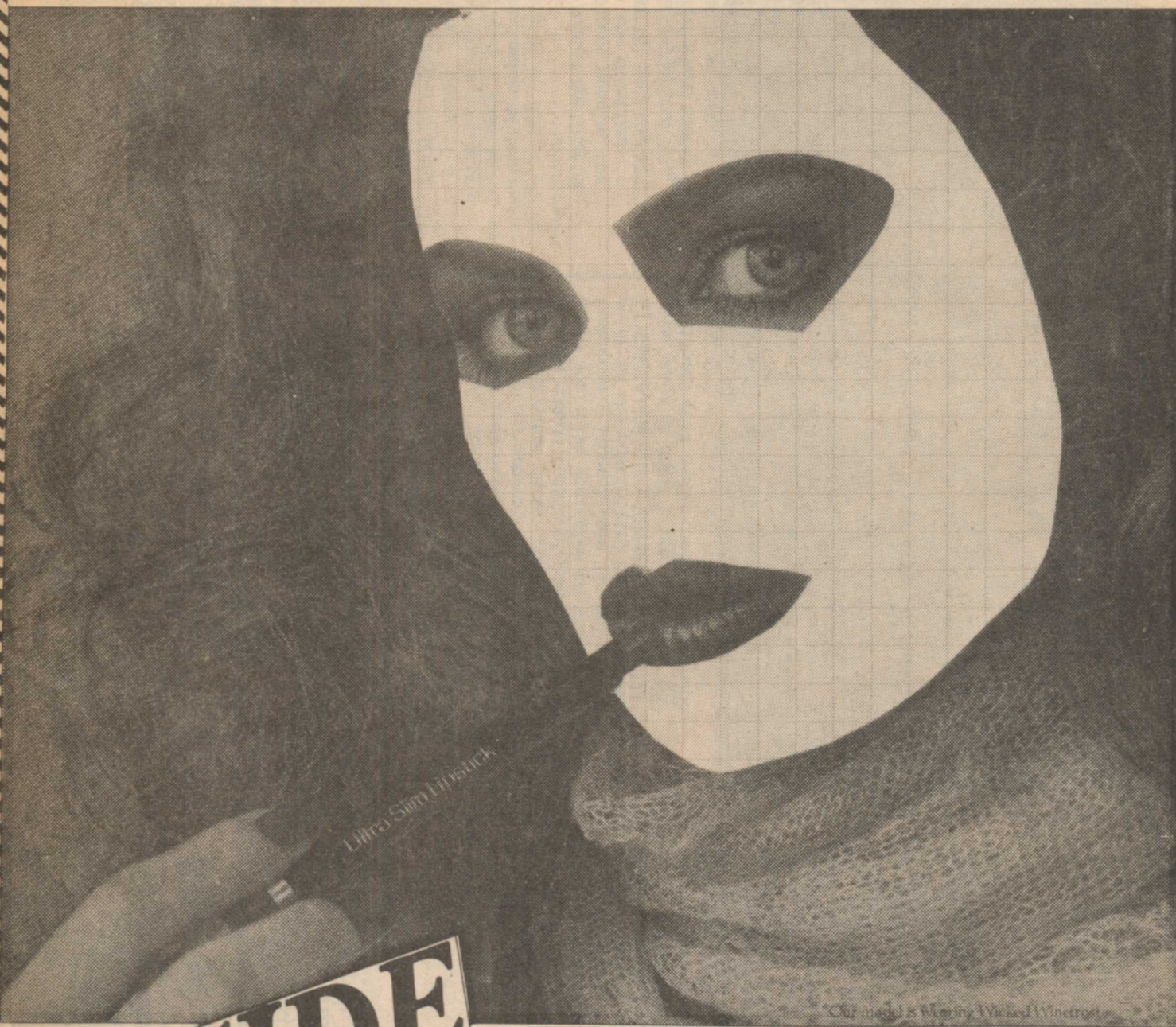


THE RED MENACE

A Libertarian Socialist Newsletter
Number 5 Summer 1980

25¢



INSIDE

**FASHION
BACK IN THE USSR
ARMS AND THE WOMAN**

NUMBER 5

WHEN SOMEONE WROTE IN to ask what we're doing now that we no longer publish the RED MENACE, we figured it was time for another issue.

The fact is we don't have the resources to come out more frequently. The RED MENACE is a paper without either staff or advertisers. Funds and labour are donated by volunteers, of which there is a very small pool. Each issue is consequently an event unto itself, more like putting out a book than a magazine.

We mention our difficulties both as an explanation for why the RED MENACE has not yet developed beyond an annual event and, in a more positive vein, to encourage readers to send suggestions, preferably from their own experience, about how this could be remedied or at least turned into an asset.

READERS SHOULD NOTE THAT putting out the RED MENACE is not the only activity of the Libertarian Socialist Collective (LSC). The collective meets every two weeks to discuss issues raised by the members. Over the past year most of these discussions have centered on socialization and women's liberation. More recent topics have included electoral politics, the Afghanistan crisis and housing co-ops.

An ongoing concern is the relation between libertarian theory and the group's structure and practice. Our discussion on socialization had a direct bearing on this. It helped us understand how leftist tenaciously hold on to their early obsessions by converting them into left-wing hang-ups; chief among these being Programme, Organization and compulsive Action. The LSC is not finished with its soul-searching about these things but we have managed to widen the boundaries of the discourse.

Beyond discussion the activity of the group is no more than the sum of individual efforts, which is inevitable when the group is this small.

THE BULK OF THIS ISSUE is taken up with two articles on the 'socialist' bloc.

██████████, a member of our collective, visited the Soviet Union in the fall of 1978. He presents here a first-hand account of what he saw and heard while he was there. Richard Swift's article, on the other hand, is an attempt at showing popular and strikingly profound criticism of the regime finds expression in cynical humour.

The two articles complement each other. ██████████'s article shows the Soviet Union as a schizophrenic world where official reality can be relied upon to always be the inverted image of lived experience. This is what Swift calls the "cynicism from above". Swift then goes on to describe how this bureaucratic cynicism engenders its own demystification in the form of a mass humour that forces the official ideology to become explicit and thus show itself for what it really is.

Swift suggests that, because of its ability to demystify, this "cynicism from below" has a liberating potential. As ██████████'s article indicates, however, it may also serve another function, namely, as a safety device that allows people to adapt to otherwise intolerable circumstances.

Kay Cole's article on fashion is intended as a beginning rather than the last word on the subject. In insisting that fashion is not just a mode of exploitation but also a medium for self-expression Cole challenges the rigid dogmatism that has conditioned the left's view on the subject. We hope readers will extend this discussion.

And lastly, Eric Glatz's article on prostitution provides an overview of the various feminist positions on this issue. Sketchy as this article might be we are printing it here because we feel this issue raises important questions on the theory and strategy for women's liberation. Again we welcome discussion.

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CANADA

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Feb 4 1980

Dear Folks

I know you don't publish RM anymore, but I'm writing to see if you've maintained some collectivity and to see what you're up to.

We enjoyed RM very much when it lived, and we were sorry to see it go. What

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FASHION



One day last winter on a typically slushy day, I walked to my doctor's office and observed the sign on her door: "Please remove rubbers before entering."

Dutifully, I removed my red-rimmed rubber boots, left them on the mat outside the door, and entered, self-consciously, in my stocking feet. Immediately I was confronted with four or five other women in the waiting room who were not in my humbled condition. They all had their boots on. But all their boots were leather, good leather, the kind with two-to-five inch heels. Even the receptionist was wearing high leather boots. Evidently the sign was meant to apply only to those who were either male or gauche enough to actually wear leak-proof rubber boots in slushy weather. The sign did not even say "Remove boots before entering". No, only the material rubber was specified as being necessary to remove.

However, my feelings of humility were somewhat put into perspective a couple of weeks later when a gigantic slush storm descended on the city, coupled with a great thaw which turned the sidewalks into streams and rivers and the streets into lakes. Slushing home from work I watched with pure enjoyment and pleasure as those unfortunates (men included) who were not wearing high rubber boots like me, leapt precariously from one relatively dry spot to another, or resignedly walked through deep puddles with misery etched on their faces.

This is certainly not the only time I have been struck by the sheer impracticality of people's apparel. Seeing a highly fashion-conscious woman bravely stalking forward on four-inch heels always fills me with a strange combination of admiration at her prowess, and contempt at the utter silliness of it.

Dress - the way people cover and decorate their bodies - is, as I see it, a form of self-expression. Fashion is the way each person conforms to the manner of dress of his/her society or segment of society. Some people, perhaps leftists in particular, have confused the two. We have tended to see any attempts - particularly on the part of women - to be elegant, or feminine, or simply attractive, as surrenders to the world of sexist, objectifying fashion. Any undue or apparent attention to one's apparel is looked on with suspicion, and thoughts of "bourgeoisification" are never far from people's minds.

Fashion is not a recent phenomenon or one unique to western society. Throughout the ages and in all or nearly all cultures people, especially women, have been expected to conform to the modes of dress prevalent at the time. Usually it is the women who are expected to decorate and disfigure their bodies. But sometimes, though more rarely, and usually less inconveniently, it is the man. That this is in large part a sexual action, like birds in plumage, designed to attract people to each other - or to signal that the wearer is not available - seems fairly evident.

It can also be a lot of fun.

Men and women both have always enjoyed dressing up. Changing one's appearance for special occasions or just for the fun of it has always been an indulgence for men and women both, except for those for whom poverty precludes any frivolous activity extraneous to the immediate struggle for survival.

Unfortunately, sexist attitudes and the manner of women's dress have been inextricably linked. Women tottering precariously on bound feet, or on platforms or high-heeled shoes, are made to seem vulnerable and the men thus strong and protective. A waist made tiny by organ-mutilating corsettes gives a woman that breathless but dainty quality which is physically incapacitating, and is also attractive to the sexist man of certain cultures.



The foot that fits the shoe: According to the gospel of the shoe-makers, the big toe ought to be in place of the third one. Drawing by Bernard Pfriem. From Bernard Rudofsky, *The Unfashionable Human Body*.

Fashions in the western world today are a little less of a physical burden, but much more of an economic one. Since fashion has been made the business of those with a profit motive, what used to be a sometimes oppressive but often enjoyable indulgence, has reached near the heights of absurdity. The speed at which hemlines rise and fall, at which skirts flare or straighten, or shoes become fat or skinny has become so predictable that each woman who wants to be "in" now takes for granted that each year she will have

to buy a complete new wardrobe. Advertising introduces new "needs" and reinforces the belief that everybody who is anybody is improving their appearance and their relationships by buying these new products, "carefully researched" by "people who care".

To some, this may seem doubtful. How many women really slavishly follow the dictates of fashion to such an extent as that? To find out, all one really has to do is take a stroll downtown in any large city at lunchtime and observe. Also observe the number of stores and boutiques catering exclusively to the office crowds and obviously doing a good business. Also if one has a job in one of these offices in the big cities, one quickly realizes that it is not the "bourgeoisie" who buys all these expensive clothes, but frequently the clerk and typists and receptionists. Immigrant factory workers certainly have neither the time or the money to indulge in the latest fashion trends, but most of them I'm sure would like to and their children certainly do.

In a great many offices, especially those of the large finance companies, dressing in the latest fashions goes along with the job and it's hard to get away with dressing simply and cheaply. Indeed, I've often thought that a good union demand for some offices that are unionized would be a clothing allowance so one doesn't have to spend one's hard-earned wages on clothes to come to work in. At the very least they should be tax deductible.

Beyond a doubt, the fashion industry has made what should be a pleasant and interesting activity, i.e., the art of self-decoration, into a chore and a drag. It's no accident of semantics that we now refer to this chore as the "dictates of fashion". Men and women both are afraid not to conform to what the media say "everyone is wearing". They may not like the new styles, or more often than not, they probably don't suit them, but not to wear them would mean being "old fashioned" and "out of date". Women, naturally get picked on far more than men because their role as objects gives the male (and female) designers in the fashion industry endless angles to exploit. And of course fashion is only one aspect of "keeping up with the Jones", for which consumerism prepares people from childhood. In suburban middle class society, having a well-dressed wife is analogous to having a new model car. It's a mark of success, of having "made it", and its often essential to advancing



Woman's body, as it might have looked if it actually corresponded to fashions in clothes: 1. The 1870's period of the bustle. 2. The mono-bosomed dowager of 1904. 3. The hobble



skirted woman of 1913 who seemed to have a single leg. 4. The flapper of the 1920's. From Rudofsky, *The Unfashionable Human Body*.

Common amoeba killing swimmers by eating brains

© New York Times Service
TAMPA, Fla. — It could
be a science-fiction plot:
Usually harmless organisms
living in the water
have been found to
kill swimmers.
The amoeba
has been found to
kill swimmers.
The amoeba
has been found to
kill swimmers.

in one's career.

But even though the fashion industry has made dress oppressive one should not discard it completely, or at least only on appropriate occasions. Do we really all want to walk around looking exactly alike in dull green pajamas and peak caps? Do we never want to draw attention to ourselves? Perhaps we should all wear brick and cement camouflage in order to blend in with our city surroundings. Islamic women in this sense have the right idea. They don't want to draw attention to themselves so they cover up with long black robes with one eye peeking out. In their society it is permissible for men to attack any woman not so smothered. (Judges, lawyers and police in rape cases would probably support this fashion in our own society.)

Unfortunately, in our sexist society, women justifiably do not want to be too obvious in a crowd, but they do at the same time want to be attractive and so they try to blend in, in an attractive way. Thus the desire to conform in dress style.

For styles of dress to become matters of freedom and choice rather than matters of social dictate and camouflage, society will have to change fundamentally. Women will have to be free of the fear of being potentially harassed or attacked by any passing man, and fashions in dress have to be torn from the web of profit and commodity production. Until women can exist freely in a non-sexist society, it will naturally be impossible for women to be free about expressing themselves sexually or otherwise through dress.

But that does not mean that women must do what Islamic women do and hide from men altogether.

The seeds of change have already been planted. Some women and men are already stepping out of their uniforms into their own creations. But in this, as in other cultural activities, we have a long way to go.



