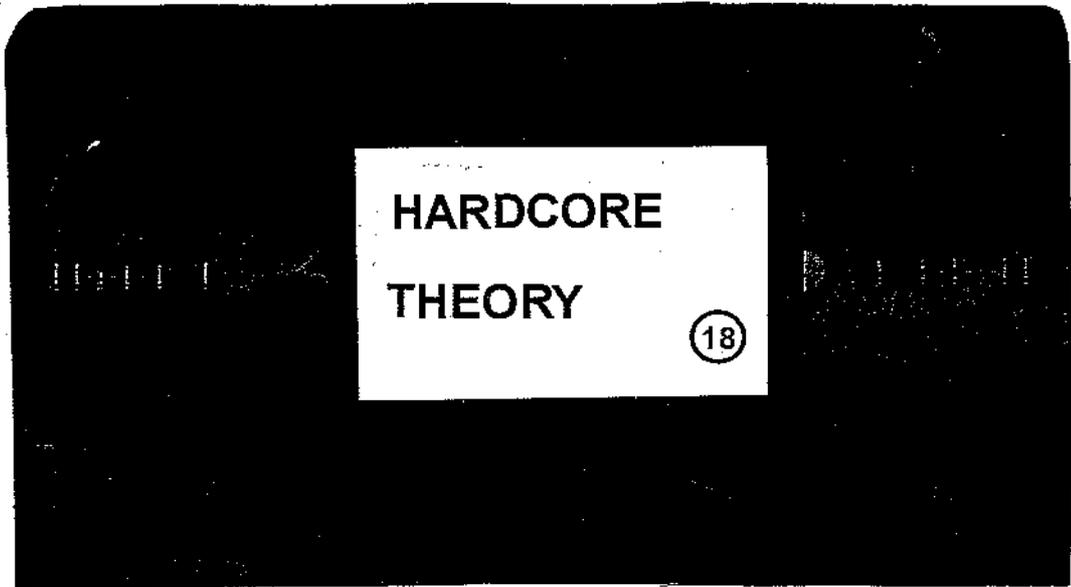


COMMUNIST HEADACHE



NOTES FOR WORKING AND LIVING : Vol 4.

COMMUNIST HEADACHE

NOTES FOR WORKING AND LIVING VOL. 4

SPRING 1996.

CONTENTS:

1. Internal Bleeding...page 3
2. Class Theory for Beginners...page 17
3. After Cease To Exist...page 19
4. X-Files 0001-0004...page 21
5. Seduced and Abandoned / 3-Dialectics...page 28

It was once said...

Our notes for working and living represent our efforts to develop a radical methodology for examining this society, and our own observations and recommendations when we apply this methodology to various aspects of the capitalist system.

We are only a small group, and have put out these first three volumes in a hope to engage in some critical debate and to further the revolutionary cause. Communist Headache does not exist as some formal organisation. If we manage to stir some revolutionaries from their various slumbers then we will consider this initial stage as successful. Needless to say we offer no blueprints and our analyses are far from flawless.

However, some of this is blatantly untrue. Those who suffered the early volumes would have seen this (particularly volume 1) was my own talking aloud as I suffered through a kind of fever to understand what is passed around as revolutionary theory. And so this fever is passed on. This volume comes back full circle and I inadvertently look back on my own work and activity as part of the praxis I have developed. I'm sorry if it all appears as a big joke (the punchline is on the back cover). As I indicate elsewhere, I plan to continue with new things, and so the contact address will remain 'live'

Contact us as follows:

C.H.
c/o Black Star
PO Box 446
Sheffield
S1 1NY.

- In volume 1 : New struggles in an Old Framework
 Some Questions for the Anarchist Movement
 Workplace Struggle vs Community Struggle
- volume 2 : Postmodernism vs Class Struggle
 Our Contribution to the Animals Debate
 Libraries and journalists on strike
 Violence and Adrenalin
- volume 3 : Middle Class Struggle
 Punk Rock Demystified
 Crime and Community
 Information Society

INTERNAL BLEEDING (A Tragedy)

Prologue : This is a Genuine Sincerity Alert

On the introductory pages to Communist Headache I outline an aim to 'develop a radical methodology for examining this society' and to give my own 'observations and recommendations when we apply this methodology to various aspects of the capitalist system'. What does this mean? Obligatory words put down as part of the deal when producing a radical publication? A contract to be honoured between myself, and you the reader?

