence of councils. Further, the total lack of information on the trade unions and their attitudes to councils, the parties and parliamentarianism as the major organisations of the workers leaves a large blank in a consideration of the fate of the revolution.

Despite its major documentation of very valuable information Revolution in Central Europe lacks both a political depth of understanding and the breadth of time necessary to consider the implications of workers' councils, bolshevism and social democracy, and the inherent contradictions among all three.

D.B.

* p.211 ** Woodcock Anarchism, Pelican 1963. p.408.

*** ibid p.409 and The Origins of the Movement for Workers Councils in Germany, Workers Voice, p.6.

**** op.cit; p.7.

SOLIDARITY ⁻³⁰⁻ REORGANISES

Following the national SOLIDARITY meeting in London, March 17-18 (see Solidarity, Vol.7 no.6) two further national meetings have been held, both in Manchester. A national working party consisting of four comrades from Lancaster, Leeds, London and Manchester was formed to convene these meetings, and, guided by those meetings, to get the regroupment of Solidarity members and supporters into a national framework.

A number of comrades had expressed at the London meeting a feeling of isolation from the Solidarity movement, and Manchester Solidarity, announcing its disbandment, spoke of the stresses and strains of holding an autonomous group together, and of the dangers of forcing into existence autonomous groups when the self-confidence and experience of the individuals involved was not ready for such a development. Some comrades also felt that the relationship between autonomous groups outside of London and the London group (being the strongest) was an inhibitive one. It was therefore generally felt that a regroupment of SOLIDARITY, on a national basis, was desirable at the present stage of its development, and agreed that points I-9 of As We Don't See It would form the political basis of such a regroupment. (Point 10 dealing with organisation was to be considered at the following national meetings).

The first national meeting, following the London meeting, took place in Manchester on April 28-29. Discussion mainly focussed on organisation questions. It was agreed that the formation of stable autonomous groups had not progressed as satisfactorily as had been hoped; that many comrades not covered by such groups were very isolated; and that the position regarding the national co-ordination of the movement was unsatisfactory. Stemming from these observations the meeting, consisting of members of the Swansea, Clydeside and London groups, and comrades from Manchester, Dundee, Leeds and Lancaster, agreed with the following decisions, with reservations from Clydeside.

1. That the central importance of autonomous groups was to be re-affirmed, and that everything possible was to be done to encourage and help the formation of such groups, on both a geographical and an interest group basis (the latter was felt to be particularly useful to isolated comrades).
2. That national membership of SOLIDARITY be established and that all members of existing autonomous groups were automatically eligible to join, and would be urged, though not obliged, to do so.
3. That the national organisation should have its own funds, raised by subscription.
4. That the national working party should be on a rotating basis.
5. That national meetings should be held more regularly (every 6-8 weeks was suggested) and that these meetings be held in different parts of the country, to discuss business and politics. It was felt that political discussion on a regular basis and the opportunity to meet other comrades would

be a significant benefit of such meetings. It was also felt that national meetings should have the power to make binding decisions on matters of political principle.

6. That the national organisation should produce its own pamphlets. It was felt, however, that it was impossible for the time being for the production of a national paper, and some reservations were expressed regarding a national newspaper, due to duplication of the efforts of the London group in their paper. It was generally, though not universally, felt that the London paper was in effect the national mouthpiece of the movement and would remain so for the foreseeable future, and that its control would remain with the London group who understandably would not be prepared to surrender their autonomy over its production.

Guided by the meeting, it was agreed that the national working party should convene a further national meeting to discuss detailed implementation of the above six points, and to arrange a seminar on N.Ireland. Two bulletins were produced by the working party in the interim period, the first containing a report of the meeting and details of the next national meeting, and inviting comment from SOLIDARITY members and supporters who were unable to attend, on the decisions so far taken. One document received, and circulated by the working party prior to the next meeting, was an 'open' letter to the London group Now We See It, Now We Don't, produced by Clydeside, in which they formally disassociated themselves from SOLIDARITY. The second bulletin issued by the working party covered correspondence received, expenses incurred, suggestions for expanding sales of literature and an appeal for volunteers with typing, duplicating and typographical skills.

At the next national meeting, again held in Manchester, on June 16-17, comrades from Edinburgh, Manchester, Lancaster, Leeds, Swansea, Coventry, Southampton and London attended. Most correspondence received expressed support for the national regroupment of SOLIDARITY. The one exception was the ex-Clydeside group, who wrote declining the invitation to attend. In their letter, which they asked to be read out, they stated that attendance on their part would be a waste of their time, as it would also of the meeting; that they felt the politics of SOLIDARITY were in danger of becoming exclusively Cardanist rather than Solidarist, and although they had formally left the Solidarity movement, they stated that they wished to remain in friendly contact. Both their letter and Now We See It, Now We Don't were discussed. Some comrades felt that Clydeside had raised an interesting point vis a vis Cardan and Solidarity, but the meeting unanimously rejected Clydeside's opinion contained in their document that 'the national organisation of the Solidarity movement would actually be an impediment to genuine political work'.

Dealing with the implementation of the six points, it was agreed that acceptance of new members to SOLIDARITY would be on the basis of recommendation by existing autonomous groups or members, subject to ratification by the national meeting. Members of existing autonomous groups would have dual membership - to their group, and if they wished, to national SOLIDARITY. National subscriptions were agreed at 25p per month, although contributions

above that figure would always be gratefully received! Individuals who wrote in applying for membership would be invited to a seminar where they could meet comrades, or if unable to attend, would be put in contact with an existing member. The subscriptions to the national organisation would be the same for a member of an autonomous group as it would for an individual comrade.

A national stock-holding distribution centre for literature was explored, as were the possibilities of national pamphlets. A comrade from Coventry said there was a possibility that he could act as a distributor for Solidarity pamphlets to bookshops in the Midlands. Saturday's session ended with the appointment of a treasurer and a correspondence secretary, on a non-rotating basis, and agreement that there was no conflict with the new regroupment and point IO of As We Don't See It, and point IO was fully endorsed.

On Sunday a seminar on the situation in N.Ireland was held, led by L.W., and a useful discussion on that specific topic and the position of revolutionary libertarian socialists on 'national' struggles in general followed. (See article in this issue Northern Ireland Reappraisal, based on L.W.'s talk).

In line with the desire for more regular meetings and get-togethers the meeting agreed that the next national get-together should be held in August or September, and main topics suggested for discussion were on 'The Lump' and Cardan and Marx. It was pointed out that some of those attending may wish to have a discussion on a topic of particular interest to them, besides the two main items. It is hoped that a social will be arranged, and a creche for those with children. Following this meeting the membership of the working party will be rotated. Subscribers to Solidarity will be circulated and invited to the political discussions. In the meantime, correspondence concerning the national organisation should be sent to John King, 4 The Grove, Lancaster, Lancs. Those wishing to be put on a regular mailing list are asked to send a couple of stamped addressed envelopes. It all helps!

P.G. - for National Working Party.

FURTHER SOLIDARITY PAMPHLETS

CEYLON: THE J.V.P. UPRISING The 'official' left in power put down an insurrection and maintain a reign of terror. How Britain, Russia, China and the USA achieved unity... to suppress an uprising. 25p

STRATEGY FOR INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE by Mark Fore. How to link struggle at the place of work with the overall objective of workers' management of production. 10p.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT The Fisher-Bendix occupation, with some comments on factory occupations in general. 5p