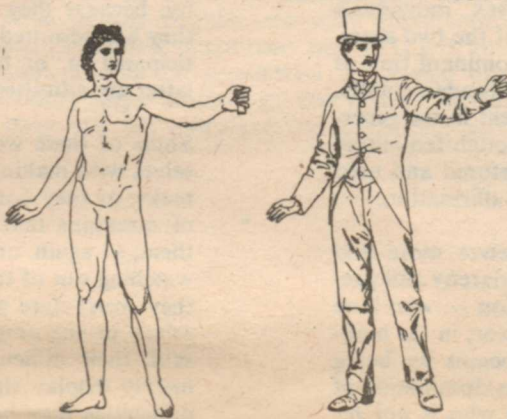
An example of "half-dress" from the Oriental Album by James Augustus St. John.

Dress, television, dance, movies, bingo nights, music, decoration, are all elements of popular culture, most of which (music and movies are the exceptions) are ignored politically by those who advocate liberation and which tend to be put down in the social microcosm of the left because of the inevitable bourgeois elements. Some of us boast that we "never watch television" thereby proving that we are on a higher level of consciousness and have no need of such passive forms of entertainment. We prefer to sit passively in endless meetings instead. Dance is restricted to jumps and hops accompanied by ear-jarring music, while the often more interesting folk and square dancing are disdainfully left to our parents. Most of us are embarrassed to open our mouths to sing, preferring to leave one of the most enjoyable of group activities to the "experts" on our records.

Presently the left - at least in North America - considers a woman (or a man) who dresses up as bourgeois or at least as cur-

iously aberrant, allowing themselves to be objectified. The left woman, coming home from work and changing out of her office or factory uniform before joining her "comrades" must carefully choose her clothing if she feels in a particularly dressy or creative mood. Make-up is definitely out, even though it can be a lot of fun. Fancy blouses are OK if they are not too new and are accompanied by the inevitable blue jeans. Flouncy peasant skirts are becoming more acceptable as long as they look handmade, and especially if they are made out of cast-off clothing or scraps. Necklaces are generally OK but iffy, and other jewelry, such as bracelets and broaches are darn right risqué.

Even though women have been the more exploited sex in the world of fashion, men have been much more restricted in the variety of their dress. Witness the suit. La-



pels and tie may have gotten fatter or skinnier, but that is about as much leeway as is allowed in men's fashions. That stiff collars and neck ties are now virtually extinct everywhere but the business world and the classier restaurants must be a great relief to many men, but it is not enough. That they should still be restricted essentially to shirt and trousers (jeans) in a subdued variety of colours and textures, means that there is still much room for improvement. When men can wear skirts in hot weather, things will really have gotten somewhere.

Reaction against aspects of the western fashion industry is natural for those who consider themselves "liberated", but too many altogether deny that dress plays any role in their lives at all beyond staying warm, keeping off the sun and staying legal. But there is no question that even the most blase of people do pay attention to what they wear and are conscious of how they appear however they may try to suppress this consciousness. Recently, my housemate and I were preparing to go to a party, when to his horror he discovered that the holes in his only pair of blue jeans had become big enough to be indecent. The only other possibility was a pair of dress slacks reserved exclusively for family obligations such as weddings and certainly not to be worn in the presence of real friends. Nonetheless he had no choice and was forced to walk into a room full of blue jeans to a suitable chorus of admiring wisecracks.

Jeans are a good example of how the dictates of fashion - in this case, the extremely fashionable fashion of pretending not to care about fashion at all - can lead to impoverished creativity and the suppression of common sense. They are not always the most comfortable apparel, especially when new, and they can often restrict movements if they are worn too tightly as they very frequently are (worn too tightly in men, they can also inhibit the production of sperm cells.) They are very bad in snowy conditions since they are not at all water resistant. They often shrink, disintegrate into rags quickly and on top of it all are quite expensive. Yet they are by far the most popular apparel worn today, especially by the young, the left and the self-consciously unfashionable, so popular as to be almost a uniform. One redeeming feature is that they are somewhat sexy and to this I would attribute their rise and stay in popularity.

Ideally, dress should be free speech. It should articulate what that person is into, how that person sees herself, today or generally. What fashion does is restrict that freedom of speech, mold everyone into the same acceptable pattern of dress.

Dress is a statement that can mean different things in different contexts. If a friend of mine, accustomed to wearing jeans and sandals walked in wearing high-heeled shoes and lipstick, I would be surprised and would wonder what had happened to her. My boss at work would probably say she now wants to grow up and "be a lady". I would probably say that she has either sold out or is mixed up or has gone around the bend.

Attractiveness isn't an absolute. What society today might find attractive, an earlier or later or different society may find downright ugly. The important thing about such things as make-up is the context in which it is placed. It isn't inherently bad or objectifying to wear makeup, but to women who are trying to free themselves from the sexist, objectifying nature of today's society, make-up has become a symbol of false femininity, and a woman wearing makeup today is making strong statements about her attitudes and position in society, consciously or not.



Elegance in another culture: Neck ring, skirt, and the severe abstraction of a blouse add up to a festive outfit.

There are really only a very limited number of considerations which should be given to the choice of clothing. Clothes should be comfortable and should not restrict movements. They should be easy to take care of (though this restriction could be sacrificed in favour of a particular effect.) They should be economical (could also be occasionally sacrificed.) They should be flattering to the wearer. They should provide the wearer with suitable protection from the elements. And they should (in this society anyway) cover up strategic parts of the body, although the way this is done can often make the body sexier than stark nakedness anyway.

But in a society where one's choice of clothing is wrapped up in so many other considerations and causes, we have to decide how best to cope with the restrictions imposed by them. Giving the matter some thought would be a good way to start making our choices free and more sensible.

By Kay Cole

ARMS AND THE WOMAN

JEANNE CHARLES

One of the symptoms of the weakness of the revolutionary movement today is that it has not yet reached the point of giving birth to a qualitative and autonomous expression of *revolutionary women*. It is known that the degree of development attained by the forces of negation in existing society finds its unequivocal, decisive and obvious manifestation in the relations between revolutionary *men and women* and in the manner in which the direct and natural relation of the sexes is conceived.

The division of *roles* of the sexes in alienated society, inherited from feudal society and the first stages of industrial society, can be schematically defined in this way: *femininity* concentrates the *anti-historical* tendencies of alienated life (passivity, submission to nature, the superstition that follows from this, repetition, resignation), *masculinity* its *pseudo-historical* tendencies (a certain degraded taste for struggle, arrogance, pseudo-activity, innovation, confidence in the power of society, rationalism). Femininity and masculinity are the two *complementary* poles of the same alienation. In modern industrial society, these two poles *tend*, in losing their material bases, to blend into each other to constitute the specific traits of the modern proletariat, where the differences between the sexes are less and less marked.

In all epochs, and according to the nature of those epochs, men and women have never constituted two *pure* types. Whatever their sex, individuals unite, in various ways, the character traits and behavior of the two sexes. Nevertheless, femininity has up till now always been the dominant trait of the alienation of women, and masculinity that of men. But fundamentally, it is the traits of the old femininity which reappear at present in the generalized passivity of the reign of the modern economy, although femininity and masculinity, freed from their material roots, are recaptured and used indiscriminately by the two sexes, as modes of spectacular affirmation.

While in alienated society woman and man find themselves more and more on a plane of equality (except in the cases where patriarchy still prevails) because the woman cannot find in her male companion — who is as unarmed as she is — an admirable and all-powerful protector; in the modern revolutionary movement, in contrast, the woman begins by being sharply confronted with her old femininity in the face of the domination of a certain theoretical prestige. Because, for the individual who is *not involved* in theoretical activity, theory appears as an "ability to write," to "think," a product of intelligence, an individual creation full of mystery. This is the spectacle effect; the fetishism of theory for those who find themselves outside it. The woman often finds herself forced to admit that she has "not yet written anything," and that she has no active role in the elaboration of revolutionary theory, in apparent contrast to certain of the men she sees. In matters regarding theory, her first impulse is to rely on men, who seem to her "more qualified" than her. She ends up distrusting her own thought, paralyzed by external criteria. When she happens to penetrate unexplored terrains, she stops short, thinking that if it hasn't been done before, it must have been because it wasn't worth the trouble. Her thought, when in spite of everything she manages to have some, remains a dead letter: the woman never on her own follows through to the practical consequences of her thought. Often, she judges an individual very quickly, making a pertinent, perceptive critique, even before her male friend or friends; but in her passivity she stops there. When it comes to practical consequences, she hides behind men. Her reflections and her critiques are made in private, leaving masculinity to attend to *putting them into practice*.

But in this way she deprives herself of a direct grasp on her social environment; she never directly influences anything and thus cannot become a theorist. For theory is the critique of daily life; it is the operation of each individual conducted in this daily life; it is a succession of renewed and corrected *interventions* in relations with people (which are also the *effective terrain* of alienation) and, what amounts to the same thing, it is also a series of interventions in society. Theory is an undertaking of *revolutionary transformation* that implies that the individual theorist accept his own uninterrupted transformation. Theory lies therefore in the comprehension of and action on blocks (individual and social-historical).

If men have an *apparently* preponderant place in the revolutionary movement, it is because many among them enter the revolutionary struggle with the character traits of *masculinity* — that is to say, in reality with as few aptitudes as women, and with the same *unconscious complacency* regarding their character traits as women have regarding femininity — which can *create illusions*, since the practice of theory demands imagination, real struggle, confidence in oneself and in the power of the individual, aptitudes which the masculine character possesses in a degraded form. To convince oneself of this hidden misery of the modern revolutionary movement, it suffices to note that femininity would not be allowed to exist in it without the assent of masculinity, or at least would not be tolerated for long. Feminine passivity has its flip side in masculine activism. Up till now, it is primarily the passivity that has been noted, because it is the most glaring contradiction in a movement founded on the autonomy of individuals.

Women are only colonized by the spectacle of theory insofar as they are totally exterior to theory. And it is not the example or the *intervention* of men, themselves largely colonized by this *spectacle*, that can precipitate women's demystification, that can make them comprehend *in vivo* what theory is. Henceforth, the passivity of women must be criticized, not *superficially* because they don't write or don't know how to express themselves autonomously, but at the root, because they don't have any direct and practical efficacy; notably in their relations with others. Equally, it must no longer suffice for a man to "express himself" *abstractly*. His writings and his thought must directly have concrete effects. Masculinity and its activism must no longer have as a foil femininity and its passivity.

There is an obvious complacency present in the maintenance of these roles. The alienated individual is reluctant to root out what he has repressed; and since masculinity and femininity are complementary, they have all

the solidity of *natural* and *inevitable* phenomena. In the refusal to combat these *roles*, there subsists in fact the *global* acceptance of alienated society. Those who claim to be revolutionaries say that they want to change the world and their own lives. But in reality these individuals hope that they will be *changed* by a revolution. They thus remain passive individuals, ready to *adapt* themselves, *if they have to*, but who *fundamentally* fear all change. They are quite the opposite of *situationists*.

The resolution of the deficiencies of revolutionary practice at the beginning of the new epoch now passes *directly* through the resolution of the deficiencies of revolutionary women; which is to say, also through the *supercession* of a certain limited masculine practice which has up till now accommodated itself to these deficiencies and their maintenance. It is an urgent objective for the *critique of daily life* to definitively destroy the inequality of the sexes in revolutionary activity; that is to say, to destroy the respective *roles* which both sexes establish in alienated life, the character structures of *femininity* and *masculinity* and the limitations that they impose on revolutionary experience.

There are two principal types of women in the revolutionary movement: the most numerous at present are the women provided with a protector. They are admitted into the revolutionary milieu with the traits of femininity, because they are presented by a man. The others present themselves: they are admitted as the result of a prestigious past which they have participated in, or for an ideology which they have assimilated well. These latter are admitted with the traits of masculinity, as men are.

Some of these women say absolutely nothing in public, contenting themselves with making remarks in private that they wouldn't otherwise dare to make; or they don't open their mouths except in response to the futile sort of questions that are believed to be the only ones that can be asked of them; or again, arbitrarily thrown into "theoretical discussions," anxiously watching out of the corner of their eye for the approval of their protector, they won't dare admit their ignorance of the subject, and entangle themselves in the confusion of their thoughts, or repeat what they've heard said, their difficulties in this domain seeming shameful to them; others openly display their insufficiencies, finding excuses for themselves in the difficulties they have in writing — but only in writing, as an inexplicable calamity — implying that they nonetheless *think* admirably; or perhaps they recognize in this a feminine defect, and fancy themselves protected, supposing that their honesty guards them from any more direct critique; still others express themselves by means of aggressive demonstrations toward men, to show that they aren't under any man's thumb and that they think autonomously. Each time, it is their colonization by the spectacle of theory which paralyzes women.

Thus, for the most part the only relations which remain to women are amorous ones. There they flaunt their sensitivity, ranting in private against theory as being something cold and abstract, and lauding "human relations." Women are often recognized as having greater sensitivity and subtlety when it comes to judging people. In addition, men, having a certain minimum of practical exigence, are considerably more prudent when it comes to critiques that will entail practical consequences. They prefer to admire their female companion for such a capacity, which they claim to possess only in a lesser degree — they had to repress it — and thus justify their relation with this woman: the passivity and public non-existence of the woman must be compensated by a greater hidden richness, and the monogamic justification of the couple is this complementarity of the man and the woman. If sensitivity is still an attribute of femininity, it is because theory is not understood for what it is, since men who are considered to be theorists are considered to lack sensitivity; whereas in fact theory includes the *practical application* of this sensitivity and this subtlety.

The modern revolutionary movement must destroy this opposition of pleasure/activity, sensitivity/lucidity, conception/execution, habit/innovation, etc. The femininity/masculinity opposition corresponds to a reified stage of human development.

The individuals colonized by the spectacle of a revolutionary theory are in fact colonized by the need to appear autonomous; they are subject to appearance. As long as theory continues to be understood as a product of intelligence, as the individual faculty of "thinking" and of "writing," and as such, as a possible source of personal prestige, men will continue to want to "express themselves" at all costs and women will lament not being able to imitate them.