There were a lot of things I put over in the first three volumes of CH. This represented at least 2 years worth of half-penned and festering frustrations - frustrations formed from my everyday 'interaction' with the capitalist system, and also formed from my inability to 'relieve myself' within the structures that are antagonistic to capitalism. At its most cynical the contents of volumes 1-3 could just be seen as an airing of my frustrations, the whole reason for its being as nothing more than getting it off my chest. Of course I used some established paths and procedures ('class struggle') and also tried to develop them further, but how much of this was done out of a selfish frustration?

Subsequently this volume has been almost impossible to produce. From writing to this moment of typing it up. Poor old me etc. Sticking to the intentions of examining the dynamics of this society I have turned this examination upon those who, in some way, oppose this society, the ways they express their opposition and the ways they see of resolving this opposition. Having taken on this task it seemed sensible to turn the spotlight onto my own activity in producing this magazine. Moving away from the cynical angle it would seem relevant to assume that I have opted for a certain 'theory' and a certain 'style' of deliverance, and so have alerted myself to various individuals and groups who both share an opposition to current society and see themselves as differing to myself in either ideas, ways of presenting ideas, the practical use of ideas, or even the impracticality of ideas. This volume includes dialogue I have had with the oppositional milieu (in letters or spoken criticism inserted into articles) and also of my own activity in this milieu. By turning the examination of the dynamics of society onto the dynamics of the opposition to this society I am changing the game plan. By examining society I mean to examine the forces at work (ie the shaping mechanisms of capitalism) and how they structure our lives (ie the attempt to remove the understanding of a class system). In fact this is my methodology, my ideology if you like.

Marx was partly wrong about not wanting to interpret the world but to change it, what is necessary now more than ever is to change people's interpretation of the world. Capitalism exists as a living system - we know its basic 'life functions' and so some of us feel we can predict what will happen in this society. Certain groups

adopt this as an article of faith... 'crisis theory' becomes like a version of quantum marxism, an extremely scientific (but proven) process in space and time. Some of us feel that capitalism has grown new 'limbs' and that it ploughs its efforts into shaping our minds ('the carving up of social existence' 'intensive rather than extensive development' etc). Again, blessed with our special knowledge, we can try to predict what will happen, how to best make things happen, and how to best interfere in the dynamics of flow to effect this towards our ideas. And so my examining of the dynamics of the oppositional currents is shaped by my ideology of the need to examine dynamics full stop.

Of course there are manoeuvres and manipulations at work - intense efforts to make sure that everyone is committed to class struggle etc. At the Northern Anarchist Network conference over summer it was agreed by everyone present that NAN should be about class struggle anarchism yet only a few hours earlier in a discussion it was obvious that most people in the room were uncertain of how to define the class system and relate it to real life. The pages of the ICC publications are littered with an intense three way argument between themselves, the CWO and the CBG regarding 'political parasitism' and the 'gravitational pull' of the anarchist 'swamp'. Etc.

The material I put into volume 1 was broadly theoretical in that it talked of marxism and systems that I have 'faith' in believing exist if only I could get them to reveal their true nature. I had used the influence of the Aufheben project but came to realise that each volume of Aufheben was becoming a complete work in itself, in that it had no loose ends and was tied tightly to the correct reading of Marx. Their discussion on primitivism was so finalistic that I felt I needed to take this further. A questioning of progress makes the whole science of scientific marxism turn in on itself. Natural laws are shattered as we realise that our society is becoming more and more hound up by forces that are all pervasive. As far as I was concerned, this meant an extra effort in unravelling and countering these forces that make the dynamic of our society - to some extent this was attempted in volumes 2 and 3. The theory I develop should not be developed to exist as something increasingly complete and separate - it should be used to inform our attacks on the structure of our society. Many people seemed to 'like' certain articles (I had a few comments that people liked the punk article). This can be symptomatic of some aspects of the milieu - it becomes like stargazing. So you can feel caught between trying not to develop the ultimate all encompassing theory that stands the test of time (past, present and future) and trying not to provide 'revolutionary' 'entertainment' and stimulation to a hungry audience of consumers. Check the calendar, another volume of such and such a publication should be due around now, put the kettle on and put your feet up...

As well as including a chronology of recent 'theoretical' activity and some critical exchange I have also included a short article on class. This was written partly as a commentary on another article on class that demands attention, and partly as a response to accusations that I had a certain (wrong?) theory of class. The volume concludes with a mishmash of reprinted articles from about 10 years ago presented in a different

format. This is done for those who accused me of just stirring up old (and so redundant or failed?) ideas. I didn't know I was doing this so after some extensive reading I am now going to do it with some panache. All of the articles are concerned with the oppositional milieu and its use and abuse of theory. They all express what I am trying to put across here, albeit in a much better style.

