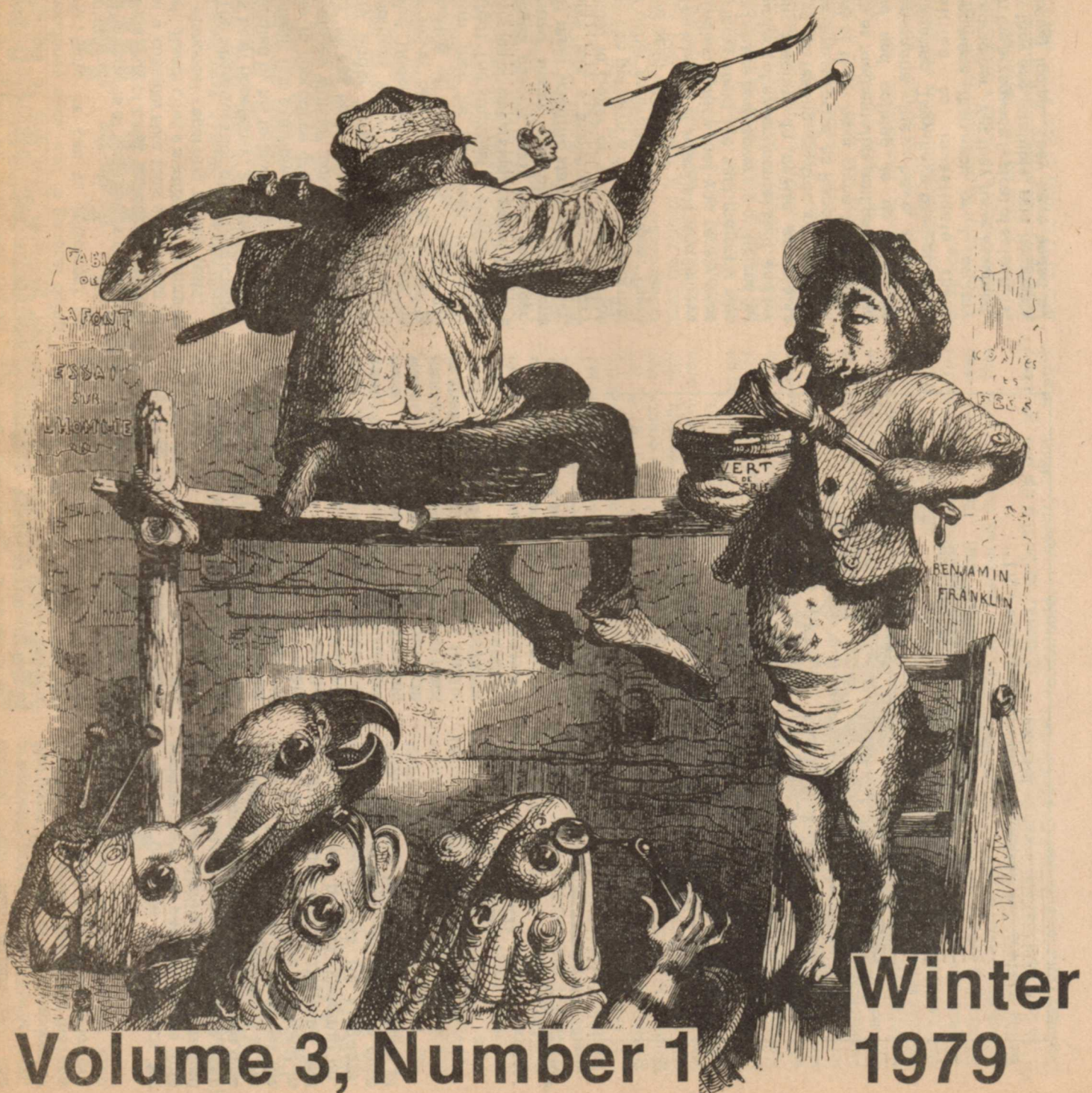


THE RED MENACE

25¢

A Libertarian Socialist Newsletter



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1979

Introduction to this issue

Fortunately for the collective, the rate of publication of the Red Menace does not indicate the rate of activity of the group.

The bright side of things is that our experience with the last two issues has helped us isolate the factors that prevent the Red Menace from appearing more often. As a result, the magazine will likely appear more often and more regularly in the future.

The most important article in this issue is the Statement of Principles in the center. This was discussed exhaustively by the group and represents the most detailed expression so far of our common position. We encourage people to send us their comments and criticisms of it. Groups wishing to undertake common work with us should note that this document is the basis on which we would undertake such collaboration.

The other articles speak for themselves. The anarchist/Marxist debate continues with a reply by Sam Dolgoff to Ulli Diemer's comments in the last issue as well as several articles and letters. In future issues we will not devote as much space to this topic, so please make your letters to the point and do not repeat arguments.

We hope to see you again in three months. Meanwhile, back to faceless conspiracy.

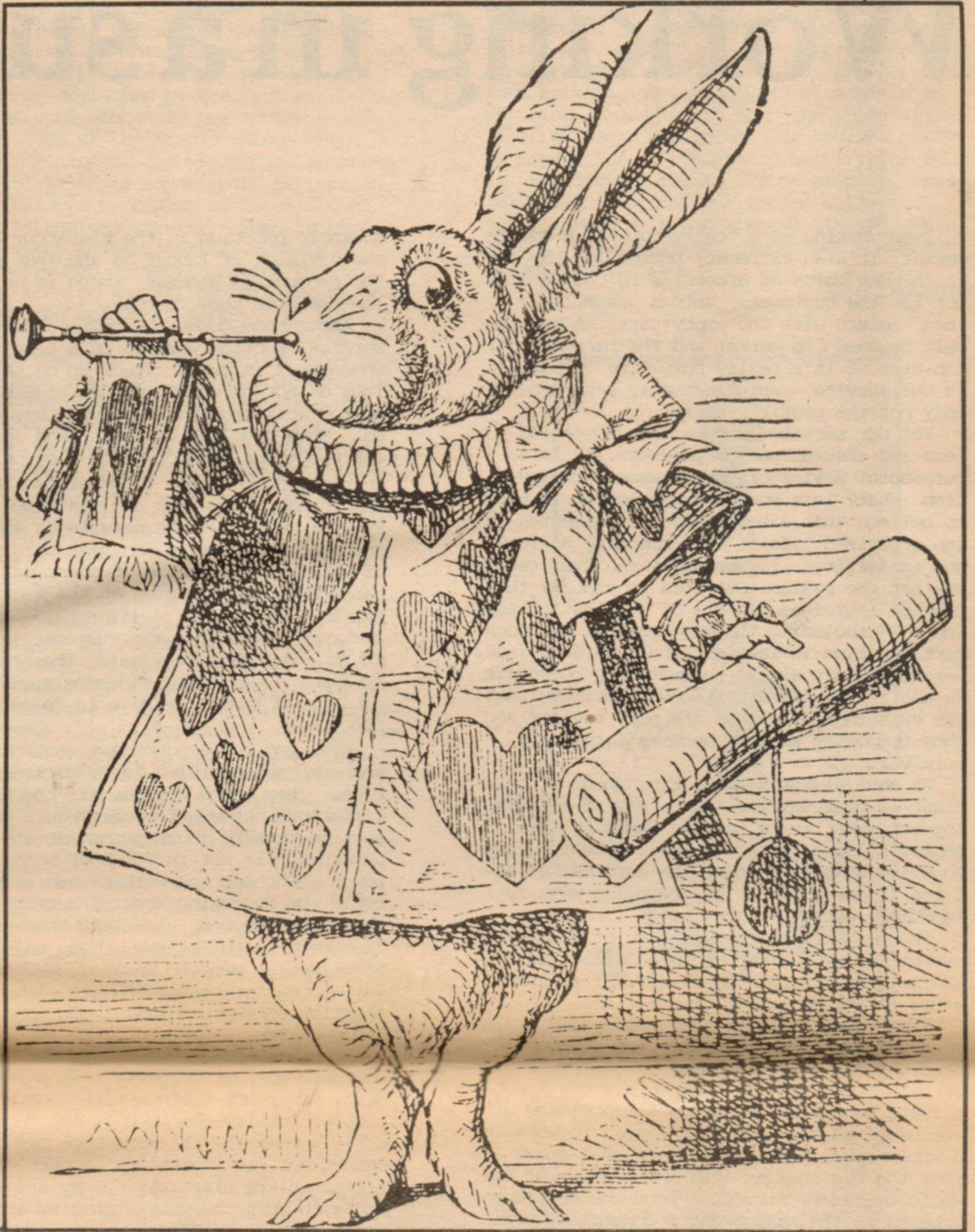


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Working in a supermarket

I am working as a "carry-out" in a supermarket. It's an extremely boring job. My job is to push carts of groceries to the parking lot for the customers, unload them, and then return with the empty carts. A moving belt between the market and the parking lot, non-stop if it's really busy. The 'product' is our service - which actually serves nobody but the profit system.

Yet our service is more than a meaningless and absurd "pseudo-product". It is a purposeful device of consciousness-manipulation. What? This sounds paranoid? It is hard to believe that a being who is regimented in the organized life of the commodity society and assimilates its mentality can ever revolt against the system. But this is exactly the concept ingrained in all of our institutions today - including the supermarket. Through participation in institutionalized activities - which are always permeated by bourgeois values - people are forced to believe that the existing reality is the only reality and thus commodity society secures for itself survival.

We have always been talking about a "critique of everyday life" as a way of refreshing our sensitivity towards humanity in a people-killing culture. Now I find it urgent to write something about the supermarket as I see it, as a member of grappling with my immediate everyday life.

The most significant feature of the supermarket for me is that it is a reflection of the larger society's hierarchy, it is a miniature entity of authority-relations.

First of all, the job classifications are so structured that everybody is related to others either by domination or subordination or both. Not only is this self-evident of private ownership, assuring the position of the owner as the head (I happen to work in a supermarket that is not part of a chain and thus the big boss is less abstract), but the whole hierarchy structure from the boss down adheres to the management's concept of efficiency. Of course this concept of efficiency is based on an arbitrary division of labour, and reinforced by a merit system: one has more merit the higher up one is in the hierarchy, and this, in turn, corresponds to the degree one is willing to submit to the hierarchical establishment and its mentality.

This formal structure gives rise to two crucial aspects of the working life: the nourishing of the bossing ethic - that is human relationships based on domination and/or subordination - and the submerging of peoples' consciousness into this process so completely that they take this social reality to be the only possible frame of reference. One has to give up one's own judgments of any human relationship and in fact learns to repress the slightest awareness of sharing in order to be successful in this game. Yet also important and reinforcing of the bossing ethic is the fact that the boring and unfulfilling work aggravates a tendency in every individual to shift the burden onto his or her co-workers. And this is only possible when one attains a certain prescribed level in the hierarchy which legitimizes this bossing around.

The lowest grade - the underdog - are the carry-outs whose work is most unfulfilling and, in fact, deadening. Both because

of their position in the hierarchy and in the division of labour as the last part of the production process, there is no one below that for them to boss.

Above them comes the temporary section workers, section workers on a trial basis whose work is to put stock up on the shelf. They do not have a permanent section to work on and work when and wherever they are needed. They have one of their legs in the carry-out world which means they only work on the sections when the business is quiet and enough carry-outs are stationed at the front. They have the privileges and are supposed to learn to manifest this privilege of shifting the burden of carry-out to the carry-outs when helping at the front. They are supposed to help with packing and call for carry-outs when the customer is ready to go. But as I have said, they have one of their legs in the underdog world. When it is real busy they have to do carry-out too.

Next comes the permanent section workers who are "responsible" for a particular section. They stock shelves all the time. The difference between the carry-outs and the section-workers (both permanent and non-permanent) is not in terms of money, just power. The section workers are able to avoid the deadening work of a carry-out. This does not mean, however, that the section work is fulfilling. They value their privilege as section workers because they have a greater chance to work alone and thus lessen the sense of being bossed around all the time.

On top of these "boys" are the section managers who are directly responsible to the boss. They are quite a different world of people, totally absorbed by the bossing ethic. They are the mini-boss because they cannot but see themselves as part of the pillar of the hierarchy. They are responsible to keep the "boys" in line and to straighten up their discipline. Not only do they train the "boy" to do the work but also refresh their sense of responsibility to the rules of the bossing game.

The super-boss is of course, the owner himself and as the name implies, his work is to boss around.

This is the main body of the supermarket (except for the women on the cash register). The whole structure is a hierarchy with many miniature hierarchies inside systematically co-ordinated. The individual reaction to this structure is to see oneself inherently competitive with others, manifested in one's degree of attained power to dominate. So the carry-outs always seek to go into the section work. The non-permanent section workers then hope to become "responsible" for one section under the section managers and so on.

Every individual's attitude towards the bossing game may be a bit different but one thing is for sure: one is always either victim or executioner. The different attitude is a result of one's position in the hierarchy and one's past experience (e.g. family background). So the big boss and the mini-boss' attitude is much less obscure. Their position in the hierarchy which was probably achieved after a long time in the bossing game, and their way of perceiving their position is clearly seen in every little bit of their ethical judgement.

To illustrate the combined effect of position in the hierarchy and past experience on one's attitude towards the bossing game, I'll describe the situation of two immigrants.

First is a new immigrant from Lebanon who is working as a carry-out. Very probably it is because of his experience as a humiliated new immigrant that he exemplifies the most illustrative personality of a captive being. He never refuses any work passed onto him; he even rushes for work; he simply accepts his position as an underdog.



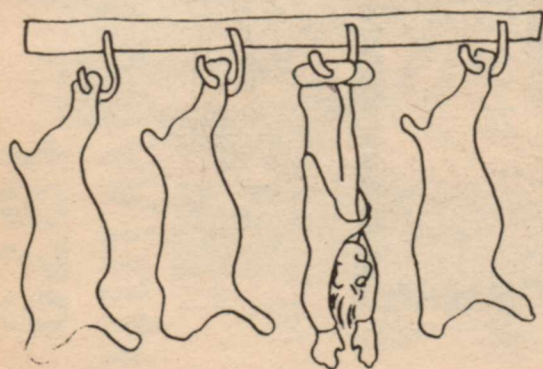
The second one is an old immigrant from a Caribbean country who has moved to the status of a mini-boss and who shows the worst of all bossing attitudes and being bossed. This may probably be a result of the same experience of a humiliated being who tries to reassure himself by humiliating others. Bear in mind what Fanon has described in "Black Skin White Mask": the phenomenon of some blacks who are trying to be more white.

Another thing which is very revealing is that the bossing attitude is most expressed in the section workers. They are the ones who most despise the carry-outs. This is probably because of the fact that they have just begun to "enjoy" the privilege which the bosses have allotted to them and thus try to flourish their newly acquired sense of responsibility. Of course, there is the fact that it is the best and most legitimate way of getting away from the boring work of carry-out. One very revealing example: a high school ninth-grader who works as part-time has recently been "promoted" informally by being sent to work in a section. He is really overjoyed in ignoring his ex-fellow carry-outs and bosses them to do carry-out. He also never forgets that he's an "in" person among "in" section workers. One can also observe his hyper-awareness of his new status-symbols: the duster and personal price stamp of a permanent section worker.

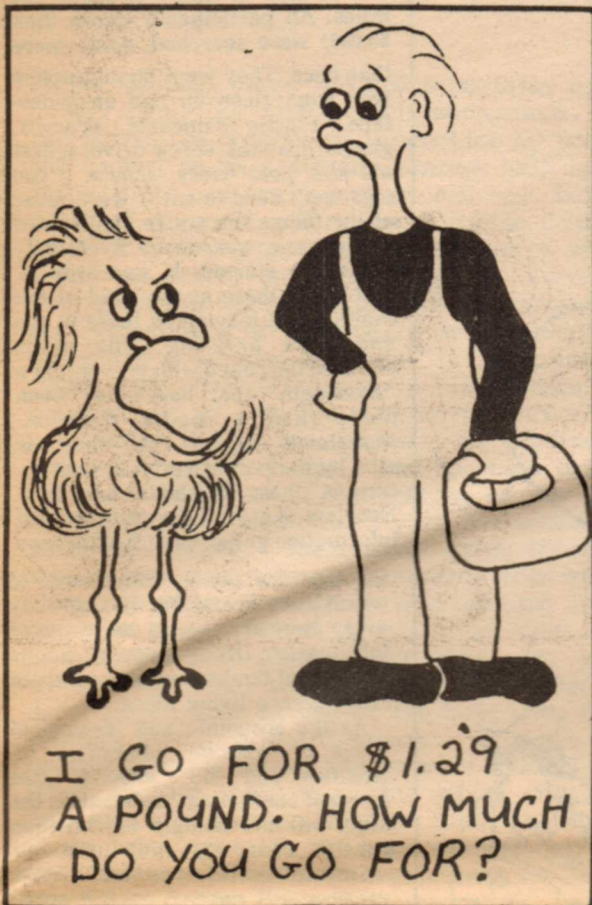
It's sad enough to see a ninth grader trying to be a boss. Yet it is even more terrifying to realize how completely our society is organized along this principle of authority; along the idea that the purpose of one's social activities is to dominate. More than that, how many people accept this idea and thus worsen the situation by upholding the authoritarian structure through their own activities. Thus, the structure becomes self-sustaining.

Then, the point I want to make is clear and simple. Capitalism has never totally depended and is now probably far less dependant on its open oppressive law and order machine. We know by just looking around that our sense of reality comes mainly from the social activities we participate in. The managers of capitalism in exerting their power over the organizations of our social activity, succeed to a certain extent in manipulating our consciousness.

The supermarket is a case in point. The employees below the management level are all young people in their teens, either working part-time after school or full time after quitting school (only to find it the same boring life). These people have grown up in similar environments of one institution



or another, disciplined along the line of the larger social discipline - notably the family and the school. To work in the supermarket, or any other workplace, is only to magnify the detail of authority since the work "job" in our society means to young people, a more calculated responsibility. It becomes the next stage towards total adaptation into the regimentation of the established reality. Therefore it is not just a problem of making more pocket money for the part-timers, or shooting around before getting into a better job for the full-timers, it is very much a part of the conditioning of young people into the smooth functioning of the machine of modern



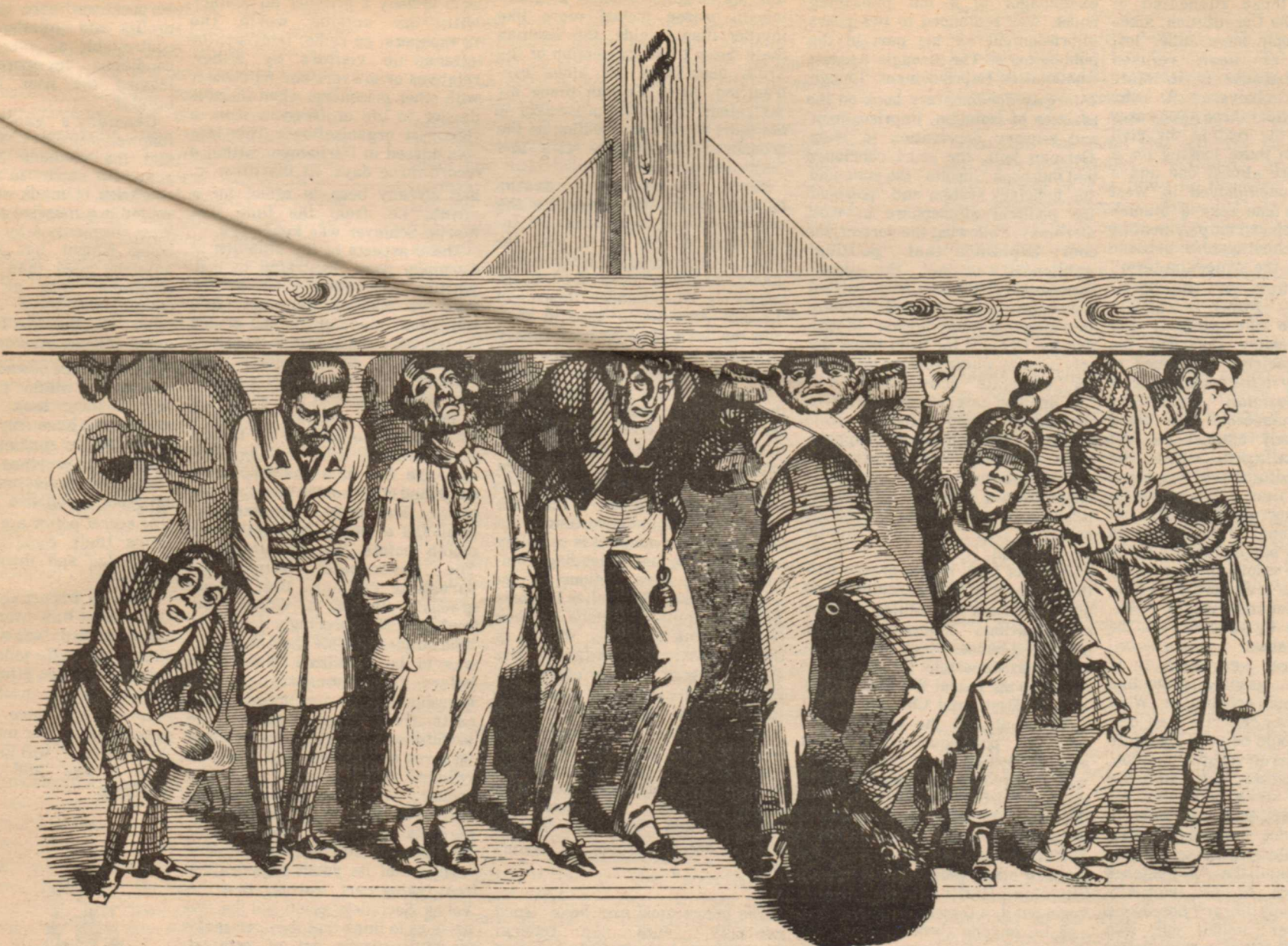
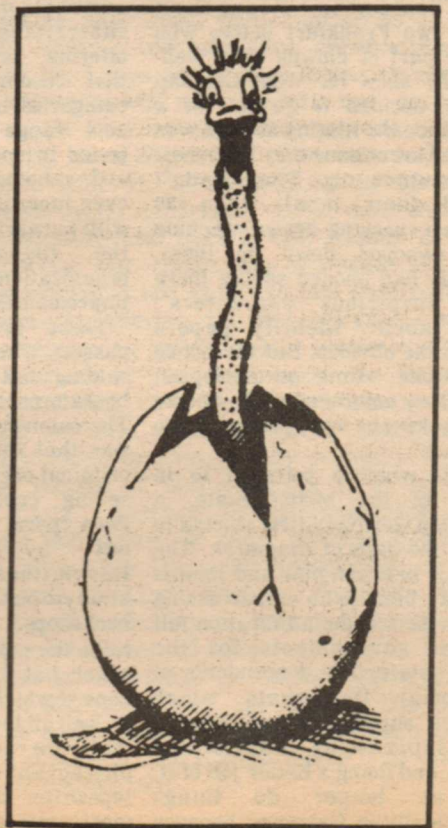
capitalism and their acceptance of its underlying principles. To see carry-out and shelving as necessary to make a living and to be willing to put up with the long hours of boring work just to refresh oneself in high entertainment and weekend drinking (whether this is refreshing or refreshing for what? is also interesting to ask) is almost to accept life as it is, to accept one's being dominated by the system.

The service mentality has become a science. One of the stupid things about bourgeois sociology and the social sciences in general is their superficial perception, always followed by claims of intellectual neutrality and objectivity. That is why they call the post-industrial society a service-oriented society, meaning by it that the service industries have become dominant in the commodity market. By not probing into the deeper implications of the nature of "service" in our society they have already made the value-laden assumptions of a status-quo morality. All that is left for the bourgeois world to do, already well-practiced at theorizing social reality in its own image, is to "fit" people into the only existing reality. Some customers didn't really want us to carry-out for them; their fate was to find a service forced on them. As to those who have already integrated into the existing world of things, they merely approve the service with an ever-decreasing praise, becoming less and less aware of the nature of the service. It never occurs to them that it is based on the degradation of a human relationship between us and them into a commodity relationship between this disintegrating being - the carry-out as a dying object of a production process - and the customer who falsely believes that he or she is consuming something in a completely normal fashion, as much a part of the universe as the sun going up and down.

I don't mean to be pessimistic and say that every one of us working there is a puppet being hopelessly conditioned. In short, I don't mean social determinism; the very fact that we are human, having a history of history-making convinces me against any kind of determinism. I understand history-making

in the sense that we are capable of transcending the social environment shaping us, plus the fact that I see everywhere within every one of us a seed of rebellion against the dehumanizing nature of our society. The mere fact that carry-out or section work is a deadening job has made us rebel against it in one way or another. I see co-workers pissing around or working for just one day and then quitting or taking lots of time to do anything, thus slowing down the whole efficient process, and so on. Of course, more is needed for a revolution but I think this is the starting point. To be aware of the deadening nature of our social activities and to see how it has created its own antithesis in every street corner and workplace is very convincing.

Anonymous



West Germany: Censorship and Repression in the Model State

By Mario Cutajar

Last September, Nappo and Kunkel, two Frankfurt actors who play the part of clowns on a well-known TV show for West German children, decided to go out for a snack. Since the filming session was scheduled to continue they kept their full costumes on. They hadn't finished their meal when 20 policemen carrying drawn machine pistols swooped down on them. Somebody had phoned saying there were "suspicious characters" lurking about. Identity papers revealed the obvious. But the police didn't waste time on apologies. Instead they commended the people of Frankfurt for being "so suspicious".

This is what is referred to in Europe as the Model State, a description Germany first started to enjoy in the days of Bismarck. The difference between now and then is that today there is no embarrassing Kaiser to poison the admiration felt by other governments for the "strong" state. The descendants of the Social Democrats which Bismarck suppressed are now in power suppressing today's Red menace, and doing a better job of it. They no longer do things autocratically in Germany because repression is "democratically" sanctioned.

The most notorious example of democratic repression is the Berufsverbot. Passed in 1972 this law (literally a "profession ban") is designed to exclude from the public service all those suspected of disloyalty to the Constitution. Since then 4,000 people have either lost their jobs or been refused employment because of it. More important, however, is the intimidating effect these 4,000 cases have had on the rest of the civil service and on those looking for a job. (There are almost one and a half million unemployed in West Germany). In one case a Munich student was refused employment as a grammar school teacher because he supported the "medium-term" political platform of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). According to the student the Bavarian Ministry regarded the term "class society" as applied to West Germany in the programme as "anti-constitutional". Suspicions that the Berufsverbot was being used exclusively against the left were not allayed when the Mannheim administrative court ruled that the aims of the neo-fascist National Democratic Party are not anti-constitutional. This is just as well since any ban on fascists in the public service would have seriously debilitated the civil service which, after the Second World War, absorbed the bureaucracy of the Third Reich intact.

There are currently 15 "intelligence" services protecting the West German constitution. What information they collect is their own business: it could be your signature on an anti-Berufsverbote petition, your membership in Amnesty International or a commune or simply the fact that you seem to read a lot of left-wing books. German librarians recently complained that the "intelligence" services seem to be unusually preoccupied with library borrowing lists. However, unlike our own RCMP, the German secret police don't have to step outside the law or even to keep their disruptive operations secret.

This is partly true in the area of

radical publications. Legislation passed two years ago (paragraphs 88a and 126) makes punishable by a sentence of up to three years the i) distribution ii) displaying or making accessible in any way iii) producing, subscribing, delivering, storing, offering, or announcing material that recommends any of seven categories of unlawful acts. These acts range from disturbing the peace in special cases, to murder and sabotage. This law becomes even more draconian when coupled with paragraph 129 which threatens the founders of "criminal organizations" with up to five years imprisonment.

These laws had hardly been passed when the police started raiding left-wing bookstores. Ten bookstores in five cities were raided. The ostensible reason for the raids was that these stores supported a criminal organization (para. 129) by selling copies of *Revolutionärer Zorn* (para. 88a), a newspaper put out by the underground Revolutionary Cells and sent anonymously to various left-bookshops. However, during the raids the police seized not only this paper but also 30 different titles, none of which is officially forbidden. As well as the apartments and shops that were raided were sketched and photographed, samples of typewriter script were made and, most ominous of all, subscription lists, correspondence and publisher files were seized. Readers will notice the similarity between these tactics and "our own" Body Politic raid.

In an even more blatant case, Gerd Schnepel, the bookseller and ex-manager of a left publishing house, was sentenced to two years imprisonment for his part in the publication of *The Struggle Against Annihilation Imprisonment*. Though a largely documentary book on the practice of isolation, imprisonment and sensory deprivation in West German jails, the court concluded that this book "insults" the state and the judiciary system and "poisons" the political atmosphere in West Germany. Following the verdict, the court explained that "political opinion" was not the issue. Significantly, the law here existed even before paras. 88a and 126 came into effect. It would appear, in fact, that the USSR is far from being the only country where you can go to jail for "anti-state" activities.

In another case, the printers of a newspaper called Info-BUG (Info Berliner Undogmatischer Gruppen) were arrested for printing a "megaphone for terrorist organizations." Yet of the 400 articles that appeared in the period referred to by the public prosecution, only 12 were statements from illegal groups and these appeared in a paper that had often criticized the politics of these organizations. Moreover, AGIT publishing-house, which prints Info-BUG, has done jobs for groups as varied as the Postal Workers' Union and the Protestant Church.

Nor is it just the printers and sellers of "poisonous" material that are threatened. One truck driver was arrested for transporting books and letters from West Berlin to West Germany. In each case, what is important is not the actual arrest but the self-censorship each arrest teaches other people. Because, as Rheinland-Pfalz prime minister Vogel put it, a terrorist sympathizer can be anyone "who simply says 'Baader-Meinhof Group' instead of 'Gang'."

The extent of the censorship being sought may be glimpsed from the actions of the police. As Pastor



Ensslin found out after he stated that his daughter's death in Stammheim prison looked more like murder than suicide, the German State doesn't like its version of the Truth questioned, let alone contradicted. After Ensslin made his statement, the public prosecutor in Stuttgart started prosecution on the grounds of "defaming the state" and "injurious slander."

The Stammheim deaths highlighted two other aspects of the current wave of repression: the co-operation of the press with the police, and the ability of the police to obtain whatever laws they deem necessary. When Baader, Raspe and Ensslin were found dead in their cells the German press immediately pronounced "suicide" as the verdict, this, despite any confirmation whatsoever of the allegation. Later they followed with a stream of sensational and often contradictory findings. During the Schleyer kidnapping, *Der Spiegel* even bragged about the co-operation of the press with the government. "That the chancellor and his government feel so close to their subjects is certainly thanks to the understanding commentary on their actions by the German press." The police for their part are quite conscious of their relations with the press. Writing in the professional magazine *Die Polizei*, a high ranking officer explained that cultivating good contacts with universities and academies and "especially the cultivating of good connections to the press" is part of the "field work". Other field work: confusing demonstrators "by spreading rumours" and "telephone calls to irritate certain groups of disturbers".

The police must also have "good contacts" with the federal parliament. All measures resorted to are either already law or else pass into law sometime after they are used. A good example of the latter was the Kontaktsperregesetz

(Contact Barrier) Law, making it legal to deny a prisoner all contact with the outside world (no newspapers, no radio, television or letters, no visitors by either relatives or lawyers and no contact with other prisoners) when there is danger to life or freedom from a "terrorist organization". This law was passed in Parliament within a record three days. At that time, it had already been in effect for a month, i.e. from the time that Martin Schleyer was kidnapped.