It is now a matter of understanding theory for what it is. It is essential that women (and men) no longer accept one's acts being in contradiction with one's words, and no longer accept the existence of critiques without consequences. It is essential to restore to subjectivity all its rights by giving it practical follow-through. No one should be able to be lucid about others without being lucid about himself, or lucid about himself without being lucid about others. The modern revolutionary movement must become unlivable for masculinity and femininity. It must judge individuals *on their life*.

This article, originally entitled "La critique ad mulierem," is from the *Chronique des Secrets Publics* (Volume 1, June 1975). Correspondence:

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Translation: Ken Knabb, Bureau of Public Secrets, P.O. Box 1044, Berkeley, CA, 94701. No copyright, June 1975.

BACK IN THE USSR

During a three week visit to the Soviet Union last summer, a member of our collective had the opportunity to speak with Soviet citizens and observe, briefly, life in the Soviet Union to-day. His article isn't meant to be a comprehensive survey of the Soviet scene but rather a presentation of attitudes, ideas and situations that he encountered.

His trip consisted of a cruise from Helsinki to Leningrad, where he spent a week and a half, a journey to Riga, the capital of Soviet Latvia, and then return by ship to Helsinki.

LENINGRAD

The whole centre of Leningrad, which has a population of approximately four million people is beautifully preserved. Unlike the rest of Europe there are no modern glass, 20-story monstrosities to ruin mile after mile of pastel coloured 18th century palaces, institutes, museums, stores and apartment buildings. The Nevsky Prospect, Leningrad's main street, is bustling and lively. It's the only place where I was hustled, by (unpleasant looking) young men who wanted gum and jeans. On the Nevsky I encountered the only beggar I was to see for three weeks, an old woman in a wheel chair who was successfully collecting coins from passers-by.

There seemed to be small movie theatres all over the place, tucked into apartment buildings or over stores, with simple signs out front "KINO" and a list of coming attractions. Again on the Nevsky, a large theatre with a painted sign advertising "Blue Water, White Death", an old American film about sharks.

On the streets you'd come across line-ups, 10, 20 maybe 30 people in a line-up to buy apricots or tomatoes. Down side streets you'd go past apartment buildings where every window was full of plants; and behind the apartment buildings there would be a small park, with playground equipment and benches. In fact there seemed to be quite a large number of little parks all over.

In "Dom Knigi", House of Books, the largest bookstore, there are a wide variety of, among others, anti-drunkness posters to be purchased. Outside the store is a beautiful canal (the city is full of canals) at the other end of which stands the Martyr Czar Cathedral. Built in memory of a Czar, I believe Alexander III, who was assassinated on that spot, the Cathedral is a classic fairy-tale mixture of spires and multi-coloured onion domes.

The west was not forgotten in Leningrad. In our hotel, a Chargex-Visa sign was attached to the front of the check-in desk. At the entrance to the hotel dining room was a sign urging guests to "Come and see our show" at the foreigners-only "Dollar" bar in the hotel. The accompanying photograph showed a chorus line of young women in silvery bikinis.

On the streets I was constantly amazed to see young men wearing American flag shirts, stars and stripes T-shirts and military jackets with "U.S. Air Force" crests on them. Young people are crazy about American culture and styles.

Our Leningrad guide, Antonov, was a young man who came across as fairly honest. In my time there we got to be reasonably comfortable with one another and on my last night in Leningrad we got together in the hotel bar to do some socializing.

We started off when I asked him why most of the people I'd met seemed to have very little interest in politics. In his opinion that wasn't very surprising, people had to devote all their energy to the struggle for adequate housing, clothing and food, so people felt they had no time for politics. He felt that the dominant mood in the Soviet Union today was discontent. People, as he put it "are tired of not getting the food, the clothing and the goods they want. People have rubles but there are no goods to spend them on. In general,

workers are better off than professionals, however they still aren't getting enough. Workers get only 50% of what they want and intellectuals only 20% of what they want. "My experience is that things are gradually getting worse and that the economy is slowly going to grind to a halt".

Which of course led to the next question, what's the problem with production? Different people had different perspectives on the problem. Antonov felt clear that one of the main reasons was the fact that the Soviet Army is the largest in the world. "How do you know?" I said. "I was in it" he replied, and added, "Now, let's change the subject", and that was the end of that.

I asked if there were many gays in the Soviet Union. He was quite taken aback, why was I even interested, what an odd question and so on. After explaining that a lot of leftists in Canada felt the question of gay rights was very important he still seemed surprised but willing to discuss it. As he presented it, there are certainly gays living in the Soviet Union but they are not very public about it; although

it is not completely socially unacceptable, it is seen as something of a sickness. Two of the women who lived in the flat he shared with another couple were gay. They were quiet and tried to please everyone. A friend of his who travels in those circles reported that the son of Yuri Andropov (head of the KGB) was gay. The son, Sergei, is protected from harm by his father, and is surrounded by people who like to have some sort of connections with power.

Antonov related an anecdote about a prominent Soviet author who had been interviewed on West German Television. When asked about gays the author replied that he felt sorry for them. The interviewer responded by saying that this was a narrow way of looking at gays. The author then asked "If your daughter was gay how would you feel?" The interviewer, upon reflection had to admit that he would be quite unhappy. "So", concluded Antonov, "it is normal to have this outlook about gays."

It was my turn to change the subject and I did with a question about Brezhnev:





What do people think about him? Antonov felt that in what he had to say he was speaking for the students. They were required in every subject and on every question to learn and approach all subjects on the basis of what Brezhnev thought or once thought about them. They found him very tiring.

We finished our evening with a discussion of travel in Western Europe as he had escorted Soviet tour groups to Italy and Germany. He observed that just as in those countries, the Soviet Union had prostitutes and pimps. For the most part they worked the tourist trade and interestingly, often have a connection with the KGB for the passing along of information.

One evening, I was out for a stroll and came across a theatre showing the film "Leningrad Blockade". The film was in colour and of recent vintage. It attempted to portray the history of the blockade (Nazi forces laid siege to Leningrad for 900 days during World War II) through the lives of a nurse, a captain, the Party chief of the city, the generals involved, leaders of a factory party committee and an architect. In the background was Stalin, portrayed as a fatherly, wise, and resolute leader. You would never think that Khrushchev had once portrayed Stalin as a less than savoury character.

In one notable little scene a friend comes to visit Stalin who is working late in his Kremlin office. A brief chat about how their respective sides are doing at the front and then the friend asks Stalin, "Why weren't we prepared for war?" Joe replies that they did the best they could and after all who could know that Germany would fight on two fronts?

Aside from the very sympathetic portrayal of Stalin, the other aspect of the film worth further study were the central characters who were uniformly leaders or professionals, workers receiving all the bit parts. Another Soviet film, Dersu Usala, (actually a Soviet-Japanese co-production) casts a czarist officer as one of the two central figures. Sensitive and intelligent, he is quite a contrast with the boorish lot who constitute the party of soldiers under his command. Sixty years later Soviet film makers seem to be developing sympathy for the formerly badly abused czarist officer corps.

I should say before I go on to a description of the next conversation, that people would not speak frankly with you until they had had a few days of contact. They would discuss nothing of substance in the hotel (unless they were in the bar when loud music was playing) and on the street, conversation would stop if any person came too close. This sort of behaviour, which seemed common, induced a mild paranoia.

I met Nadia and Inessa in a coffee shop in Riga. They were both clerks in small shops and were both members of the communist Party youth organization, Komsomol. Although initially reticent to talk

"You would never think that Khrushchev had once portrayed Stalin as a less than savoury character."

about anything but western music and life style, we were able to have an interesting discussion one evening down by the Riga docks.

It started out with their comments that my clothing seemed to be very sturdy and well made which broadened into comments that "Everything is better in the west". I was a bit taken aback, given that they were young communists, and after pointing out that in Canada we didn't have completely free medical and dental care as they had in the Soviet Union, I asked if things weren't improving in the Soviet Union.

They said that things were improving but that the west was also improving, so the Soviet Union would never catch up. "Almost everyone thinks that, although you can't say it". "At our Komsomol meetings we have to say things are better here than in the West but we don't believe it."

Apparently most discussion at the meetings centres on work with very little if any time spent on political analysis. They felt that they couldn't speak freely, as an open expression of opinions could lead to hardship and reprisals. They were in Komsomol, like the majority of their fellow members, because all young people are required to be members. The only exceptions are those singled out as bad students or bad workers.

Pursuing this matter of reprisals resulting from free expression of opinion I asked who exactly decides what can and cannot be said. "The higher-ups, the state personnel".

Which led to a question about class structure and a firm statement that there are no classes and therefore no class contradictions in soviet society.

"Well then, who makes the most money?"

In their opinion, chiefs of firms make the most money, about 400 rubles a month (the official average is 158 a month). I tried to determine whether or not managers were able to pass on their "class" status. Nadia and Inessa both had heard that the children of managers were able to get into university, whether they were able to pass competitive exams or not, through bribery. Although the children of managers were not necessarily destined to become managers, they did have an excellent chance of getting a good job.

As for members of the communist party the only real privilege they knew of were the special stores. Apparently both military officers and communist party members had access to these shops which did not offer bargains but did offer no line-ups. After a few weeks in the Soviet Union one understands why a store without line-ups is a treasured privilege.

The last real chance I had for a lengthy conversation came with a couple I originally met in a park. Young and well-spoken Vlad and Alexandra were both members of the communist party.

After a few get-togethers I felt that they were becoming more relaxed and so I asked them what they felt were the long term prospects for the Soviet economy.

They were both convinced that although things were bad now they were going to get worse. Wages were low and rising slowly, prices however were rising steadily. Not only were officials declaring increases for certain items but a constant undeclared round of price increases was going on in the stores.

In their opinion the fundamental problem of the economy was the centralization of decision-making in Moscow. All decisions they emphasized, are made there even for the lowest administrative levels. Decisions were not made by the people affected by them.

"On paper we have all kinds of democracy but really there is none. After all, one cannot even speak freely."

I asked then what did they speak about

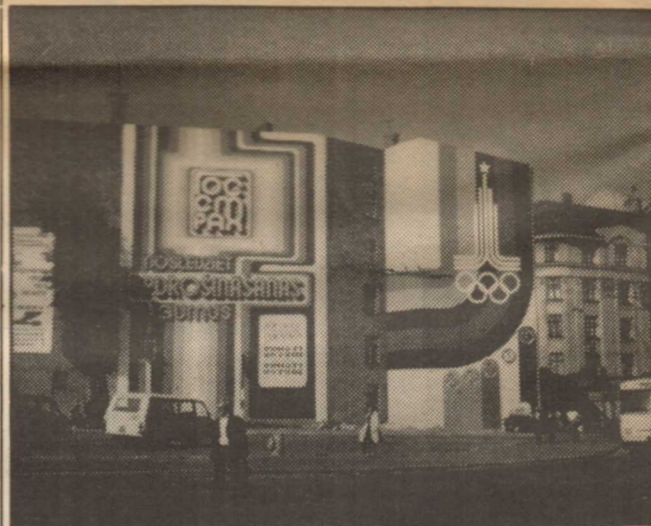
at their party meetings. They agreed between them that for the most part their party meetings consisted of discussions about work and how to increase production. As to political analysis they did little or none for the political line came down from above. "When we go to conferences we can't really say anything. When the leaders speak we have to applaud whether we agree or not."

As for Brezhnev they considered him to be just a "big talker". However they felt that a personality cult was being built around him that was potentially dangerous.

I asked why they were in the Communist Party if things were so bad and its leadership, at least Brezhnev, was discredited. After a brief survey of reprisals taken against open political dissenters, jail, loss of work or vacations, none of which they were ready to face, they said that in the end one still had to do something even at a minimal level. As for those people in open opposition to the regime they expressed respect for their bravery. Characterizing them largely as intellectuals, they said that there were great numbers of oppositionists in jail.

It is possible that this crushing of desire for social change is what is driving people back to the church. Both party members, they were regular church goers and suffered no penalties for it. Every year they observed more and more young people going to church if only to get married.

I was assured after some probing that there were neither classes nor class contradictions in Soviet society. As Alexandra said, "There are no landlords or big property owners now but the state is very rich and we have little."



The Alexander Nevsky monastery in Leningrad is a quiet retreat. It has a very large, very well maintained and still active Russian Orthodox Church.

It has two graveyards. The first, closest to the entrance, has the graves of many well-known Russian authors, composers and cultural figures. Inside the monastery itself is a smaller graveyard. It is apparently set aside for war heroes and notables from the communist party. The graves have fences around them in the Russian fashion.

It is silent and peaceful and disquieting. First you notice one marker, born 1890, died 1935, then another, 1901-1932, another 1892-1936 and so on until it strikes you that almost a third of the markers you see are for purge victims. It's the same in other places, memorials to the heroes of the revolution, museums, etc.

When Stalin buried both the revolution and the revolutionaries, he left a society with a lower level of political awareness and development than we have even in North America.

We can hope for upheaval in the Soviet Union but even with what appears to be a perceived and real drop in living standards I don't think it will happen too soon. I hope I'm wrong.



Cynicism From Above

Cynicism From Below



THE NATURE OF THE SYSTEM

The battle for popular control of society and its institutions has traditionally been identified with the Left of the political spectrum. However, the current structures and practices of state socialism¹ in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have cast doubt on the traditional identification. There Marxism, once a living part of working class experience, has been ossified and manipulated to justify whatever policy helps maintain and reproduce the existing relations of domination. This has resulted in a myriad of clever evasions by some on the Left. For others it has meant a very basic crisis of definition. It has forced the latter to think in new ways about political power and its relationship to economic power. No longer can the abolition of private property in the means of production be seen as a sufficient condition to guarantee working class sovereignty. Direct and indirect forms of democracy need to be evolved for both state and economy.

Similarly it is necessary to reconsider the categories and language that Marxism has used in analyzing society and developing its politics. The inversion of Marxist language and categories into an ideology against popular control makes this a fundamental task. The critique of "Marxism-Leninism" that is being made in a very practical sense by the people living in state socialist societies provides us with an excellent starting point.

The problem of how to define and effectively criticize existing state socialism is a difficult, yet crucial, one for the Left. Many socialists are haunted by the fear of playing into the hands of anti-communism and the forces of reaction. This tendency to always glance over one's shoulder has resulted in a failure to appreciate the importance of the democratic opposition in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Opposition is judged more on its political shortcomings than on its courageous stand in the face of monolithic power. Little account is taken of the political context in which the opposition must struggle. There is a general failure to understand that the priority of this struggle must be the creation of a space where political life and the debate about the meaning and purposes of socialism can begin again. The fundamental questions this opposition is asking about Marxism cause a good deal of discomfort amongst Marxists of various political stripes. Yet a clean break with the Soviet precedent can only be achieved by supporting the democratic opposition without ideological reservations.² Only with practical political support for the democratic opposition will there be a chance of renewing the old vision of a socialism where democracy is a principle and not just a tactic. The popular distrust (and hostility) which already exists towards Marxism, in both East and West, marks this a critical problem.

An honest self-examination by Marxists must come to terms with the fact that the directives of oppression in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are drawn from the arsenal of socialist ideas and values. It is useless to bemoan betrayal, revisionism and deformation. Certain tenets of Marxism in general, and the Bolshevik tradition in particular, have proved highly adaptable in administering what Ferenc Feher has called "the dictatorship over needs".³ The state socialist tendency (traceable in part back to Marx) to glorify the achievements of capitalist efficiency in production, science, and technology are central here. These are held to be neutral phenomena which may serve socialism as well as

capitalism. The emphasis in state socialist economy thus becomes a rather productivist concept of growth with the capitalist inefficiencies removed. Work (wage labour) is the ultimate official value. The capitalist methods (hierarchy) and technology of production reproduce relations of domination but in a different context.

With the capitalist autocracy in economic production retained and a market system based on some degree of consumer choice removed, there is little space for popular needs to emerge in the process of economic planning. Growth and the abolition of the private means of production are seen as enough to guarantee socialism. Any considerations of ecology and a self-managed division of labour tend to get lost in the shuffle.

The decisive failure has been the inability (unwillingness) to develop democratic forms in either the economy or political life. This has led to a situation where needs are bureaucratically determined and prioritized from the top down. The model is one of a hyper-rationalistic⁴ society with no dysfunctions emerging either through messy conflict or dissent. The result is a socialist version of the rather Germanic myth of a perfectly ordered, conflict-free society. That the whole thing is a myth, with conflict, dysfunctions and dissent simply not officially recognized, does not seem to dampen technocratic enthusiasm. Typical problems include imbalances in production between consumer and capital goods, high defense spending, shortages, a black market and low productivity. Although the economy in state socialist societies has superseded the particular forms of capitalism (the central role of the market, private appropriation of wealth, labour as commodity) this has failed to achieve the more profound vision of Marx, a rupture in the rule of capital over man. This radical rupture would assume a collectively deci-



ded purpose behind an economics defined by human need. Such a purpose is a precondition for a society where money doesn't talk.

In the sphere of politics the situation is even more dismal. The ambiguous legacy of the "dictatorship of the proletariat"⁵ especially when combined with older forms of autocracy (Czarism, oriental

despotism and the byzantine traditions of Imperial Austria) has proved tragic for the Left. Not only has state socialism failed to extend those democratic freedoms won in the bourgeois era, it has failed to even maintain them. A statement by the Left opposition Praxis group in Yugoslavia indicates the importance of these freedoms and criticizes the apocryphal dismissal of them as simply bourgeois illusions.

"The basic civil rights and liberties are the great achievements of the past democratic revolutions. They are necessary - though not sufficient - conditions of a free life in any society. A critique of these rights which rejects or disparages them as merely "formal" "abstract" or bourgeois is not only devoid of historical sense, but, in the context of societies which have not only not overcome this "bourgeois" level but have not even approached it, also expresses an aggressive obscurantism."⁶

Again the more profound elements of the Marxism critique have been buried under the usual scientific cant about the necessity of iron discipline and the "leading role" of the party. The party-state dominates all social groups and the institutions of civil society, destroying their autonomy and capacity for self-government. The ideological rationales from apologists are as ingenious as they are torturous. The populations are held to be immature and in need of the firm guiding hand of the party at the helm. The ubiquitous influence of the Central Intelligence Agency and "enemies from abroad" are seen to be everywhere capable of destabilizing state socialism even after three decades of its existence. These old tired arguments pretend that the crisis in socialism does not exist. Criticism destroys the unity of world progressive forces and plays into the hands of anti-communism. According to this schema, world politics is reduced to a morality play with easily identifiable good guys and bad guys. Those who are on the receiving end of this type of logic cannot be blamed for becoming cynical about official Marxism and its scientific pretensions. A perpetual state of emergency is used to put off forever a process which Marx hoped would result in the abolition of political power as such. Relations of subalternity,⁷ the new alienation come to dominate in all aspects of society - production, the press, the army, trade unions, the party - commandism is the order of the day.

ANALYTIC CONTROVERSIES

The decisive issue of the nature and direction of state socialism⁸ divides much of Western Left opinion. This is not the place to evaluate the many worthwhile contributions dealing with this problem. It is important, however, to locate the misleading and superficial tendencies in the analysis associated with different critical schools. While interpretations vary widely there is a general unwillingness to go to the root of the matter.

Domination in all its most important aspects has destroyed any progressive impulse in state socialism. But domination varies greatly in both means and ends. To define it principally in the ways in which it is similar to capitalism misses the point. Yet there is a constant effort to observe the new realities in terms of the old. Whether one evaluates state socialism positively or negatively, the crucial questions asked have to do with the role of the market, whether a new class with a relationship to private property is emerging, or if this or that reform is moving in the

"Repressive tolerance is a luxury state socialist bureaucracies cannot afford."



A careful reconsideration of these assumptions is too threatening. It is easier to see the problem as one of bad rather than good leadership, cynical bureaucrats rather than dedicated revolutionaries - instead of questioning the fundamental divisions between conception and execution and ruler and ruled.

Western Marxism has paid far too little attention to what the opposition in state socialist societies have to say about their own circumstances. The main current amongst democratic oppositionists is to look at their societies as unique social formations with a logic of their own which cannot be defined principally in terms of its relationship to capitalism. Absolute control of the political arena is essential for the state socialist ruling class to legitimate both its economic and political policies. In this context the struggle for democratic freedoms has a different meaning than it does under liberal capitalism. There formal political democracy (although absolutely essential for working class struggles) may serve to mask the main relations of domination which lie in the monopoly power that transnational corporations exercise over the economy. The ideological struggle is much more concentrated under state socialism where there is no separation of public (political) and private (economic) spheres. The battle for autonomy and for decision making space by both the intelligensia and the working class has a significant and threatening impact on bureaucratic prerogatives and power. Repressive tolerance is a luxury state socialist bureaucracies cannot afford.⁷ It is in this sense that it is important for the Western Left to appreciate the limited program (rights to independent trade unions, freedom of religion and national cultural rights, freedom of the press, opinion, and association) of the democratic opposition in Soviet-type societies. The issues cannot be defined in relation to a capitalism creeping in through the back door but as the political dynamics of a new social formation.

Conservative critics of state socialism have been no more successful than the Left in penetrating the ideological veils that surround state socialism. Too often their perspectives are clouded by a desire to discredit socialism and the peculiarities tend to get lost in the dust of domestic political battle. The convergence school which stresses the continuity of statist and technocratic tendencies under both capitalism and state socialism do so only at the cost of ignoring the specificity of each system. While it is true that there is no decisive contradiction between international capitalism and state socialism¹⁰ (although there is plenty of vigorous competition, particularly in the area of international power politics), the rulers of each system depend heavily on a perceived contradiction to legitimate their power. Real differences underpin this political offensive on each of their parts. Here are two different ideas of democracy, albeit a rather proscribed democracy, are the crucial issue. The Soviet system grants limited economic rights (a guaranteed living at a certain level and the right to work) while liberal capitalism grants limited political rights (formal universal franchise, freedom of assembly, press and opinion). In both systems these rights are constantly in danger of being eroded and can only be effectively defended by working class struggle. Yet the rulers and ideological priests of each system trumpet the meager freedom that they each allow as compared to the sham freedom of their competitors. In this sense they perform services of mutual reinforcement.

The totalitarian school analyses state socialism with the main emphasis on the terrorist control of the state over every aspect of social life and individual decision. In contrast to liberal society where the state is constitutionally restrained and the rights to property provide a bul-

wark against state encroachment - the state under socialism is seen as having almost totally unimpeded control of society. This view runs up against the realities of periods of resistance and of liberalization which dot the history of state socialism.

If the totalitarian theorists are right, we should be facing a period of ever increasing state control. Yet in many state socialist countries there has been a definite extension of the political indifference area. A greater latitude in cultural and personal matters marks the present era in comparison to the ideological inquisitions of the Stalin period. Physical liquidation as the normal course for dealing with opposition has been curtailed. In countries such as Hungary and Poland there has been both economic liberalizations and a greater toleration in intellectual life. The system has proved neither immune to internal conflicts nor totally insensitive to pressure from the grassroots. The spectre of revolt, particularly spontaneous workers revolt, is one the bureaucracies must all live with.¹¹ Political process, albeit the exclusive preserve of an elite, still goes on and as the case of Czechoslovakia proves, can spill over its banks and infect public sentiment.¹²

Nowhere is the limited effectiveness of state socialist 'totalitarianism' so obvious as in the realm of consciousness. Despite an elaborate network of institutions engaged in the work of censorship, news management, and the production of official viewpoints through culture and ritual - the monster of consciousness remains at large.¹³

The quality of state socialist propaganda is often quite laughable. In comparison with its Western competitors, who provide a view of a way of life based on a seductive (if ultimately impoverishing) consumer culture, state socialist propaganda is overtly political and very clumsy. While the journalists of Time and Newsweek present an American mythology to the world, their Eastern counterparts write and broadcast not for the public, but for the censor. It is upon him that their continued livelihood depends. One of the censor's basic principles, a basic principle of all forms of absolutism, is that there is no news but good news.* The credibility gap engendered has not only discredited the regimes in question, but the Marxism which they use to justify themselves.

*This principle has been modified somewhat in the case of Polish and Hungarian liberalizations. Here criticism may be allowed in individual cases although they must never be generalized into a critique of policy or society.

THE MONSTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The visitor to Eastern Europe in particular is struck by the degree of Western influence especially in the cultural universe of everyday life. Western cultural styles are increasingly tolerated as the old Stalinist puritanism collapses. Coca-cola, blue jeans, western music, Hollywood film stars, melt into what appears as a mindless glorification of corporate consumer culture. Window shopping threatens to outstrip football as the most popular spectator sport.¹⁴ Things Western carry such status that a quick profit may be turned by selling a Levi-Strauss label to adorn a Polish made shirt. Even Mayday was celebrated in Budapest with a punk rock concert in 1978. The old cultural conservatism of Eastern European and Soviet Marxism is no match for the latest fads and fashions from the West. This superficial evidence of a failure in the battle for hearts and minds mirrors a deeper malaise that infects all levels of state socialist society. The situation was eloquently described by the Polish socialist Włodzimierz Brus when he gave the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Lecture in 1976.

direction of capitalism or socialism. The economy is the major preoccupation. There is an almost universal insistence that state socialism is a transitional form of society - in movement either forward toward socialism or backwards towards capitalism. This use of the word "transition" is rather tautological and far from the original Marxian idea of a self-destructing transitional state. The predominance of analytical categories developed under the conditions of capitalism blocks the possibility of investigating state socialism as a new form of domination with a stability and dynamic of its own is consistently missed.

One analytical tendency assumes that the old categories applicable to capitalism are directly transferable to the analysis of the new type of social formation. A return to capitalism (Maoism) or a form of state capitalism (unorthodox Trotskyism) is the direction in which these analyses lead us. What is ignored is the specificity of capitalism and the centrality of the plan under state socialism and its role in overriding popular needs and their articulation. Emphasis is placed instead on the economic rights and privileges of the bureaucracy, ignoring the fact that the roots of domination in state socialism lie not in the economy but at the centre of the political system. The analysis of this tendency in its calculations never really comes to terms with the socialist demogogy of the legitimating ideology, in state Socialist societies.

Those schools of socialist thought which do recognize the primacy of the political tend to do so in a superficial manner. The systems basically healthy direction must overcome some unhealthy blockages which are of a political and hence derivative nature. Bureaucracy (orthodox Trotskyism) or bureaucratic attitudes (main stream Eurocommunism) are seen as predominately political distortions of a more or less socialist economic structure. A new ruling class cannot consolidate itself without the traditional bourgeois relationship to private property. The crucial point that both these analyses overlook is the fusion of political and economic forms of domination in state socialism. This leads to underestimating the deeply entrenched political and economic interests of the bureaucracy and to an overly optimistic prognosis about its overthrow. The root of the failure lies in the inability to critically analyze the theory and practice of Bolshevik democratic centralism with its tendencies towards hyper-rationalistic planning, social engineering, and politics based on management and administration rather than working class power.

"The gift of liberty is like a horse handsome, strong and high spirited. In some it arouses the wish to ride; in many others on the contrary it increases the desire to walk." - Massimo d'Azzamio 1848

"Deprivation of freedom, even in its present day forms which are 'soft' compared with the Stalinist period, destroys the roots of human creativity and initiative, and stifles the ability to make intelligent choices. In consequence a deep contradiction persists between 'mine' and 'theirs', the latter meaning what is supposed to be common ownership. The official ideology, by contrast, incessantly preaches the theme of social integration, based upon what is allegedly 'all power to the people' and on mass participation in economic decision-making. The ideology cannot, of course, be abandoned - it is, after all, the regimes source of legitimation - but since it is in striking contrast with observable reality it naturally contributes to a breakdown in social morality and it leads to cynicism and frustration. Too often the natural outlet for these deep social contradictions finds its expression in pursuing strictly egotistic interests, in developing an admiration for bourgeois patterns of success in general and of consumerism in particular; and these are met, in practice but obviously not in words, with far greater approval by the Party leadership than activities which are closer to the socialist ideal but carry a threat to the regime. From the side of the political elite there is undoubtedly an element of rationality in this encouragement of bourgeois individualism in its several manifestations." 15

The backwardness of the masses is a selffulfilling prophecy for the bureaucracy. An atomized and depoliticized population is much easier to control than a militant and class-conscious one. If aspirations and desires can be channelled into the world of private achievement then the political power and policies of the elite are safe, at least in the short-term. The limited possibilities for private material improvement tend to intensify the conflicts between groups in society as well as those between the individual and society. The social decomposition caused by consumerism without consumption (at least in anything approaching the levels achieved by industrial capitalism), has effects on the level of individual psychology. In Hungary, the country which has gone furthest down the road to what Bruns terms 'enlightened socialist absolutism' these effects are particularly striking. In 1977, 20,000 people tried to kill themselves and 4,500 succeeded, giving Hungary the highest suicide rate in the world.