These aspects of the situation in Germany were illustrated in conjunction with each other at the massive Kalkar demonstration which took place at the end of last September. The demonstration, described by its organizers as a "festival with stands and games", was called to protest the building of a fast-breeder reactor. Though it was destined to become the largest demonstration held in Germany since the War, this was despite the combined efforts of the press and the police. The press, for example, predicted a bloody confrontation a month before the demonstration. The government helped by spreading rumours that "some groups" planned a violent confrontation. Not surprisingly therefore, "the largest possible show of police" was to be mobilized. Four days before the demonstration, the township director announced special restrictions which included the prohibition of articles of camouflage (scarves and masks) and a ban on vehicles of all kinds (including sanitary vehicles) accompanying the march. Meanwhile, the SPD (the majority party in North Rhine Westphalia) formally prohibited members of its youth organization from taking part, warning that the Young Socialists could not be "so naive as to think that they can make peaceful citizens out of political criminals." Likewise the German union federation called on its members not to attend.

On the day of the demonstration

the police had so many road blocks that it took 17 hours to drive 300 miles. All participants (more than 50,000) were searched, some more than once. They were photographed both from close up and on Videotape. Plastic raincoats, scarves, gloves, lipsticks, screw drivers, first aid kits, note books, snacks ("you pigs don't need to eat") were some of the things the police confiscated as "passive weapons". Eventually the march started. It was over so quick that those at the head of the march were leaving as those at the end were arriving. The press credited the police with preventing a "bloodbath" that had never been more than a media creation. Complaints against the methods used by the police were silenced by turning these methods into law. Needless to say all the pictures and information gathered at Kalkar was

fed into the police computers, of which there are 30,000. In Germany today there are at least 200 pieces of information (from shopping habits to political tendencies) stored about every person living there.

As the economic and ideological crisis of Western capitalism intensifies and the "experts" put forward conflicting "solutions", the state will increasingly fall back on purely coercive measures to maintain social "peace". This process will depend on the speed with which liberal ideology disintegrates. At some point, we may have already passed it, words like "restraint" and "cooperation" cease to perform their mystifying function. Restraint is a vile term in a country where in the same period that wage controls were in effect corporations were making record profits and inflation was as uncontrollable as ever. Under such conditions "co-operation" means leaving the door open for the burglar.

Germany's example will be followed elsewhere. The technology and the methods are eminently suited for export to other Western countries. Canada is already involved in a massive arms deal with West Germany. A lot of the armour being bought has little use for anything other than the control of civilians. And as the RCMP revelations have confirmed in recent months, the RCMP is quite adept at doing semi-legally what the

German police nowadays do legally. Moreover, within the context in which they took place, these revelations have only strengthened the RCMP by making more people aware of its presence, the only reply from the government being a proposal to legalize "dirty tricks". The secret police are most effective when their existence is public knowledge and their powers self-defined.

What is happening in Germany, therefore, has more immediate relevance to us than would appear at first sight. If today our press celebrates the efficiency of the German police in the months to come it will have little trouble congratulating our own force. "Our cops are tops" will then reverberate with a new and quite sinister meaning.



Hierarchy of salaries and incomes

1. For several years now and especially since May 1968, the idea of self-management, of the effective control of production by workers, has ceased to be a utopian concept held by a few individuals and small groups, and has become a topic of frequent and animated public discussion as well as the programmatic position of such an important labour union as the CFDT. Even those who up to now were the staunchest opponents of self-management are gradually being reduced to defensive positions (such as "it isn't possible right now", "not absolutely", "it depends what you mean by it", or "we must test it first").

Someday it will be necessary to examine the reasons for this change. For the time being we can note that this is the destiny of new ideas in all fields, particularly in the social and political sphere. Their adversaries start by saying that such ideas are absurd, then say that everything depends on what meaning is given to them, and end up by saying that they have always been strong supporters. We must never forget that such a purely verbal "acceptance" of an idea is one of the best ways of robbing it of its vital energy. If those who up to now were its strong enemies suddenly adopt an idea and take on the job of putting it into practice, we can be sure that, whatever their intentions, in the vast majority of cases the result will serve to enslave it. There is strong evidence that modern society possesses an unparalleled virtuosity in the art of co-opting and sidetracking new ideas.

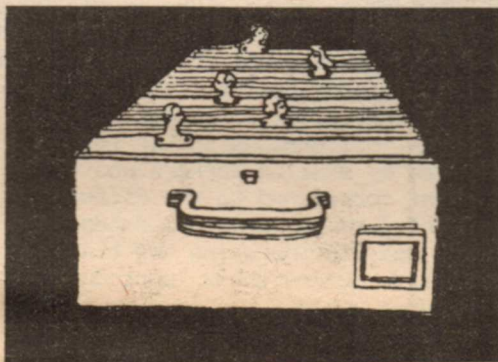
But in the case of self-management other important factors have aided its acceptance by some business leaders and politicians—something that no one could have predicted.

These factors relate to the profound crisis of the modern industrial system, the organization of work and the techniques that correspond to it. On the one hand it is more and more difficult to make workers accept tasks that are strictly limited, brutalizing, and totally uninteresting. On the other hand it has long been apparent that the division of labour pushed to absurd lengths—Taylorism, the attempt to fix the workers' tasks in advance down to the smallest detail in order to better control them—has passed the point where it benefits the business enterprise and now creates enormous difficulties at the same time as it intensifies the daily struggle in production between workers and those who would impose the system on them—a conflict which becomes more and more evident, for example, in strikes over working conditions.

The bosses say that this conflict cannot be reduced by granting wage increases, and faced with the collapse of the dream of complete automation, they are led to consider the introduction of some partial modifications in working conditions. Hence the projects and attempts at "job enrichment", autonomy of production teams, etc. Opinions may vary as to the real meaning and possible results of these efforts. However, two things are certain: such a process once started could very well achieve a momentum which might not be controllable by the capitalists and the state. On the other hand, since the present organization of society sets precise limits to such efforts, they will not affect the power of the hierarchical bureaucracies which really run every business, however small, and even less will they challenge basic relations of power in society. Without a fundamental change, all modifications inside the business will have only a very limited significance.

In any case there is only one way to combat this dilution of the idea of self-management by the powers that be. We must make it as clear as possible, and draw out all the implications. Only in this way will we be able to distinguish the idea of a collective management by producers, the control of society by all men and women, from its empty and misleading caricatures.

2. In all discussions of self-management one fundamental aspect of the organization of business and society is hardly ever mentioned: hierarchy of power and of wages and incomes. However, as soon as one thinks of self-management beyond the limits of a production team, the hierarchy of power, and the chain of command as it now exists are necessarily called into question, and therefore so is the hierarchy of incomes. The idea that true self-management of an enterprise could co-exist with the present power is a contradiction in terms. What meaning could we give to the term "self-management" if we still had the same pyramid of power with a minority of bosses at different levels managing the work of a majority of workers reduced to following orders? In what sense could workers really run production and the enterprise if a separate group of bosses kept the power to make decisions in its own hands? Above all, how could workers take



an active interest in the progress of the enterprise and feel that it vitally concerned them—failing which, any attempt at self-management would be defeated—if, on the one hand, they are condemned to passivity by having to maintain a system of leadership that makes the final decisions by itself, and on the other hand, the economic inequality finally persuades them that the progress of the enterprise is not their concern because it benefits only a small part of the personnel?

Similarly, in a much wider context the progress of the enterprise is affected in a thousand ways by the economy and society, and thus the self-management of an enterprise cannot have any real meaning unless organizations of workers and the rest of the population assume those functions of coordination and planning that are now in the hands of those who wield economic and political power.

3. Certainly the existence of a hierarchy of power and income is presented as justified by a host of arguments. Before discussing them we note that they have a clearly ideological character: on the basis on unstated assumptions they attempt to justify with only an appearance of logic a reality with which they have little connection. They submit reality to the last few decades' official ideology, an ideology currently decomposing and no longer coherent. It can no longer invoke values that no one accepts, and is incapable of inventing new ones. The result is a mass of contradictions: thus in France we have Gaullist "participation" alongside the absolute and uncontrollable power of the president of the Republic. Similarly, the arguments used to justify bureaucracy contradict each other, are based on different and incompatible assumptions, or lead to conclusions diametrically opposite to what really happens.

4. The crux of the official ideology's notion is the justification of a hierarchy of income based on a hierarchy of power, which in turn is defended as based on a hierarchy of "knowledge", "qualifications", "talents", "responsibilities" or the "shortage" of specialized skills. One can see immediately that these scales do not coincide or correspond with either logic or reality. There can be a shortage of garbage collectors and an oversupply of teachers; great scholars have no responsibility while workers with very

little "knowledge" have a daily responsibility for the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Furthermore, any attempt to make a "synthesis", to "balance out" these different criteria is necessarily arbitrary. Finally, it is even more arbitrary to use such a scale, even if it were justified to a given differentiation in incomes. Why should one year of school or a diploma be worth 100F and not 10 or 1000? But let us look at the arguments one by one.

5. It is said that the hierarchy of power and incomes is justified by a hierarchy of knowledge. But in the business enterprise as in society at large it is not those who are most knowledgeable who give orders and earn the most money. It is true that the majority of the hierarchy have diplomas. But setting aside the fact that it is ridiculous to identify knowledge with diplomas, it is not the most knowledgeable who ascend the ladder of power and incomes but those who are most skillful in the competition that occurs within the bureaucracy running the enterprise. An industrial company is practically never run by the most learned of its engineers: he is most often confined to a research bureau. And in society we know that scholars, important or not have no power and earn only a small fraction of the income of the director of a medium-sized firm. Neither in an enterprise nor in society are power or high incomes given to those "who have the most knowledge" or "technical skills", rather, they are determined by the ability to survive in the struggles between cliques and clans (a talent that has no economic or social value except for him who possesses it) and by the links one has with capital (in the western countries) or the dominant political party (in the eastern countries).

6. What has just been said sheds light on the argument justifying hierarchy on the basis of differential skills. As soon as we consider the differences in hierarchy and salary that are really important—not those between an assembly line worker and a tool maker but those between manual workers and the top management of an enterprise—we see that what is rewarded is not the ability to do a good job but the ability to bet on the right horse. But the official ideology claims that the hierarchy of incomes corresponds to a very specific skill, the ability to "direct", to "organize" or even the ability to "conceive and sell a product". However, it is evident that these skills have no meaning except in the present system. "The ability to direct" in its present sense only has meaning for a system that separates and opposes order takers and order givers, those who work and those who direct the work of others. It is the present organization of a company and of society that creates and requires the task of "directing" separate from the collectivity of workers and opposed to them. The same thing applies to the "organization of work". This is no less true for the "ability to conceive and sell a product", for only to the extent that society depends on the creation of artificial needs does such a function and the corresponding skill have meaning and value.

Furthermore, these functions are not accomplished by individuals. Groups of ever greater importance and impersonality are charged with the "organization" of work and production, with publicity and sales, and even the most important decisions concerning the enterprise (investments, new manufacturing processes, etc.). The most important point is that in a large modern enterprise—just as with the state—no one really leads: decisions are made after processes so complex, impersonal and anonymous that most of the time it is impossible to say who decided what when. One could add that there is an enormous difference between the way things are supposed to happen and the way they actually occur, between the formal and the real processes of decision-making, just as in a work place there is a difference between the way the workers are supposed to do their work and the way in which they actually work. While a decision may be formally taken by an administrative committee, in reality the decision is already made behind the scenes or is altered by those who have to execute it.

7. Arguments in favour of hierarchy based on responsibility have no more weight than any of the others. We must start by asking in what cases can responsibility really be localized and assigned? Given the increasingly collective nature of production as well as other activities in modern society, these cases are extremely rare, and are not found in general except at the lowest levels of the hierarchy. Furthermore, there is no connection between the logic of the argument and what really happens. A railway crossing guard or an air traffic controller have the lives of hundreds of people in their hands each day but they are paid less than a tenth of what the bosses of the railways or Air France earn, even though the latter do not have the direct responsibility for any lives.

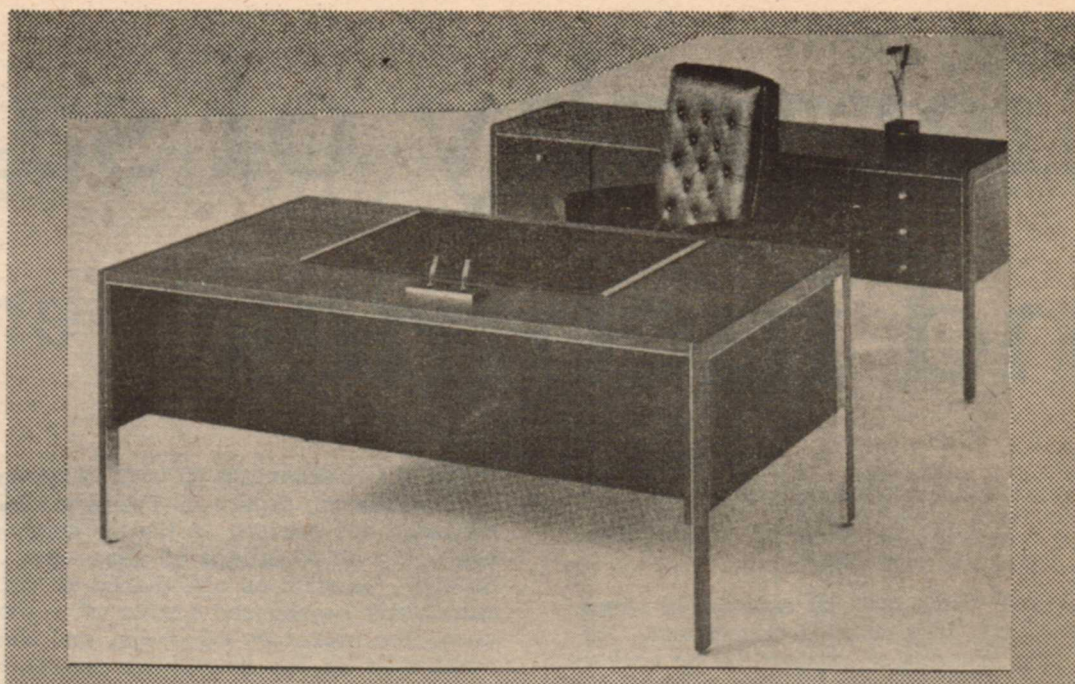
8. It is hard to take seriously the hierarchy of salaries based on a relative shortage of skills. As long as such a shortage exists it can push the wage level of a given category higher than it was before, but it cannot go beyond certain narrow limits. Whatever the relative "shortage" of factory workers and the relative "surplus" of lawyers, the latter will always be paid more than the former.

9. Not only are all of these arguments illogical and out of touch with what really happens, but they are incompatible with each other. If one takes them seriously, the level of salaries corresponding to "knowledge" (or even to diplomas) is quite different from that corresponding to "responsibilities" and so forth. The present systems of payment try to make a "synthesis" of the factors supposedly determining rates of pay by means of an "evaluation" of work accomplished in such and such a job or such a place (job evaluation). But such a synthesis is a gross mystification: one can neither measure each factor taken separately nor add them up, except in an arbitrary fashion (with "adjustments" that do not correspond to any objective datum). It is by now absurd to measure knowledge by diplomas (whatever level of quality of the course of the education system). It is impossible to compare responsibilities except in some cases that are banal and without any importance. There are drivers of passenger trains and freight trains: how many tons of coal are equal to a human life? Hare-brained measurements established for each factor are added to oranges and apples with the aid of coefficients which correspond to nothing but the imagination of those who invent them.

The best illustration of the mystifying character of the system is furnished by the results of its application. One would have thought that after two centuries of non-scientific determination of incomes in industry, that job evaluation would have overthrown the existing structures of incomes. It is difficult to believe without knowing, why it is that enterprises have income levels which miraculously correspond to the discoveries of this "new" science. However, the changes effected by the application of the new method have been minute—which shows us that the method has been adjusted in order to change the system as little as possible, as well as to give it a pseudo-scientific justification. Furthermore, job evaluation has not diminished the intensity of conflicts over absolute and relative income that occupy the daily life of enterprises.

More generally we can never insist too much on the duplicity and bad faith of all these justifications that always reduce factors relative to the nature of work into base differences of incomes—despite the fact that by far the least important differences are those which exist among workers, and the most important are those between the mass of workers on one side and the different categories of bosses (political or economic) on the other side. But the official ideology thereby attains at least one result: for no logical reason, and contrary to their own self-interest, the workers themselves seem to attach more importance to the small differences that exist between them than to the enormous differences that separate them from the top ranks of the hierarchy. We will return to this question later.

All this concerns what we have called the ideology of the justification for hierarchy. There is a discussion that seems more "respectable", that of academic or marxist economic science. We cannot give a detailed refutation here. Let us say simply that for



on a coal-burning locomotive, you get rid of the engineer, you do not "lessen" the product (transport) "a bit", you wipe it right out; and the same thing is true, if you get rid of the fireman. The "product" of this indivisible team of engineer and fireman obeys an all-or-nothing law; there is no "marginal product" from the one that you can separate from that produced by the other. The same thing holds true in a single shop, as well as throughout the whole of a modern factory, where the jobs are strictly interdependent.

For Marxist economics, incomes are determined by the "labour theory of value", that is, they are equivalent to the cost of production and reproduction of this commodity, which under capitalism is labour power.

Therefore, differences in the level of wages earned by skilled workers and unskilled workers must correspond to the differences in the costs of forming these two categories of work. (The main factor being the training of future workers during their "unproductive" apprenticeship years.) It is easy to calculate that, on this basis, the differences in income levels would scarcely exceed the proportion of 1 to 2 (between work absolutely devoid of any skill and work that requires 10 to 15 years training). However, this has little to do with reality, either in the western countries or in the east (where the hierarchy of incomes is practically as blatant as in the west).

We must emphasize that even if the academic and Marxist theories offer an explanation of income differences, they cannot furnish an adequate justification. For in each case hierarchy is accepted as a given fact, unchallenged and unchallengeable, when it is really nothing but the result of the continued existence of the overall economic and social system. If skilled work is "worth" more, this, according to the Marxist conception, is because a workers' family has spent more for his education (and theoretically must "recoup the costs"—which means in practice that the skilled worker must in turn finance the education of his children). But why were they able to spend more, something that other families could not do? Because they were already privileged with regard to income. All that these explanations say is that if we start with a hierarchical differentiation, it will continue to perpetuate itself by these mechanisms. Let us add that

academic economics, incomes supposedly correspond to the "marginal product of work", ie., that which is "added" to the product in an hour or work by an extra worker (or, the amount subtracted from the product by getting rid of one worker.) Without entering into the theoretical discussion of the concept—we can easily prove its untenability—we can immediately see its absurdity in the case that interests us, the different payment of different skills starting from the point where there is a division of labour and interdependence of different jobs, which is generally the case in modern industry. If, since it is increasingly true that society as a whole and not individuals pay the costs of education, it is reasonable for those who have already benefited at the expense of society by gaining an education that trains them to do more interesting, less painful work, to demand further that they should also obtain a higher income.

This concerns profound sociological and psychological factors which determine individuals' attitudes to the hierarchical structure. It is no secret, and there is no reason to hide it: we find with many people an

acceptance of and even support for hierarchy that is just as strong as that found in the privileged strata.

It is even doubtful that workers at the bottom of the bureaucratic structure are more opposed to hierarchy than others (the situation is complex and varies with the times). We must seriously examine the reason for this state of things. This would require a long and difficult study which would have to be made with the greatest participation of the workers themselves. Here we can only give a few reflections.

We can always say that it is true that the official ideology of hierarchy has penetrated all sectors of the working class; but we must ask how it happened since we know that in France as well as England the working class movement was strongly egalitarian. It is also true that the capitalist system could not have continued to function, and above all could not have taken its modern bureaucratic form, if the hierarchical structure had not only been accepted but supported and "interiorized"; it was necessary for a considerable part of the population to agree to play the game for the game to have been playable. Why does it play this game? Partly, no



doubt, because the modern system, the only "meaning for existence" that society is capable of producing, the only bait it can offer is consumption, and hence an income that constantly rises. To the extent that people take this bait--and for the present almost everybody seems to take it--to the extent also that illusions of "upward mobility" and "promotion" and the fact of economic growth make them see the upper echelons as levels that they try and hope to reach, they attach less importance to differences in income than they would in a static situation. One is tempted to conclude from this factor that there is what we could call a freedom to create illusions about the real importance of income differences present in the majority of the population; recent surveys have shown that in France people underestimate the differences in incomes to a fantastic extent.

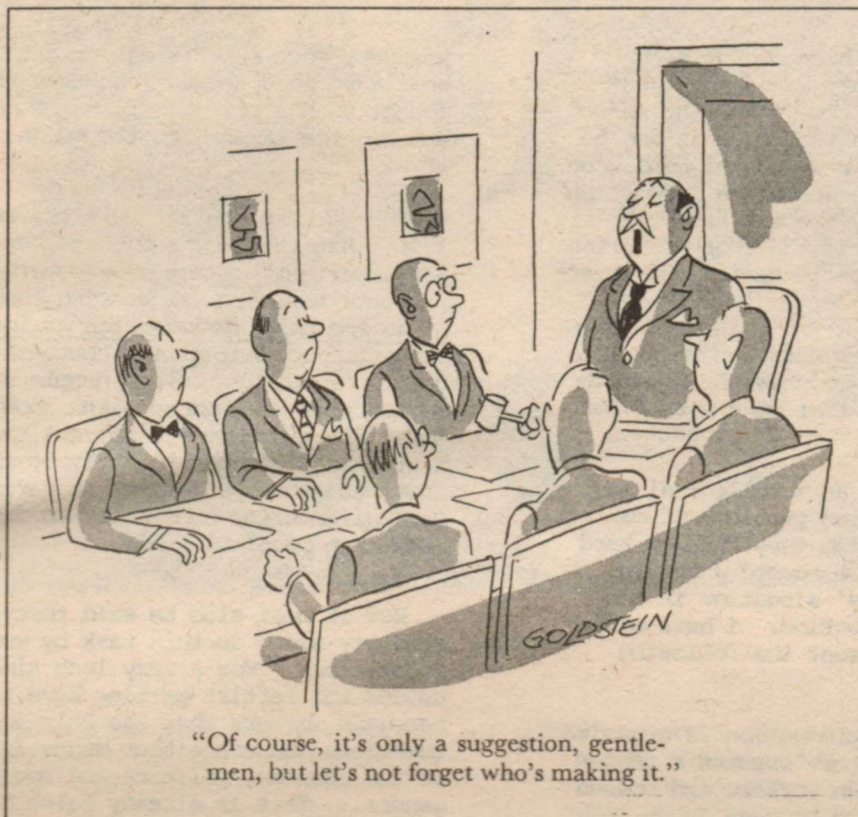
But without doubt there is a deeper factor more difficult to formulate which plays the main role here. The triumph of the gradual bureaucratization of society has also and necessarily been the triumph of an imaginary representation of society--in whose creation everyone shares to some degree--as a pyramid or system of hierarchical pyramids. To be blunt, it seems as if it is impossible for man in modern society to imagine a society whose individuals are really equal in rights and obligations, where the differences between individuals correspond to something other than the differences in their positions on a scale of command and incomes. And that is due to that fact that no one can think of himself as something in his own eyes (or as the psychoanalysts say, establish his "sense of identity"), except in terms of the place he occupies in a hierarchical structure, even if it is one of the lowest positions. In fact, one could say that this is the only way that modern bureaucratic society leaves open for people to feel that each one is someone--by holding onto a last vestige of apparent self-determination, even as all standards and sources of meaning are emptied of any meaningful content. In a society where the objectives as well as the manner in which work is performed have become absurd, where there are no more truly living collective activities, where the family shrinks and breaks up, where the mass media and the rush to consume reduce everything to uniformity, the system cannot offer people anything to hide the emptiness it creates in their lives except that ridiculous bauble, the place they occupy in the bureaucratic hierarchy. It is therefore far from incomprehensible that many cling to it, and that occupational and pro-

fessional rivalries are far from disappearing.

perspective we must try to see to what extent this hierarchical representation of society is wearing out and being put into question.

Cornelius Castoriadis

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WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

In issue number three of *Worker's Power* a school teacher asked the question: why don't workers write? He showed in a thorough manner that this is due to their total situation in society and also to the nature of the so-called "education" that is dispensed by the capitalist schools. He also said that workers often think that their experience "is not interesting".

This last point appears fundamental to me and I would like to share my experience on it, which is not that of a worker but of a militant.

When workers ask an intellectual to talk to them about the problems of capitalism and socialism they find it hard to understand that we accord a central place to the workers' situation in the factory and in production. I have often had occasion to present the following ideas to workers:

- The way in which production is organized in a capitalist factory creates a perpetual conflict between workers and bosses around the production process.

- The bosses always use new methods to chain workers to the "discipline of production"

- Workers always invent new ways of defending themselves.

- This conflict often has more influence on the level of salaries than negotiations or even strikes do.

- The waste which results is enormous and for greater than that resulting from economic crises.

- Unions are always out of touch with and most often hostile to this kind of workers' struggle.

- Militants who are workers ought to spread all the important examples of this struggle outside the enterprise where they occur.

- Nothing is changed in this situation by the simple "nationalization" of factories and "planning" of the economy.

- Socialism is therefore inconceivable without a complete change in the organization of production in factories, without the suppression of the bosses, and the institution of workers' control.

These expositions were both concrete and theoretical - that is to say that each time they gave real and precise examples, but at the same time, far from being limited to description they tried to draw general conclusions. Here were facts of which workers evidently had the most direct and complete experience, and which also had profound and universal importance.

However, one could say that the listeners spoke little, and it appeared they felt deceived. They had come there to speak of or to hear important things, and it seemed difficult for them to believe that the important things were those that they did every day. They thought that they would be told about absolute and relative surplus value, of the decline in the rate of profit, of over-production and under-consumption. It seemed unbelievable to them that the evolution of modern society was determined more by the actions of millions of workers in all the factories of the world than by the grand economic laws, hidden and mysterious, which are discovered by theorists. They even disagreed that a permanent struggle between workers and bosses exists and that workers succeed in defending themselves;

however, once the discussion got under way, what they said showed that they themselves fought such a struggle from the moment they entered the factory to the moment they left it.

The workers' belief that the way they live, what they do, and what they think "is not important" is not only something that prevents them from expressing themselves. It is the most serious sign of ideological servitude to capitalism. For, capitalism could not survive unless people were persuaded that what they do and know concerns only them, is unimportant, and that important things are the monopoly of the big shots and the specialists in various fields. Capitalism tries constantly to drum this idea into peoples' heads.

But it must also be said that it has been strongly aided in this task by workers' organizations. For a very long time trade unions and leftist parties have tried to persuade workers that the only important questions concern either wages in particular, or the economy, politics and society in general. This is already false but there is worse to come. That which these organizations took to be "theory" on these questions and that which increasingly passed for such in the eyes of the public was not linked, as it should have been, to the experience of workers in production and social life, but became a so-called "scientific" theory increasingly abstract (and increasingly false). Certainly only the specialists - intellectuals and bosses - can and do speak of such a theory. The workers must simply keep quiet and try hard to absorb and assimilate the "truth" that the latter feed them. We thus reach two conclusions. The intense desire that many workers have to expand their knowledge and horizons, to gain a conception of society that will help them in their struggle is destroyed from the start. The so-called "theory" set before them seems to be in most cases a sort of higher algebra, inaccessible and frequently containing a litany of incomprehensible words that explain

nothing. On the other hand, the workers have no verification of the content and truth of such a "theory"; its demonstration appears, they are told, in the fourteen volumes of *Capital* and in the other immense and mysterious works possessed by the learned comrades in whom we must have confidence.

The roots and consequences of this situation go very far. It originates in a profoundly bourgeois mentality: just as with the laws of physics, there are said to be laws of economics and society, "laws" which have nothing to do with the experience of workers. Rather, they are the property of the scientists and engineers who know of them. Just as only engineers can decide how to make a bridge, similarly only the engineers of society - leaders of parties and unions - can decide on the organization of society. To change society is thus to change its "general" organization, but that does not affect in the slightest what happens in the factories, since that "is not important".

In order to move beyond this situation it is not enough to say to workers: speak, it is up to you to say what the problems are. It is necessary to demolish the monstrously false idea that the problems that workers see are not important, that there are more important ones which only "theorists" and politicians can speak about. We can understand society, but still less can we understand society if we do not understand the factory. There is only one way for this to happen: the workers must speak. To demonstrate this must be the first and permanent task of Workers' Power.

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RADICAL NEWSPAPERS



1. Rather than speak of a radical or socialist newspaper, it would be more precise to speak of a radicalizing newspaper.
2. "Radicalizing" refers to two dialectically related processes: radicalization of the community (or workplace, etc.) which the paper serves, and the radicalization of the newspaper itself. Neither of them can be radical, because radicalism is not a state of being (a state of Grace) but a state of becoming.
3. Since a newspaper is a medium of communication, a radical newspaper must embody a radical approach to communication. This means challenging the conception of a newspaper itself, challenging it in two different aspects: the content of what is communicated, and the way in which the communicating is done.
4. To begin with the word: newspaper. A newspaper supposedly relates "news"; events which have newly happened. But which of the countless events happening are news, which aren't? "event" is itself a concept that is tied to one's world-view: for some, for example, the rise of capitalism is one of the major events of world history, for others, there was no such event. Many newspapers restrict themselves to isolated, sensational events and thereby ignore most of the really important events, which are not daily "hard-news" occurrences. What is selected, what is passed over? Why? Who decides?
5. Selection implicitly involves interpretation of what is important and why, and therefore fractures the myth of objectivity, since events are not "objectively" important. (How could they be, on a planet which is itself unimportant?) One cannot say an event is important without saying to whom it is so, and why.
6. Interpretation goes beyond selection. It involves the presentation and interpretation of selected events in some kind of a structure of meaning. Different world-views will see the same events in very different ways.
7. We are generally aware of how capitalist newspaper approach "news", and what interests are served by their selection and analysis of it. The common mistake of the left is to assume that it is necessary only to reverse the bias, to select and interpret from a socialist viewpoint rather than a capitalist one.
8. The result is a left press that is little more than a mirror image of the capitalist press. Readers are lectured and harangued; "lessons" are pointed out in the best manner of traditional authoritarian pedagogy; and fantastic tasks are barked out as orders: "Bring INCO to its knees!", "Oust the generals-workers to power!", "Stop the Oil grab!", etc.
9. What is ignored is the way communication occurs. Real communication should be dialectical, both in the sense of being a dialogue, and in the sense of leading to the transformation of those participating or listening.
10. Capitalist communication naturally is not intended to be of this kind. The fundamental content of capitalism, and thus the basic message of the capitalist media, is the apparently inevitable

alienation of social life. We are and can be nothing but passive spectators as forces and events beyond our control unfold. The media may tell us that events are unfolding as they should, or they may be critical in matters of detail, but in no case do they allow us to view ourselves as subjects rather than objects. Their own structure as well as their content is part of the same message of passive acceptance in which freedom evaporates because the existing world is the only possible one. We can relate to newspapers only as consumers because (so we are told) that is the inevitable, technologically given nature of modern mass media. The actual content it reports, whether it be truth or lies, is thus in a very real sense secondary: "Within a world really on its head, the true is a moment of the false."