Despite significant divergences in policy due in part to levels of popular resistance and in part to different cultural and political traditions, certain common features stand out throughout the different state socialisms. The strict control of information is one of these. Another is the purely formalistic use of Marxism in analysis and its public presentation in monotonously predictable and highly stilted language. This type of Marxist-Leninism becomes so elastic that seemingly any policy can be included as a socialist one. Miklas Haraszti reports in his study of the sociology of work in a Hungarian factory that the piece work system is defended as being the ideal form of socialist wages the embodiment of the principle 'from each according to his capacity, to each according to his work.' This alteration of the old communist ideal 'from each according to his ability to each according to his need' is the work of a Hungarian expert in 'management science'. The labour 'exchange' program which brings workers from all over Eastern Europe to the labour-starved factories of East Germany is universally acclaimed as an example of the highest achievement in socialist internationalism. In fact the system differs little from the oppressive guest worker system which operates in Western Europe. Bar-

rack conditions and cultural alienation are the defining characteristics. In a similar but more sinister vein, political rhetoric is used to justify the suppression of dissenting views. In the German Democratic Republic left opposition theorist Rudolf Bahro is arrested as an imperialist spy. In Czechoslovakia the human rights Charter 77 is officially portrayed as a 'cynical and cold blooded act calculated to cause chaos in a peaceful country'. Record work achievements are seen to be a consequence of working class 'disgust ...at the endeavour of the renegades who concocted the squib "Charter 77"'. All this comes from a booklet entitled *In the Name of Socialism* compiled by the Czechs from official sources to influence foreign public opinion.

The crude justifications for almost any policy of economic rationality or political repression in Marxian terms tends to undermine the very socialism in whose name it claims to speak. Its contrast with peoples' everyday experience creates an enormous credibility gap and an ideological vacuum. To prevent this vacuum from being filled by an effective political critique from below the party state must resort to further bureaucratic fiat. If concessions are granted it is almost al-

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1979

Shadowy past

Few Communist youths in Hungary know why their heroes are heroes

By MICHAEL DOBBS

Special to The Globe and Mail

BELGRADE — Four out of five Communist youth leaders in Hungary have no idea who is meant to be running their country.

That, at least, is the conclusion of a recently published public opinion poll which reveals the depth of political ignorance and apathy among young people throughout Eastern Europe today. The former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was described variously by those polled as a U.S. president in the early 1960s, the first man in space, and the manager of a collective farm.

Perhaps the most startling fact about the poll is that it was conducted among those young Hungarians who are expected to know most about politics: officials of the Communist Youth League. They themselves undergo extensive political training and part of their job is to teach other young people Communist Party history and ideology.

Results reflect cynicism and reaction

Although the poll was confined to Hungary, there can be little doubt that it reflects a general mood among young people throughout the region. The explanation for it seems to lie in a mixture of cynicism about the value of political activity in an authoritarian state and reaction against the regime's incessant attempts at ideological indoctrination.

The Hungarian pollsters discovered that, of the over 800 youth leaders they questioned, 82 per cent knew nothing or very little about the country's most broadly based political organization, The People's Patriotic Front. The Youth League itself comes under the Front's umbrella.

Only 8 per cent knew the name of the Front's president and 3 per cent its secretary-general.

The youth leaders' knowledge of Communist history turned out to be little better. Seventeen per cent of those polled knew nothing about Lenin, 31 per cent had no idea who Stalin was, and 42 per cent professed ignorance about Khrushchev.

While most of the youth leaders had at least heard of Lenin (an ubiquitous name in Eastern Europe, if only because of the number of streets named after him), the depth of their knowledge ended with the description of him as "a revolutionary" or "a Marxist." One student put him in the wrong historical era by describing him as "a close friend of Marx and Engels," a pardonable error in view of the fact that the three men are

often featured together on billboards.

Meanwhile, Stalin was described by one youth leader as "the former governor of Hungary during the Stalinist era." Another appeared to confuse him with Adolf Hitler by claiming he was "commander-in-chief of the Germans and was finally shot in the head."

Similar results have been recorded by pollsters in Yugoslavia where, as in Hungary, research into public opinion is relatively developed. A girl student typified the attitude of much of her generation when, asked what she thought of young political activists, she replied: "I think they are wasting their time since nothing depends on them anyway."

In a private conversation, a young Yugoslav office worker said he had joined the Communist Party purely because he thought membership would help his career. "Among new party members, there are comparatively few who really believe in the ideology. Most of us join either because we are encouraged to or for what we can get out of it," he remarked.

Young people in the Adriatic port of Rijeka revealed their materialist aspirations in a poll by plumping overwhelmingly for capitalist countries, notably Switzerland and Sweden, when asked where they would like to live other than Yugoslavia. But confusingly, when asked which social system they preferred, many opted for socialism. The pollsters blamed the apparent contradiction on "a lack of maturity."

A popular song of youth festivals here catches both the materialistic bent of a generation born after the war and the rugged love of independence which has characterized Yugoslavia's past. The words defend the interest of young people in music, fast cars, and long hair. Despite this, goes the refrain in a message to their worried elders: "You can rely on us."

Young Yugoslavs would fight to death

Yugoslavia at least differs from other East European countries in that it broke away from the Soviet straitjacket in 1948 and pursues its own policies. While many young Yugoslavs are apathetic about domestic politics, a much higher proportion insist that they would be prepared to die defending their country in the event of outside interference.

Within the Soviet bloc itself, what one Yugoslav sociologist described as "the long-term hopelessness of their position" provides an additional reason for the futility of political involvement.

ways in the area of the economy but seldom in the expansion of political and cultural rights. The underlying principle which must never be questioned is the party's unchallenged right to decide and control what is written, said, and, where possible, thought.

A former Polish censor, Tomasz Strzyzewski, who recently defected to Sweden has revealed the scope and extent of censorship in his country. Although the word 'censorship' has been eliminated by the Office of Censorship, the activity is still pervasive. The Central Office of Control of the Press, Publications and Theatre is a major institution - almost a ministry with its president, vice-president, its departments and services. All books, plays and the entire press is checked preventively - that is before they appear in public. Such matters as foreign affairs, economic relations with the West, the democratic opposition and the measures taken to curb it are very strictly controlled or in the latter case, barely mentioned at all. There are blacklists of major intellectuals and writers whose names and the titles of whose work are strictly proscribed. The system operates through 'interventions' by the Central Office but most frequently through the self-censorship of press and media journalists.

According to Strzyzewski this form of news and culture management represents more than simply lack of confidence in the citizen. "More than lack of confidence...it is the government's contempt of the citizen that this is all about. It is possible that at a certain time, the government may lack confidence in a fraction of the population; but it is not possible to be afraid of everyone all the time. No, it is a question of contempt, since the aim of censorship is not to convince, but to manipulate everybody all the time. Cynicism, that's the operative word."

If this is true in Poland, with Hungary one of the most liberal countries in Eastern Europe, it is acutely the case in Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic or the Soviet Union itself. The cynicism of the rulers gives rise to a cynicism of the ruled. This shows most clearly in things like sabotage, alcoholism, absenteeism, low labour productivity, a refusal of available forms of participation and a generalized sense of disdain about the institutions of administration and those who control them. A cynicism from below is in an important sense a healthy development. State socialism and its managers have shown long ago that their socialism is merely rhetorical. They have made a laughing stock of any idea of a society cemented by moral incentives or socialist community. Attempts at socialist renewal such as those in Poland in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, or the various left opposition tendencies have been vigorously discouraged. Replacing the self-blame of consumerism ('you are what you possess') with the structural and more political blame of cynicism from below is a healthy social symptom. It is a necessary if not sufficient condition for change. It is a negation of the negation.

One of the most ingenious forms that cynicism from below attains is that of the joke. A lively political humour has developed under state socialism which explodes the pretensions and constituting myths of the planning elite. Where the space is missing for an organizational resistance, irony becomes a most important weapon for creating an autonomous psychic space. Laughter is the widespread and entirely understandable response to party-state authoritarianism. The bitterness of the humour gives it a sharp political edge. It clearly marks the failure of bureaucracy (hopefully inevitable) in regimenting popular consciousness.

Political jokes touch practically every aspect of life under state socialism. The tension between ideal and reality provides a fertile ground. The legitimating ideology of official Marxism-Leninism is turned



"Faith, Mr. Secretary, faith."

on itself in a manner which reveals the hollowness of its claims. In some the privileges of an elite supposedly committed to equality are revealed.

Breshnev's mother comes to visit him in Moscow. He picks her up in a chauffeur driven Rolls.

M. "Son, where did you get the car?"

B. "It comes with the job Ma."

She notices his fine new suit.

M. "Son, where did you get the good clothes?"

B. "They come with the job Ma"

They arrive at Breshnev's penthouse apartment. 'It comes with the job Ma'. Fine furniture - 'comes with the job'. The mother thinks for a moment - 'I'm glad to see you are doing so well son, but what will happen to you if the Communists come back?'

Other jokes poke fun at the scientific nature of the 'correct line' ideology of administration.

Q. What is it when you have too much food in the country and no food in the city?

A. A Bukharinite right deviation.

Q. What is it when you have all the food in the city and none in the country?

A. A Trotskyite left deviation.

Q. What is it when you don't have any food anywhere?

A. The correct application of the party line.

Similarly the pompous boasts of socialist efficiency come under fire.

Socialism comes to the Sahara. They have their first five year plan. Nothing happens. They have their second five year plan. Same thing. Then during their third five year plan they begin to run out of sand.

or

What's twelve yards long and eats potatoes?

- A line-up in a Polish meat store.

The institutions which possess a monopoly of top down political power are held up to ridicule.

At school the teachers are taking up a collection for the party in Ethiopia. Everyone is supposed to bring in five kopeks the next day. Everyone dutifully brings theirs except for young Franz. Franz explains;

'My father says that Ethiopia is a long way away, we don't get much news of it, how do we even know they have a party there.'

A week later another collection is taken up this time for the trade union in Ethiopia. Everyone brings their five kopeks except Franz. Again Franz explains.

'My father says that Ethiopia is a long way away, we don't hear much about it, how do we even know they have a trade union there.'

A week later another collection is taken, this time for the starving millions in Ethiopia. Everyone brings their five kopeks except for Franz who brings fifteen kopeks. He explains:

'My father says if they have starving millions in Ethiopia they must have a trade union and a party.'

Or the predictability and boredom of official pronouncements are caricatured:

Comrade Breshnev is addressing the Party Congress when a security agent passes him a note saying that a spy has infiltrated the congress. There was a brief pause while the security

agents assured Breshnev that if he continued his speech they would keep a close watch and nab the culprit. Breshnev continued and soon out of the corner of his eye caught sight of a short dark man being led away by two hefty KGB agents. Breshnev was much impressed by the efficiency of the KGB being able to pick a spy out of the thousands in attendance at the Party Congress. He was curious as to how they had been able to do it so quickly, and queried the KGB agent in charge after finishing his speech. The agent proudly replied that it was simple. They had followed the teachings of comrade Lenin who had taught that 'the enemy never sleeps.'

Wolfschmidt Vodka. The spirit of the Czar lives on.



The supposed final advent of communism and the almost forgotten 'withering away of the state' are other tempting targets for popular humour. With the utopian dimension of communism buried so deeply by the banal productivist realities of existing state socialism, this is a particularly popular theme for wry reflection. No where else is the gap between theory and practice quite so obvious.

Breshnev decides that now that more than six decades of socialist transition have passed since the Russian Revolution it is time to estimate how far the socialist world is away from the final goal of communism. This is an important theoretical and political issue so that it is necessary to set up a special study commission of leading party ideologues. The commission holds six months of intense investigation before reporting to the Party Congress that they are one hundred kilometres from Communism.

Breshnev is frankly puzzled. What can this answer possibly mean? He decides, enough of these ideologues, let's ship the problem out to the Academy of Sciences to look at. Another six months and the answer comes back the same, one hundred kilometres. Breshnev is both confused and annoyed. The best brains in the country have only been able to come up with incongruous answers. He decides to give the problem to the Rand Corporation to see if a capitalist think tank can handle it

with more efficiency.

He waits a year until Rand submits their final report. The answer is again the same--one hundred kilometres. Breshnev is beside himself. How can this be--one hundred kilometres from Communism? He calls together all those involved in the study and demands to know what methods they used to reach this conclusion.

The head scientist pauses for a moment and then begins to explain:

Scientist: "Well, Mr. Chairman, we feed various kinds of data into our computer bank--material on production, consumption, gross national product, trade figures and indices for measuring scientific progress..."

Breshnev: "Yes...yes...very good."

Scientist: "And then we feed in a quote from comrade Lenin which was that 'Each five year plan is a step towards Communism.'"

Cynicism itself (particularly the cynicism from above) is caricatured in others:

The foreign sales administration finally promotes Comrade K to a job which will allow him to take promotion trips abroad. On his first trip he goes to Copenhagen and sends back a telegram saying 'I choose freedom'. This causes great consternation in the administration and promotes worries of new restrictions to be imposed by the central committee.

On Monday morning the party secretary sees Comrade K in the hall coming to work as usual. The surprised secretary stops him and incredulously asks him what he is doing there. K replies that he is going to work.

"But what about your telegram saying that you choose freedom?" the secretary demands.

K grins at him: "Faith, Mr. Secretary, faith."