11. "Left" papers that approach communication in the same way thus largely negate their content through their form. The readers do not participate in the communication. The message of powerlessness is ironically also conveyed: the setting of impossible tasks is not very different from saying that change is impossible.
12. A radical newspaper can only be truly radical to the extent that it succeeds in involving its base actively in the paper, and to the extent that it actually (not rhetorically) becomes a part of the fabric of the community (workplace, etc.) and its struggles.
13. A radical newspaper is not something that exists, therefore, but something that is always in the making, always becoming. A newspaper will become more radical, in its structures and relationships, as well as its content, as the community becomes more radical. Its radicalism is always partial, never complete.
14. This is not to say that it cannot be ahead of much of the community, but it is to say that one is not leading if no one is following.
15. A newspaper succeeds in being radical to the extent that it succeeds in going to the roots of alienation, to the extent that its base moves from passivity to activity.
16. The condition of both radicalism and freedom is activity, and the condition of free or radical activity is critical thought.
17. A radical newspaper therefore has two primary tasks: to encourage critical thinking, and to encourage self-activity.
18. These in turn require access to information.

19. Critical thought and self-activity cannot be encouraged by telling people what to think or what to do. It occurs only when people think for themselves and decide on their actions themselves. If a newspaper is to have a role, it must therefore be a means of communication, organizing, and action for the people, not a vehicle through which 'radicals' communicate their message to the people.

20. A radical newspaper must seek to involve people in the newspaper itself, not necessarily as 'journalists' but in selecting and creating the content. Only in this way can it respond to the needs of the people.
21. A radical newspaper must become part of the more general self-activity of the people. The people must see it as their own paper, and must consider it as one of the weapons they use in their own struggles. Whether this happens is not primarily a matter of how radical the paper is (ie whether it is 'too far left') but of the quality of its radicalism (ie whether it succeeds in involving the community in itself, and itself in the community.)

What Might a Radical Newspaper be Like?

1. Well designed, well-written, interesting. Important not only to make the paper appealing in itself, but indicative of its politics. If a message can't be interesting or well-written, there is something wrong with the message or the person giving it.
2. Honest. We have to tell the truth, even when it hurts. This means not only that we don't lie, but also that we don't delude ourselves.
3. Critical. We don't just repeat the old dogmas, we think and write critically.
4. Specific. We cannot deal in abstract theoretical fulminations. Certainly we will analyze and theorize, but the basis of the paper, and our analysis, must be specific events.
5. Concerned with daily life, not just with 'political' issues.
6. Balanced in content, catering to the whole person and a whole range of interests.
7. Willing to admit mistakes.
8. A sense of humour.

1. All facets of everyday life under modern capitalism feature aspects of repression, dominance and reification in constant tension with and opposition to other aspects, the struggle for autonomy and creativity. This dialectic of domination and liberation is readily seen in struggles of national liberation, class conflicts, the politics of the family, and movements for sexual liberation, to cite the more prominent contemporary arenas. Though usually treated as mere ideology or even propaganda, the cultural sphere is another equally important area of our experience filled with the conflict and tension which result from dehumanized life in bureaucratic capitalism. Cultural politics engaged in the service of human liberation begin with the exploration of this dynamic, tracing out the salient forms and functions of cultural contradictions, and relating them to society as a whole.

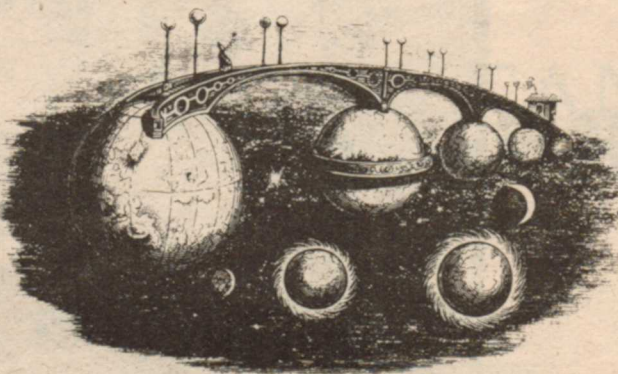
2. While mass culture theory from Tocqueville on has always been informed by politics, never claiming to be value-free, both radical and conservative forms alike have been marred by a tendency to reduce mass culture to something other than the discrete form of cultural expression that it is. In distinct contrast to bourgeois high culture, divorced from explicit acknowledgment of its social and historical sources by the general social division of labor, mass culture is always seen in relation to the social, and hence the political.

Conservative critics attempting to retain the purity of Western civilization react strongly to the defilement of their intellectual preserve. For them, mass culture is simply one facet of the general shift to a mass society heralding the decline of excellence in favor of democratic equality, the individuality for uniformity. Quality of life is equated with the necessary scarcity and limited access to the fruits of civilization endemic in aristocratic orders; culture is preserved only by denying it to the majority, and class hierarchy is defended in the name of Truth.

The social change opposed by culture critics like T.S. Eliot, Ortega y Gasset and F.R. Leavis, and viewed ambivalently by liberals like J.S. Mill is initially embraced by radicals. What conservatives view as the extinction of enlightenment by the barbarism of mass society, radicals characterize as the extension of previously limited privileges in the revolutionary moment of the newly ascendant bourgeois class. Extension of political rights and cultural participation are progressive measures accompanying the new forms of class oppression. An ambiguous development however, industrial capitalism's liberatory ideology is used to prevent the actual realization of its own ideals. But in its attempt to translate these bourgeois ideals of freedom, equality and democracy into actual social relations, the socialist tradition also denied the integrity and autonomy of the cultural realm. Enshrined in the Marxist subsumption of political-ideological superstructure under the technical base, cultural activity is seen as a mere reflection of the more important economic relations, and is relegated to sterile propaganda.

The conservative and radical views of mass culture simply cannot come to terms with the vitality of popular thought. From the aristocratic perspective, "democratic culture" is a contradiction in terms, for by its very nature culture is only accessible to the few; for the radical, ideology is false consciousness perpetrated by the culture industry, and culture becomes merely a weapon to be utilized in class warfare. As either non-serious entertainment, or as propaganda, the net effect is the same: the denial of the whole symbolic realm of meaning where the purpose and significance of everyday life is continually constituted and (re)-defined.

3. Instead, culture is a form of praxis. This remains true even when folk-generated popular culture is replaced by the domination of the market and the commodity form in mass culture. Undoubtedly an aspect of the attempted integration of particularity (as a source of negation) into a bureaucratically administered form of capitalism,



mass culture retains the ambiguity of ideology, which speaks the truth even as it attempts to disguise it.

Mass culture is a historically specific form of social signification, predicated on the technical, economic and cultural transformations brought about by industrial capitalism. The colonization of the cultural sphere begins in earnest with the transition from competitive to monopoly capital: work relations are rationalized by "scientific management"; concentration and centralization of capital gives rise to the corporation, with application of the detailed division of labor to management producing specialized marketing agencies; mass consumption is pushed via new media advertising images into previously safe areas of life; family relations and character structures crumble under the onslaught of the market and in response to the increase of direct state intervention into the affairs of everyday life.

Yet institutions of social reproduction are not merely agencies of social control; they are also the site of social (self-) constitution. The very technical and social changes brought on by the rise of industrial capitalism permit the (albeit abstract) extension of access to culture. Cheap, mass-produced newspapers are one of the first manifestations of the transition from popular to mass culture engendered by capitalism; out of the publication of the early era grew the book trade, and the rise of the novel as both entertainment and art form - a tension between edification and enlightenment retained within other, later forms of mass culture. The market also permits the rise of professional writers and publishers, even as it subjects culture to the unseen hand. The new literacy required by capitalism at the same time universalizes thought.

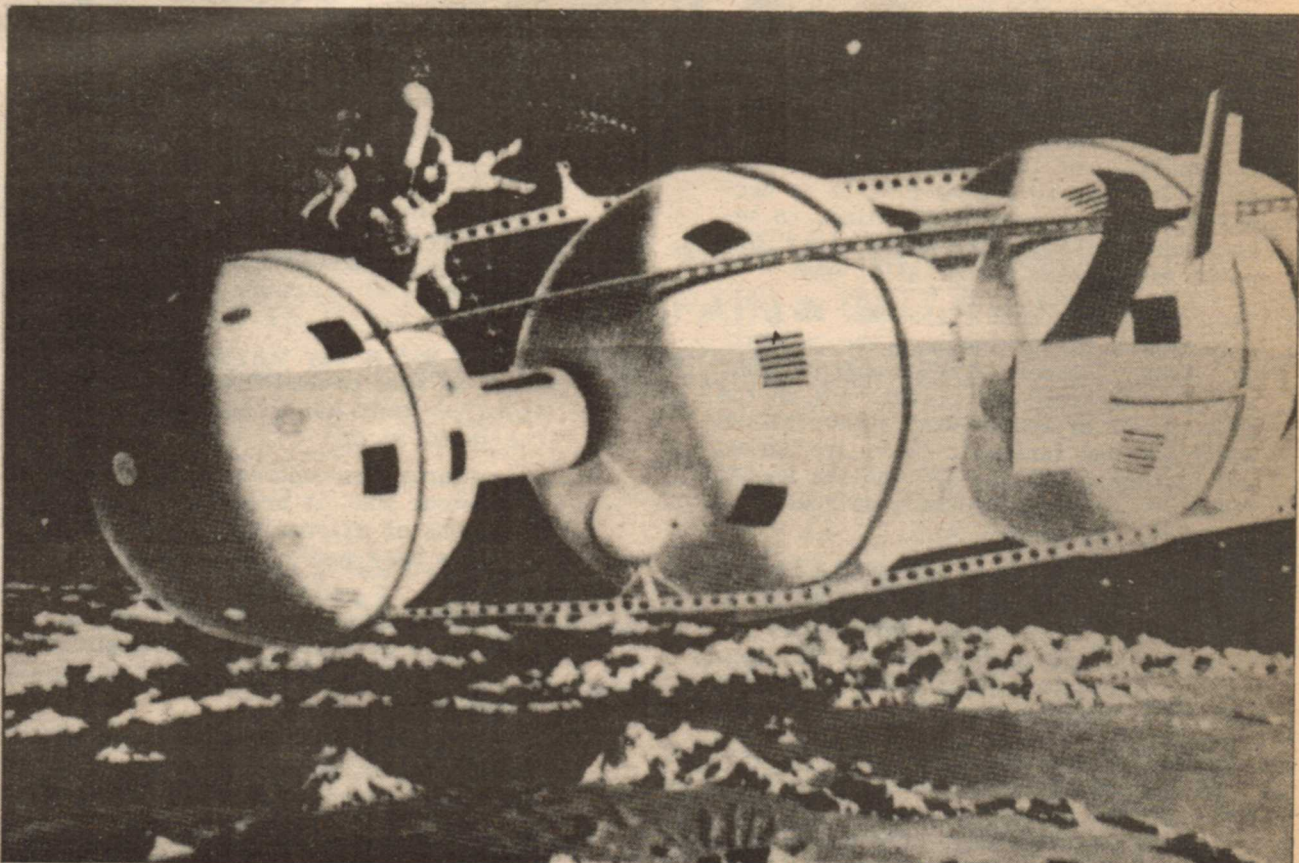
The transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism marked by the advent of rationalized mass production, mass consumption and media mass culture retains this cultural dialectic. Appropriation of popular cultures literary formulas into mass culture

Science fiction than just

is paralleled by the erosion of bourgeois high culture, even as subjectivity in general retains an ambiguous ideological tension between affirmation and negation of contemporary life. The Six-Million Dollar Man may affirm literally the mechanical dehumanization we all figuratively feel, and portray as natural and desirable the use of unrestrained power by the state; at the same time it overtly recognizes the reduction of life to an instrumentalized subervience whose only expression is both quantitative and monetary. The reverse is the case for New Wave music, from the start an ambiguous revolt which partook of the very elements against which it struggled, but now co-opted by jaded aesthetes who, in the rush to catch the latest market-managed "counter cultural" fad, rob it of its authenticity by ripping it from the social context within which it derives relevance as a gesture of frustration and resistance.

4. Thus, even as the form of mass culture dialectically combines formulas with originality, its content combines repression with disclosure, identification with estrangement, and affirmation with negation. The examination of one form of mass cultural literature, science fiction, reveals its specific location in this cultural dialectic.

Science fiction as an identifiable genre emerged as an essentially ambivalent reaction to the process of developing industrial capitalist society. Its two thematic poles reflect an unease with the new historical changes which were to permeate other mass cultural forms as well: on the one hand, it glorified scientific and technological progress and embraced the new industry and its concomitant social forms; on the other hand, the negative reaction to the alienation accompanying industrial capitalism portrayed the change as regression rather than progress, via romantic critiques based on a longing for earlier, simpler times. Like all mass culture formulas, science fiction combines general archetypes and literary forms (utopias, fabulous voyages, gothic romance) with specific cultural materials rooted in the immediate historical context;



is more Buck Rogers



from this it derives its particular themes and fictional strategies (alien encounter, questing scientist, dystopian satire, evolutionary fable, alternative universe).

Like most modern literature, science fiction is concerned with the alienated human condition, yet it articulates this concern in a distinct manner, as a form of literature concerned with the implications of the problems engendered by industrial society. It particularly utilizes a tradition of themes and devices which create common writer/reader expectations in the context of a strong reception dialectic unique to this form of mass culture (sf fandom). That is, production and consumption are mutually influenced to an extent far greater than in other forms of mass culture, which tend towards a sharply bifurcated active/passive, top-down manipulation of the consumer. But in science fiction, fandom—the network of institutions (newsletters, correspondence, conventions, formal awards procedures) which provide means of reader-writer communication—substantially affects the nature of the production-consumption dynamic. While this tends to enhance the insularity of the sf community, it also makes the literature more responsive to the desires of readers by giving fans (some of whom in turn become writers) an active input into the process of cultural creation; the overall result is that science fiction is fairly responsive to social change.

Science fiction also employs a literary approach which powerfully enhances fictional distance to comment indirectly upon society. Unlike the traditional novel, the science fiction setting is ontologically different from our world (regarding space and/or time), yet there remains aesthetic and thematic continuity for interest and intelligibility's sake. The narrative must utilize literary conventions in order for it to make sense to the reader (and in this respect sf is backward, only recently having discovered "modernist" inventions); likewise, regardless how exotic the setting or characters, the issues it deals with must be relevant and interesting to someone living here and now.

But while the imaginative worlds of realistic fiction are based on actual contemporary or historical societies, those of science fiction (and modern fantasy as well) are definitely not, being set on other planets, in the future, in alternative universes, and the like. Science fiction is thus particularly able to vicariously reintroduce in its content those "alien" features—the Other, or the Different—so often denied by the one-dimensional mechanisms of exclusion prevalent in our society. The result is to make science fiction essentially social: though fiction, its narrative style and thematic emphasis are realist in a manner which permits effective, oblique social comment. The retention of some basic rules of the scientific world view as well as the traditional conventions of aesthetic coherence, forces the thematic focus back upon our world. (In fantasy, science is replaced by magic: the specific focus upon contemporary problems then gives way to romantic escapism.) Thus, in the imaginary worlds of science fiction, "fiction" twice removed comes full circle to comment on everyday life under capitalism.

5. Abstractly considered, the form of science fiction reveals a tension between structures of enlightenment and edification: the content of science fiction reveals a dialectic between mimesis and escape, between realism and imagination; while its ambiguous social function features a parallel tension between ideological affirmation and critical negation. Considered historically, the development of science fiction's major phases reveals the dimensions of form, content and social function in their concrete ambivalence.

The period of science fiction's emergence in the 19th century is characterized by formal reliance upon mainstream literary techniques and the novel form, while its themes emerge in romantic reactions like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the early "scientific romances" of H.G. Wells, as well as the technocratic adventures of Jules Verne. Still a part of the literary establishment, and not yet fully mass culture as we consider it,

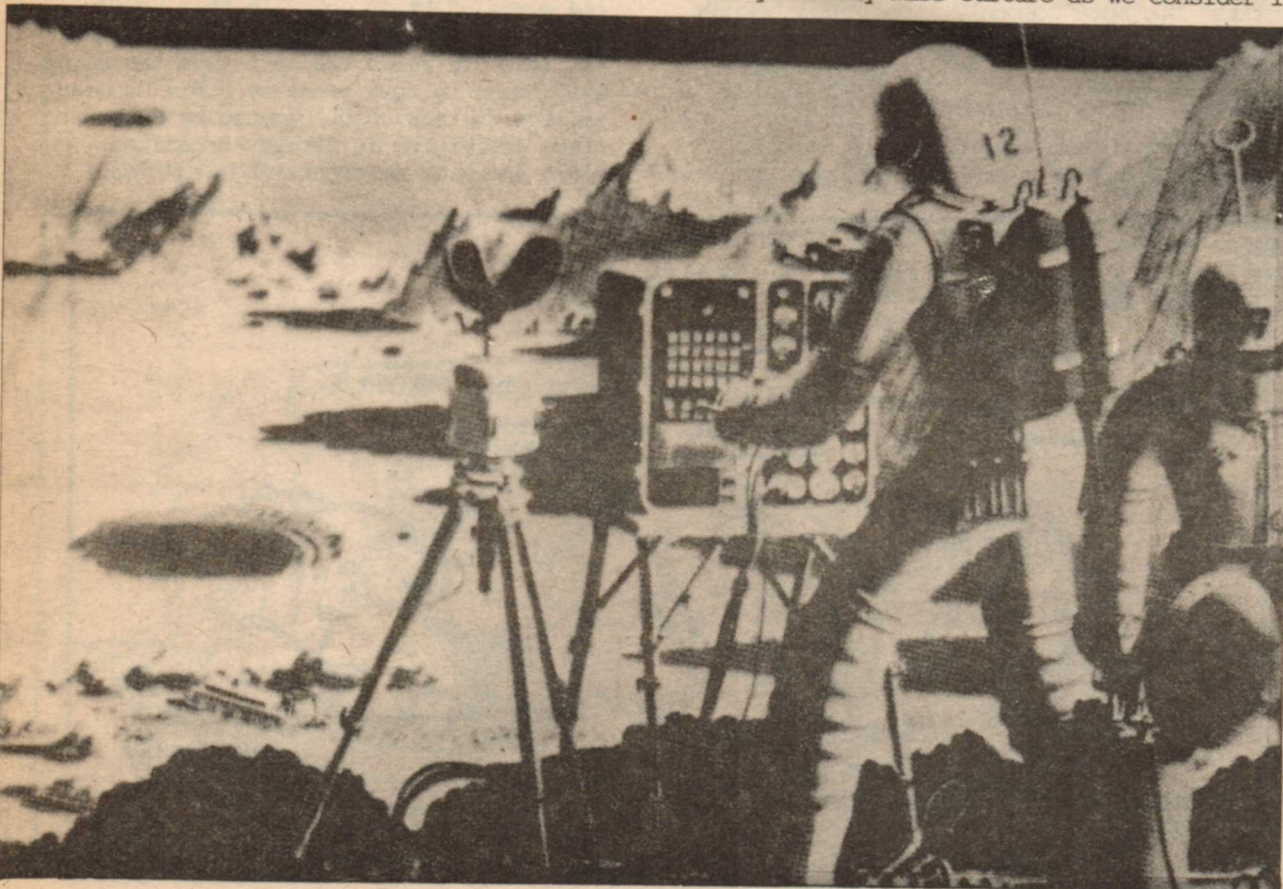
the emphasis tends towards the critical pole, exploring themes of knowledge as power, the dangers of science, as well as developing critiques of class society (*The Time Machine*) and imperialism (*The War of the Worlds*).

The second period occurs with the development of mass culture proper, in the cheap, mass produced pulp specialty magazines of the 1920's in the U.S. This period, also featuring the rise of mass advertising and consumption as salient characteristics of newly transformed American life, featured equally drastic changes in form, content and social function of science fiction. It emerged for the first time as a distinct literary entity in the "scientifiction" of Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*, formally shifting from novel to short story, thematically shifting to an emphasis on inventions themselves, rather than their social effects—a complete reversal in both areas. Postwar boom and optimism in the new phase of capitalism are reflected in the ideological themes of the period: imperialism, seen in the perpetual conquest of foreign planets; racism, seen in aliens thinly disguised as non-whites; sexism, seen in the male protagonists, with women (when they appear at all) as decorative objects or rewards. Ironically, the birth of science fiction as an independent cultural entity is achieved at the cost of literary excellence as well as critical content.

John Campbell's *Astounding* in the 1940's marked a qualitative shift in form and content again, though not in social function. Growing reader-writer sophistication, and an emerging self-conscious attitude fostered by the fandom phenomenon led to an emphasis away from gadgets as ends in themselves, and towards literary considerations in story construction; a tendency (which continues today) of growing rapprochement between science fiction and mainstream literature. This third phase was further altered by a parallel shift from short story back to novels again, following the explosion of mass market paperbacks in the 1950's. However, though the craftsmanship improved, the themes remained ideological. Overall, they reveal an ahistorical ethnocentrism, with the institutions and values of capitalist America projected throughout the universe as natural and eternal—bourgeois abstraction on a grandiose scale. Science fiction reflected the faith in scientific progress, and the optimism prevalent in the U.S. at its height as a global capitalist power, even as cold war paranoia crept in via fear of aliens, blobs and the like.

Since the 1960's science fiction has become "legitimate", entering the academy, as well as the work of mainstream writers such as Burgess, Lessing and Pynchon. It has also become more sophisticated, approaching literary quality from its own side (even while retaining its character as mass culture). What was called the "new wave" marked a culmination of previous developments, an experimentation with literary style and language, but also featuring a critical reversal of science fiction's previous ideological perspective. The most recent return to the critical pole of the continuum is this time a self-conscious one: writers such as LeGuin, Brunner and Delaney incorporate reflections on science fiction into their critiques of social, economic, political, sexual and psychological alienation; more than ever, the unique structures of the science fiction form are being utilized to critically extrapolate and explore new social relations. The most recent shift in science fiction reveals a case of one form of mass culture which has partially transcended its initial thematic and political limitations.

6. Science fiction novels such as LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*, Delaney's *Triton* or Russ' *The Female Man* actively contribute to the ongoing self-criticism of the science fiction community, as well as to the critical consciousness of our society. Current science fiction as a form of mass culture may not be a socially pervasive as television or rock music, but it certainly partakes of the same socio-cultural dynamic. Concrete investigation of science fiction's elements and their socio-historical development, reveals the ongoing dialectic of domination and liberation which characterizes life in modern capitalist society, demonstrating that mass culture shares that drive to humanize our world which is usually characterized in only political terms. Cultural politics is thus an essential part of the struggle for full human liberation.

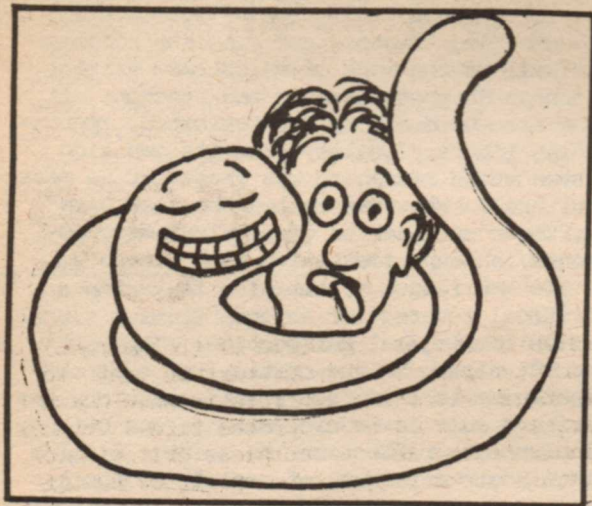


Some of my best comrades are friends

In matters of language, I tend to be a conservative. While I am not opposed to linguistic change per se, it is my sense that most such change represents intellectual laziness and decay. Most current changes in the English language are in no sense improvements or even the result of misguided attempts to bring about improvement, but simply destructive assaults. To say that these assaults are usually thoughtless rather than premeditated is not to excuse them but to understand their nature, for the degeneration of language is a major symptom, as well as a cause, of the degeneration of thought. Imprecise writing and speech are the clearest possible indications of imprecise thought, and those in the forefront of linguistic destruction are usually those who would have the most to lose if the habit of thought were to spread. My attitude to language is therefore that of the pedant, as Bertrand Russell once defined him: "a person who prefers to have his facts correct". A pedant is also someone who prefers to use language correctly, and in that sense we are in desperate need of pedantry.

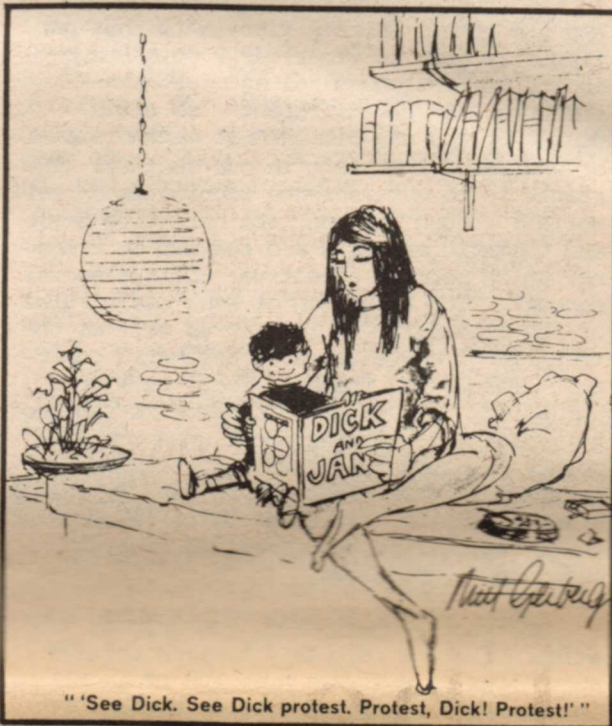
It is clear that an integral part of a conservative-yet-radical attitude to language (progressive conservatism?) must be opposition to the introduction of jargon. But it is also necessary to be sensitive to the abuse of established words which results in their becoming jargon. When this occurs it sometimes becomes necessary to reluctantly abandon words that have stood us in good stead for a long time. (A related problem occurs when the generally understood meaning of words changes drastically: it is virtually impossible to use the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" any more, for example, because "dictatorship" has taken on a very different meaning in the twentieth century, while "proletariat" now has no meaning for most people.)

An example of a word which is probably necessary to give up on is "comrade". It used to be a good word, but it has fallen on hard times, and I think it doubtful that it can be rehabilitated.



"Comrade" has become one of the typical bullshit words of the left, its use usually recognizable as humbug posturing as fellowship and solidarity. "Comrade" is no longer part of our normal vocabulary but rather one of the special buzz-words we trot out (no pun intended) on certain occasions, occasions on which we are being less than candid. Its usage today is markedly different from what it was originally. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "comrade" as "mate or fellow in work or play or fighting, (an) equal with whom one is on familiar terms." As this definition makes clear, "comrade" was at one time an easygoing, informal term of address that was commonly used throughout Europe in referring to one's fellows. As such, it easily became part of the socialist vocabulary, where people were bound together by the normal ties one felt towards one's fellow workers, and additionally by the special ties that were implied in socialist comradeship. But gradually the meaning of the word changed—significantly, the change was directly linked to a change in the concept of "party", as socialists used it. When Marx and Engels, for example, referred to "our party", they meant nothing more than those people who

shared their ideas and who were in some way working to realize them. Much later, in the 1960's, we used "movement" in the same sense. With the growth of the Second, and even more so the Third, International, however, "party" came to have a much more official, institutional meaning. No longer did it connote something broad and non-exclusive. Now one was either in the party or not in the party; if one didn't have a membership card, one was at best a "sympathizer" or a potential recruit. The word "comrade" was now used exclusively to refer to members of The Party, and, ironically, as it came to be more and more associated with socialism, it increasingly fell into disuse among ordinary people as they worked or played together.



Nevertheless, the word still had real life as long as there was real life in the socialist movement, but as that hardened and decayed, the word "comrade" was emptied of content too, until only the shell remained. Instead of the easygoing fraternity it once signified, "comrade" is now an official term, a title, devoid of personal content. (Certainly one does not address one's friends as comrades.) It is objectionably exclusive in its clear statement that only fellow members of the organization, not one's fellow workers are comrades. (It has always been almost exclusively a male term as well.) "Comrade" is rarely used in speech, almost never as the term of direct address it once was. (It may still be used in speeches: "Comrades...") Its normal application is now in written communication, sometimes as a salutation in letters, but more commonly, ironically enough in referring to one's opponents, in polemics "Comrade Dumbfuck seems not to have grasped Lenin's analysis of _____ as it applies to _____."

It is a sad end for such a fine word to come to, but there is nothing we can do about it now except to give it a respectful funeral.

about it now except to give it a respectful funeral.

Another word whose meaning we would do well to examine is "demonstration". It is surely a sad commentary on the political creativity of many of those who aim to create a whole new world that they are normally able to conceive of only one single political tactic, a tactic which is supposed to fit all situations: the demonstration. No matter what the issue, the knee-jerk response of the left is nearly always to "call a demonstration". What this indicates is not only a lamentable lack of imagination, but a lack of understanding of what a demonstration should be: demonstrations have their place, to be sure, but they are hardly the magic bullets of the class struggle.

As the root of the word, whether "demonstration" in English, or "manifestation" in German or French, should make clear, a demonstration should demonstrate something, show something, manifest something. Preferably, one would think, it should demonstrate the strength and unity of the demonstrators, and oppressiveness of the establishment, the possibility and desirability of radical alternatives. What many demonstrations really demonstrate, however, are the weakness, insignificance, and divisiveness of the left, the left's sterile approach to politics and change, its inability to offer any alternative except abstract slogan-chanting. If that is what a demonstration is going to be, if that is how it is going to come across to the ordinary people who witness it as onlookers, then it would have been better not to call it. Let us have fewer but better demonstrations, demonstrations that show something worth demonstrating.

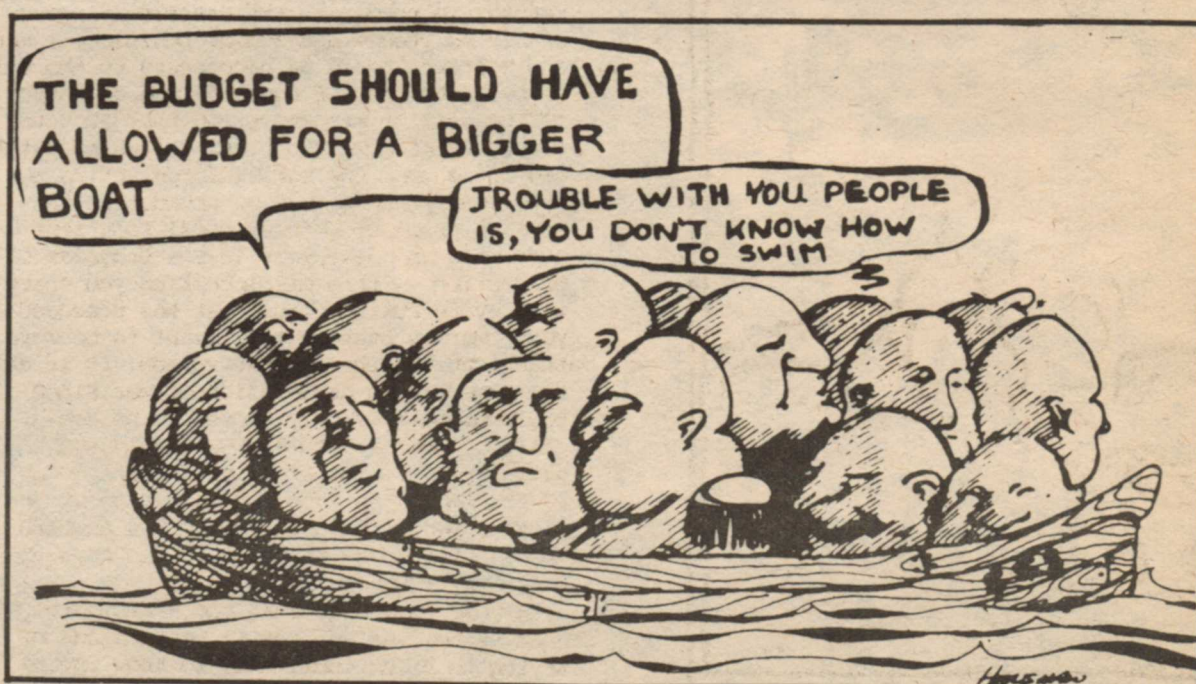
A. S. Neill tells the story of "the young devil in hell who rushed to his master in great perturbation:

"Master! Master! Something awful has happened; they have discovered truth on earth!"