In a similar vein the ritualistic ceremonies to celebrate the fraternal relations between the peoples of Eastern Europe and those of the Soviet Union are satirized:

The week November 7 - 14 is declared 'the week of undying friendship' between the peoples of Czechoslovakia and those of the Soviet Union. Appropriate official ceremonies are planned. Posters announcing 'the week of undying friendship' are put up. A Czech citizen paints under one of these, 'O.K., one week but not a day longer.'

The real tragedy in the bankruptcy of state socialism is caught in the distinction between capitalism and socialism that is widely adhered to:

'Capitalism is the exploitation of man by man and socialism is the complete opposite.'

These examples provide a flavour of the very practical critique of Marxism-Leninism which has developed in the popular culture of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They should provide a hint to us that the conception of socialism represented by the Bolshevik tradition is a spent force. It is useless to hold to the position that 'Yes there are criticisms but still it is better than capitalism.' The mistake here is mixing up different with better (or if this naked ethical imperative is bothersome, 'historically progressive'.) Reform of this tradition will not do, a fundamental rethinking is necessary. This is a precondition to replacing a political culture of restraint

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Prostitution Rights

With the exception of a rural area of Nevada, prostitution remains illegal in every state of the US. In Canada it is illegal in all provinces and municipalities to my knowledge. Illegal or not, it exists as an informal institution in every metropolitan area. The selling of sexual services represents a viable market in Canadian and US societies regardless of the criminal stigma attached to it and the consequences of engaging in it. Any analysis of prostitution requires the consideration of historical, economic and social factors which all contribute to our view of prostitution.

Our sexual mores, social attitudes, laws and our economic systems work on sexual levels; often behavior that is not tolerated in public, is accepted, even encouraged in the private areas of our lives. For us to look at prostitution it is necessary to consider the delicate balance between the public and private areas of our lives. We should also remember that when an issue as volatile as prostitution is a focal point, it tends to elicit gut-level reactions. Even from a highly rational investigator.

Woman as a commodity in a market controlled by males is a feminist issue. This arrangement is often identified as being sexually exploitive and potentially harmful to the woman. Prostitutes have been viewed as oppressed by economic hardship, thus causing them to sell their bodies to men, by laws which punish them and not their customers, and by the violence of pimps who take a large cut of the money prostitutes earn. Prostitutes have also been glorified by male society as being "the only honest women." Prostitution then, as a feminist issue is subject to stereotypes, as it is a kind of "scholarly subject" or as a moral issue.

Kate Millet in the "Prostitution Papers" stated, "Prostitution provokes gut-level feelings in women precisely because it reveals so starkly fundamental and tacit assumptions about women's relations in a patriarchal society. It reminds us that we are defined by our sexuality: i.e. wife, spinster, lesbian, whore; and it reminds us that most women are dependent on men for social survival and that most of us in one way or another secure our survival in exchange for the commodity that men want most from us. Feminists see this sexual objectification as dehumanizing and degrading - with the ultimate degradation experienced by women who sell their bodies to earn a living..." Prostitution becomes an uncomfortable issue not only for MP's, clergy, citizens, police, the political left etc., but for feminists as well. Many feminists feel that if historical and current sex roles are seen as oppressive, prostitution is the most oppressive sex role of all. However, the problem with this question is that, to a certain extent, it arises out of a feminist ideal rather than present reality. In initially thinking about prostitution, the earnest feminist envisions the best of all possible worlds. One where there is no sexual exploitation or no power hierarchy based on our sex roles. But this thought process does not provide any real answers to the fact that currently prostitutes are arrested and jailed. The current prostitution laws in Canada or the US favor the customers who in most cases are not even charged. The police agencies use dubious and illegal entrapments to arrest prostitutes, wholly ignoring the right to privacy.

The element of choice becomes obscured, not only by adherence to social ideals, utopic views and neglected realities but because very little research has been done on prostitution by women and without patriarchal bias. Available information tends to reflect the mores of the researchers. What must be done is that feminists and the left have to acknowledge that women do make choices to survive and that whether a woman chooses prostitution at one dollar a minute or that of clerk-typist at three dollars an hour our response must be consistent. With the best

of intentions we can postulate on how we believe a woman's situation is discriminatory. We can work to gain legislation which will open up better options for women. This would make a woman's current role more bearable. And we should fight long and hard to make these changes. But when a woman decides we must not annul her choice. To do so is reverting to a paternalistic attitude and would in reality be an anti-feminist position. The issue of choice in prostitution is an understandably difficult yet important concept to accept. To view prostitution with "pity" is to negate prostitutes individual self sufficiency and potential for power and change. This has been made clear in recent forums where prostitutes and feminists have spoke on and worked together.

Prostitution asks that we consider prostitution beyond the boundaries of stereotypes. That realistic and comprehensive information be studied. That the issue not be reduced simply to avoid conflict.

ARGUMENTS OF THE PROSTITUTION RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The American Prostitutes' Rights Movement was begun by Margo St. James and others in California to protest the hypocrisy of laws that control female sexuality, particularly prostitution. COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) started as WHO (Whores, Housewives and Others) to develop a union of women - both prostitutes and feminists to fight for legal changes. The short term goals of COYOTE are decriminalizing prostitution, with the long term goals being to free women in their sexual roles. Margo St. James insists that COYOTE is not just an organization - "its a political concept."

There are constitutional proportions to this Prostitutes' Rights Movement. These would be equal protection under the law, the right to individual privacy, free speech, the right to due process, freedom from cruel punishment, and the right to due process.

THE LAW

Current prostitution laws are under attack because they discriminate against women, especially poor women who tend to be the targets of all law enforcement activity. Also, poor and black women tend to be denied access to hotels, bars or apartments that cater to prostitution and are forced to work the streets where arrest rates are high. Poor women must then end up dealing with many of the street and criminal risks involved in prostitution, especially the prejudices of the police. Where there are no solicitation laws, police will arrest women on vagrancy or loitering laws.

Some courts consider prostitution to be a victimless crime, as is the case in Detroit where a traffic court judge has been letting prostitutes go free. Still, this means that the governmental bodies are regulating the behaviors of consenting adults - behaviors which are really private agreements. This control of private acts violates our right to privacy, as well as a human being's right to control his/her own body.

Because prostitution is a victimless crime, police have used entrapment to fulfill the law. Prostitution rights lawyers argue that court decisions regarding "a constitutionally protected zone of privacy surrounding areas of the body" (US Supreme Court) are precedent for removing prostitution's criminal stigma.

Equal protection under the law is raised because in many areas only the woman is identified as the law breaker. Thus, the Adam and Eve story is repeated in laws and their enforcement. Furthermore, this unequal enforcement has a lot to do with the fact that Canadian Parliament and US Congress are dominated by males.

Arguments against decriminalizing prostitution usually claim that "the moral climate of the community will be affected." Or, that "Prostitution will lead to other crimes and help proliferate them." However, research shows no clear cut connection between prostitution and criminal behavior. The issue of change in community standards due to repeal of prostitution laws fails to take into consideration that sexual behavior for money already exists in most communities and the customers taking part in this enterprise are in many cases the same individuals that run the communities.

Specifically, what is meant by prostitution decriminalization? Decriminalization takes prostitution from the jurisdiction of the criminal code. It means private sexual acts between consenting adults are placed outside the realm of criminal laws. It would essentially bring the informal practice of tolerance of sexual behavior out in the open, without spending millions of dollars, endless energy prosecuting and incarcerating prostitutes.

Legalization, predominantly not favoured by prostitutes' rights advocates, is the governmental regulation of prostitution. The argument against this is that under legalization the state replaces the pimp and would collect a great deal of revenue from "the industry of sexual work." Legalization should be viewed as taking away the self control from prostitutes.

Decriminalization is the least restrictive alternative.

-Eric Glatz



PRIVATE ROOM IN A FANCY RESTAURANT • Separate

LETTERS

So be it

In my reply to Ulli Diemer's two articles - Anarchism vs. Marxism and Bakunin vs. Marx - I confined myself only to correct the most glaring factual errors and distortions because the articles were largely irrelevant to the main principled issues involved in the debates between Marx and Bakunin. As far as I was concerned, my reply closed the debate because further discussion would serve no useful purpose.

Unfortunately, Diemer's reply in the last issue of The Red Menace (Winter 1979) instead of providing a solid base for discussion contains new factual errors and distortions. In justice to the readers, I must again ask you to grant me only enough space for a short and final rejoinder. I list the more important errors:

1) I repeat, Bakunin did not "deliberately fabricate" the accusation that Marx believed in the "People's State". Marx condemned the "People's State" in the Gotha Program, 1875, first published in 1891 by Engels, 15 years after Bakunin died. An unavoidable error does not constitute a "deliberate fabrication."

2) Mehring stated that there is a contradiction between Marx's analysis of the Paris Commune (The Civil War in France) and his opinions in the Communist Manifesto (1848) and in writings written after the Commune. Diemer claims that Mehring misrepresented Marx's views, that there is no contradiction. But a reading of both the Manifesto and Civil War... as well as later writings (Anti-Duhring, resolutions of the Hague Congress of the International (1872), even the article titled Interview With Kark Marx in the same issue of the Red Menace fully sustains Mehring's remarks. Obscuring the issue by downgrading Mehring is a cheap debater's trick.

Mehring was not an opportunist. He was a revolutionist who together with his close comrades Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin, and other revolutionaries fought against World War I and the reformist branch of the German Socialist Party. Furthermore, the chapter in Mehring's biography explaining Marx's Capital, was written by Rosa Luxemburg. Contrary to Diemer's assertion, Mehring was authorized to write his biography of Marx, not by the German Socialist Party, but by Marx's daughter Laura Lafargue.

3) No amount of doubletalk can camouflage the fact that Marx and Engels were misled by their fallacious theory of Economic Determinism to defend slavery as a progressive phase in the evolution of society and that this constitutes an endorsement of slavery - anti-slavery sentiments to the contrary notwithstanding.

4) It is crystal clear from Diemer's own quotation (prominently displayed in his article) that Bakunin's diatribe against Marx, Rothchild, and the Jewish bankers on the ground that the centralization of the state as proposed by Marx would be dominated by a "parasitic Jewish nation", prejudiced as it is, does not, as Diemer asserts, constitute an international conspiracy between Marx, Rothchild and Bismark. A conspiracy is a deliberate, planned alliance. Speculation about what might happen in the future does not constitute a conspiracy. An analogy, however false or true, is not a conspiracy.

5) Quoting out of context is another debater's trick. Thus, Diemer quotes only extracts from Bakunin which back up his argument and deliberately omits quotations which decisively demolish his contentions. The quote omitted reads:

"...while Marx is a democrat, an authoritarian socialist and a Republican, Bismark is an out-and-out aristocratic, monarchical Junker...the difference (between Marx and Bismark) is therefore very great, very serious...(considering) Marx's lifelong dedication to the cause of the social democracy...there is no agreement or reconciliation possible

between Marx and Bismark..." (Bakunin On Anarchy p. 315)

Bakunin's charge that ONLY the "out-and-out cult of the state", unites Marx and Bakunin, does not, in view of the above quote, even imply the existence of a CONSPIRACY between both of these deadly enemies.

6) Diemer does not seem to grasp the vast difference between a political party bent on the monopoly of power and a movement whose sole purpose it is to forestall



the usurpation of the Social Revolution by "...making it impossible for authorities, governments and states to be re-established..."

Diemer's example of Stalin (disciple of Lenin, the architect of the totalitarian state) far from negating Bakunin's position (outlined in my report) actually re-enforces his argument. Nor does Diemer's contention that Stalin did not hold public office until 1941 (while exercising de facto dictatorship at all times) invalidate Bakunin's points.

Diemer's diatribes do not provide an adequate basis for meaningful discussion of serious problems. I have neither the time nor the inclination to continue this fruitless polemic. So be it.

Sam Dolgoff

P.S. Kropotkin NEVER "...alleged that Marx stole his economic theories from the anarchists..." He severely criticised Marx's Capital. There is no statement accusing Bakunin of conspiring to take over the International to be found on page 168 of Woodcock's Anarchism. I suspect that Diemer does not quote him because there is none.

The last word

It seems to me that Dolgoff is shifting ground - he is not disputing most of the points I made, but is introducing red herrings and quibbling over terms.

1. When you make something up which isn't true and which has no basis in fact, it seems to me that you are deliberately fabricating.

2. Dolgoff thinks Mehring's interpretations are correct; I don't. The point is that you can't quote Mehring's interpretations as evidence of what Marx thought, especially when Marx had published his own different views, which can easily be referred to. I don't accept the idea that Mehring knew Marx's mind better than Marx himself did.

Nowhere did I suggest that Mehring was "an opportunist", or that he was not a revolutionary. I just think that he was wrong in this matter. Beyond that, I pointed out that Mehring's so-called "authorized" biography was certainly not authorized by Marx. I find it fundamentally dishonest for Dolgoff to base so much of his argument on the views of the German SPD leadership group, including Mehring, when it is well known that they were greatly at odds with Marx over a number of important issues, including that of the state. They are on record as believing that "the old man in London" was out of touch in his insistence on the revolutionary abolition of the state.

And further on Mehring, Marx himself is on record as having been quite critical of Mehring in particular. He called his future "authorized" biographer a "liar" and a "reptile". Hardly a recommendation.

3. The point bears repeating: it is perfectly consistent to say that a historical relationship, such as slavery or capitalism, was a progressive phase in the evolution of society, and to still be opposed to it. This was Marx's position - I think quite correctly - and only a non-Marxist moralist would see this as an "endorsement" rather than as part of what it is: an analysis.

4 & 5: "This entire Jewish world, which forms a single profiteering sect...a single gluttonous parasite, closely and intimately united not only across national borders but across all differences of political opinion..." This sounds rather like a conspiracy to me. The point, however, is not the word "conspiracy" but the fact that Bakunin attributed common goals, interests, and ideas, to Marx, Bismark, and Rothschild.

6. Dolgoff does not seem to grasp the vast difference between what people say and what they do, between their intentions and the way their intentions work out in practice. It is not a question of whether Bakunin intended to head a secret dictatorship (although he certainly did advocate one) but whether his conspiratorial, centralized structures would have resulted in one regardless of his intentions one way or the other. This was the point of my reference to Stalin: certainly not to compare him to Bakunin, as Bruce Allen seems to think, but to show that Bakunin's injunction against holding public office is meaningless, since even Stalin held no public office. The movement has no need of self-appointed or any other kind of saviours, not even well-intentioned anarchist ones.