The Devil smiled. "That's all right, boy. I'll send someone up to organise it."

The story could as well be about the left. The most overused word in the socialist vocabulary, and the most uncritically applied concept in the socialist world view, is "organize". For most socialists, "organize" is just a synonym for political activity generally. "Organizing" is the only conceivable form of political activity.

Now, it is certainly true that all life and all social interaction involve some kind of organization or structure, whether we are aware of it or not. In that sense, everything is organized. But that is not the sense in which the left uses the word, and indeed in that sense it would be meaningless to talk about organizing something, since everything is already organized. One could speak of re-organizing, however.)



But the left uses the concept of organization in a much narrower sense. The dictionary gives us a fair definition: "organize: give orderly structure to". Probably the clearest indication, however, comes from the workplace context, where, to both trade unions and the left, an "organized" workplace simply means a unionized one. Used in this sense, "organization" is an ideological concept both because it betrays a very restrictive and bureaucratic view of class struggle, and because it invariably accepts the proposition that such "organization" is necessarily a good thing.

Unions (to continue with this example) certainly play a role in protecting workers' basic rights, but, as anyone who has ever worked in a unionized workplace can testify, unions are in many ways negative phenomena which play a disorganizing role among the workers. Because unions are highly bureaucratic organizations tied to contracts, official grievance procedures, paid fulltime staff, pre-established routines, and very strictly defined limits, and because they jealously guard their monopoly as the only "workers" organization allowed in the workplace, they constantly and necessarily act to thwart the independent struggles and forms of organization of the workers.

As Jeremy Brecher has pointed out in *Radical America*, (vol. 7, No. 6) the prevailing view on the left is that the working class is organized "to the extent that it is enrolled in formal organizations, particularly trade unions and radical parties. The possibility that such organizations might represent the disorganization of their members - their inability to initiate and control their actions themselves - is not apparent from this point of view. Any activity not originating with such organizations is by definition "spontaneous".

It is this conception that underlies the left's drive to "organize". The advancement of class struggle is seen as lying in the building of traditional organizations with structures, meetings, leaders, and programs. (Let me stress here, before the organizational fetishists come howling after my scalp, yelping "spontaneism, spontaneism" - whatever that means - that I am not opposed to forming

organizations. I am opposed to the view that equates progress toward socialism with forming organizations. The fact is that one of the key factors preventing the development of collective consciousness and activity is the way in which capitalism atomizes people in their work, their living arrangements, all aspects of life. It is only when people are able to come together that change becomes possible. Organizations which perpetuate the atomization of people, which do not allow collective action to develop, which bring people together as units of a mass, are not radicalizing organizations. The hard fact is this: people "organized" in a bureaucratic trade union have developed little more collectivity than people organized into a ball park by a football game.

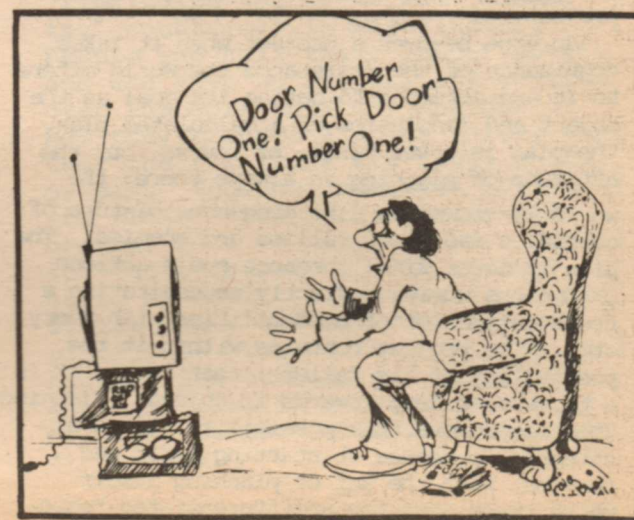


The result of the left's peculiar bias is that everything else tends to be ignored, subordinated, or subsumed in the organization-building fetish. It is no wonder, then, that the struggle for socialism, as we engage in it, is in practice a narrow one, despite our theories and our intentions. The struggle to - for example - achieve sexual liberation, to raise free and happy children, to drive authoritarianism out of the schools, to create a different culture, to transform daily life, is not primarily a matter of forming organizations, although organizations will undoubtedly play a role of some kind.

Why does the left have this bureaucratic fetish? (The anarchists are obviously not included in this critique: they have an equally stupid anti-organizational fetish which abstractly rejects organization. Neither position contains an analysis of the

role of formal organizations, of their hows, whens, and whys.) I think it has a great deal to do with the traditional socialist stress on planning. The main problem with capitalism, according to this view, was seen as its inability to plan. Socialism was a historic leap forward because it would substitute a Plan for "capitalist anarchy". (Trotsky, for example, insisted to the end of his life that the Soviet Union was more progressive than the capitalist countries because it had a Plan.) This attitude was applied, more or less, to all areas of social life. After the revolution, there would be no more of the miserable chaos of capitalism where everything was left to chance or to the desires of the most powerful: Socialism would organize the hell out of everything, and in so doing bring justice to the world. The underlying motives were good in many ways, but the resulting perspective was fatally narrow. (The ultimate destination was The Organization: The Party.) A free society requires a great deal of organization, but freedom also involves recognizing where organizing is not appropriate. In the meantime, we should not always assume that "doing politics" means "organizing". There are other forms of activity, other ways of raising consciousness.

Ulli Diemer



The Destructive Urge

Demystification can be construed as a terrorist practice.

The desire to reduce illusions to ashes proceeds from both a hatred of illusion and the sheer aesthetic joy of witnessing the conflagration. For the hatred for the bourgeois is aesthetic as well as moral. The bourgeois is a pig not just because he exploits but even more so because he is bourgeois, a conceited bastard who refuses to recognize the utter contingency of his existence and social position, a man who believes he is as necessary to the universe as the law of conservation of energy.

"The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms, springing from your present mode of production and form of property -- historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production -- this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you." Marx's statement is meant to be more than a philosophical observation. It is at the same time a declaration of war since the bourgeois is only proved to be conceited if he is actually made to disappear. Having escaped the anguish of his freedom by pretending to be a manifestation of the eternal he is reintroduced to his anguish through the naked strenght of the revolutionary movement.

Revolt thus begins as the affirmation of contingency, as an urge to test things by trying to break them. All we know in the

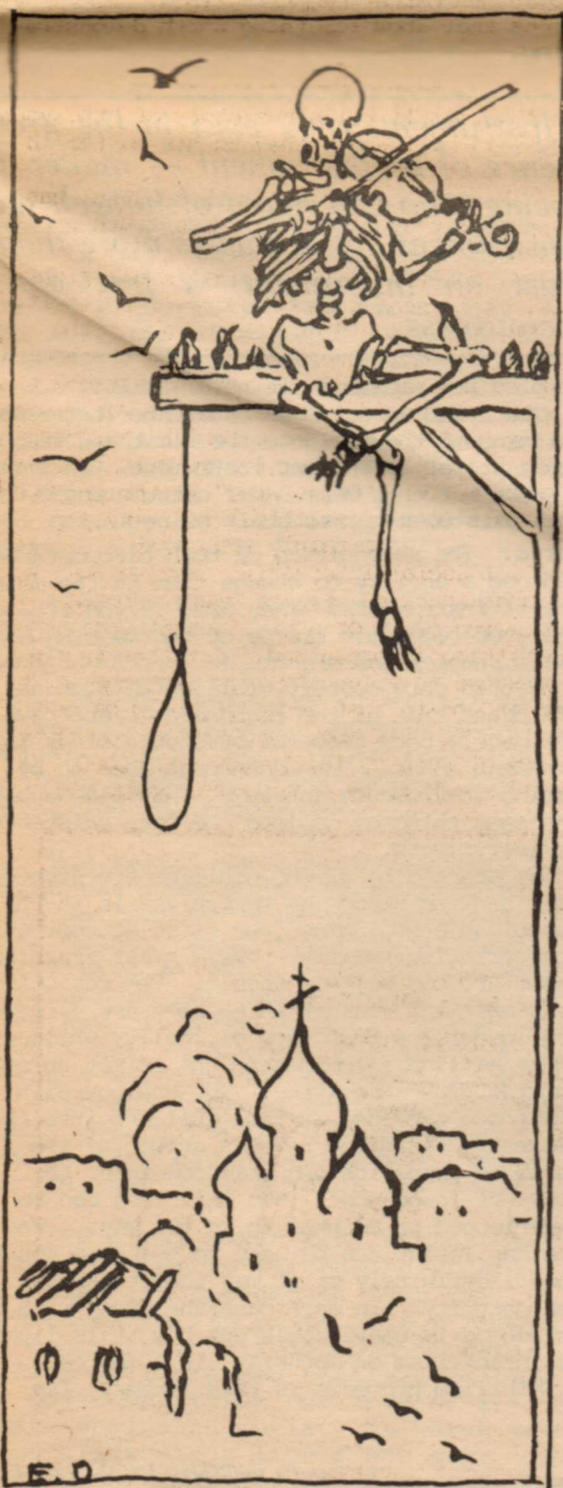
beginning is that the world of the bourgeois is a fabrication. For our part we yearn for the concrete and the concrete is what doesn't burn, the ashes left after the fire. Thus Marxism begins as the "ruthless criticism of everything existing." "The spirit of revolt makes its first appearance as nihilism.

Nihilism is the beginning. It is therefore infantile in both senses of the word: it is both an unavoidable first step and inadequate as a permanent relation to the world. We have as yet only an automatic reaction to a vague yearning for the real. Between yearning and gratification there is not rational mediation. The yearning itself is left unquestioned, shielded from the "ruthless criticism" that it subjects everything else to.

At some point this blind search of the real must become aware of its blindness. Childhood stands outside itself and recognizes its inadequacy. Prolonged beyond this point nihilism, like childhood, becomes grotesque,

"Thus nihilism must either degenerate or else mature into a genuinely revolutionary attitude."

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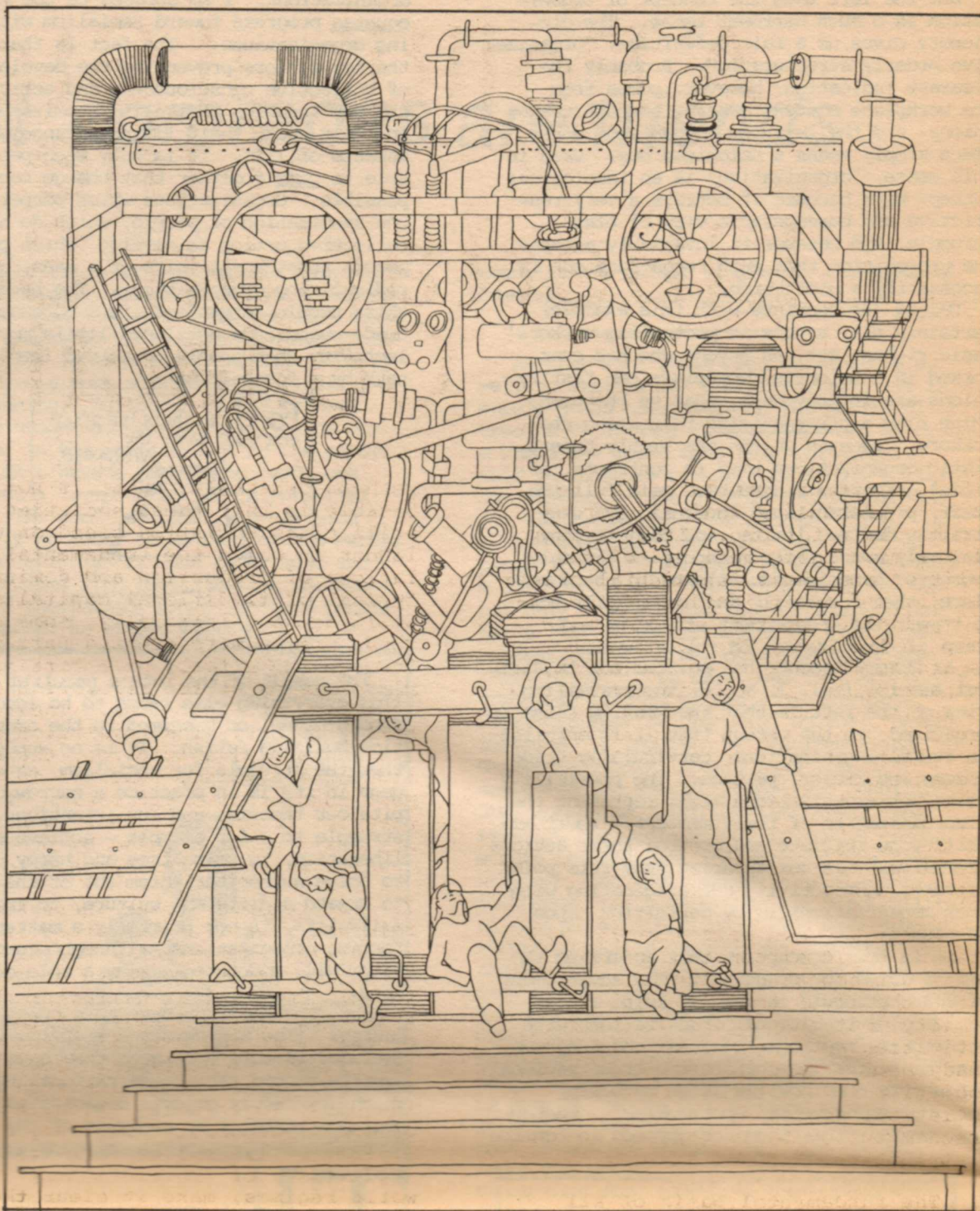
its original youthfulness turned into a pathetic mimicry of itself.

Thus nihilism must either degenerate or else mature into a genuinely revolutionary attitude. Philosophy proceeds in the same way: the process of doubt must at some point become a process of discovery. The skepticism which liberates us from our illusions must give way to the more arduous but fruitful investigation of experience. Else it becomes an excuse for new illusions. In a similar fashion nihilism by refusing to situate the urge to destroy within a context of conflicting possibilities avoids the risk of failure that must attend any project undertaken in the real world. In a backhanded way it eliminates the contingency it pretends to celebrate.

The revolutionary attitude on the other hand demands that the urge to destroy be subsumed within the project of creation. Bakunin's equation of the two (the urge to destroy is a creative urge) is simply bad faith, an attempt to avoid the dirty task of transforming one into the other. The urge to destroy has to become the urge to create and the urge to create has to become a conscious project.

An urge becomes a project when it takes cognizance of the resistance the world offers to it and attempts to define its goal as the object and conclusion of a calculated plan. The plan is never final, of course, but the attitude of planning is always there: the world is viewed as a heterogeneous mixture of obstacles and tools, allies and enemies. The plan is never final, because one's actions change the world constantly necessitating a fresh estimation of probabilities with every step. The project contains within it the possibility of its failure; that is why it is a project, a leap towards an object. Planning does not remove this possibility, it merely attempts to reduce it starting first and foremost with the act of planning itself which translates the undifferentiated resistance of the world into an obstacle and thus into a lack of tools. By virtue of this simple operation the resistance offered by the world becomes overcomable since the obstacle at least defines the tools for its overcoming. These may not be available but at least the task of fashioning them or discovering them (a rough stone is both a stone and a potential hammer head) is a practical one.

The creative attitude may thus be defined as an instrumentalizing approach to the world. This is not the same thing as the technocratic approach. Creation demands recognition of the free consciousness behind the project. Which project to undertake and what means to use in order to objectify it remain forever open questions. By contrast the technocrat sees the project as a given, something which in a sense already exists since it does not originate in any human currently living but rather something imposed by the future on the present. Production has to be doubled, so-



cialism has to be "built": the plan rules. Within the creative project, however, the plan itself always remains an instrument, the unification of all other instruments. Paradoxically by denying the human authorship of the plan, its arbitrariness, technocratic reason dooms itself to irrationality, to a permanent discrepancy between the plan and reality. Instruments only exist in the presence of an instrument-maker, a being who can make of himself an instrument but is always more than just an instrument, a free consciousness. Once this being is obliterated, instruments return to their inert state, the hammer-head resumes its existence as a stone. Likewise the technocratic plan fails the moment it ceases to be an instrument and starts to rule. Production is doubled and

"Instruments only exist in the presence of an instrument — maker a being who can make of himself an instrument but is always more than just an instrument, a free consciousness."

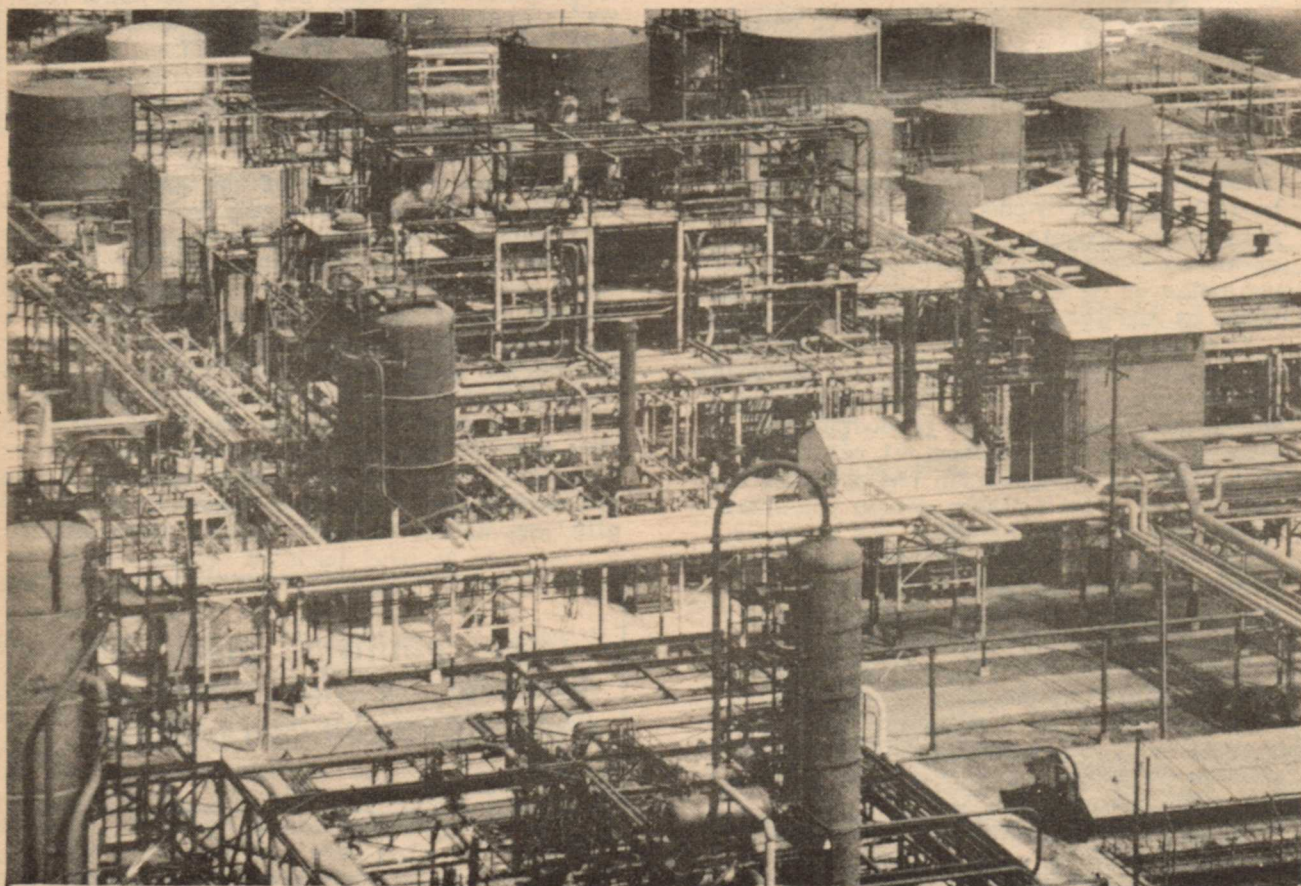
tripled but socialism is never built.

The creative attitude takes the instrumentalizing of the world to the limit and regards itself as another instrument. Men make history but they make under circumstances that existed prior to their being in the world. The recognition of both circumstances and one's ability to change them is the meaning of instruments. They are, if you like, the ever-renewable traces of the meeting between subject and object.

Within this context nihilism emerges as the other side of the technocratic approach. Ultimately both deny the existence of an instrument maker. The technocrat does it by giving instruments autonomy. Nihilism achieves the same thing by denying the very existence of instruments.

We started by giving nihilism the status of a genuine need. We recognized in it the unavoidable beginning, the first attempt at appropriating reality. These first trappings about are not without result. The resistance they meet and against which they are directed elucidates the structure of reality while at the same time illuminating the as yet uninterrogated urge to destroy. The analogy with childhood provides further insights into this process. Childhood reveals enough of the world to force its own transcendence, the "loss of innocence". But this loss can be experienced or adapted to in two ways. What one has learnt can be used to postpone adulthood indefinitely or it may form the basis for maturity. In each case the break with childhood is unavoidable but how it is lived, as infantilism or maturity, is a choice.

Nihilism proceeds in this manner. Its



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Political Statement

hierarchy, and bureaucracy, of capitalist technique, forms of organization, and technology, of the orientation to the environment that attempts to dominate and manipulate it rather than living in ecological harmony with it. Socialism means recognition of the centrality of creativity, play, art, and sexuality. It involves awareness of all forms of social life, struggle against all forms of oppression and repression, work on developing alternatives in the process of the struggle itself. Libertarian socialism implies the following:

12. The idea that socialism is first and foremost about freedom, and therefore about overcoming domination, repression and alienation that block the free flow of human creativity, thought and action. We do not equate socialism with planning, state control, or nationalization of industry although we understand that in a socialist society (not 'under' socialism) economic activity will be collectively controlled, managed, planned and owned. Similarly, we believe that socialism will involve equality, but we do not think that socialism is equality, for it is possible to conceive of a society where everyone is equally oppressed. We think that socialism is incompatible with one-party states, with constraints on freedom of speech, with an elite exercising power 'on behalf of' the people, with leader cults, with any of the other devices which the dying society seeks to portray itself as the new society.

13 Libertarian politics concerns itself with the liberation of the individual because it is collective, and with the collective liberation because it is individualistic.

An approach to socialism that incorporates cultural revolution, women's and children's liberation, and the critique and transformation of daily life, as well as the more traditional concerns of socialist politics. A politics that is completely revolutionary because it seeks to transform all of reality. We do not think that capturing the economy or the state lead automatically to the transformation of the rest of the social being, nor do we equate liberation with changing our lifestyles and our heads. Capitalism is a total system that invades all areas of life: socialism must be the overcoming of capitalist reality in its entirety, or it is nothing.

15 Being a socialist is not only an intellectual thing, a matter of having the right ideas or the right intellectual approach. It is also a matter of the way you lead your life.

16 A politics that is revolutionary because, in the words of Marx and Engels, "revolution is necessary not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew."

17 Because revolution is a collective process of self-liberation, because people and society are transformed through struggle, not by decree, therefore "the emancipation of the working class can only be achieved by the working classes themselves", not by a Leninist vanguard, a socialist state or any other agent acting on their behalf.

18 A conception of the left not as separate from society, but as part of it. We of the left are people who are subjected to social oppression

like everyone else, who struggle for socialism because our liberation is possible only when all society is liberated. We seek to bring others to our socialist project not to do them a favour, but because we need their help to achieve our own liberation. Cohn-Bendit's comment that "It is for yourself that you make the revolution" is not an individualistic position but the key to a truly collective politics based on joy and the promise of life, instead of on the self-sacrifice that is often the radical's version of the white man's burden.

19 We of the left see ourselves as equal participants in the struggle not as the anointed leaders of it. We put forward our socialist vision as part of our contribution, but we do not think that our belief in socialism means that we have all the answers. We deal with people honestly, as equals, not presuming the right to dictate what they shall think or do, nor presuming that we have nothing to learn from them. We have enough faith in our politics that we do not seek to manipulate people to our conclusions.



20 with other people who share our ideas. This is necessary and valid, but it represents a situation that we should try continually to overcome, not one that we should accept and even institutionalize in the Leninist mode. Socialism implies not only the withering away of the state, but also the withering away of the left and its organizations as separate entities. Power in a socialist society must be exercised in ways allowing the participation of everyone, not only those belonging to a given organization. This must be prefigured in the political forms and movements that emerge before the revolution. The ultimate goal of the left and its organizations must not be to rule society, but to abolish themselves.

21 The most important component of socialist consciousness is critical thought. We must learn to think about everything critically, to take nothing for granted, nothing as given. Consequently we do not want people to accept socialist ideas in the way they now accept, partially or completely bourgeois ideas. We want to destroy all uncritical acceptance and belief. We think that a critical

examination of society leads to socialist conclusions, but what is important is not simply the conclusions but equally and even more so the method of arriving at them.

22 We base ourselves on the heritage of Marxism. This does not mean that we accept all the ideas of Marx, let alone of those who claim to be his followers. Marxism is a point of departure for us, not our predetermined destination. We accept Marx's dictum that our criticism must fear nothing, including its own results. Our debt to Marxism will be no less if we find that we have to go beyond it.

23 Nothing could be more foreign to us than the "traditional Marxist" idea that all important questions have been answered. On the contrary we have yet to formulate many of the important questions.

24 We have to try to maintain a balance of theory and practice which seeks to integrate them, and which recognizes that we must engage in both at all times.

25 The centre of gravity of our politics has to be where we are, not in the vicarious identification with struggles elsewhere. Solidarity work is important, but it cannot be the main focus of a socialist movement.

26 We don't know if we'll win: history is made by human beings, and where human beings are concerned, nothing is inevitable. But because people do make history, we know that it is possible to build a new world, and we strive to realize that possibility. "There is only one reason to be a revolutionary -- because it is the best way to live."

Socialism and Socialist Strategy

Socialism and Socialist Strategy

27. We have much to learn from previous revolutionary efforts, from their successes and failures, but none of these efforts have been ultimately successful. There are no socialist countries or "workers' states" (deformed, degenerated, or otherwise) in existence today. All social, political, and economic systems in existence are oppressive and exploitative, and must be overturned. All states must be overthrown, including those that now call themselves socialist, such as the USSR and its bloc, Yugoslavia, Cuba, China, Albania, Mozambique, etc. There are significant social and economic differences between countries, but these are differences within the oppressive system built on wage labour.

Nevertheless, the differences between countries and types of social structures are important, and our political attitudes will take them into account. For example, liberal democracy or social democracy are preferable to facism or military dictatorship. A regime promoting literacy, modern health care, and economic development is more progressive than one offering nothing except corruption and social decay. Internationally, we support the efforts of nations to gain independence and resist imperialist domination, even though we do not support the regimes of these nations or the programmes of the national liberation movements. In other words, our opposition to all existing regimes and social structures does not mean abstention from all political choices prior to their overthrow. The fact of their sameness does not blind us to their differences.

28. We reject social democracy and social democratic organizations, but we may support reforms of various kinds. However, we never see them as ends in themselves, but always as part of a process leading to revolution.

29. We oppose a parliamentary or reformist strategy for bringing about socialism, but at times it may be tactically correct to participate in elections, or parliaments, as part of an overall strategy.

30. In cases where socialists are elected, they must be strictly subordinated to the program and decisions of the organization as a whole. The normal freedom to disagree belonging to members of the organization is severely restricted in their case, because they are public spokespeople for the organization. Elected representatives who do not follow the decisions and policies of the organization must be recalled and/or expelled. The same holds true for people holding posts in other political or labour bodies after being elected as members of the group. The group must be consulted before any member runs for a political position.

31. Because revolution must take place in all spheres of life, revolutionary activity must also take place on all fronts: economic, political, social, cultural, ecological, etc. Socialist activity is not merely a matter of political or workplace organizing. Forms of 'extra-parliamentary' action such as community and workplace organizing are necessary forms of socialist activity, although they are not of themselves revolutionary.

32. The process of advancing to socialism involves many people in many different activities, and for that reason alone cannot be primarily a matter of elections or preparing for elections. But it is possible that in a country such as Canada, a liberal democracy, at a certain point in the process, socialist candidates will win an electoral victory. This would be an occasion for working people to implement the socialist program - i.e., continuing the struggle both outside and inside parliament. It is extremely likely that in such a situation the forces of reaction would discard bourgeois legalities and attempt to destroy the socialist forces by any means available. Such an attack will be resisted by whatever means necessary that are consistent with socialist principles. In principle, however, the possibility of a relatively peaceful transition to socialism cannot be absolutely ruled out. It depends largely on the actions of the bourgeoisie.

33. Socialism is not state ownership of the means of production. It is not the extension of the role of the state. While society will not be stateless immediately after a socialist conquest of power - although the bourgeois state must be immediately dismantled and destroyed - the nature and activities of the transitional state apparatus will be radically different.

34. The first task of the transitional administration is to co-ordinate the defeat and repression of the bourgeoisie and its allies and agents, internal and external. It is not the primary agent of the reconstruction of society on socialist lines - this can only be the work of the people as a whole, working directly through the organizational and social forms they find appropriate.

35. The second task of the transitional state is to participate in its own dismantling as social, political, and economic life is organized on a radically different basis.

36. While there cannot be blueprints for the socialist future, it is possible to talk about certain basic pre-conditions and principles. Foremost among these must be direct popular control of social life: workers' control and management of the workplaces, community control of the community, students' and staff control of the schools, etc.

37. At the same time, because none of these things exist in isolation, there must also be found ways of making sure activities and institutions are accountable to society as a whole - e.g. a workplace must also be responsible to the community in which it is situated and its environmental, economic and social needs, and to the needs of the economy as a whole.

38. Therefore representative institutions deriving their mandate from and answerable at every point to, the different constituencies eg. workplace, community - will also come into existence.

39. Organizations such as workers' councils will have key roles to play, but theirs will not be the sole role. Not everyone works, so other organizations will also be important to give everyone a say on the different levels of societal organization.

40. Socialism implies no fetish of centralization. In some things there will be a great deal more co-ordination and planning, but in many cases de-centralization is often more efficient and/or more suited to peoples' needs. In many areas of life, there is presently too much control and intervention. In many cases, therefore, the advent of socialism will mean less control and interference, and the expansion of individual freedom and the increase of group activity outside any official or state control.

41. The creation of socialism implies the broadest political and individual freedom and democracy. This includes freedom of the press and other forms of communication, and the freedom to form various political parties and groups - a socialist pluralism. It will be necessary to ban only the parties of the extreme right and those actively working to restore bourgeois society. And even this ban can be progressively eased and finally removed as the socialist transformation proceeds.

Canada

42. Canada's position in the world capitalist system is largely defined by its relation to the United States. Canada is largely dominated by the United States, and this creates various economic, cultural, and other ramifications in this country. We therefore oppose the U.S. imperialist domination of Canada, and see the opposition to it as a component of the struggle for socialism. At the same time, we recognize that in some areas, such as the Caribbean, the Canadian state and Canadian capital themselves play an imperialistic role and we oppose this in the same way as we oppose imperialist penetration of Canada. We also recognize that the same processes of capitalism have also produced serious distortions and exploitative relations in Canada itself, for example in relation to Quebec or the Maritimes. The struggle against these inequalities is also a component of the struggle for socialism in Canada.

We reject the idea that Canada is a colony, and we reject the idea that U.S. imperialist domination is the 'primary contradiction' (a valueless concept at any rate) or that it is necessary to form a 'national liberation' movement in Canada. The effort to make Canada independent is a subordinate part of the overall struggle for socialism. Our international perspective is not that of nation against nation, but of class against class.

43. We recognize that Quebec is a distinct national entity within the Canadian state, and we thus support Quebec's right to self-determination. At the same time, we do not presuppose that Quebec ought to separate from Canada. We see no necessary reason why Quebec's national aspirations cannot be met within the framework of Canada, should the people of Quebec choose that option. In Quebec, as in Canada, we are opposed to any form of nationalism, such as that of the Parti Quebecois, which claims to supersede class questions.

44. We support unions and the organization of unions insofar as they defend the interests of workers. At the same time, we recognize that unions have a dual role: they also increasingly function to discipline workers and integrate them into capitalist production in exchange for recognition and certain economic gains. We therefore recognize that in many ways unions do not serve the interests of workers, and we reject the view of unions as actual or potential vehicles of revolutionary organization. The struggle of workers is increasingly directed against unions as well as against management. We do not see a workplace strategy as being directed at capturing union office, or at bringing about changes in unions. The problems of unions are structural - a product of their role, and that of the contract, in guaranteeing consistent production - and are thus not solvable by changing leaders or by bringing about greater democracy. We do not rule out the possibility, in specific circumstances where the union has become an issue in a given workplace, that socialists will participate in organizing elections or will even run for office on the local level. But we see this as an exceptional circumstance, not a general or long-term strategy for workplace organizing.



45. We support the self-organization of people into unions, co-operatives, community and tenants' groups, women's liberation groups, etc. At the same time, these organizations often tend to be partial and inclined to reformism. We support and participate in their activities, but we always strive to connect their activities to the concept and activities of a larger movement toward socialism.

46. When participating in larger organizations, common fronts, etc., we put forward our ideas. We do not seek to hide our affiliation or beliefs, or to manipulate or seize control of groups. If we participate in the running of such groups, we do so on the basis of having been chosen by people who know our politics. We loyally work to support the activities decided upon even if we favoured other options, unless they are clearly reactionary. We do not seek to substitute ourselves for reactionary leaders, but to democratize the organizations to the fullest possible extent, to involve as many people as possible directly. In a strike, or any action, our objective is to facilitate its development, not to bring it under our control or to get it to adopt our 'line'.

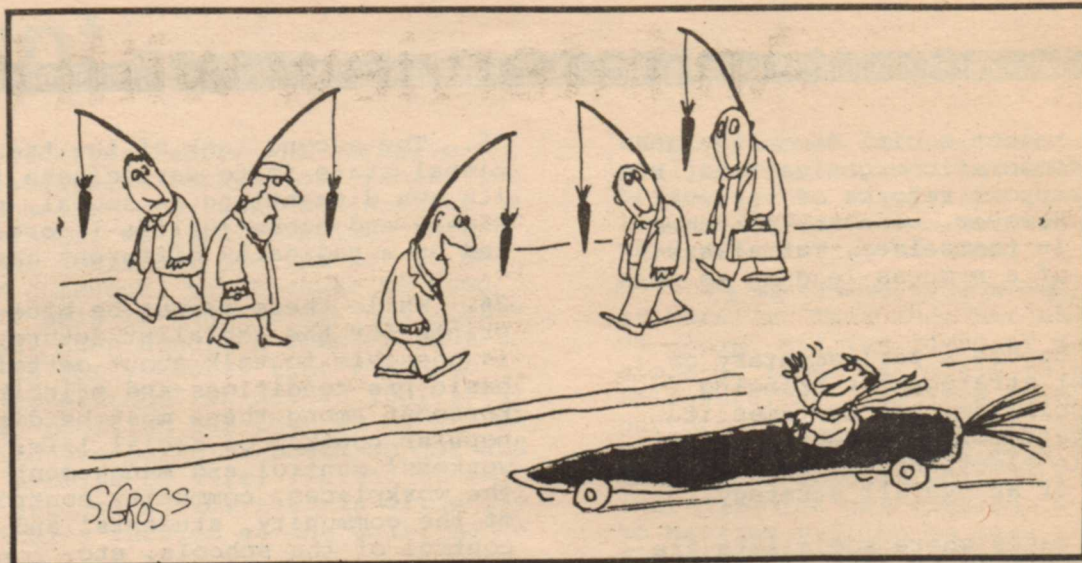
47. We think that revolutionary organization is necessary. We see the role of such organizations as being largely to educate, to provide a common focus, theme, and analysis for the movement, a pool of resources, a means of co-ordinating activity which can be useful at certain points in the struggle. We do not see the organization as playing the dominant role in a revolutionary movement or crisis, or in the post-revolutionary period. Historical experience has shown that working people create their own institutions and forms at such times, institutions that transcend party lines: the Paris Commune, the soviets thrown up by the mass strike movement in Russia, the factory councils, the workers' councils of the post-World War I period and of Hungary in 1956, the collectives of revolutionary Spain, the worker/student action committees of France in 1968, the drive to create non-party forms in Portugal in the 1970's. Historically, the role of parties has usually been to retard the revolutionary process in moments of crisis because they attempt to take it over, "lead" it, and determine its pace. If a revolutionary organization is to assist the revolutionary process, it must place itself at the disposal of broader movements, especially in times of crisis, rather than attempt to place the movement at the disposal of its strategy.

48. We reject the ideas that consciousness develops through a progression of pre-determined stages ("trade union, political" etc.) and the idea that socialist consciousness must or can be brought to the working class from the outside.

49. The crisis of the working class movement is not a crisis of leadership, but a crisis of the self-activation and self-consciousness of the working classes.

50. Leadership is not an institutionalized function in a movement, but a practical reality that can change from one day or one hour to the next, and almost certainly will change in any mass movement or dynamic situation. The attempt to institutionalize leadership in a particular organization can only result in putting a brake on the development of the revolutionary process.

51. The concept of a vanguard and its supposed monopoly of "revolutionary consciousness" is fundamentally false. It indicates a narrowly intellectual stress on formal



ideas which fails to understand that consciousness is reflected and worked out in all aspects of life. Consciousness can and does differ in even the same person from time to time and from issue to issue. The left has no monopoly on consciousness: while the left understands the necessity for revolution, it does not necessarily completely understand what this entails and how it is to be brought about.

52. We reject terrorism everywhere since it is a dead end. We particularly condemn random terror (eg. hijacking) which does not even discriminate between enemies and ordinary people. Terrorism stems from the belief that revolution is an impossible ideal whereas it is possible if the majority of people believe it to be a practical action.

53. We support civil liberties and oppose the erosion of liberal democratic forms in the direction of greater authoritarianism. We oppose bourgeois democracy, but we do so because it is not truly democratic, not because we propose to replace it with dictatorship. We seek to establish a society which is far more democratic than any existing now. In a socialist society rights such as freedom of speech, of association, of assembly, of the press, of religion, freedom to form political parties and associations, will be guaranteed. Their exercise will be protected against not only legal but economic sanction. Rights such as freedom of the press, for those who criticize the status quo as well as those who favour it, will be actively supported in ways making it possible and not merely legally permissible to exercise them.

54. We seek the replacement of liberal electoral "democracy" by forms of participatory, direct, and representative democracy that extend political power to everyone. We seek the extension of direct popular control to all parts of the economy and all social institutions.

Internal Organization and Membership

55. To be a member of the Libertarian Socialist Collective (LSC) it is necessary to accept the program and principles of the group. Disagreement with specific programmatic points is acceptable as long as the group feels sufficient basic agreement exists, and as long as the member is willing to abide by the points in question in doing political work with the group. In addition to this "Political Statement", prospective members should be in basic agreement with the political direction and approach of the group, as exemplified by The Red Menace and the practice of the LSC. If differences are felt to be unbridgeable, a member may be removed from membership by majority vote upon notice of at least one meeting being given.

56. The fundamental organizational principles of a socialist organization must always be the greatest degree of democracy, meaning active control by the membership, and the greatest degree of openness compatible with the legal confines it is working under.

57. The organizational principles of the group include the greatest possible degree of autonomy for members and local groups in undertaking activities, so long as these are compatible with the basic principles and program of the organization, and as long as actions decided on by the organization as a whole are carried out.

58. Since the activities and membership of the organization encompass more than one locality, the membership may propose and set up such central and co-ordinating bodies as are necessary. Such bodies are subject to the complete control of the membership.

59. Programmatic minorities have the right to exist and organize within the organization, as long as they remain within the basic principles of the organization, and as long as their factional organization does not interfere with their political work as members.

60. Minority viewpoints may not be presented, explicitly or implicitly, as the viewpoint of the organization.

61. Political differences within the organization are not secret - political debate with the organization is public.

62. Members of the organization are expected to participate in the activities of the group, and are expected to attend meetings regularly.

63. Members may not belong to any other political party or league, or to any organization exercising centralist discipline over its members.

APPRECIATED DONATIONS

If the Red Menace is to survive, it has to pay its bills. To do that, we need help from you. Subscriptions and sales are the financial backbone of The Red Menace, of course, but so far they haven't been paying the bills. To get by, we have been relying on donations from people who consider The Red Menace important enough to give additional financial support to. Please send us whatever you feel you can afford: The Red Menace, P.O. Box 171, Postal Station D, Toronto, Canada.

An interview with Karl Marx

The fact that Marx wrote little on questions of organization has made it easier for 'socialists' and 'Marxists' of all stripes to claim that their particular organizational prescriptions were the logical complement to Marx's theories. We reproduce here an interview which Marx gave in 1871 in which he deals with the organization of the First International.

I came immediately to the purpose of my visit. The world, I said, appears to be in the dark concerning the International; it hates the International without being able to explain what it actually is which it hates. A few, who believe that they have penetrated more deeply into the darkness, claim that the International is Janus-headed, with the good-natured and honest smile of a worker on the one face and the murderous aspect of a conspirator on the other. I asked Marx to lift the secrecy which surrounds this theory. The scholar smiled amusedly - so it seemed to me - at the idea that we had such fear of him.

My dear sir, there are no secrets to reveal, began Marx, in a very polished form of the Hans-Breitmann dialect, unless it be the secret of the human stupidity of those who persist in ignoring the fact that our Association does its work in the open and that it publishes exhaustive reports of its activities for all those who want to read them. You can purchase our Statutes for one penny, and if you spend a shilling, you can purchase brochures from which you will learn almost everything about us that we ourselves know.

I: "Almost" - that may be true. But is it not perhaps precisely that which I don't know which is the most important? I will be completely open with you and put the question as an outsider must put it: Does not the generally negative attitude to your organization itself prove more than the ignorant ill-feeling of the masses? And would you, after everything you just said, still allow me this question: Just what is the International?

Dr. Marx: You only have to look at the people who comprise it - they are workers.

I: Yes, but soldiers are not always representative of the government which disposes over them. I know several of your members, and I will gladly believe that they are not the stuff of which conspirators are made. At any rate, a secret which one shared with a million people would not remain a secret. But what if these people are only tools in the hands of a bold cabal - and I hope you will forgive me if I add - one not always fastidious in its choice of means?

Dr. Marx: There is nothing to prove that this is the case.

I: And the last uprising in Paris?

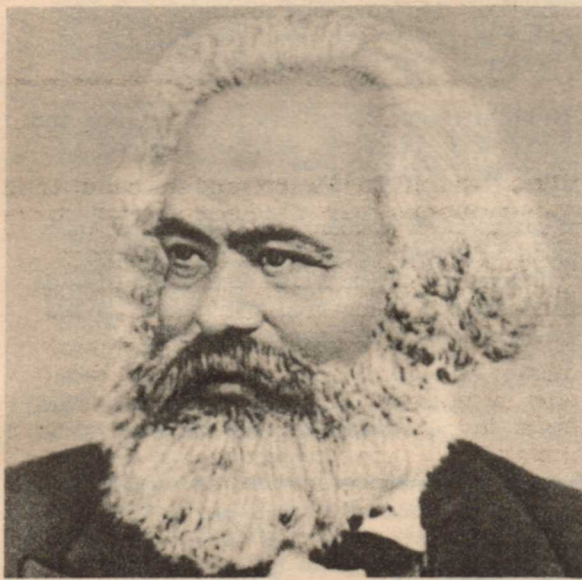
Dr. Marx: First of all I would ask you to prove that there was any kind of a conspiracy and that everything which occurred was not simply the inevitable result of the existing circumstances. And even if we assume that there was a conspiracy, I would still ask you to prove to me that the International Association took part in it.

I: The presence of so many members of the Association in the Commune.

Dr. Marx: Then it could just as easily have been a conspiracy of Freemasons, for their individual part in it was not small by any means. I really would not be surprised if the Pope did try to push the whole uprising onto their account. But let us try to find another explanation. The uprising in Paris was carried out by the Parisian workers. The most capable workers must therefore have been the ones who led it and carried it out; yet the most capable workers are also members of the International Association. But nevertheless, the Association need not be

responsible for their actions in any way.

I: The world will look at it through different eyes. People are talking about secret instructions from London and even about financial assistance. Can it be maintained that the allegedly open activity of the Association rules out any secret communications?



Dr. Marx: Has there ever been an association which carried out its work without having confidential as well as open communications? But to speak of secret instructions from London as if it were a question of decrees in questions of belief and morals, emanating from some centre of papal rule and intrigue, would be to completely misunderstand the nature of the International. This would presuppose a centralised form of government in the International; in reality, however, the organizational form of the International gives the greatest scope to local initiative and autonomy. The International is in fact not at all a government of the working class; it is more of a union or an association than a centre of command.

I: And what is the purpose of this association?

Dr. Marx: The economic emancipation of the working class through the conquest of political power. The utilization of this political power for the realization of social goals. Our goals have to be all-encompassing so that they may include all the forms of effectiveness of the working class. If we had given them a particular character, then they would have met the needs of only one section of the working class, the working class of only one nation. But how could one induce all people to unite for the interests of a few? If our association did this, it would not have the right to call itself an international. The Association does not dictate any particular form of political activity; it only demands that all this activity be directed toward the same final goal. It comprises a network of subsidiary organizations which stretch throughout the world of work. In every part of the world special aspects of the general problem emerge; the workers take these into consideration and work to solve them in their own way. The associations of the workers cannot be identical to the last detail in Newcastle and Barcelona, in London and in Berlin. In England for example the working class has a choice as to how it will develop its political strength. An uprising would be a stupidity in a country where the goal can be reached more quickly and surely through peaceful means. In France the numerous repressive laws and the deadly antagonism between the classes seem to make a violent solution to social divisions necessary. Whether such a solution will be chosen is a matter to be decided by the working class of that country. The International does not presume to dictate in this question, or even to advise to any extent. But it does express its sympathy for every movement and gives them assistance within the framework of its own rules.

I: And what is the nature of this help?

Dr. Marx: Let me give you an example. One

of the forms which the movement for emancipation employs most often is the strike. Previously, if a strike broke out in any country, it was strangled by the importation of workers from other countries. The International has almost brought an end to all that. It receives information concerning the intended strike and passes the information on to its members, so that these will immediately be made aware that the place in which the struggle is being carried out is taboo to them. In this way the manufacturers are forced to depend only on their own workers. In most cases the strikers require no other help. Their own dues or collections in other unions with which they are closely allied provide them with provisions. If however their situation has become difficult and if the strike has received the sanction of the Association, then they receive assistance from the common funds. The strike of the cigar workers in Barcelona was brought to a successful conclusion in this way. But the Association is not interested in strikes in themselves, even if it supports them in certain circumstances. From a financial point of view it cannot gain anything from a strike, but it can easily lose. To put it concisely: the working class remains impoverished amidst the general prosperity and immiserated amidst luxury. Their material poverty cripples the workers morally and also physically. They cannot count on any help from the outside. Consequently it was for them a matter of pressing urgency to take their cause into their own hands. They have to change the relationships between themselves and the capitalists and landlords, and that means changing society. That is the common goal of every known workers' organization; the Land and Labour Leagues, the trade unions and the associations for mutual aid, the consumer and productive co-operatives are only means for achieving this end. The task of the International is to bring about a truly genuine solidarity between these organizations. Its influence is becoming noticeable everywhere: two newspapers spread its views in Spain, three in Germany, the same number in Austria and Holland, six in Belgium and six in Switzerland. Now that I have related to you what the International is, you can form your own opinions about the alleged conspiracies of the International.

I: Some people believe that they have detected elements of positivism in your organization.

Dr. Marx: By no means. There are positivists among us, and there are positivists who do not belong to our organization but who are also active. But this is not a result of their philosophy, which wants nothing to do with the ideas of popular power, as we understand it; their philosophy aims only at replacing the old hierarchy with a new one.

I: It appears to me that the hoped-for solution, of whatever kind it may be, will be achieved without the violent means of revolution in our country. The English method of agitating at public meetings and in the press until the minority becomes a majority, is a hopeful sign.

Dr. Marx: In this respect I am less hopeful than you. The English bourgeoisie has always shown itself ready to accept the decision of the majority as long as it commanded a monopoly at the polls. But you may be sure that as soon as it finds itself in a minority in questions which it considers crucial, we will see a new civil war.

Translated from the German by Ulli Diemer

This interview with Karl Marx was conducted by R. Landor on July 3, 1871 and was published in the New York World on July 18, 1871. The only available copy of the interview is a German translation, in Marx-Engels Werke, Vol. 17, pp. 639-643, which has also been published in *Gespräche mit Marx und Engels*, Hans Magnus Enzensberger (ed.), Insel Taschenbuch, Frankfurt, 1973, Vol. 2, pp. 375-382.

What Bakunin said

Red Menace:

Your issue discussing the Marx-Bakunin dispute complains that anarchists merely talk around Marxism, rather than getting down to Marx's actual words and intent. But you then violate this stricture yourselves by not actually facing what Bakunin himself said. I am hoping that you'll print these following quotes, so as to provide your readers with at least a slice of Bakunin's critique and social vision.

"The leaders of the Communist Party, namely Mr. Marx and his followers, will concentrate the reins of government in a strong hand. They will centralize all commercial, industrial, agricultural, and even scientific production, and then divide the masses into two armies - industrial and agricultural - under the direct command of state engineers, who will constitute a new privileged scientific and political class." 1873.

"The Dictatorship of the Proletariat... In reality it would be for the proletariat a barrack regime where the standardized mass of men and women workers would wake, sleep, work and live to the beat of a drum; for the clever and learned a privilege of governing; and for the mercenary minded, attracted by the State Bank, a vast field of lucrative jobbery." 1869.

"The programme of the International is very happily explicit: the emancipation of the workers can only be gained by the workers themselves. Is it not astonishing that Marx has believed it possible to graft on this never-the-less so precise declaration, which he publically drafted himself, his scientific socialism? That is to say, the organization of the government of the new society by socialistic scientists and professors - the worst of all despotic governments! 1872.

"No dictatorship can have any other aim but that of self-perpetuation and it can beget only slavery in the people tolerating it; freedom can be created only by freedom." 1872.

"We who are Materialists and Determinists, just as much as Marx himself, we also recognize the inevitable linking of economic and political facts in history. We recognize, indeed, the necessity, the inevitable character of all events, but we do not bow before them indifferently and above all we are careful about praising them when, by their nature, they show themselves in flagrant opposition to the supreme end of history... the triumph of humanity... by the absolute free and spontaneous organization of economic and social solidarity as completely as possible between all human beings living on earth.

... The Marxists do not reject our programme absolutely. They only reproach us with wanting to hasten, to outstrip, the slow march of history and to ignore the scientific law of successive evolutions. Having had the thoroughly German nerve to proclaim in their works consecrated to the philosophical analysis of the past that the bloody defeat of the insurgent peasants of Germany and the triumph of the despotic States in the sixteenth century constituted a great revolutionary progress, they today have the nerve to satisfy themselves with establishing a new despotism to the so-called profit of the urban workers and to the detriment of the toilers of the countryside...

... Mr. Engels, driven on by the same logic, in a letter addressed to one of our friends, Carlo Cafiero, was able to say, without the least irony, but on the contrary, very seriously, that Bismark as well as King Victor Emmanuel II had rendered immense services to the revolution, both of them having created political centralization in their respective countries. I urge the French allies and sympathizers of Mr. Marx to carefully examine how this Marxist concept is being applied in the International." 1872.

"To support his programme of the conquest of political power, Marx has a very special theory which is, moreover, only a logical consequence of his whole system. The po-

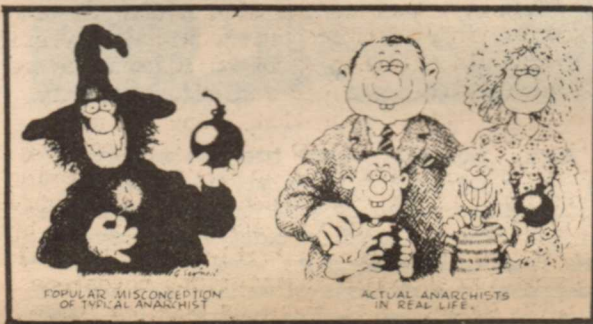
litical condition of each country, says he, is always the faithful expression of its economic situation; to change the former it is only necessary to transform the latter. According to Marx, all the secret of historic evolution is there. He takes no account of other elements of history, such as the quite obvious reaction of political, juridical and religious institutions on the economic situation. He says: "Poverty produces political slavery, the State." But he does not allow this expression to be turned around to say, "Political slavery, the State, reproduces in its turn, and maintains poverty as a condition of its own existence, so that, in order to destroy poverty, it is necessary to destroy the State." 1872.

"Either one destroys the State or one must accept the vilest and most fearful lie of our century: the red bureaucracy."

"Freedom without socialism is privilege and justice, and socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality."

In a subsequent letter I'd like to go into Bakunin's actual words on his programme for federative communalism and a world-wide federation and industrial parliament based on revolutionary industrial unions.

Gary Jewell
Delegate, IWW Defense Local 2



Critical distance

Dear Friends:

The articles by Ulli Diemer were excellent and I wholeheartedly concur with his position on the relationship between Marxism and anarchism. (The same old tired rhetoric in Murtaugh's piece provided a nice foil for his analysis) Further, his characterization of the uncritical editorial policy of THE OPEN ROAD was right on target.

It appears from the quality of Diemer's articles that libertarian Marxism has established a critical distance between itself and the Marxist tradition and in particular, the dark Leninist side of that tradition. Now it's up to Murtaugh and the anarchist movement of which he is a part to establish their critical distance from the Bakuninist tradition and, in particular, the dark Nechaevist side of that tradition, best represented in our own day by the Red Brigade terrorists, the Baader-Meinhoff gang, and the Symbionese Liberation Army.

Anarchists must make a choice between their real libertarian impulses and their tendency towards anti-intellectualism, romanticism, terrorism, and conspiracy. For starters, they might do well to read Murray Bookchin's "Challenge the Icons of Anarchism" in THE OPEN ROAD, No. 5, Winter, 1977-78. But, as Diemer points out, the anti-intellectualism of most anarchists is the major stumbling block preventing them from overcoming their uncritical past.

One can only hope that many anarchists will break with their uncritical past and join with libertarian Marxists to become free and equal partners in a new left libertarian movement.

David Bean
St. Catharines

Point of order

Dear Comrades:

Just two points now. In your first issue you publish an article on 'dialectical materialism', attempting one of the eternal neo-Marxist tries at redefining it. In the

next issue you attempt to counter an attack on it by saying that it is not part of your politics. At least this is what I assume the obscure reference to Plekanov meant. Ten to one as soon as the issue is forgotten you will start using the term again.

Second, as a point of order, you nowhere answer the charge that I put forward. I did not state that Bakunin was a saint and Marx was a devil. I did not say that some anarchists do not have some pretty stupid ideas (as do some Marxists). I am not a Bakunist and neither is the anarchist movement. This was most definitely stated as far back as the Congress of St. Imier in the 1800's. I would like to put the charge of ignorance back in your lap. You obviously know little about how widespread the opposition to much of Bakunin's politics was amongst the anarchist movement. You also do now know (or you deliberately disguise) the fact that many non-anarchists walked out on the International because of Marx's conspiracies against the anarchists. One thing I have got to hand to Marx; he was smart enough not to try and make a principle of conspiracy as Bakunin did. If anything, I agree with Malatesta that I am not a Bakunist because Bakunin was too much of a Marxist.

What I did state was that the adoption of 'dialectical materialism' (or any 'correct interpretation' of Marx's philosophy, whatever you might like to call it) will have a certain effect on the socialist movement. To answer what I said you have to answer this charge, and answer it on some other basis than name-calling (ie., "anti-Intellectualism of anarchism").

Anyway, to get off the argument I really enjoyed the article on the use of 'lefty language'. I hereby cross my heart and hope to die if I ever use the word 'concrete' again (as I have in the past). This one especially struck me as I have to work with a Trotskyist who is on the executive of the local union of the unemployed (as I am.) This fellow cannot open his mouth without spouting off rhetoric, and 'concrete' is one of his favourite words. Usually he doesn't even use this word right, as trots, in my experience, attempt to reduce the program of every organization they enter down to holding a demonstration and supporting the NDP. Therefore all the analysis of an organization has to be reduced down to "concrete demands" ie slogans for the demonstration. It doesn't matter how abstract these slogans are--as long as they can fit onto a placard. Concrete becomes a synonym for short.

In solidarity
P. Murtaugh

Read before attacking

Dear Friends:

Congratulations on a great issue. Especially appreciated were the articles by Ulli Diemer on anarchism and Marxism. They shed quite a bit of light on the differences between the two, as well as clarified the actual theories of Marxism and the truth about the Marx-Bakunin split. I wonder if any anarchists will take the article seriously and read Marx before attacking him.

P. Murtaugh, it seems, contents himself with little knowledge of the writings of Marx, yet proceeds to attack him regardless. He charges that Marxism is "bifocal" having separate ideologies for the masses and the leaders. If Murtaugh had read Marx and not accepted the claims of the "Marxist-Leninists" so gullibly, he would have realized that the "Marxism for the leaders" is not Marxism at all. The leaders have abandoned nearly all of Marxism except the name, as has been documented amply. He would also realize that "Libertarian Marxism" is not "a rather recent development", but the Marxism of today, a logical conclusion of the Marxism of yesterday

Fraternally,
Martin Deck

We can learn to live free

Dear People:

I would like to reply to some of the ideas expressed by P. Murtaugh in "Some Thoughts on Organization". In spite of the disagreements I have with some of his ideas, I thought it was a serious attempt to talk about real problems - and I hope your publication will print more articles like it.

Comrade Murtaugh attacks the romantic idealization of "The Revolution" as a gigantic "street fight". He advances three arguments against insurrection: (1) the military apparatus of the state is too strong; (2) a complex and technologically interdependent society cannot survive the chaos of an insurrection - that is, millions of people will starve and the survivors will demand authoritarian rule; and (3) the capitalists/bureaucrats will not hesitate to use nuclear bombs to stop an insurrection, even at the risk of their own lives.

The first and third arguments oversimplify, in my opinion, a much more complex situation. Insurrection is not simply a military event. If you presume a situation in which tens of millions of working people are "raising hell" about all or nearly all aspects of class society, this kind of ferment will not stop at the edge of a military base or the outer wall of a police station. The loyalty of armies and police is not necessarily permanent and unchanging. There are many historical examples of armed forces turning against their officers and in favor of the insurrection. The people who serve a class society with weapons are under a tremendous strain during periods of insurrection; they must engage in mass murder of unarmed civilians. The number of people who can kill a lot of people over a long period of time is not large - most will balk at some point. This is even more true when speaking about "pressing the nuclear button". Even if the order is given, will it be car-

ried out? And if done once, with all the horror known, could it be done again? I would not, of course, argue that insurrection must be victorious - most insurrections lose - but only that the outcome cannot be predicted by adding up tanks on one side and rifles on the other.

As to the effects of an insurrection on a technologically complex society, we don't have too much evidence. However, we can look at earthquakes, hurricanes, and other disasters and see how quickly a technological society can recover from massive disruption. Technological societies possess large surpluses which are available for use during a disaster - that is, technological societies don't have famines following crop failure, just higher prices. Further, again presuming a situation where tens of millions of working people are willing to engage in insurrection, is it reasonable to believe they'd be willing to restore class society in order to get the subways running again? Particularly when the subway workers already know how to get them running again? People who've lived all their lives in a class society are naturally prone to prefer a dominant/submissive relationship to all the others and this is something that will doubtless persist for at least a generation or more after a successful insurrection. But give the human race a little credit! For the most part, we've stopped burning witches. We've stopped believing in ghosts. We can surely learn how to live free, neither dominant nor submissive.

Finally, what is the alternative to "The Revolution"? Comrade Murtaugh can only bring up the old chestnut about building up a new society within the old society. And only he knows better than that! For the most part, we are not going out to try and make a living by scratching in the dirt ("re-investigating our relationship to the countryside") any more than we are going to fly by flapping our arms. A little network of alternative economic institutions threatens class society just about as much as "off-Broadway" theater threatens Broadway theater. And did Comrade Murtaugh say some-

thing about Food Co-ops? In the San Francisco Bay Area, one of the largest super-market chains began as a food co-op and is still called The Co-op. It has bosses and workers, just like Safeway.

People no doubt do have a lot of romantic illusions about "The Revolution" and such illusions are fair game for Comrade Murtaugh and everyone else to attack. But, please let us have an end to even worse illusions about building a new society within the old society. If we are going to use the word "impossible" to describe social events, this fits the word perfectly.

After all this criticism, some words of praise are in order. Comrade Murtaugh's suggestion for a North American libertarian newspaper that would appear frequently and be widely distributed has considerable merit. Speaking personally, I would be certainly willing to do whatever I could to assist such a project. However, it's only fair to add that I know of no serious group that has committed itself to this project. Of the groups that Comrade Murtaugh mentioned, the IWW has its own paper and would probably be unwilling to put much effort into another paper; SRAAF is very disorganized and probably incapable of putting any meaningful effort into a new paper; and the Vancouver Open Road people like their present format and would probably be unwilling to give it up in favor of a smaller, cheaper, but more frequent publication. It is possible that the newly-formed Anarchist-Communist Federation may be willing to undertake a North American paper (members of their Milwaukee affiliate have suggested such a paper in the recent past). Or perhaps an informal coalition of groups and individuals in the U.S. and Canada might be able to get together and set up such a paper. However it turns out, I think a lot of people are beginning to see that such a project is needed...and that usually means that it will, sooner or later, be implemented.

For a life without bosses,
Ed Clark

Problems with Red Menace method

Red Menace:

I have just finished your third issue (Spring, 1978) and am fully sympathetic with your attempts to formulate a non-authoritarian socialist theory and practice. I offer the following comments as constructive criticism.