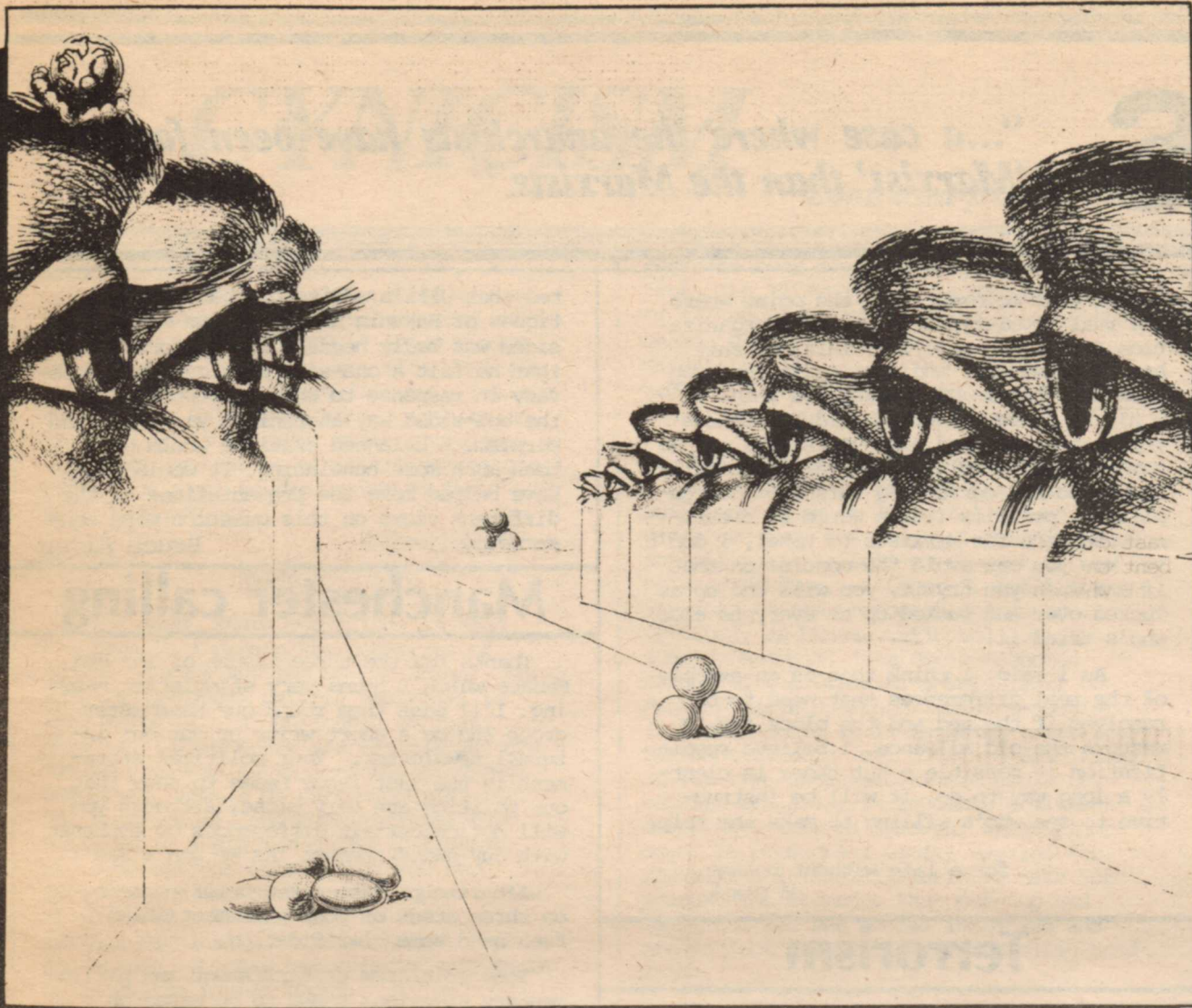
Ulli Diemer

Flogging away

Since this issue has been literally flogged to death I wish to make only two points. One is that a great many anarchists mayself included, adopt a critical stance to Bakunin's legacy as well as towards the anarchist movement generally. Our rejection of Marxism is not monolithic. Many anarchists openly recognize that Marx made some very important contributions to revolutionary thought.

In giving the impression that anarchists, generally, view Marx and Marxism as the incarnation of all evil, Ulli is setting up a straw man that can easily be knocked down.

He does the same thing in portraying anarchists as "advocates of a secret net-



work of cadres" which concludes with his matching Bakunin up with Stalin. In over five years of involvement with the anarchist movement I have only met one anarchist who liked this idea on organization and he dropped out of sight quite some time ago. We anarchists overwhelmingly advocate federalism as the basis for organization just as Bakunin did in most of his writings.

The Red Menace can be a great paper but not if its writers continue to engage in the kind of vindictiveness which underlies an identification of someone like Bakunin with a butcher like Stalin.

For Anarchist Communism,
Bruce Allen
St. Catharines

The quoting urge

I promised some quotes from Bakunin on his social theory:

"The co-operative workers' associations are a new fact in history. It is possible and even likely that they will someday transcend the limits of towns, provinces, and even States. They may entirely reconstitute society, dividing it not into nations but into different industrial groups, organized not according to the needs of politics but those of production...when the free productive associations voluntarily organize according to their needs and special skills, they will transcend all national boundaries and form an immense world-wide economic federation. This will include an industrial parliament supplied by the associations with precise and detailed global scale statistics; by harmonizing supply and demand the parliament will distribute and allocate world industrial production to the various nations. Commercial and industrial crises, stagnation, waste of capital, etc., will no longer plague mankind; the emancipation of human labour will regenerate the world."

1866 Revolutionary Catechism

"...it is absolutely necessary for any country wishing to join the free federations of peoples to replace its centralized, bureaucratic, and military organizations by a federalist organization based only on the absolute liberty and autonomy of regions; provinces, communes, associations, and individuals. This federation will operate with elected functionaries directly responsible to the people; it will not be a nation organized from the top down, or from the centre to the circumference. Rejecting the

principle of imposed and regimented unity, it will be directed from the bottom up, from the circumference to the centre, according to the principles of free federation. Its free individuals will form voluntary associations, its associations will form autonomous communes, its communes will form autonomous provinces, its provinces will form regions, and the regions will freely federate into countries, which, in turn, will sooner or later create the universal world federation."

1866 National Catechism

"Our aim is the creation of a powerful but always invisible revolutionary association which will prepare and direct the revolution. But never, even during open revolution, will the association as a whole, or any of its members, take any kind of public office, for it has no aim other than to destroy all government and make government impossible everywhere... It will keep watch so that authorities, governments, and States can never be built again..."

1869

You published some anti-Jewish remarks by Bakunin in his critique of Marx and Rothschild. Bakunin made some introductory remarks in his related "Study on the German Jews" (1869):

"I begin by begging you to believe that I am in no way the enemy nor the slanderer of the Jews. Although I may be considered a cannibal, I do not carry savagery to that point, and I assure you that in my eyes all nations have their worth. Each; moreover, is an ethnographically historic product, and is consequently responsible neither for its faults nor its merits. It is this that we may observe in connection with the modern Jews that their nature lends itself little to frank Socialism. Their history, long before the Christian era, implanted in them an essentially mercantile and bourgeois tendency..."

G. Jewell

Useless pastime

It was Otto von Bismark, I believe, who said, "...the International is dead; but woe be to the crowned heads of Europe should red and black ever be reunited." Unfortunately, old Otto's fears are yet to be realized. It appears from the current debate in *The Red Menace* that both anarchists and marxists are more interested in scoring debating points against their opponents; in arguing over the correct in-

terpretation of the sacred texts; in defending the integrity of their favorite revolutionary "saint", than in dealing with the substantive issues that have separated these two schools of thought and action since the split in the First International.

Yet, while I feel that the polemics are futile, I am by no means neutral in the debate. While I am not anti-marxist, I do feel that many of the anarchist criticisms of marxism are legitimate. On the other hand Ulli Diemer does not even venture to critique anarchist ideas concerning the state, society, the individual, organization, revolutionary activity, etc. He merely criticizes anarchists for criticizing Marx, for being anti-intellectual, for being moralistic. His chief concern seems to be to "prove" that Marx and not Bakunin is the real libertarian; the Bakunin was just an anti-Semite and an anti-German and, therefore, his criticisms of Marx are invalid; that Bakunin not Marx was the real forbear of Lenin (as if it really mattered). Diemer seems to be concerned with the allegation that the anarchist critics of Marx have not read Marx. Yet when confronted with critics who have obviously read Marx, and use quotations to back up their comments, Ulli merely backpeddals claiming that these critics have mis-interpreted Marx and that what Marx really meant was...

Let's face it, comrades, none of us really meant when they wrote what they did. We interpret these teachings in the light of our own personalities; our own preference. This is why the debate, anarchism vs. marxism, is a useless pastime. There is no resolution. I am not going to stop being an anarchist, not because I think that Marx was full of shit, but because in the light of history I think the anarchists were right more often than not. (Bakunin's almost prophetic description of what the marxist dictatorship would look like, whether or not Marx actually subscribed to these views attributed to him, is a case in point.) Nor does this mean that I reject the left-communist tradition of Pannekoek, Gorter, Korsch, Ruhle, etc. These individuals contributed a great deal to an understanding of society as it exists and the vision of how society could be transformed. Genuine revolutionaries should draw upon all of these revolutionary traditions.

Let's get down to the business of really discussing the issues: the role and nature of the State, trade unions, feminism, nationalism, sexuality, etc. and the lessons that past revolutions have for all of these points. And let's try to do it without getting into a battle of quotations from sacred texts. Just because Marx, or Bakunin, or Lenin said thus and so doesn't make it true. What do we think about these things? What lessons do we draw from past revolutions? What can we do to put our ideas into practice. Let the dead bury their dead!

In Solidarity,
Michael J. Hargis

The good and the bad

Praise first: your paper takes theory seriously enough to write about it coherently. To my knowledge, that is unique in North America!

And you believe it is important to overcome the differences between anarchists and libertarian marxists, to reunite the red and the black after a century of bitter disunity. I agree.

But is it really reasonable to expect this to happen as a result of bringing up all the ancient squabbles? Are people who emotionally identify with Marx or Bakunin going to admit that the other guy was right? That seem so me to be what you're asking, a hopeless request if there ever was one.

LETTERS

"...a case where the anarchists have been far more 'Marxist' than the Marxists."

What are the contemporary differences between serious anarchists, like the North American Anarchist-Communist Federation, and serious libertarian Marxists, like yourselves? To me, that is much more to the point than endless reruns of the split in the First International! It is the present historical situation that is relevant, since after all we cannot go back and change the past. "The dead oppress the living", wrote Marx, and this is as true of those historical figures themselves as of anything else. It is we the living who will unify or fail to unify, not the ghosts of dead revolutionaries.

Once we put aside emotional identification with corpses, serious anarchists and serious libertarian socialists share a lot of common political ground. They use a lot of the same concepts; they analyze events and come up with similar conclusions. There are differences, some of them serious. There are also a lot of minor differences of style, which people could learn to live with provided the major differences were overcome. It remains to be seen whether anarchists and libertarian socialists think unity is important enough to make a serious effort to overcome these differences.

There is a very good example of this in Point 29 of your Political Statement: "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."

I submit that this is a case where the anarchists have been far more "Marxist" than the Marxists. Although your point is solidly rooted in Marx's own writings, Marx, after all, had an excuse - the idea was new in his time and had not been tested. But now, a century after Marx's time, we have hundreds of examples of all kinds of would-be revolutionaries trying every possible approach to participation in capitalist electoral politics - with uniformly disastrous results! Even some of the Spanish anarchists tried it - and it des- ly disastrous results! Even some of the Spanish anarchists tried it - and it destroyed them as a revolutionary force just as effectively as it has destroyed scores (hundreds?) of Marxist parties. Thus contemporary anarchists, learning from history in the way Marxists are supposed to be able to do, say clearly: no participation in electoral politics. But you, as nominal Marxists, simply ignore all these bad experiences and say "it may be correct."

And, worse, you don't even attempt to explain why you think this. I've read every issue of The Red Menace and, unless my memory is faulty, I can't recall where you've ever even discussed the "question". For example, under what circumstances could it be correct to participate in capitalist elections? How do you "recall" a parliamentary representative who goes off on his own? How do you keep your parliamentary representatives from being bought off? How do you keep your parliamentary representatives from using their access to the media to develop a solid reformist faction

within your movement...to the point where the real revolutionaries in your organization are simply expelled? This bullshit has happened over and over again, and you know it! What in hell makes you think it would be different if you did it? Unless you want to try and pass yourselves off as some kind of revolutionary saints, totally immune to the corrupting influences of capitalist politics (which would be a curious position for Marxists to take), I don't see how you can avoid the conclusion that if and when you try it, you will end up as fucked over and fucked up as everyone else who's tried it.

As I said, I think this is an example of the real differences that need to be resolved if the red and the black are to restore the old alliance. I believe reunification is possible - but there is clearly a long way to go. It will be instructive to see who's willing to make the trip.

for a life without bosses,
Ed Clark

Terrorism

A reply is in order to the letter from David Beam in your latest issue. In it he classifies the Red Brigades, the Bader-Meinhoff urban guerillas and the SLA with anarchism. This is an inexcusable and apparently conscious distortion of the truth. Both the Red Brigades and the Bader-Meinhoff group are Marxist Leninist. They make no pretensions to being anarchist. Nor did the SLA when it emerged so dramatically in 1974. The adoption of situationist and anarchist beliefs by Bill and Emily Harris took place only after their imprisonment.

His parroting of the bourgeois media in referring to the Bader-Meinhoff guerillas as a "gang" places him squarely on the other side of the class struggle. While the Marxist-Leninist ideology, the urban guerilla strategy and the ruthless use of violence by the members of the Bader-Meinhoff group must be condemned. One is objectively placing oneself on the side of the West German state by not simultaneously attacking its own terrorist practices. If any group deserves the term "gang" in this respect it should be the people responsible for the "suicides" in Stanheim.

With regard to the general question of terrorism and anarchism, I suggest that people read a new pamphlet from Australia entitled "You Can't blow Up a Social Relationship: The Anarchist Case Against Terrorism". It gives an excellent analysis of why terrorism should be rejected while maintaining a revolutionary perspective. It also is indicative of the views of a very large segment of the anarchist movement which unfortunately does not get the attention it deserves in respect to this critical question. In North America, this pamphlet is available from the newspaper Fifth Estate, 4403 Second Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48201 for one dollar.

On another matter, it should be sta-

ted that Ully's admission that his critiques of Bakunin and Anarchism were one-sided was badly needed. It's unfortunate that he felt a one-side critique was necessary in response to what he perceives as the one-sided way anarchists view Marx and Marxism. A balanced critique would have been much more convincing. It would also have helped make the presentations of the different views on this question more constructive.

Bruce Allen

Manchester calling

Thanks for the three issues of The Red Menace which I found very stimulating reading. I'll pass them round our Manchester group and do a short write up for our internal newsletter. Your political statement in the last issue seems to show that our politics are very close, although you will notice certain differences of emphasis with our own statement 'As We Don't See It'.

I'd like to make a few brief comments on three areas of your statement which I feel need some clarification.

Your criticism of Parliament and parliamentary elections seems to be based on their inadequacy as a democratic form and underestimates their ideological value in legitimising class rule and in branding direct class struggle as undemocratic. I would expect libertarian socialists today to take a principled stand against these institutions.

Your position on trade unions and trade unionism is a bit unclear to me. At one point you appear to say, correctly I think, that trade unions today are not only NOT potentially revolutionary but in fact more or less part of the state and management apparatus and inadequate even as a means of self defence. However, in the next breath you talk of supporting "the self organisation of people into unions" and "participating in their activities" etc. Of course, we should attend union meetings and speak out, but our 'participation' should be aimed at taking struggles outside of union control and union boundaries. It is not possible to do this and be a union official level.

Lastly, your attitude towards 'national liberation' whilst clear in theory seems contradicted by your support for a possible new capitalist nation state in Quebec (and elsewhere?). Your inability to apply your theory boldly in practice is perhaps a result of the difficulty in separating certain struggles for cultural diversity from their attachment to outmoded nationalist and patriarchal concepts. It is an area our own groups needs to do more work on.

I hope we can maintain a dialogue, either independently and/or as part of the international discussion journal promoted by the French group PIC detailed in our newsletter.

Yours fraternally,
Mike Ballard
Manchester

A Case Of Altered Consciousness

great deal of heart-searching to be done on all sides yet.

Bernard F. Booth
Ottawa

Probation essay

The following essay is being sent because I have just been charged in relation to drugs. Part of my probation sentence was to send in my essay for editorial to show other teenagers the hazards of drugs from one who knows me.

My attitude on drugs has changed very much within the last year and a half. Before that, I thought they were great. You could fit into the crowd much easier. I thought I felt really great and happy. Well, those were the good things. As I look back now, I can see all the bad things, and the reasons I smoked marijuana. I now would classify them just as bad as the hard drugs, unless they were being used in healing administered by a doctor.

The bad effects are not noticeable at first, but later they don't just

change you into a happy or good feeling, but change your whole personality. They take your personality and give you a "who cares" attitude towards everything in life.

You don't care about the people who love you or try to help you. You disagree with everything and do what you feel like or want to do. This causes many more problems mainly in your family with your parents, brothers, or sisters, separating the whole image of family life. The sharing, the feelings (good or bad), doing things together, and the most important loving each other.

With respect to your friends who care and don't smoke drugs, you lose them very fast and start with a whole new kind of crowd. This crowd of people are only interested in one thing, which is smoking. They don't really care about you. They can't because they have the "who cares" attitude towards everything in life.

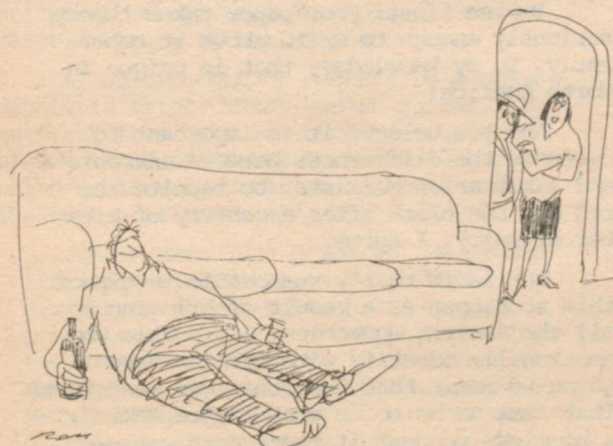
I now can see that as I became more involved with drugs, they af-

fected me greatly. My goal of going to university slipped further and further away. My school work was affected the same way. I would lose interest in school and prefer to go and skip classes to smoke up. As I skipped classes, I fell behind very fast and made it impossible to catch up. Since it was impossible to catch up I simply did not feel like going. I was not interested in school sports or even jogging, which I used to do every day. My health deteriorated, because I would do no exercise and not eat proper meals. The only thing that I would eat would be junk foods, beer, and smoke marijuana. I was always sleeping and when I got a cold it would take longer to get rid of it. I also lost weight and looked bad. I would not even go out on the weekends to movies, bowling, roller-skating or skiing but go over to a friend's house and drink beer and smoke the whole weekend away. If I did not feel like going home for dinner I would not call. This caused many fights with my family.

Now I have no more problems since I have stopped and given up marijuana. My life is back on track. Our family is back to normal. My school work is getting better all the time. I have found school much more interesting and I can now continue my goals for the future. I also have a wonderful girl friend who has helped a great deal.

The only thing that I am sorry about now is that I did not listen to my parents in the beginning and hurt them and disgraced myself. If I had I wouldn't have gotten all mixed up and into this mess. However, I have learned a great deal about myself from my mistakes. As I look at other people who smoke drugs I thank my family, friends, and teachers who have stood behind me and helped me become myself again. I am surely one of the lucky ones to get out of drugs and I feel sorry for the others who will not.

I Goodman
Toronto



"It's the one indulgence he allows himself."

CYNICISM

Continued from p. 10

with one of imagination.

We are left with the problem of what is needed to supercede cynicism from below. This poses the necessity of a new vision of socialism to replace the old. Cynicism tends to fill the vacuum left by a failure of vision. This is as much a problem in the West as it is under state socialism. In either case it is necessary to restore popular control to the centre of the socialist project.

Richard Swift

Notes

1. The term 'state socialism' is used here to indicate the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. While the institutional pattern described is to a large extent applicable to Third World socialism there are significant divergent features as well--forms of direct democracy, levels of participation, etc. The problems of, and possibilities for, Third World socialism differ radically and some options closed long ago for Soviet type socialism remain open in the Third World. This is not to discount a certain similarity of triumphalist style and strong internal and external pressures to adopt the Soviet model.

2. Those leftists who choose to support only the explicitly Marxist currents in the opposition will increasingly face a serious dilemma as even the Marxist currents have been forced to find a new political vocabulary to express their dissent. The discredited categories of Marxism-Leninism prove inadequate.

3. Feher, Ferenc; 'The Dictatorship over Needs', Telos #35, P. 31 - 42. Feher is a participant in the Budapest School of Marxism which emphasizes the role of human needs in defining the socialist project. (See Agnes Heller's Marx's Theory of Needs Allison and Busby.) Feher and other members of the Budapest school have been forced into the Hungarian diaspora as a consequence of their opposition to a system which determines needs from the top down.

4. Hyper-rationalism has led to an increasing anti-rationalism on the part of certain sectors of the opposition. This is most true of the relatively isolated opposition in the Soviet Union itself. Solzhenitsyn, despite the realism of much of his work, is the most obvious example here. Hyper-rationalism can also be seen in the Soviet choice of the psychiatric apparatus as a means of repression against dissent. If the system is close to scientific perfection, those who oppose it must be mentally unstable as they could have no possible rational grounds on which to stand. 'Story of a Workers' Group', Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Vol. 2, No. 1, P. 2. This is perhaps the logical conclusion of 'current line' politics.

5. The phrase had a limited application and radically different meaning for Marx. Dictatorship in the twentieth century has transformed the meaning of the word. As Fernando Claudin points out: 'Marx and Engels in their theory of socialist revolution equated democracy with socialism and preached the struggle for democracy as the principal axis of the struggle by the proletariat to achieve its own class rule.' Claudin, Fernando; Eurocommunism and Socialism, New Left Books, p. 95. London, 1978. The phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat is an unfortunate and dangerous baggage for the Left.

6. Belgrade Praxis Group, 'The Meaning of the Struggle for Civil and Human Rights' Telos #35, P. 186 - 191.

7. The phrase comes from Rudolf Bahro's excellent work on state socialism and indicates the dependent social relations cemented by state police methods which

permeate over level society. Bahro's book, The Alternative is a Marxist expose of the contemporary circumstances of the German Democratic Republic. Since his arrest in late 1977 he has disappeared completely from sight. The official press claim he is guilty of espionage.

8. The term is used here reluctantly to take into account both the system's self-consciousness as socialist and its departure from the original definition of socialism as the self-government of associated producers. Other fruitful investigations of the phenomena described it variously as bureaucratic collectivism (Carlo, Antonio, 'The Socio-Economic nature of the U.S.S.R.', Telos #21) or drawn parallels with oriental despotism (Bahro). While it is tempting to follow Fernando Claudin (op. cit.) in dismissing Soviet-type societies as not socialist because socialism is impossible without democracy, this is somewhat unsatisfactory. It provides a useful evasion for socialists in that it fails to take into account the elements that make up and legitimate the new social formation and are in fact drawn from the socialist tradition.

9. A young German writer who used to write for East German Cabaret but now lives in the West recently commented in a Der Spiegel interview: 'In the East political cabaret is supposed to change society, but it is not allowed to say anything; in the West it is allowed to say whatever it pleases, so long as it cannot change anything at all.' Meszaros, Istvan, 'Political Power and Dissent in Post-Revolutionary Societies', New Left Review #108.

10. Jimmy Carter recently showed the limits of his human rights campaign at the time of the trials of the Helsinki monitoring group in Moscow. According to Carter, "We have expressed our displeasure in a very moderate way....I have not embarked on a vendetta against the Soviet Union. We cannot interfere in their internal affairs." Montreal Gazette, 21/7/78. Increasing east-west economic co-operation including the extension of western credit (with its accompanying pressures) should be seen as part of an overall attempt to co-ordinate Western stabilization policies with Eastern growth policies.

11. Examples of working class revolt have occurred most recently in Poland and amongst Rumanian miners.

12. In a system of closed but relatively stable politics there is often great speculation on the differences over policy existing at the higher levels of the party apparatus. It is very difficult to evaluate what real differences do exist. The Prague Spring proves that change can come from within the party apparatus. However, it is a common tactic of powerholders in state socialist societies to strike a fashionably liberal pose (in private) and point to the possibility of greater evils in justifying their policies. This is quite easy to do in countries where the Stalinist past still casts a long shadow. Geography and the real possibility of Russian intervention provide useful rationales in Eastern Europe. An atrophied sense of possibility is a definite asset for a group of men whose vision cannot extend beyond keeping things together and themselves in power until they die.

13. The title of a surrealist tract.

14. Window shopping is also the only effective way to deal with periodic shortages in a wide range of goods.

15. Brus, Wlodzimierz, 'The Polish October: Twenty Years After', The Socialist Register 1977, Merlin Press.

LETTERS

Unpublished letter

I know you don't publish RM anymore, but I'm writing to see if you've maintained some collectivity and to see what you're up to.

We enjoyed RM very much when it lived, and we were sorry to see it go. What are your energies applied to now? Toronto seems like it has a good deal of positive energy. I know several good, energetic people who either live in or around there and the fact that you could put a paper of RM's bulk and quality out regularly indicates either a substantial community or a small band of absolute fanatics.

Ron Linnille
for Black Rose
Rochester



Raised consciousness

Why did Ulli Diemer end his article "Some of my best comrades are friends" with a phrase like "consciousness raising"? That should have been one of the first terms he debunked. At first I thought he was kidding.

Chip Clements
California

Canada's pride

One of the nicest things about my brief visit to Canada was finding "Red Menace" in the Alternative Bookshop in Montreal. I particularly liked Ulli Diemer's articles on Marxism and Anarchism, as the connections between the two have been of concern to me recently, and I felt he helped clarify several important points. I also found the thoughts on organization helpful; as a radical feminist trying to bring about desperately needed reforms eg. in the abortion situation, while keeping much larger, libertarian goals in mind, the question of how to organize looms large. Finally, the cartoons were very funny - the "sensuous hippos" had me in stitches.

I enclose \$5 for a subscription plus postage to New Zealand. I look forward to receiving the paper and wish you all the best.

Christine Dann

P.S. I'll recommend "Red Menace" to as many N.Z. friends/acquaintances as possible.

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stuff!" Says
Arthur Godfrey



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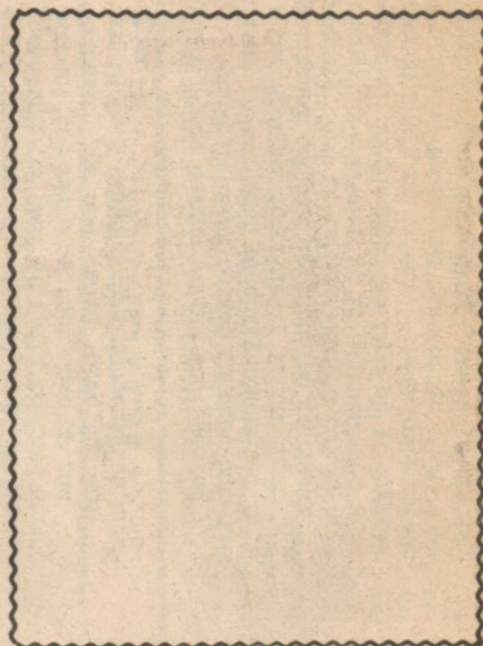
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A LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST PRODUCT

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.

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