It strikes me that your attempt to develop a positive alternative to DiaMat Marxism and Marxist-Leninist sects suffers from a polemical method which reproduces the very problems you want to get away from. That is, your last issue seems to consist mainly of a series of one-sided abstract debates whose intention is libertarian but whose execution is partisan at best, and often mystifying or even unfair. Such an approach is clearly self-defeating for a libertarian project. Here are two examples, chosen from Ulli Diemer's three articles.

(1) The article on leftist jargon ("Words, Words, Words...") raises an issue crucial to socialist practice. Clarity of terms

(concepts) and of expression (syntax) is necessary for the left's communication and education, as well as for precision of social analysis. Jargon such as Ulli points out badly needs to be pruned. The verbal baggage of the left, heritage of infighting and persecution, needs to be critically re-examined, and cleansed of unnecessarily ambiguous, mystifying, or authoritarian terms. While such is clearly the intent of the article on language, it is executed in a manner which seems to encourage, not critical reappraisal, but abstract dismissal.

For example, while the term "concrete" critized in the first third of the article is surely abused often enough, it is one component of the dialectical pair (antimony), "abstract-concrete". The use of such antinomies as analytical tools is part of the valuable Hegelian heritage preserve in Marxian analysis, and the use of the term "concrete" implicitly acknowledges this, attempting to relate empirical (concrete) examples to general (abstract) theoretical frameworks.

Instead of indicating how the term could be constructively used in leftist analysis, Diemer presents the abuses alone in a negative light, implying that the term's use should be stopped altogether.

(2) The polemic against anarchism in the following two articles ("Anarchism vs. Marxism" and "Bakunin vs. Marx") is even less constructive. First of all, Diemer is concerned to present a more "faithful" reading of Marx to counter the vulgar generalizations he claims anarchists use in their denunciation of Marxism. I question the relevance of this method of rationalization through textual exegesis: Marx did not use the term "capitalism" (following the form of Ulli's critique of "dialectical materialism"), but that certainly does not limit the effectiveness of the term's descriptive power, or mean that it cannot be used by "Marxists".

In other words, the issue is whether or not mere Marxology is sufficient (or sometimes even necessary at all) to deal with problems or controversies in socialist theory and practice. Somehow, the analytical, explanatory power of a theory seems more important.

Secondly, Diemer argues for a plurality of Marxes ("...his writings and actions span some 40 years...") to counter the monolithic generalized theory criticized by anarchists. Fine, I say, this is a first step towards a critical appraisal of Marx's complex and sometimes contradictory work. However, in his polemic against "anarchism", Ulli commits the same sin he accuses them of - that of ignoring differences and contradictions, lumping everything under one grossly over-generalized label whose essential characteristics are not even clearly defined. Further, if he argues a plurality of interpretations of Marx against simplistic oversystematization of one "Marxism", how can he consistently argue for a "correct" reading at the same time?

Finally, the manner with which the argument is conducted has the function of reducing the issue to an either-or choice between two hypostatized alternatives abstracted from both their historical development, and from the relation of theory to the development of capitalist society. The issue

is presented as a case of incorrect with the correct answer presumably determined by accurate quotes rather than relevance in explaining contemporary capitalism. While I prefer the "libertarian" reading of Marx myself, I have no delusions about its being anything but an interpretation, that is, a specific emphasis on certain parts of the text to the exclusion of others. Ulli's interpretation is in part conditioned by the abuse of Marxism as ideology by the Soviet Union and by Western Marxist-Leninists - a historical burden that must be critically dealt with by any socialist movement today - yet no reference is made to this important context conditioning his choice of interpretation. Most importantly, the issue of the controversy, "abstract term vs. abstract term", is presented as though it could be decided without any reference to the society the theory is supposed to explain and help change.

I submit that the task facing socialists sincere about working towards human liberation is not one of repeating old formalist debates concerning the "right" interpretation of Marx or the a priori "correct" theoretical solution, but one of (a) the theoretical interrogation of social reality via a critical appropriation of our radical heritage, and a continual testing of new concepts in concrete analyses; and (b) practical attempts to develop tactics and strategy for human liberation on all levels of experience. From this standpoint, I found the article about office work, despite its limitations, more relevant than the question of Bakunin's unethical scholarly or political practices.

It strikes me that might be slightly problematic attempting to achieve human liberation via repressive means. By the same token, the aims of contributors to this newsletter must in good faith be reproduced in the journalistic methods they use in writing. I have taken Ulli to task (the loudest but by no means only offender) in the hope that my criticism will be of assistance in your ongoing self-constitution.

Yours,
Greg Renault

BAKUNIN VS. MARX

As pointed out in my introduction to Bakunin on Anarchy (Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), the clash of personalities between Marx and Bakunin was not the essential element in their running controversy during the congresses of the International. The debates transcend petty personal squabbles and embody two diametrically opposed tendencies in the theory and tactics of socialism, the authoritarian and libertarian schools respectively, the two main lines of thought that helped shape the character of the modern labour and socialist movements.

Unfortunately, Ulli Diemer's articles Anarchism vs. Marxism and Bakunin vs. Marx (Red Menace, Spring 1978) really do not deal with the main issues involved in the debates. A discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this paper. I limit myself to correcting the more glaring factual errors and distortions. I also express my deep appreciation to the comrades of Red Menace for granting me space. (Unless otherwise specified, all quotes are Diemer's.)

The very fact that there is still, over a century later, a debate between Marxism and Anarchism on fundamental principles proves that Marx was not, and could not possibly have been the "central figure in the development of libertarianism." Neither Marx or Engels ever claimed that they were "central figures in the development of socialism". According to Engels, the "central figures", the founders of socialism, were the "utopians" Saint Simon, Fourier, and Robert Owen, who formulated the leading principles of socialism, as Marx himself acknowledged in a letter to his friend Wedemeyer. (See Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific). Marx even praised Proudhon's What is Property as the first "truly scientific analysis of capitalism," anticipating Marx's later findings. (See J. Hampton Jackson's Marx, Proudhon, and European Socialism.) Marx, who minimized the role of the individual in history, would certainly have rejected the notion that "...it is not possible to create...a libertarian world..." without him.

Whether Marx or Engels did or did not use the term "dialectical materialism" does not invalidate the fact that they WERE dialectical materialists and that there is a funda-

mental indissoluble connection between dialectics and Marxism. For Marx and Engels the dialectic method was not only a theory but a LAW OF NATURE. Anyone who questions this connection is not a Marxist. Engels emphasizes this in his preface to the second edition of Anti-Duhring--a work written with the full approval of Marx:

"...Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics from German idealist philosophy and APPLY IT TO THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF NATURE AND HISTORY..." (emphasis mine)

Engels devotes three whole chapters to dialectics, even trying to demonstrate the validity of the dialectic method to chemistry and mathematics.

Only one who is almost totally ignorant of anarchist literature could assert that "with very few exceptions, anarchism failed to produce a rigorous analysis of capitalism, the state, bureaucracy, or authoritarianism..." A bibliography of such works could easily fill several volumes. For example, Max Nettlau's bibliography of anarchism compiled over half a century ago has been immeasurably enriched by later works. While there is sufficient Marxist literature on capitalism, there is almost nothing on such crucial questions as the state, bureaucracy, federalism, self-management and other forms of social organization which even modern Marxists deplore. They are trying to drastically revise Marx's naive and erroneous views on these vital issues.

Bakunin did not "deliberately fabricate" the accusation that Marx believed in the "People's State". Bakunin criticised Marx for this in 1870 and 1872. He could not be expected to foresee that Marx would condemn the "People's State" THREE YEARS LATER in 1875 in his Critique of the Gotha Program. The Critique was published AFTER Bakunin's death about a year later. But this error does not invalidate Bakunin's prophetic indictment of the "Workers' State" which Marx and Co. DID champion.

The assertion that the Marx and Engels "...position is spelled out most extensively

in Marx's Civil War in France is in flagrant contradiction to everything Marx and Engels wrote before and after the Paris Commune. To establish this extremely important point, I quoted Franz Mehring, Marx's disciple and authorized biographer in my Bakunin on Anarchy. I strongly suspect that Diemer ignored this quote because it decisively refutes his argument. Here is is:

"...The opinions of the Communist Manifesto could not be reconciled with the praise lavished by The Civil War in France for the vigorous fashion in which began to exterminate the parasitic State...Both Marx and Engels were well aware of the contradiction, and in a preface to a new edition of The Communist Manifesto issued in June 1872, they revised their opinions...after the death of Marx, Engels in fighting the anarchists once again took his stand on the original basis of the Manifesto...if an insurrection was able to abolish the whole oppressive machinery of the State by a few simple decrees, was that not a confirmation of Bakunin's steadfastly maintained standpoint? (Karl Marx, pp. 452-3)..."

Diemer's assertion that Marx and Engels "consistently maintain that the state is INCOMPATIBLE with socialism..." (my emphasis) is not correct. For them, the "workers state", the TRANSITION toward full realization of communism, IS COMPATIBLE with socialism. Diemer himself states correctly that Marx and Engels believed the proletariat must "use the state" to achieve the liberation of the proletariat. "The state employs means which will be discarded after the liberation." As if means can be separated from ends! Diemer does not write that Marx and Engels proclaimed the necessity for the "workers' state" not only to crush the bourgeoisie, but also to institute socialism:

"...the proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to CENTRALIZE ALL INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION IN THE HANDS OF THE STATE...centralization of credit...by the State. Centralization of communication...and transport by the State. Establishment of industrial armies by the State..." (Communist Manifesto)(emphasis mine)

There is therefore no foundation for the assertion that for Marx and Engels, socialism is not compatible with the state, and still less that they were "in intransigent opposition to the state..." It is significant that they proclaimed the same views thirty years later in 1878. "...the means of production are...transformed into state property..." (Anti-Duhring, Part 3, Chapter 2 - Theoretical) Solidly basing himself on their writings, Bakunin, in this prophetic quote, defined the authoritarian character of Marxian "socialism":

"...labour employed by the state--such is the fundamental principle of authoritarian communism, of state socialism...after a period of transition...the state will then become the only banker, capitalist, organizer, and distributor of all its products. Such is the ideal, the fundamental principle of modern communism..." (quoted in Bakunin on Anarchy, P. 217)

Since Diemer grudgingly concedes that "...use of the state in the transition period is dangerous and the concern of Bakunin about the possible degeneration of the revolution is valid..." further comment is unnecessary.



On page eleven, Diemer takes exception to Bakunin's remark that Marx "as a German and a Jew, is from head to toe an authoritarian." On the next page he flatly contradicts himself. "Both Bakunin and MARX displayed considerable arrogance and AUTHORITARIANISM..." (my emphasis) With respect to Marx there is ample evidence to substantiate this accusation. I challenge Diemer to PROVE that Bakunin was either arrogant or authoritarian.

The greatest historian of anarchism, Max Nettlau, the foremost living authority on Bakunin and his times, Arthur Lehning, and Bakunin's contemporary, the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist Anselmo Lorenzo--all of them--at one time or another, deplored Bakunin's anti-semitic streak and his anti-German prejudice. But Diemer, intent on white-washing his hero, Marx, and discrediting Bakunin, deliberately hides the fact that Marx was also anti-semitic and prejudiced against Slavic peoples. (on anti-semitism see Marx's On The Jewish Question). Max Nomad (Political Heretics, pp. 85-86) tells how Marx insulted Lasalle:

"...calling him the 'Jewish Nigger' and Baron Itzik". Marx wrote about the Croats, Czechs, Pandurs and "similar scum" and demanded the complete "annihilation" of those "reactionary races". Marx even justified the subjection of eight million Slavs to four million Hungarians on the ground that the Hungarians had more "vitality and energy"..."

Economic determinism constitutes the essence of Marxism. It is clearly defined in this celebrated passage from Marx's Critique of Political Economy:

"...the economic structure of society always forms the real basis from which in the last analysis, is to be explained, the whole superstructure of legal political institutions, (the State) as well as the religious, philosophical, and other conceptions of each historical period..." (In another place, Max Eastman's introduction to the Marx anthology Capital, he quotes Engels) "...with the same certainty with which, from a given mathematical proposition, a new one is deduced, with that same certainty, can we deduce the social revolution from the existing social conditions and the principles of political economy..."

Notwithstanding his anti-slavery sentiments, Marx in his polemic against Proudhon, tried to justify slavery in America on the ground that it was an economic necessity, arguing in line with his theory of economic determinism, that slavery was progressive phase in the evolution of society:

"...slavery is an economic category like any other. Slavery is just as much an economic pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery or credit... without slavery, North America, the most progressive of countries, would be turned into a primitive country. Abolish slavery and you will wipe America off the map of nations..." (quoted from Poverty of Philosophy in Handbook of Marxism; International Publishers, 1935, p.357)

Marx's attitude is justified by the editors of the Handbook... on the grounds that while slavery was an economic necessity in 1847, when the North was industrially backward, the development of industry in the 1860's made slavery economically unnecessary. The question, How progressive is a country whose very existence depends on slavery? never occurred to Marx. In his polemic with Duhring, thirty one years later in 1878, Engels repeated that "the introduction of slavery in Greece", was both an economic necessity and "a great step forward."

How Diemer, in the face of overwhelming contrary evidence, can insist that "Marx was not an economic determinist", supporting his argument with two long quotations from Engels, which in no manner whatsoever, invalidate their theory of economic determinism, is difficult to understand. (see Anti-Duhring p.202)

To back up his charge that Bakunin was expelled from the International in 1872, because Bakunin's secret Alliance conspired to "take over the International", Diemer cites George Woodcock's Anarchism page 168. (There



is no reference to this on page 168 or anywhere else). He also cites Eileen Kelly, an ignorant, scandal monger whose review article in the New York Review of Books is on par with Diemer's irresponsible allegations. Diemer's assertion that "most historians" think that Bakunin was guilty is false. All responsible historians insist that Bakunin and his close comrade James Guillaume were expelled in a rigged congress packed by hand-picked "delegates" who "represented" non-existent sections of the International. Marx's friend Sorge, residing in the United States, sent Marx a dozen blank credentials from non-existent groups which Marx distributed to his stooges. Serrailier, Secretary for France, in the General Council, also came to the Congress with a handful of credentials which could not be verified. Of the five members of the Commission of Inquiry chosen to investigate the charges against Bakunin and other libertarian members of the International and report their findings to the Congress, one, Walter (whose real name was Von Heddeghen) was a Bonapartist police spy. The Commission reported that "...the secret Alliance did at one time exist, but there is INSUFFICIENT PROOF OF ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE..." (my emphasis) Nor could the Commission prove that the Alliance established rules opposed to the rules of the International when it did exist. Roch Spingard, a member of the Commission submitted a minority report contending that Bakunin was being indicted on insufficient evidence. He declared that "...I am resolved to fight the decision before the Congress..."

On the last day of the Congress after over half the delegates went home, The Marxist clique staged a successful coup to kill the International by moving its headquarters to New York. Nearly all the delegates, including Marx's strongest supporters, refused to accept the decisions of the Marx-Engels cliques. They joined the Bakuninist sections of the International, not because they agreed with their anti-statist, anti-parliamentary political action policies, but because they demanded the complete autonomy of the sec-

tions irrespective of different political or social ideas. They revolted because the phony Congress enacted a resolution giving the Marxist dominated General Council power to expel sections and even whole federations from the International.

Marx's authorized biographer, Franz Mehring noted that the Congress of the International "...which the General Council in New York called for in Geneva, drew up...the death certificate of the International..." while the Bakuninist counter-Congress which also took place in Geneva was attended by delegates from all sections and federations of the International - the Marxist congress consisted "mostly of Swiss who lived in Geneva... not even the General Council, was able to send a delegate..." (Karl Marx, pp.495-496).

Bakunin did NOT try to dominate the International. In his Letter to La Liberte (Bakunin on Anarchy p.278) Bakunin declared

"...since reconciliation in the field of politics is impossible, we should practice mutual toleration, granting to each country the incontestable right to follow whatever political tendencies it may prefer or find suitable for its own particular situation. Consequently, by rejecting all political programs from the International, we should seek to strengthen the unity of this great association solely in the field of economic solidarity. Such solidarity unites us while political questions inevitably separates us..."

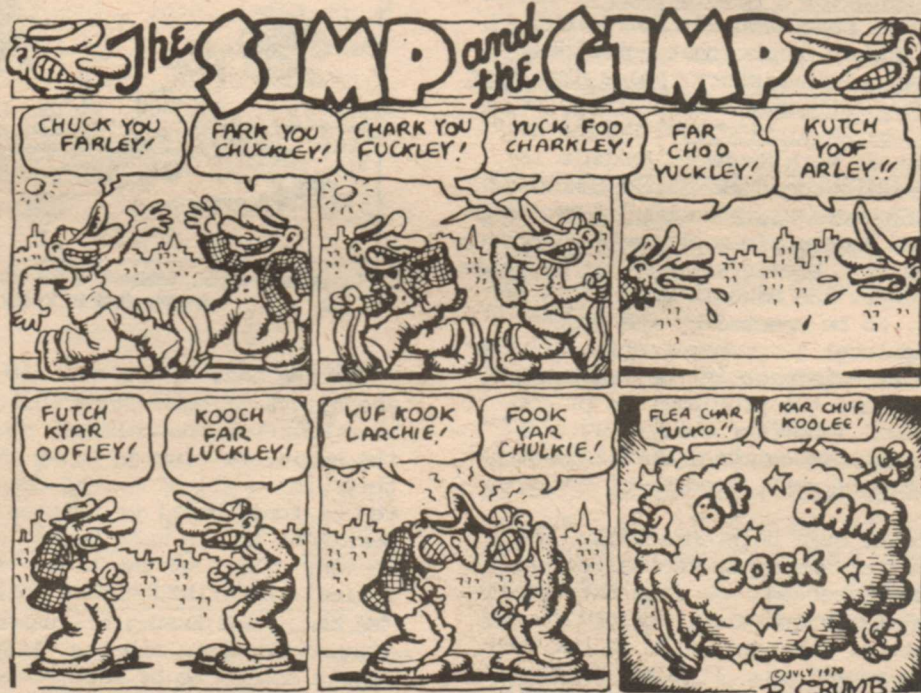
There is no reference to a post-revolutionary state in any of Bakunin's anarchist writings (there is none on page 153 of my Bakunin on Anarchy given by Diemer).

There is not one shred of evidence to back up the charge that Bakunin ever wrote that "...Marx was part of an International conspiracy with Bismark and Rothchild..."

The motion to invest the General Council with more power was NOT made by Bakunin but by Marxist delegates. Bakunin voted for the motion because it was presumably directed against the resolution of the bourgeois delegates. In an article titled Mia Culpa (I am guilty) Bakunin admitted that he had made a serious mistake.

It is true that Bakunin, in anarchist opinion mistakenly, advised Italian members of the Alliance to become deputies in the government, as a temporary measure dictated by extraordinary conditions. Bakunin acknowledged that it constituted a violation of anarchist principles. But to stress this contradiction as the essence of Bakunin's doctrine is a gross distortion.

The question of whether Bakunin was a collectivist who advocated that workers be paid according to the amount they produced and not according to need is discussed by his close associate James Guillaume. (Bakunin on Anarchy, p.157-158) Bakunin was not in this sense a collectivist. Nor was Marx a strict "communist" for whom payment according to need would prevail in the final stage of communism, and payment according to work would prevail during the socialist transition period.



In connection with secret societies Bakunin's well known predilection for the establishment of tightly organized hierarchical organizations, for which he worked out elaborate rules in the style of the Freemasons and the Italian Carbonari, can be attributed partly to his romantic temperament and partly to the fact that all revolutionary and progressive groups were forced to operate secretly. Bakunin's secret organizations were actually informal fraternities and groups connected by personal contact and correspondence, as preferred by his closest associates who considered that his schemes for elaborate secret societies were incompatible with anarchist principles.

For anarchists intent upon guiding the revolution in a libertarian direction by libertarian means, the question of how to stop authoritarians from seizing power without instituting a dictatorship of their own becomes increasingly complicated. Bakunin understood that the people tend to be gullible and oblivious to the early harbingers of dictatorship until the revolutionary storm subsides and they awake to find themselves in shacks. He therefore set about forming a network of secret cadres whose members would prepare the masses for revolution by helping them to identify their enemies, fostering confidence in their own creative capacities, and fight with them on the barricades. These militants would seek no power for themselves but insist increasingly that all power must derive and flow back to the grass-roots organizations spontaneously created by the revolution.

Because Bakunin tried to organize this secret organization he has been regarded by some historians as a forerunner of the Leninist Bolshevik dictatorship. Nothing can be further from the truth. Lenin would agree that an organization exercising no overt authority, without a state, without the official machinery of institutionalized power to enforce its policies, cannot be defined as a dictatorship.

Bakunin used the terms "invisible collective dictatorship" to denote the underground movement exerting maximum influence in an organized manner. According to the rules of his secret Alliance:

"...no member...is permitted even in the midst of full revolution, to take public office of any kind, nor is the organization permitted to do so ...it will at all times be on the alert, making it impossible for authorities, governments and states to be re-established..."

The question of the relationship between revolutionary minorities and mass movements, like the problem of power, will probably never be fully resolved. But it is the merit of Bakunin, and the libertarian movement as a whole, that it endeavors to reduce its built-in defects to a minimum. There is no point in scolding Bakunin. If he did not have foolproof answers he did ask the right questions and this is no mean achievement. Our critics would be better advised to come up with satisfactory answers.

In his remarks concerning Bakunin's relations with the ruthless, amoral terrorist Sergei Nechaev, Diemer reluctantly admits that "...Bakunin did indeed repudiate Nechaev when he found out the true nature of his activities..." Recent research by Michael Confino, (Daughter of a Revolutionary) conclusively proves that Nechaev, NOT BAKUNIN was the SOLE author of the most notorious document in socialist history: Rules That Must Inspire The Revolutionary (better known as Catechism of the Revolutionary). During his brief association with Nechaev, Bakunin is accused of writing together with Nechaev, or under his influence, "...a number of tracts that displayed a despotic Machiavellian approach to revolution..." Diemer writes that in these pamphlets Nechaev and Bakunin advocate a new social order, to be erected by (he quotes from the pamphlets) "...concentrating all the means of social existence in the hands of Our Committee, and the proclamation of compulsory physical labor for everyone...compulsory residence in communal dormitories, rules for hours of work, feeding of children ..." etc.

Diemer, to be sure unintentionally, omits vital information and makes factual errors which must be corrected. He does not identify the pamphlets in question, nor the source of the quotation. The quotation is not part of any of the pamphlets. It comes from an article in Nechaev's periodical Narodnaja

Raspravy (The People's Vengeance) Spring 1870. An editorial note attached to the article reads:

"...those desiring a more detailed exposition of our principles should read our article, The Communist Manifesto, which outlines the practical measures necessary to attain our aims..."

Nechaev himself wrote the article and edited the paper. Bakunin took no part in writing the articles or editing the paper. In any case, the measures advocated by Nechaev in his Catechism and other writings are in flagrant contradiction to everything Bakunin ever wrote or did. (source: Michael Bakunin and His Relations With Sergei Nechaev in French- edited with introduction and notes by Arthur Lehning: International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 1971, p.XXVIII)

The charge that Bakunin "...was infatuated with violence is false. Bakunin insisted again and again that destruction must be directed not against persons but against institutions:

"it will then become unnecessary to destroy men and reap the inevitable reaction which massacres of human beings have never failed and never will fail to produce in society..." (Bakunin on Anarchy, p.13)

Diemer's remarks about Bakunin's attitude toward the problem of authority does not remotely resemble his views. It was precisely in regard to the theory and practice of revolution and the nature of authority which ranks Bakunin as one of the greatest revolutionists in the history of the socialist movement. Bakunin did NOT reject "...all forms of authority..." for example:

"...do I reject all authority? Perish the thought. In the matter of boots I consult the bootmaker, concerning houses, canals or railroads, I consult the engineer... for science as well as industry, I recognize the necessity for the division and association of labor. I bow before the authority of specialists because it is imposed upon me by my own reason. I give and receive such is human life. Each directs and is directed in turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and above all, voluntary authority and subordination..." (God and the State)

"...a certain amount of discipline, not automatic, but voluntary... discipline which harmonizes perfectly with the freedom of individuals, is, and ever will be, necessary when a great number of individuals, freely united, undertake any kind of work or collective action. Under such circumstances discipline is simply the voluntary and thoughtful coordination of all individual efforts toward a common goal..." (Knouto Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution)



"I can assure you, Madam, if we were sinking I would be the first to know."

In the days of the old International many socialists of both camps, Bakunin included, then believed the collapse of capitalism and the social revolution to be imminent. Although this was an illusion, the debate they conducted on fundamental principles has remained pertinent and in many forms, still goes on. To many others at the time - as a French political scientist, Michel Collinet, has pointed out - the issues discussed by the authoritarian Marxists and the libertarian Bakuninists seemed to be merely abstract speculation about what might happen in the future;

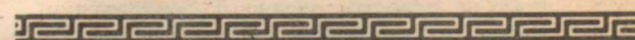


but the problems which then seemed so far-fetched, he says "...are today crucial; they are being decisively posed not only in totalitarian regimes, which relate themselves to Marx, but also in the capitalist countries, which are being dominated by the growing power of the state..." (Le Contrat Sociale, Paris, January-February 1964)

Collinet lists the basic points in question: How can liberty and free development be assured in an increasingly industrialized society? How can capitalist exploitation and oppression be eliminated? Must power be centralized, or should it be diffused among multiple federated units? Should the International be the model of a new society of simply an instrument of the State of political parties? At the Congress of Lausanne in 1967, the Belgian delegate, Caesar de Paeppe, raised just such a question regarding "...the efforts now being made by the International for the emancipation of the workers. Could this not... he inquired, "result in the creation of a new class of ex-workers who wield state power, and would not the situation of the workers be much more miserable than it is now?"

A well researched, thoughtful, objective discussion of these always fundamental questions involved in the controversy between Marx and Bakunin - especially now when 19th century socialist ideas are being re-examined - is sorely needed. Regrettably, Diemer's articles add nothing to the clarification of these perennial problems and only obscure the issues.

Sam Dolgoff



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The Continuing Debate:

I

Before the discussion of anarchism and Marxism which began in the last issue of the Red Menace and which continues in this one is carried much further, it seems worthwhile to pause and re-examine its purpose. Where is this debate heading? What is to be gained by continuing it?

My view is that we have little to gain if we — Marxists, anarchists, or whatever — view Marxism and anarchism in black and white terms, if we see the one as absolutely 'correct' and the other as absolutely 'wrong'. If we enter the discussion with this attitude, we are likely to produce little more than mutual denunciations which may be morally satisfying but which rarely convince anyone. It is still possible to produce useful analyses given this — though few seem to be forthcoming — but there seems little point in attempting a dialogue with *each other*.

What we should be doing is subjecting both Marxism and anarchism to a critical analysis, and thereby start to provide the basis for a libertarian revolutionary movement that relates adequately to the needs and problems of today.

I tried to make this point at the start of my two articles in the last Red Menace, although perhaps I did not make it as well as I should have. It is certainly true that my articles were themselves one-sided, and for this the criticism that Greg Renault makes in his letter is at least partially justified. Nevertheless, it was *necessary* to be one-sided, given what I was attempting to do: i.e., to respond to the very one-sided view of Marx and Marxism that nearly all anarchists hold. One of the main problems of the anarchist approach, one that emerges very clearly in the articles and letters from anarchists printed in this issue, is that it does tend to pose everything in very moralistic, black and white terms. I tried to point out in my articles that there has been more than one interpretation and more than one strain of "Marxism", and I indicated my view that there is a great deal of common ground between this libertarian interpretation of Marxism — which I argued is the only one consistent with Marx's own writings — and other forms of libertarian thought, including anarchism. Dolgoff et al, however, will have none of this. They will not have the purity of their doctrine tainted with the idea that there might be any common ground at all between anarchism and any form of Marxism. This purist attitude is maintained by simply ignoring, by never acknowledging, the existence of *any* non-Leninist, non-Stalinist interpretation of Marxism. Some of the most important figures of the Marxist tradition — Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Korsch, Anton Pannekoek, the Frankfurt School, William Reich — are consequently simply dropped from history. Anarchists never mention them. A complementary approach is taken to Marx: his own works are rarely looked at (references are usually to interpreters writing after his death) and where they are, they are given the most vulgar Stalinist interpretation possible.

By thus insulating itself, anarchism tends to become a closed system to which nothing is ever added and from which nothing is ever taken away. This closed system is maintained in turn by a closed, self-perpetuating system of logic. Essential to this system of logic is a blatant double standard. Thus, the actions or writings of anyone who ever called himself a "Marxist" are charged to Marx's personal account, and held to be an essential part of the Marxist tradition, even though these actions or words may be in direct and demonstrable contradiction to Marx's own position. The actions or writings of any inconvenient anarchist, on the other hand, are simply dismissed as being extraneous to anarchism. So, for example, the fact that there were Communists in the government of republican Spain (Spain is to anarchism what Russia is to Leninism) is taken as clear proof of the essentially statist nature of *all* forms of Marxism. The fact that the leaders of the anarchists were also members of the same government is dismissed as a 'mistake', or as irrelevant because they weren't 'real' anarchists. And the fact that the Marxist POUM opposed that government just as much as the most bonafide, pure, 'real' anarchists is conveniently ignored in discussions such as these.

This kind of attitude is hardly enlightening, and it tends to provoke a polemical and one-sided response. When this kind of blatant nonsense is being peddled, it necessarily becomes a priority to challenge it, even though one's purpose is not at all to engage in a sterile and tedious battle of quotations and historical references. As long as fantasies and distortions prevail, it is impossible to come to grips with the real issues. Marxism, in particular, can only benefit from the most rigorous critical analysis — *requires* such an analysis — an analysis to which anarchists potentially have a great deal to offer, but the analysis cannot take place when it is a caricature of Marxism which is given currency.

II

Sam Dolgoff's portrayal of Marxism is such a caricature. This is particularly unfortunate because Dolgoff is an outstanding revolutionary militant whose excellent work on anarchist collectives in Spain, in particular, indicates that he could contribute significantly to a *real* critical analysis of Marxism and its problematic areas if he was not so blindly dogmatic on the topic.

Nevertheless, most of his comments do represent serious misunderstandings or distortions, and thus they have to be

dealt with, at least briefly:

Dolgoff is at pains to prove that there is "a fundamental, indissoluble connection between dialectics and Marxism", and that Marx and Engels were materialists. In this, at least, we have no quarrel. To me, dialectics is the *essence* of Marxism. What I was trying to illustrate in the short footnote which attracted Dolgoff's extended ire is that anarchist critics are almost invariably unfamiliar with Marx's own writings. The blithe use of a term, "Dialectical Materialism", which was introduced after Marx's death by one of his major perversers, as if it was employed by Marx, seems to indicate that the people using it are not overly familiar with Marx's writings.

The inability — or unwillingness — to distinguish between Marx and his 'followers' (several of whom moved Marx to announce, a century ago, that "I am not a Marxist") seems to be congenital among anarchists.

It lies at the root of Bakunin's claims that Marx advocated a "Peoples' State", a claim which Dolgoff says was not a fabrication. (Dolgoff's logic here is beyond me: he seems to be saying that the charge was not a fabrication because Marx's denial came after Bakunin's accusation.) What had happened was that some of the German Social Democrats introduced the concept, and Bakunin, believing as he did that all Germans were the same, concluded that Marx accepted it as well. The fact that Marx had never advocated such a thing in his life, that he attacked the concept once it came into circulation, and that he rejected Bakunin's claims to the contrary (well before 1875), made no impression on Bakunin.

Dolgoff suffers from the same inability to distinguish between Marx and Marx's interpreters. Trying to prove that *The Civil War in France* does not represent Marx's *real* views on the state, although the book is Marx's major one on the topic, Dolgoff launches into a long quotation from Franz Mehring which he says "decisively refutes" my arguments. The trouble with Dolgoff's 'decisive' quotation, however, is that it is at best irrelevant. The fact that Mehring, writing after Marx's death, thought that *The Civil War in France* contained the wrong view on the state may be interesting, but it says nothing about Marx's views. Dolgoff's presentation of the Mehring quote is also less than honest. Dolgoff refers to Mehring as Marx's "authorized" biographer, as if this somehow made Mehring's views more authentic. But Mehring's "authorization" came not from Marx, who was long dead, but from the leaders of the German SPD, the very people Marx so vigorously attacked over their views on the state. Moreover, Marx had been quite specifically critical of Mehring's own views, including his views on the state. Mehring, as one of the leading figures in the SPD, was at pains to justify the SPD's position and to downplay Marx's criticisms. He is hardly a reliable source when he proclaims that Marx didn't really mean what he said.

It would be unproductive to reply to Dolgoff's many claims point by point, so a few more brief comments will

have to suffice:

The idea that socialism implies the abolition of the state is repeated countless times in the works of Marx and Engels. It is one of the essential concepts of Marxism. The fact that they advocated the use of the state by the proletariat during the transition to socialism may very well be problematic, it may very well be dangerous, but it in no way alters the fact that for Marx and Engels socialism only existed when the state ceased to exist.

Economic determinism: How many times is it necessary to say that there is a difference between materialism and a theory that *reduces everything to economic phenomena*? In his inability to understand this difference, Dolgoff is not joined by many other anarchists, incidentally. Bakunin, for example, called Marx's *Capital* a "magnificent work" and worked to translate it into Russian, while Kropotkin alleged that Marx had stolen his economic theories from the anarchists!

Dolgoff, because he is not a materialist, fails entirely to understand Marx's analysis of slavery. As Dolgoff knows very well, Marx hated slavery. What Marx did, however, was to show that slavery was rooted in material conditions and that a purely moralistic opposition to it was impotent. To say that something is bad is not an analysis. In the same sense, Marx repeatedly said that capitalism had been "progressive". Is there any doubt that Marx nevertheless opposed capitalism?

Dolgoff challenges a number of my references. Readers may turn to page 168 of Woodcock's book for themselves, and the comment concerning Rothschild is reproduced in the footnote below. Of more interest, however, is Dolgoff's denial that Bakunin himself advocated a post-revolutionary state. It is of interest because the denial illustrates the typically magical anarchist attitude to reality: the belief that changing the word changes the reality. For the point is that Bakunin advocated precisely such a state, complete with parliament, cabinet, army, police, etc. but gave it a different name, and thus managed to persuade himself that he had done away with it.

This attempt to do away with the reality by changing the word also characterizes the anarchist attitude to revolutionary organization. Anarchists may persuade themselves that a "network of secret cadres" who will be the "General Staff" of the revolution and who would serve as "intermediaries between the revolutionary ideas and the popular instincts" is a strictly benevolent structure which would serve the interests of the people and never oppress them. The Bolsheviks once persuaded themselves of the same thing; they were all once as "sincere" as Bakunin's "Secret Brotherhood". And to put Bakunin's naive prescription that members of his alliance would never be permitted "to take public office" into perspective, it is necessary only to recall that Stalin held no public office whatsoever until 1941.

ULLI DIEMER

Bakunin on Marx and Rothschild:

"Himself a Jew, Marx has around him, in London and France, but especially in Germany, a multitude of more or less clever, intriguing, mobile, speculating Jews, such as Jews are everywhere: commercial or banking agents, writers, politicians, correspondents for newspapers of all shades, with one foot in the bank, the other in the socialist movement, and with their behinds sitting on the German daily press—they have taken possession of all the newspapers—and you can imagine what kind of sickening literature they produce. Now, this entire Jewish world, which forms a single profiteering sect, a people of bloodsuckers, a single gluttonous parasite, closely and intimately united not only across national borders but across all differences of political opinion—this Jewish world today stands for the most part at the disposal of Marx and at the same time at the disposal of Rothschild. I am certain that Rothschild for his part greatly values the merits of Marx,

and that Marx for his part feels instinctive attraction and great respect for Rothschild.

This may seem strange. What can there be in common between Communism and the large banks? Oh! The Communism of Marx seeks enormous centralization in the state, and where such exists, there must inevitably be a central state bank, and where such a bank exists, the parasitic Jewish nation, which speculates on the work of the people, will always find a way to prevail...."

Source: Michael Bakunin, 1871, *Personliche Beziehungen zu Marx*. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Band 3. Berlin 1924. P. 204-216. [My translation].

Bakunin on Bismarck and Marx:

"the People's State of Marx and the aristocratic-monarchic state of Bismarck are completely identical in terms of their primary domestic and foreign objectives....Like Bismarck, he [Marx] is a German patriot."

Source: Sam Dolgoff, ed., *Bakunin on Anarchy*, P. 319-320.

THE LENINIST FACADE

Some sixty-one years separates us from the October Revolution of 1917 when the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin made their successful bid for power. Since that time the debate has never ceased in defence of or criticism of the takeover, but there is little attempt by socialists to give a Marxist theoretical criticism of the revolution. The early publication of the ill-fated Julius Martov's *State and the Socialist Revolution*, a reply to Lenin's *State and Revolution*, is still perhaps the best example of a socialist critique of Leninism. In short it shows that the socialism of Lenin was a facade and that not only a gulf, but a veritable ocean separates Lenin and his followers from Marx and his co-worker Engels.

There are a number of opposing ways in which most view the rise of Leninism. On the one hand we have those, such as the anarchists, who assert that Leninism and the managerial bureaucracy of a state capitalist Soviet Union is the natural development of Marxism. Others develop this theme in the defense of the revolution by claiming that Leninism was indeed a "higher" development of Marxism in the "age of imperialism" (usually asserted by most Leninists). Both views carry the single thread that Marxism was inevitably tied to Leninism - a belief which has become widely accepted simply because of force of habit. But, as Maxim Gorky forewarned: "A belief based on force of habit is one of the saddest and most harmful phenomena of our time - as in the shade of a stone wall everything new grows slowly, become stunted, lacking the sap of life." (*My Apprenticeship*).

What must be done amongst serious socialists is to review the main tenets of Leninist theory and compare them with the socialism of Marx. Such a review must not be constructed as a call for return to purist dogma but for a thorough understanding of Marx's views on the socialist movement. As such it provides a damaging critique of today's Leninist movements - a critique they cannot face.

One of the main issues of contention centres around the very role played by the socialist movement/party. To Marx, the socialist revolution could only be achieved by the "self-conscious, independent movement of the

immense majority in the interests of the immense majority." (*Communist Manifesto*). Communists/socialists did not pose as a separate party opposed to the interests of the other working class organizations and did not proclaim themselves to be its official leadership. The movement would grow out of the understanding the working class gained of the class positions they held. Objective class interests would be formed paralleled by the growth in subjective consciousness - a class consciousness. In the struggle against capital the workers, aware of their class situation through their real life experiences would become a "class for itself" (*German Ideology*) and it would be their "mass instinct" - (Engels to Friedrich Sorge, 1894) which would show them that they must build their own party. As such, "so that the masses may understand what is to be done, long and persistent work is required." - (*Class Struggle in France*).

What many socialists and anarchists have failed to understand is that the critical

element of class consciousness amongst the working class must be established for the revolution to be successful. When dealing with events of the Russian revolution, the Spanish civil war or the May uprisings in France 1968, many fail to note that what is lacking is a clear socialist consciousness/class consciousness - of the working class aware of itself as a class, aware of its immediate interest and its historic necessity to establish socialism. Such consciousness entails a belief in what socialism is and how to achieve it - call socialism the abolition of wage labour, a classless society, ending of alienation and the society of the spectacle, or the radical transformation of everyday life. Socialists were, in Marx's view the advanced sections of the working class. They did not lead the revolution but pushed all other sections of the proletariat forward and revealed the general movement of society and the social forces in conflict.

Lenin had, as early as 1902, rejected this belief when in his famous *What is to be done?* he advocated the need for a secret party of "professional revolutionaries" since "the working class exclusively by its own efforts is able to develop only trade union consciousness." The minority elite of revolutionaries was to lead the workers and it was the party alone which could establish and exercise the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in the so-called "interests" of the mass. As Lenin proclaimed at the 10th Party Congress, only the communist party "is in a position to unite, educate, organize ... and direct all sides of the proletarian masses and hence all working masses."

Marx continually stressed in his own writings and through his work in the International Workmen's Association that the proletariat, by its own efforts would seize state power by itself and in its own interests. The revolution could not be willed by a few individuals as Michael Bakunin believed and cannot be led by a Blanquist elite. Lenin on the other hand, did not understand the prerequisite of a class conscious majority. As reported by John Reed, Lenin had stated: "If socialism can only be realized when the intellectual development of all people permits it, then we shall not see socialism for at least five hundred years." Only after the Bolshevik power was deeply entrenched and a new managerial bureaucracy was being built did Lenin concede that certain "cultural" work must be done. Not realizing that socialism cannot be built without socialists the Bolsheviks and their followers may well have put the socialist movement back some five hundred years.

But perhaps the most controversial aspect of Marx's thought centres around the term "dictatorship of the proletariat", taken by both anarchists and Leninists alike to mean the iron-willed dictatorship of a small clique or party of those "educated" in socialist dogma. Yet never did Marx or Engels look upon this dictatorship as a form of state or government, but rather as the social structure of state power in the immediate transition to socialism. As early as 1848 in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx concluded that the very first step in the revolution was to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class - the "establishment of democracy".

The proletariat, being the immense majority, would seize the state power and machine" - (*Eighteenth Brumaire*). The state machine did not mean the state itself but the "Bureaucratic and military machine" (Marx to Kugelmann). While in previous revolutions the bureaucracy and military would simply be handed over to the new regime, it was the duty of the working class to cast them aside and dismantle them "at the earliest possible moment". - (*Civil War in France*). As the young Marx had commented in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State*, the bureaucracy caused the state to seemingly stand above society while in reality it was the "imaginary state behind the state" and thus possessed the very "essence" of the state.

The working class, in Marx's construct, seizes state power and lops off its worst sides. Through this "dictatorship" of the majority workers use the organized force they wield to abolish the capitalists as a class and thereby negating themselves as a separate class (for without a capitalist class there can be no working class). As the class system is abolished and classes cease to exist there is no need for a state as an instrument of class oppression and its vestiges will die

leaving an administration controlled by the people themselves.

Lenin showed a serious misunderstanding of this. In the *State and Revolution* he assumed that the state itself would be "smashed". This left him open to charges, by social democrats, that his "anarchist" tendencies had come forth, but Lenin proposed to smash the state only to replace it with a centralized "workers' state". The dictatorship, rather than giving free reign for all tendencies to appear through the establishment of the fullest democracy as advocated by Marx in regards to the Paris Commune, would suppress all oppositional forces. Furthermore this dictatorship would establish "socialism" and then lead to the development of "communism" despite the fact that neither Marx nor Engels ever made such a distinction but only commented on the lower and higher phases of communist society. That Lenin's vision was truly distorted is confirmed by his definition of socialism: "Socialism is nothing but state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people." - (*The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It*). In a short time the dictatorship exercised by the party would proceed with this socialism despite the workers. At the 10th Party Congress Leon Trotsky put it this way: "The Party is obliged to maintain the dictatorship ... regardless of temporary vacillations even in the working class ... The dictatorship does not base itself at every given moment on the formal principle of a workers' democracy." And as the guns of the Bolsheviks thundered at Kronstadt where workers and sailors demanded elementary democracy Lenin put forward the view that "Soviet Socialist Democracy is in no way inconsistent with the rule and dictatorship of one person (10th Party Congress). What a charade of Marxism!"

Much of Lenin's thought proceeds from the proposition that socialism is a distinct developmental stage apart from communist society and that the state must be smashed only to be replaced by a new form. In that instance "All citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of armed workers." - (*State and Revolution*). The state thus becomes the absolute capitalist. In *Anti-Duhring*, however, Engels made it clear that the "proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property. But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes the state as state." And as Paul Lafargue noted in his reminiscences of Marx, Marx himself promoted the triumph of the working class which would "establish communism as soon as it has achieved political and economic leadership of society."

It is undeniable that the Bolsheviks during the course of the revolution in Russia had a large following in certain urban centres, but one must, nevertheless, understand the objective circumstances of the time. The Provisional government was weak and corrupt, the Russian army lay in defeat, communication was in chaos, millions starved. The Bolsheviks promised "Peace, Bread and Land", a strong central government and the convening of a constituent assembly. Such promises appealed to certain sectors of the population and the Bolsheviks consequently appeared revolutionary, but there was nothing inherently socialistic about the demands put forward. By co-stituting themselves the state power the Bolsheviks filled the void for political power and authority and thus pushed forward Russia's bourgeois/capitalist revolution and administered a growing capitalism when the bourgeoisie was too weak to do so itself. As a result, state capitalism was raised to the level of party and state ideology as Leninist, until this day, unabashedly and deliberately confuse socialism with state control.

These are not the only differences between Marx and Lenin, others exist concerning the very materialist conception of history. This review, as stated in the beginning, is not a call for dogmatism and the quoting of "sacred" texts, but it is enough to see that Marxism-Leninism is a contradiction in terms. It is from this comparison and the mistakes made within the movement itself that socialists and the critics of socialism must learn to tear away the myth from Marx in order to discover him.

LEONARD WALLACE

1

Human beings look for the easiest solution to any problem they may face. This is as true for the problem of abolishing class society as it is for the problems of securing food, clothing, shelter, etc. Since what appears at first glance to be the "easiest" solution is usually so badly misleading as to be useless, it often takes a long time before people give up the "easy" answer and begin to make real progress in solving their problems.

2

The "easiest solution" to all human problems was summed up by Walt Disney: "Wishing will make it so!" This answer requires no physical and very little mental work. Anyone can do it in their spare time. Whether you use it to invent Gods and Devils or to explain how class society will be overthrown, it remains equally useful and always available. Of course, it does have one tiny little shortcoming: it doesn't work.

3

Whenever class society finds itself in serious difficulties, the "easiest answer" comes forward with renewed strength. In its official clothing, it seeks to convince people that their unhappiness is their own fault. But what concerns us here is how the "easiest answer" puts on a "revolutionary" costume.

4

What does the wishful revolutionary wish for? For reasons that are not clear, he usually has some distorted version of the past that he wishes to re-create. Since real primitives often have a myth of a "Golden Age", I choose to call our contemporary wishful revolutionaries Neo-Primitives.

5

Beginning with a vision of human freedom (instead of some ideas based on an examination of social reality), our Neo-Primitive proceeds to the construction of a theology. Those who support class society become devils; those who oppose it become saints. Even those who say they oppose class society secretly slide into the grip of the devil; thus the detection of heretics becomes a major task. The Neo-Primitive is all too ready to respond to communication with excommunication.

the proliferation of neo-primitives



6

The vision of our contemporary Neo-Primitive revolutionaries demands the destruction of science and technology in all its forms - their "Golden Age" pre-dates the machine. They regard science and technology as authoritarian by their very natures. They are "tools of the devil" (class society).

The Neo-Primitive revolutionary (like true primitives) has a basically passive attitude towards his social environment. He views "trying to make a revolution" about the same way a true primitive would view "trying to command the gods." His bold rhetoric of "burning factories" translates into furtive shop-lifting at best.

The notion that human beings can act on a rational basis ("know what they're doing") is heresy to the Neo-Primitive. He worships the looters in New York City's recent black-out as "real revolutionaries", even though the looters themselves thought they were just stealing. If the looters had made a conscious political decision to loot, the Neo-Primitives would have condemned them as aspiring egocrats.

Living in a technological society, the Neo-Primitives inevitably generate a severe internal contradiction. Unless they are willing to withdraw into some rural paradise (like the Amish in Pennsylvania), they find themselves using all of the technological "tools of the devil" to preach the anti-technological faith. They publish newspapers to denounce the whole idea of newspapers as a form of communication. They write pamphlets and circulate books to condemn the idea of writing pamphlets and circulating books. They form organizations based on the premise that all organizations turn into counter-revolutionary gangs. In short, at every turn, they subvert their own project. They find, as so many have in the past, that wishing does not make it so after all!

Some of the Neo-Primitives are aware of this contradiction and are self-critical enough to invite us to judge them by their practice. Taking them up on this offer is a risky proposition (given their ever-present impulse to excommunicate), but why bother? Now that a small but growing number of people are beginning to reject the "easiest answer" and really try to figure out how to build an egalitarian mass movement and construct a classless society, is there anything to be gained by trying to drag the Neo-Primitives kicking and screaming into the last quarter of the 20th century?

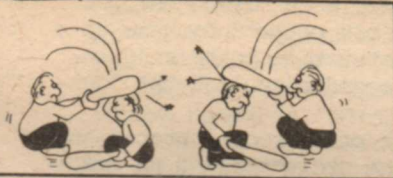
It is a shame, of course, to see otherwise admirable people waste their time and energy in visions and theology. Perhaps the best we can hope is that when a libertarian revolution is made, the Neo-Primitives will choose a life of freedom over their dreams of freedom.

Ed Clark
Oakland, Calif.

TEN THESES ON THE PROLIFERATION OF NEO-PRIMITIVES

(A reply to W.B. Jeffries' "Ten Theses on the Proliferation of Egocrats", published in the Fifth Estate, September 1977)

Face To Face



Dear Red Menace:

About a month ago, a friend sent me a copy of your paper (the Spring 1978 issue). Great stuff! I particularly liked "Bakunin vs. Marx", "Words", and "Everything You Wanted to Know About Sects". One thing for sure - your articles show a hell of a lot more original thought than those in the papers of the sectarian left. You've also got a sense of humour.

I have to disagree with P. Murtaugh when he says in his article "Some thoughts on organization" that insurrectional revolution in Canada is impossible and could never succeed. I think that non-insurrectional revolution is a contradiction in terms. I can't think of any successful revolution in history that didn't involve an armed uprising against the old regime and system. He's just kidding himself if he seriously believes that the ruling class won't react "to threats to its hegemony by either repression or bribery". It uses both even now when there is no threat of revolution. I personally know of cases where bosses have tried to prevent unions from organizing their employees by bribing the organizers with pay raises, promotions, etc.

As regards repression, what about police brutality at the Fleck strike (to name just one), the shooting of the mill workers in Montreal, and the military occupation of Quebec in October 1970? Isn't that repression? Revolutionary insurrection is quite possible in industrial societies. It almost happened in France in 1968 and in the north of Ireland the Provisional IRA has

been fighting a revolutionary war against Britain since 1969. P. Murtaugh is right when he points out that there is bound to be a lot of hardship and suffering among the people in the course of an insurrection. Unfortunately, that's part of any revolution. The only alternative is to put up with this system.



Right now, despite unemployment, inflation, shitty working conditions, racism, etc. most people are still pretty satisfied with the system. Conditions aren't bad enough yet that people are pissed off enough to overthrow the government and have a social revolution. However, I think that time will come sooner or later however long that may be.

Peter Flosznik

Dear Red Menace:

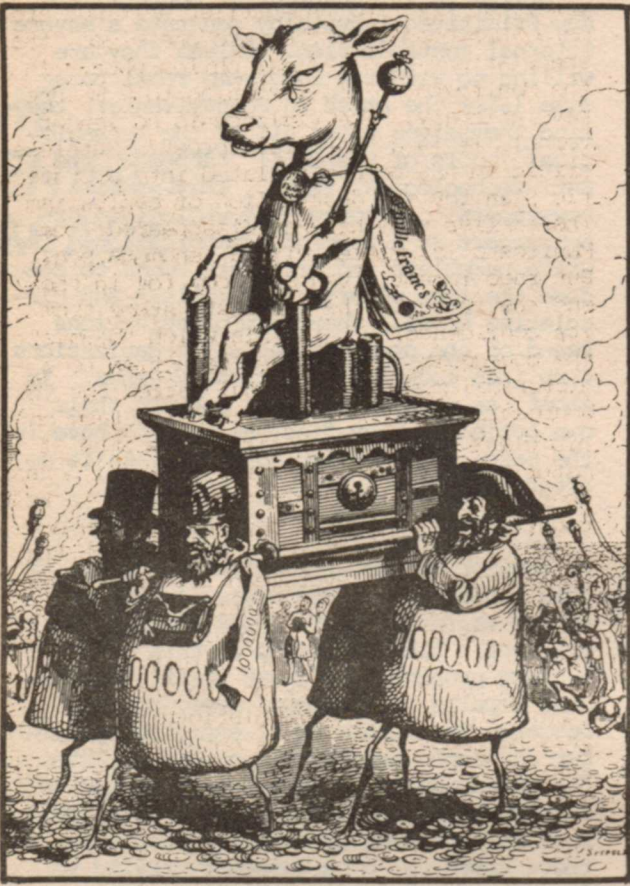
I enjoyed Vol. 2, No. 2 and it was in many ways one of the best magazines I've seen lately. Important points seemed to be the commitment to being non-sectarian within the libertarian left, and the need for an intelligent analysis leading to concrete social change. Nonetheless I have some criticisms.

Coming from a socialist anarchist background I would have liked to have seen the anarchism/marxism issue well worked out. However none of the articles on this issue was constructive at all. There seems to be little point to the historical aspects of the Marx vs. Bakunin feud except insofar as either or both can help us take the world we have now and move it toward liberation and socialism. If you have such analyses deriving from wherever it would be more useful to publish them than this sectarian bickering.

Thank you very much though and please enter a subscription for me.

Bill Coleman
Buffalo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14



yearning for the real is fulfilled. The world is revealed and with it the fact of its inhabitation. Reality, it turns out, is social. One's urge to destroy contradicts or reinforces the urge of others. But this discovery of the projects of others immediately deflates one's own urge. The urge to destroy so far accepted as a given is revealed as a choice. The urge to demystify must itself be demystified. In the processing of exposing others to their own contingency one learns the contingency of oneself. The primacy of the urge even if the urge is to destroy is revealed as an escape from contingency, a denial of one's freedom. Or to put it more simply, to be "ruled" by any passion is no more than an attempt to escape the necessity of choosing which particular passion to be "ruled" by.

Hatred for the bourgeoisie is no more "natural" or inevitable than is the existence of the class one hates. Nothing can "rule" my life, not even the revulsion I feel for those who in practice do run my life. This revulsion too is my creation as we discover in those moments of self-doubt when we feel we are taking things "too seriously". We look to our feelings to take over the automatic guidance of our lives only to discover that the moment these feelings are charged with this responsibility they collapse under its weight. I choose to be a revolutionary and to let my hatred for the bourgeoisie sustain me but there come days when my hate seems exhausted, when I can contemplate not being a revolutionary without the slightest feeling of guilt. In such moments I conjure to myself all the things that usually make me angry. I say to myself "Remember imperialism, remember your own frustrations, recall the smug faces of the pigs and the nauseating toadying of the press." My rage creeps back and once more I'm a revolutionary "as I cannot help but be". I evade absurdity. Christians are deeply aware of this



process. They recognize that religious fervor, the "loosing of oneself in God", is an exotic experience that in everyday life one has to rely on faith, a conscious commitment. The same can be said of long-time lovers. Indeed I have the same experience as I write this article: the frenzy that moves me to write sometimes fails me and I have to continue in an arduous and deliberate manner until the next bout. Absurdity or anguish are thus the proof of freedom.

Thus nihilism, which starts as the affirmation of freedom, must in order to maintain this affirmation go beyond itself. The passion that drives me to reject the obscene self-deception of the bourgeois otherwise becomes my own self-deception, my own way of establishing a "place in life" as secure and eternal as that of the bourgeois.

If I overcome nihilism I face the difficult incompletion task of constructing a revolutionary project. I subject myself to the constant uncertainty that goes with any project. Each step of the way it is necessary to make choices that are in themselves never necessary. How is capitalism fought? Should I join a party? If so which one? If not what do I do? Do I start my own party or do I act on my own? How can I be most effective on my own? These questions are necessary, I cannot avoid asking them. But each particular answer is never the necessary answer. The choice not to join a party is never final as is any other choice.

But I can also choose to deny the necessity of choosing. This is bad faith, a deliberate confusion of one necessity with another. Because it is true that each particular choice is not necessary but choice itself is not a choice. In bad faith I claim for myself a freedom I actually do not have — the freedom not to be free — so as to better suppress the freedom I do have.

This is what it means to make nihilism a profession. The damnation of others becomes my own salvation, my own way out of freedom. I jeer at the bourgeois, the bureaucrat and the Leninist even as I make of my jeering a safe occupation. I attack others for stifling freedom while I stifle it in myself.

Earlier we noted that nihilism's bad faith lies in its emphasis on the "urge". In other words nihilism chooses to limit itself to an emotion thus avoiding coming to grips with the world. It negates while at the same time refusing to transcend thus exposing its negation as a false one. It attacks capitalism but refuses to draw up a program for its destruction preferring instead to act from a distance, for the "outside".

This is typical of emotional states in general, what Sartre characterized as "magical" reactions to the practical problems of everyday life.

In the magical states one escapes the tensions that characterize the world of everyday life. The endless search for and comparison of possibilities is avoided through the reduction of the world to a non-utilizable whole. For example: I am late for an appointment. There is nothing I can do about it because the time I reach my destination at this point depends entirely on the speed of the subway train and the distance that has to be covered, a mathematical relation. At each station it is possible for me to check the time. But I avoid doing so since I find looking at the clocks unbearable. I act as if not looking at the clocks will somehow make time irrelevant to my situation and prevent me from being late. My not looking is thus a magical gesture, a symbolic destruction of the complex world in which time exists and in which I am late. For this I substitute a world which in Sartre's words "requires nothing of me" since it is a world devoid of any instruments. My subsequent ability to act as if in time, did not exist, an ability I do not "really" have, compensates for an ability I did have but which I chose to forego, namely, the ability to start my journey earlier and be on time. Had I started out early time and the speed of the train would have been devices in my favour, guarantees of my punctuality. As it is they have become insurmountable obstacles.

In Sartre's words:

"All ways are barred and nevertheless we must act. So then we try to change the world; that is to live it as though



relations between things and their potentialities were not covered by deterministic processes but by magic."

Emotion is consequently a "transformation of the world" but it is a useless transformation since it is achieved through a transformation of the perceiver.

"To put it more simply, since the seizure of one object is impossible, or sets up an unbearable tension, the consciousness seizes it or tries to seize it otherwise; that is it tries to transform itself in order to transform its object."

The clocks, and time in general, are unaffected by my refusal to consider them even though this refusal creates for me a more habitable world. "Such are the limitations of my magical power over the world: I can suppress as object of consciousness, but only by suppressing consciousness itself."

Clearly emotions are only one step away from bad faith. They are always escapes, "low-energy" states we fall into when our resources — perceived or otherwise — are not adequate to overcome obstacles in our paths. Under such conditions we find it convenient to forget both the "real" determinism of the world and our equally real freedom to adapt to it i.e. we forget the orderliness on which we normally rely to achieve our ends. As the example illustrated whether the world's determinism hinders or makes possible our freedom depends on our choices. In the emotional/magical state, however, I claim a freedom I do not possess, an exemption from the rules to which I am not entitled. Determinist as it is the material world still allows choices. In this sense I am free: how I submit to the operating pattern of the world in general and subway trains in particular depends entirely on me; it is my freedom. But in an emotional state I claim a superior freedom: that of actually defining the choices available. This freedom is a fiction. Only a God could have it. But it serves to evade the real freedom and responsibility I really do have.

This distinction between two sorts of freedom is vital because it explains why it is possible to escape from freedom in the name of freedom. Actual freedom demands that one interiorize the rules. These rules are at once the resistance to one's projects and the condition for actualizing our freedom. The lawfulness ("resistance") of matter is what makes flight possible but which

at the same time makes it require effort. This contact with the determinism of matter is what we refer to when we use the expression "to dirty one's hands".

Conversely "purity" is abstention from choice, an emotional belief in the power of one's intentions. This is the purity of nihilism. However, nihilism goes further than an implicit negation of the utilizable world.

The negation is made into a system. Further: the urge to destroy is already an act of destruction the moment the urge is given primacy. Nihilism is consequently a circular system. The attitude is its own end. To be a nihilist is already to have liquidated reality.

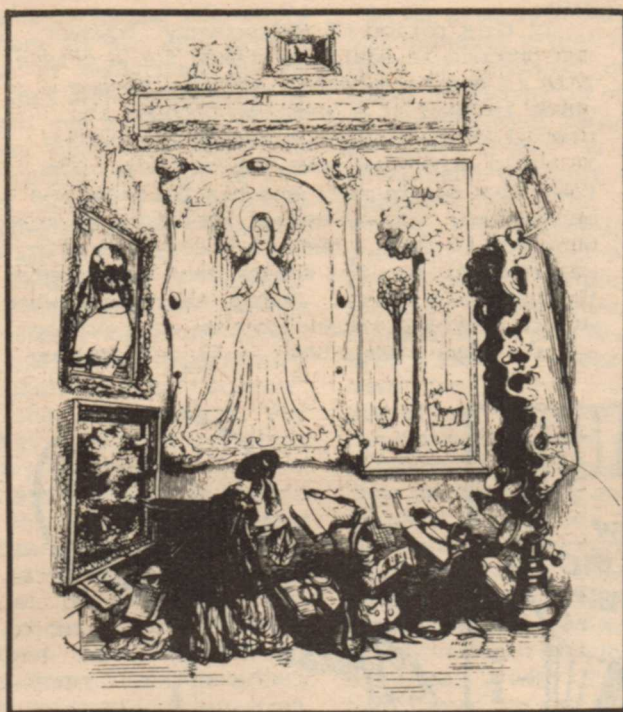
Nihilism directs its negation at the world but is concerned with the negation of the consciousness from which it emanates. One transforms oneself in order to transform the object: the emotional destruction of the world is the destruction of oneself. For all its violence nihilism leaves the world untouched.

In Marxist terminology nihilism is an ideology. But we are dealing with an ideology that is not autonomous but which inhabits other currents, a particular way of adapting to existing reality that actually perpetuates that reality. We should speak, in fact, of alienation. Nihilism represents the separation of emotion from its source and the subsequent domination of the latter by the former. The differences between this form of alienation and religious alienation are less important than the similarities. Religion arises out of the necessity to deny the misery of this world. Adaptation in the case of religion consists of transcendence toward God. The world as such is negated: its only a preparation for what is to come,

a not quite real manifestation of a genuine and infinite reality. Nihilism simply dispenses with the transcendence. Or rather it is unable to carry out the transcendence after the negation. Having liquidated reality nihilism stands hypnotized by its own gesture. The demystification of God is completed only to be replaced by a new form of alienation. The revolt against all Gods turns on itself and makes revolt as such the object of worship. It is not accidental that the devil is portrayed in Goethe's *Faust* as the spirit of negation:

The spirit I, that endlessly denies.
And rightly too; for all that comes to birth
Is fit for overthrow, as nothing worth;
Wherefore the world were better sterilized;

Satanism too is an escape, an attempt, paradoxical as it may be, at personal salvation. It is far more heroic than religion of course. If nothing else destruction is a form of self-assertion while religion is a pathetic debasement. When one's back starts to brush against the cold, hard wall the choice is between falling on one's knees or striking at everything within reach. A feeling of intense exhilaration must accompany the latter: one has lost everything and this loss has been turned to advantage. Amidst the sordidness of this world, outside the unending cycle of manipulation, there is a moment of purity. *Seule la revolte est pur*, Simone Beauvoir once said. The act of rebellion guarantees that the rebel has nothing to lose, not be-



cause he does not possess anything, but because the act of rebellion severs him from whatever he possesses. Sainthood and nihilism necessarily intersect for in the end both advocate the purity of sterility. But as we noted earlier this state of purity doesn't last long. It cannot because it is an unstable state, like the highpoint of a jump. Gravity never relinquishes its hold; matter is an adversity that only a material force can overcome. The devil is only clean in that short moment in which he defies God. After that he becomes Mephistopheles the professional cynic who actually requires God to maintain his identity. As Goetz discovers in Sartre's *The Devil and the Good Lord* both absolutes are impossible. "There is no difference between the Devil and the Lord -- personally I choose man."

What does it mean to choose man? It means accepting the necessity of dirtying one's hands. It means making compromises between the Devil and the Lord so as to be better able to beat both of them. In short humanism demands that nothing be sacred not revolt and not even man. Nihilism has to be reduced to a device. Like violence it has to be denied any intrinsic value, negative or positive. Indeed nothing has value but only received it from human action. Consequently what appears to be sordid -- the manoeuvrings, the manipulations, the compromises -- only this has any value. The rest is meaningless.

Nihilism has to lose its virginity and become humanism. That is what it comes down to. This transcendence, however, can never be complete. It has to be renewed constantly. Degeneration is a constant threat; hence the lapses of the revolutionary movement into adventurism. As Sartre has pointed out the magical side of the world is an ever-present existential structure. It only takes a slight "nudge", an obstacle, to precipitate consciousness into an emotional relation with the world. Emotions are in fact a component of our perceptual system. They help us detect difficulties, as when anger, for example, notifies me of the presence of a barrier to my plans. The question is whether one gives way to a fit, the infantile reaction, or whether the notice of difficulty serves to put in motion a plan for its overcoming.

Similarly the critique of nihilism seeks not to eradicate the phenomenon but rather to integrate it within a larger project.

Marx provides a good example of this process of integration. Thus in his early writings the purpose is almost entirely destructive. "Criticism aims not to refute but to destroy," he says. It is "a hand-to-hand fight, and in such a fight it is of no interest to know whether the adversary is of the same rank, noble or interesting -- all that matters is to strike him."

Soon, however, he has to go beyond criticism and into politics. For in the end "the arm of criticism cannot replace the criticism of arms. Material force can only be overthrown by material force." It is necessary to procure instruments ("arms") to change criticism into a plan of action. "Revolutions need a passive element, a material basis." Intentions left to themselves are useless. They must become strategy. Or as Marx announces in the 1st Thesis on Feuerbach subject and object must unite.

By the time the Communist Manifesto is written the initial nihilism has become a

subterranean current. Airy "criticism" has become "class struggle". The result is overpowering. Perhaps the earlier writings are more "profound" but they are one-sided, the speculations of a radical philosopher. In the Manifesto we are listening to a mature revolutionary. The violence is no longer verbal, it is a "material force". Ruthless criticism has been translated into a systematic plan for the destruction of capitalism. The earlier rage has not disappeared; the Manifesto is written with a venomous pen. But rage is not given autonomy for in the end the force of the manifesto stems from its confidence. It is this which "haunts" the bourgeois, his summary reduction to a historical moment. Personal hatred for the bourgeois animates an impersonal attack on his class. This synthesis is the sign of maturity since it demonstrates a willingness to plunge into the "thick" of things, a recognition as well as acceptance of the demands of matter. There is no illusion that human freedom can ever mean freedom from these demands. On the contrary human freedom begins with their recognition, hence the materialist conception of history.

Marxism thus appears on the scene as the coming to age of the revolutionary idea. But this hard-won maturity is not a permanent achievement. For the transcendence of nihilism occurs in the actual process of revolutionary action. It is consequently something that must ever be renewed. Regression to infantilism is always possible. It is in fact a possibility that permanently haunts the revolutionary project, a possibility that of necessity becomes more tempting than ever when revolution seems cut off from the present by insuperable barriers.

This is the secret of Marxism: the theory is as open as the history it intervenes in, as unfinished as the subjects who undertakes to realize it. The dialectic is the life of the subject himself. It exists in the world only through the existence and contingency of the subject. This contingency of the subject -- the utter lack of necessity for his existence and its meaning -- this radical freedom is what denies any transcendence, any choice, the permanency it might otherwise have. That first thesis on Feuerbach is both the beginning and the end of Marxism: the transcendence of the subjective/objective duality is a permanent task,

life itself. It has taken Marxism a hundred years to rediscover this truth. This rediscovery may appear to some as a "crisis" of Marxism or as Lichtheim bemoans in *Marxism* the dissolution of the unity of theory and practice. But in fact this "unity" is animated entirely by those who live it. Outside of this relation if disappears, making it futile to look for it even inside the writings of Marx. Marxism's greatest dis-



covery is in fact that it cannot prescribe any apodictic "science" of revolution, any fail-safe program. On the contrary what it provides is a new question, a new responsibility to make a choice. It allows to see the world behind the mystifications that are set up to obscure it. But behind the mystified world we find a world that is infinitely more complex in comparison because it is made up entirely of our choices. Thus Marxism leads us along the tortuous path of its development only to leave us with a burden. The theory of demystification is itself demystified. But this is not death. It is the further maturing of a mature theory. It

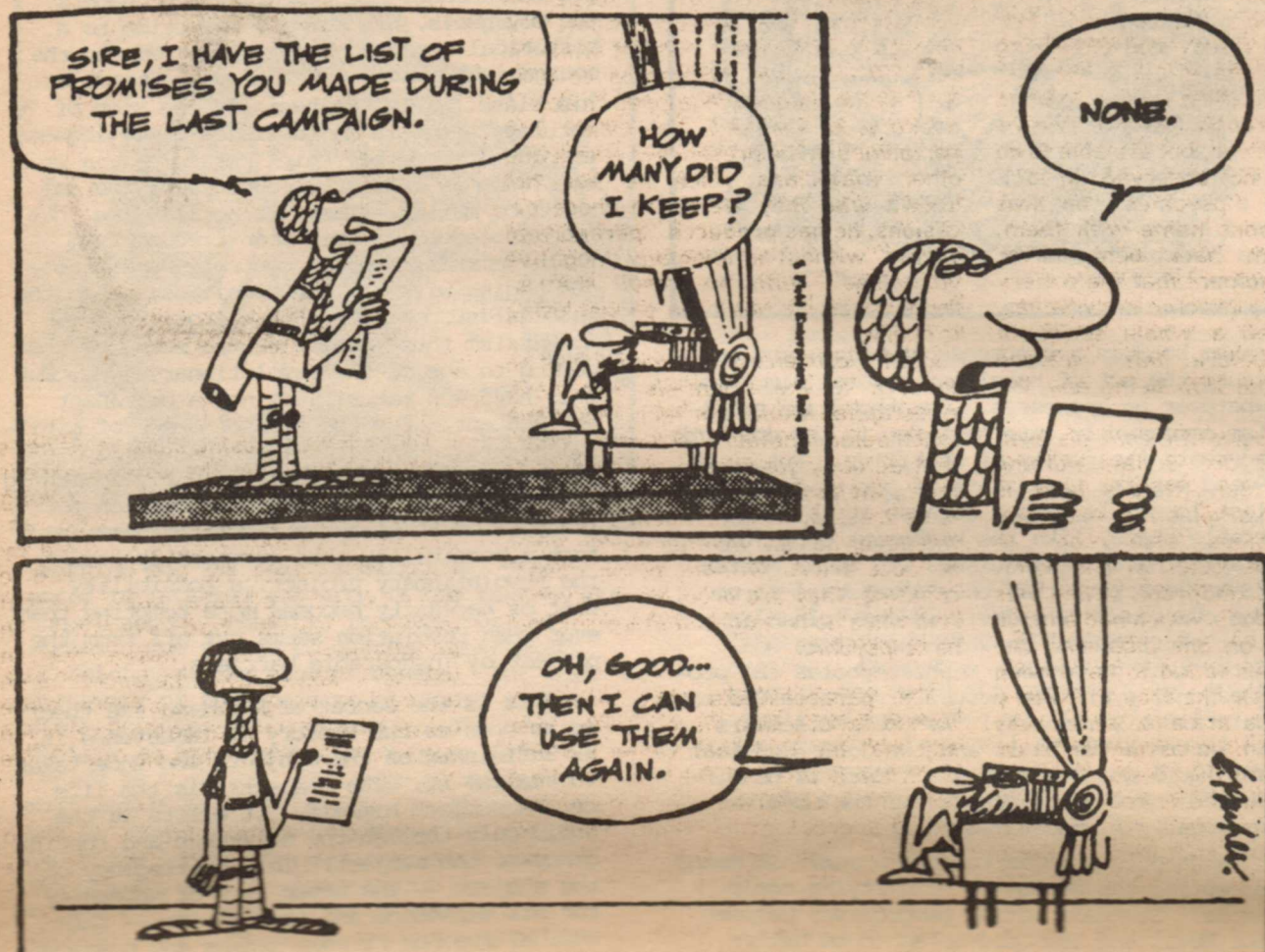
is one more step away from the nihilist origin.

In this period of rediscovery, however, the process is easily mistaken for a crisis. This is understandable. Marxism became a guide instead of a question because its practitioners could not accept the burden it would otherwise have put on them. The task Marx set himself and his followers was gargantuan. It was easier therefore to make what was in fact a task, a theory requiring realization into the beacon that illuminated the path to victory. Today, therefore, when we are starting to see Marxism as a problem -- as it has always been -- it is tempting

to see it as a failure. This is the same temptation as existed at the beginning, the same relinquishing of responsibility.

There will never be a theory that will tell us what to do. The best theory will only help us narrow the choices but choices will always remain the chasm between us and what we make of ourselves. But this is not a justification of nihilism. For as we observed earlier nihilism evades freedom and must consequently always be considered a regression.

Mario Cutajar



After failing to raise her up, evangelist lowers mom into grave

REEDS SPRING, Mo. (UPI) — The body of 80-year-old Gladys Rogers, still frozen after three attempts by her son to resurrect her, was buried yesterday, eight weeks after her death.

Mrs. Rogers was buried during a 15-minute service attended by her son, evangelist Daniel Aaron Rogers, and about three dozen friends.

The body, which remained in a sitting position, was transferred from a white horizontal freezer to an over-sized pine coffin covered with pink cloth. Rogers read several Bible passages and said a brief prayer.

Mrs. Rogers died Feb. 2 of flu in Harrison, Ark. Her son froze the body and was able to persuade Missouri authorities to let him take the remains into the state for a resurrection attempt. Arkansas officials had refused.

Rogers, who said he wanted to resurrect his mother to bring more people to Christ, was unavailable for comment after the funeral service.

The first attempt at resurrection was March 12. At that time Rogers promised he would bury his mother within two weeks if he was unable to bring her back to life. About 1,000 people waited outside the small mortuary while Rogers and other evangelists prayed inside and a choir sang hymns.

Afterwards, Rogers said he would bring Indonesian evangelist S.A. Makal to help in a final resurrection attempt. However, Rogers was unable to raise the \$4,300 Makal had requested for expenses.

Para-review investigates parapsychology

I was a psychic for the FBI

P.T. Barnum, that past master of the con game, would have had some interesting insights into the modern hocus-pocus, like "parapsychology", that so many seemingly rational people in this obsessively rationalistic age have swallowed hook, line, and sinker. To be sure, parapsychology and similar superstitions flourished in earlier times as well, but it is only in the recent past that psychics have sought (and in a few interesting cases, received) the endorsement of scientists, who have themselves become icons of superstitious faith for many people. This has put the whole game on a different level. It has enhanced the credibility of parapsychology for many people, and it has helped to make it a lucrative profession for a few.

It has also given our culture some classic monuments of stupidity and gullibility, suitably emblazoned with the name of "Science". And most important, perhaps, it has engulfed the whole wretched psychic carnival in a sticky, and virtually impenetrable, morass of fraud and foolishness, rumour and conjecture, error and confusion. Trying to make sense of what is happening in the never-never-land of parapsychology is virtually impossible. And if by chance you do succeed, you find that you would have understood the operations of the psychic miracle workers a lot sooner if you had looked at parapsychology as a case study in applied sociology, illustrating the old motto: "Never give a sucker an even break". It might well be the motto of the career "psychic".

In fact, poor Barnum must be kicking himself right now in that Great Circus

in the Sky. He was born a century too late. Nowadays, there are more suckers about than old P.T. could have wished for in his fondest dreams. And today's sophisticated suckers have a lot more money to spend than the simple country folk of Barnum's day ever did.

Imagine what heights he could have risen to in today's world. Guru Maharaji Barnum. There would have been no stopping him.

But I like to think that Barnum wouldn't have done it. I think he had too much integrity, and I think he might have been out of his depth in a world where society and the circus are one and the same. His was a simpler world. When you were being had by P.T. Barnum, you knew you were being had. You could go home afterwards, shaking your head, feeling a bit sheepish, your pocket-book empty, but your self-respect and identity still fundamentally intact. Barnum was after your money, not your soul.

The humbug of the 1970's seems to be different. What a "psychic" like Uri Geller plays the old shell game with you, he is after your soul. The game is played for keeps, and that makes it vicious and totalitarian.

Parapsychology is so confused and contradictory that it's difficult to get a grip on it anywhere. As an example, look at the two articles, of October 27 and February 11, both of them breathlessly (and mindlessly) favourable, that The Varsity was somehow suckered into carrying this year.

In them, sprouting up like so many toadstools, you'll find magic

mushrooms (of course), faith healing, ESP, people who can bend metal without touching it; levitation, messages from various dead saints (curiously, all of them Greek Orthodox), Kirilian photography, attempts by the CIA to read minds, and a conspiracy between the Rockefellers and the Rothschilds, entered into in 1888, to control the English and American governments "all through the 20th century" ("Oddly", says one of the articles, "both the Birchers and the Weather Underground have published documentary exposes of this 'conspiracy'"). You'll find contact with UFO's, white magic, black magic, bio-energetic fields, Timothy Leary, and the hint of an "occult Watergate". (This at least is probable, to judge by the regularity with which alleged evidence for paranormal phenomena disappears.) You'll even find things that go bump in the night. And you'll find all this nonsense compared in importance to the Theory of Relativity and the Quantum Theory. These two particular articles have no mention of teacup reading, astrology, talking plants, Jonathan Livingston Seagull, the Bermuda Triangle, or the tooth fairy. But then space was limited. Another thing you won't find in these articles, or any other parapsychological literature, for that matter, is a single solitary shred of hard evidence. And that is not for lack of space.

This is not to say that I think that all of these things are equally nonsensical. I am prepared to entertain the possibility that some of them, like ESP and UFO's, may in fact exist. But I am

saying that present no evidence exists, that the way they have been investigated is generally laughable, and that the case for them has been weakened by the way most of their proponents have uncritically lumped together anything "occult" as equally probable.

Yet the people who like to entertain themselves with this kind of thing have managed to make so much noise that many people are under the impression that there is in fact evidence for some parapsychological occurrences, even if most of them are transparent quackery.

This is understandable. Confusion, deliberate and otherwise, is the hallmark of parapsychology. Its practitioners are remarkably adept at shifting ground. So-and-so is exposed as a fraud? Ah, well, but you should see such and such. A psychic failed in a set of tests? Oh, but he succeeded in somebody's living room last year. Psychology Today says Uri Geller is a fraud? Never mind, The Berkley Barb says he's for real.

Obviously, it is impossible to refute all of the claims of parapsychology. It's rather like trying to disprove the existence of Santa Claus. Every year, tens of thousands of men claiming to be Santa appear in the department stores of North America. Any particular Santa who has been investigated has turned out to be an imposter. But no one in their right mind is going to investigate all of them. So one of them may be for real, for all we know. Nevertheless, most adults would place the burden of proof on those who would try to persuade us of his existence. Let

them produce a jolly fat man with eight tiny reindeer and a house at the North Pole, and who'll have him thoroughly checked out. Then we'll talk. Otherwise, forget it.

That would be the common-sense approach.

Common sense does not apply to parapsychology. If there are thousands of people running about claiming to be psychic, we are expected to believe that some of them are the real goods, even though no given psychic is ever able to do anything paranormal under controlled conditions. As near as I can make out, this reasoning (if that is the word) is justified by some sort of strange interpretation of the law of averages. Along the same lines, if we picked a number of apples from a bushel which we had been assured was full of good apples, and found that every single one we examined was thoroughly rotten, presumably the parapsychologists would have us conclude that by the law of averages there must be some apples somewhere in the bushel that are perfectly edible. This kind of logic is beyond me.

So in this article I propose to concentrate on one particular alleged psychic, Uri Geller, a former Israeli stage magician who now claims that his feats are for real. He is a likely choice because he is acknowledged to be one of the top superstars (or "superminds", as the devout like to call them) in the psychic big leagues. He has been featured on radio and T.V., had books written about him, been tested by scientists. If his claims can be shown to be fraudulent, then it is clear that claims of lesser psychics, resting on much flimsier foundations, are placed in question, to say the least.

Geller is the subject of a book by a professional stage magician, James Randi ("The Amazing Randi") entitled *The Magic of Uri Geller*. Randi's book is a devastating expose of the way Geller has hoodwinked many well-meaning but credulous

Geller, as many people know, claims to be able to perform a wide variety of psychic feats, such as bending spoons and keys, sending and receiving psychic impulses over distances, reproducing drawings that have been sealed in envelopes, starting stopped watches, and the like.

Randi explains how Geller is able to perform his feats using the techniques of the performing magician, techniques which have no "paranormal" component to them whatever. He also cites numerous occasions on which Geller has been caught while resorting to trickery. In fact, Geller left his native Israel when the press and the courts there exposed him as a fraud, ending his profitable career there as a psychic. Included in the Israeli accounts are descriptions from former assistants and his former girlfriend of the way Geller planned and rehearsed the tricks he used to create his psychic illusions. In fact, his former chauffeur now performs many of his tricks!

The explanations of how the various tricks are done are interesting, although most of them have been described in the literature of magic before. But especially fascinating, and frequently hilarious, are the accounts of how Randi and other magicians have themselves imitated Geller and done "Gellerisms" to prove how easy it is to fool those who have presented themselves as authorities in the field. For example in 1975 Randi presented himself as a bona fide psychic from Canada (Randi was in fact born in Toronto) to *Psychic News*, a leading psychic newspaper in England. He went to their offices, and proceeded to give the "experts" a demonstration of his powers they found so convincing that they featured Randi on the front page as a new "discovery" with marvellous powers. There was no possibility of deceit, they assured their readers!

Around the same time, Randi also performed in a laboratory at the University of London's King's College before a committee of eminent scientists headed by Nobel Prize Winner Maurice Wilkins, co-discoverer

of DNA. Although he knew in advance that Randi was a performer who would try to trick them, he was able to do a whole routine of Gellerisms so effectively that they didn't know what he had done until he explained it afterwards. They were later happy to endorse his contention that an investigation of apparent paranormal phenomena is useless unless a qualified conjurer is present.

Randi also paid a visit to Professor John Taylor, a mathematician who has authored a splashy book on parapsychology entitled *superminds*. Taylor's contributions to the "science" are nothing short of comical. For example, he has discovered something called the "shyness effect": the fact that psychics are often unable to bend spoons, etc. through psychic means while being observed, but are able to do it when they are not observed. In fact, Taylor has let "psychics" he was testing take spoons home with them, and bring them back bent, never doubting for a moment that the cutlery had been bent by psychic brainwaves. Randi performed a whole series of "Gellerisms" before this "trained observer" without him being any the wiser.

The so-called scientific controls used to test psychics are in fact nothing short of a scandal. Randi's book is sprinkled with examples. For example, there is the famous "steel room" in which Geller was tested at one point, which was not soundproof, which was not checked for bugs, which had a large unguarded hole on one side, and the lock of which was found to have been tampered with. Or the tray of cutlery which Geller was to bend, which was left unguarded in his dressing room! Or the fact that during tests Geller's assistants are allowed to roam at will among the props used for the experiments. Or the fact that Geller's mentor, Dr. Puharich, holds several patents for microelectric devices for the deaf, which are designed to be implanted in the mouth or elsewhere on the body, to receive messages which are not audible to others! Or the fact that during tests Geller's every whim is catered to, that he is allowed to run about at will, refusing or postponing attempts at any test, returning to abandoned ones, and in general doing everything he can to misdirect attention.

The reports of test results reveal not only a lack of basic experimental skill, but a considerable lack of candour as well. Randi cites a number of examples of dishonest reporting of key tests.

The whole question of authentication has been hopelessly, and deliberately, muddled by his followers and by Geller himself. For example, he claims to be able to reproduce drawings in sealed envelopes without looking at them. In fact, he has been able to do this trick only under informal uncontrolled conditions which lend themselves to fraud. Under controlled conditions, he has never been able to do it. Yet in boasting of this ability, Geller will claim that he has been rigorously tested! The situation is similar for all of his feats. Not a single one of Geller's alleged psychic feats has been performed under controlled conditions that meet scientific standards. In fact, Randi has a standing offer to pay \$10,000 to Geller or any other person who can perform a single paranormal act under controlled conditions. There have been no takers.

The handful of scientists who believe in Geller (notice that you rarely hear anything about the vast majority who don't) have been severely criticized for their lack of experimental skill, and for their inability to devise acceptable ways of testing psychic phenomena. This is no surprise, as Randi points out. Most of them have come from fields, such as mathematics and physics, that have had nothing to do with the phenomena they have been investigating. They have been no more qualified to investigate these phenomena than you or I, or my grandmother. Yet they have assumed, with the arrogance typical of scientists, that they are infallible, and incapable of being fooled. They have ended by

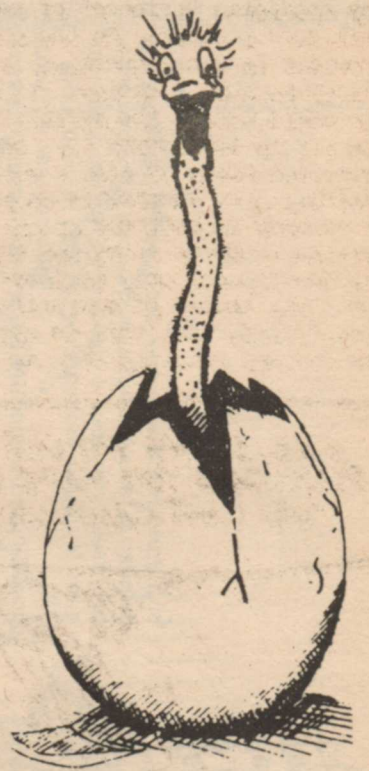
making fools of themselves.

In the process of doing so, they have also managed to junk most of the basic rules of scientific method, and to construct a whole set of "special" rules for investigating parapsychology. One of these rules is that psychic phenomena can only occur in an atmosphere where the "sensitive" feels trusted. This means, for example, that a psychic like Geller who claims to be able to deflect compasses may not be searched for magnets. It also means that suspicious people are not allowed to be present. It is because professional magicians give off "negative vibrations" that Geller absolutely refuses to have them present while he performs. (It has nothing to do with their being uniquely equipped to detect trickery, of course.) Yet Geller has performed in the presence of Randi and other magicians when he has not known who they were. On those occasions, he has produced "paranormal events" without noticing any "negative vibrations", with the result that at those times, he has been caught using trickery.

But the proven use of trickery is of no concern to the scientists who have investigated Geller. In fact, they have constructed another "scientific rule" that actually justifies it. According to them, the psychic, because of his need to be trusted, feels compelled to cheat whenever he can. In other words, when he does tricks without being caught cheating, they are proof he is psychic. And when he is caught, that's also proof he is psychic.

The parascientists have similarly turned failure into its opposite. They say that the fact that Geller's stunts often fail is proof of the fact that he is not a mere performer, for a performer would succeed every time! Thus, for example, the fact that Geller was unable to do anything on the Johnny Carson show (Carson, a former magician himself, made sure that conditions were tightly controlled so that there was no room for cheating) is proof of the erratic nature of psychic phenomena! A refinement of this insight was developed in a series of experiments in which astronaut Edgar Mitchell attempted to transmit psychic messages from the moon. The experimenters failed even more often than one would have expected from the law of averages. They immediately proceeded to claim a "significant" "negative success" because their results had deviated from the average!!

It should be apparent by this time that reason plays no role in the investigation of psychic phenomena. Consider, for example, the logic of investigators who are perfectly satisfied that Uri Geller is a psychic because he can perform certain feats in their presence. They are unwilling to admit that Geller might have tricked them, even though The Amazing Randi, for example, can perform identical, and even more difficult feats in their presence under more tightly controlled conditions using mere trickery without them being able to detect that trickery. Yet they are unwilling, of course, to maintain that Randi is also a psychic.



There is an amusing story in Randi's book that sums up the psychic circus beautifully. It concerns a young psychic James Pyczynski who appeared on a radio program hosted by Long John Nebel. He was reported to have uncontrollable supernatural powers, which had resulted in paranormal events happening in listeners' homes when he appeared on an earlier program. Listeners were asked to call in if strange things started happening to them while he was on the air.

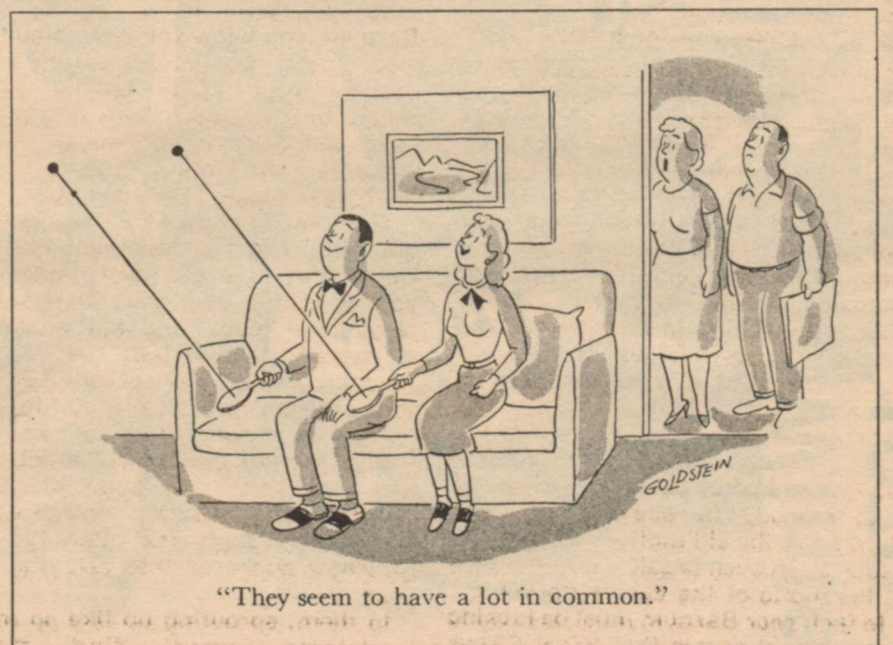
For the next hour, the switchboard was flooded with reports. The calls only ceased — and quite suddenly, at that — when Randi joined the broadcast, revealing that Pyczynski was his assistant, and that the whole thing had been a hoax to prove a point.

We may safely assume, however, that most of the listeners learned nothing from their experience. The precedents are there. Some years ago, Margaret Fox, one of the founders of modern spiritualism, confessed that she had been a fraud. Most of her followers simply refused to believe her confession.

We can go even further back for another historical parallel, to the time of early Christianity, when Tertullian proclaimed what has ever since been the ultimate canon of faith: *Credo quia absurdum*. I believe because it is absurd. In these words is captured the very quintessence of the irrational in its glory — unblushing, majestic, and self-satisfied beyond redemption. Unreason proclaims its kingdom. "Nothing remains" as Bakunin once said, "but the triumphant stupidity of faith".

**The Magic of Uri Geller,
by The Amazing Randi,
Ballantine
\$1.75**

Ulli Diemer



"They seem to have a lot in common."

THE RED MENACE

A Libertarian Socialist Newsletter

Who are we?

The Red Menace is a libertarian socialist newsletter published by a small collective of people living in Toronto. We call ourselves the Libertarian Socialist Collective.

What do we mean by calling ourselves "libertarian socialists"? Partly, that question is answered more fully elsewhere in this issue (see Contents on page 1) and partly, we are still trying to work it out ourselves. But we share some fundamental ideas:

What do we believe?

We believe that capitalism, the social system we live under (in whatever bureaucratic, "mixed", social-democratic, or "free-enterprise" variation) is deeply and fundamentally destructive of individuals, relationships between people and societies. There may be times when it produces progress of some kind, but its overpowering reality is always its warping and crushing of the potentialities of human beings and societies. Our society and its advanced industrial base give us the possibility of creating a world of abundance in which human needs and creativity shape the future. Instead, capitalism gives us chronic poverty and economic crises, war, alienating and meaningless work, commercialized leisure, immovable bureaucracies, a deteriorating natural and urban environment, oppression of minorities (and majorities), chronic social and "personal" problems, sexual frustration, trashy culture — in short, a crazy, miserable world that seems to be going downhill fast, with no one in control.

For many, many, people, "that's life". That's the way the world is, and there's nothing we can do about it except try to make the best of our lot.

For us, that's not enough. We believe that people can make their own future if enough of them want to badly enough, and act together to do it. We want to overthrow the capitalist system and build a new world in which freedom and creativity can flourish, a world in which people are in control, in which they run things democratically and collectively. A libertarian socialist world.

Such an alternative vision of the future can never be legislated, decreed, or installed by a coup-d'etat. It is far too revolutionary for that, for it requires that people change themselves even as they try to change society. Consequently, it requires active participation from the vast majority.

Right now, of course, we are a tiny minority, not a vast majority. But we believe that our ideas are reasonable and exciting, with the potential to capture the imaginations of those who now put up with this society.

The Red Menace

Our purpose in publishing *The Red Menace* is to reach people with our ideas, to develop and clarify those ideas, and to give other people the opportunity to share their visions and experiences through its pages. Through it, we hope to make contacts with people who like our ideas, and to start working with those people. We would like to branch out into other kinds of activities directed at social change as well. *The Red Menace* is not an end in itself (although the enjoyment we derive from creating it is.) If you are interested, please contact us

We need your involvement

Thinking about society and how it could change is something that everyone does. It is not the exclusive province of a few theoreticians. We would like as many people as possible to contribute to this newsletter. We are especially interested in brief, to-the-point comments on specific problems; ideas, observations, etc. A couple of paragraphs or a page that offers a good insight is worth more than a long dry treatise that says nothing new. Nor does your contribution have to be "definitive"; the tentative, the exploratory, is often the most fruitful.

Among the things we are interested in: articles about where you work, where you go to school, where you live, where you shop, where you play. Articles about political activities and organizations you are/have been involved in. Criticism and evaluation of what's happening on the left, in the women's movement, in society at large. Poetry. Observations about culture, everyday life. Book reviews. Artwork. Revealing anecdotes. Questions you don't have answers for. Questions you do have answers for.

We need your money

We need money to put out *The Red Menace*. Each issue costs us approximately \$500 to put out, enough that we would appreciate financial help from those who like it and wish to support it.

We have changed our price per issue from 75¢ to 25¢ and accordingly people who have paid up subscriptions will receive the magazine for a longer period of time.

Our new subscription rates are \$3.00 for 12 issues, but if you can afford to send us more, please do. However *The Red Menace* will still send out free to those who can't afford to pay. Our address is:

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A Libertarian Socialist Newsletter



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