Act 1 : Honey, I Shrunk the Anarchist Movement!

I got all the CH material produced 'just in time' for the @ bookfair although some of the flyers that went towards volume 2 had been minimally circulated in the summer (thanks to Proletarian Gob and Armchair for responses). The only reason to mention the @ bookfair is for the showdown between Larry O'Hara and the rest of the world. That there was a whole room in suspended animation listening to a schoolteacher give his contribution to the movement - ie scuttling around in an ill-fitting suit, sweating profusely, shuffling with seraps of documents in a brief case, and aspiring to be an investigative reporter - was enough to make you sick. The slanders he had set down on a certain individual were ridiculous, but the fact that they were followed by kangaroo courts, promised punishment beatings, and a puffed up chest debate between who was the most effective (read hardest) AFA crew made me feel that people were actually getting off on all of this. The article in CH 2 on the addictiveness of militancy was written part tongue in cheek - sadly this fiasco seemed to confirm what had been written.

Following the bookfair, at last minute notice, I presented the talk 'Some Questions For the Anarchist Movement' to a local anarchist group. This was a bit of an uneasy experience for a couple of reasons - firstly that I had to use the written version of the talk (as in CH 1) which is designed to be read (and not read out), and secondly that discussions in the group were more suited to a brief and coherent (though open ended) presentation that then began to pick up complexity as the issues were debated within the group. I felt that I had to adjust some of the talk and in the event it became too long and its major thrust was lost.

Initially there was a couple of disagreements from a comrade who had seen a draft of the work beforehand and seemed eager for me to do the talk (so it could be attacked). The title of the talk had caused him some concern as it seemed to him that I was somehow standing above the anarchist tradition and throwing down questions. I will not pretend that the anarchist milieu is beyond criticism, although I don't feel able to make a science out of it ('swamp' theory), but the title was meant to imply that these are questions for the anarchist movement in the nature that they seemed to be no longer asked by something that prides itself on a radical tradition. Thus the only possible question to the anarchist movement would be 'Why do you no longer ask certain questions?'. That said, there seemed to be a disagreement in terms of approach between what I was perceived to be doing and what was seen as the traditional anarchist approach. (The other point was the continual insistence on using

'we' within CH when it is only a one person project).

The talk was situated in a general discussion of latest literature that was being disseminated at the meeting. It was agreed that there was a poverty of writing in the latest Class War (particularly a gruelling article about the upper class 'scumbag' factor in the game of golf). There was also a discussion about Proletarian Gob and some of the problems it presented (Class struggle = angry proletarians getting more out of control BUT only certain proles - not teachers, scientists, journalists - and only certain anger - not heroism, nationalism, reformism, single issues, trade unionism). However people felt there was a need for revolutionary theory (literature) and this was why I did the talk.

Beyond these initial 2 criticisms there were further criticisms of what I was trying to achieve and if I was elevating myself to a particular status above the anarchist movement. Though I find it hard to pin down a form and function of the anarchist movement (when I address it I address those who consider themselves as anarcho-communists who have a degree of commitment to developing or understanding class struggle) it appeared that I was accused of trying to find a cosy niche within groups formed from Situationist embers that saw little other to producing magazines than boasting a correct theory and slugging each other off. The person criticising thought that a handful of followers existed for such groups of situationist embers and that the production and consumption of revolutionary material in this circle had become a spectacular activity. Whilst I admitted earlier that this situation can seem partly true I do not think that the fault lies at the feet of the various groups (Situationist embers) producing the material. Also the answer doesn't lie in the practice of just getting on with everyday struggles and keeping on 'chipping away' etc. The criticism that the ICC etc level at the anarchist milieu is of their morality, and it is this that forms the swamp theory. I would admit that anarchist morality is ripe in the movement and this is from a tendency to get involved as much as possible while trying to understand as little as possible. Some individuals turn in on themselves and create the ultimate non-exploitative superbeing who are keen to criticise anyone else who isn't prepared to put in the effort (be a vegan / fight the nazis / etc). It is possible to spend your lives hammering away at the injustices of society riding along on the moments where this injustice is momentarily expressed by society and filling the gaps with (projecting your) personal disciplining. However, by opting to develop a theory and methodology you can open yourself up to accusations of trying to attain a degree of political smugness.

Activism and moralism can play strange games with each other. On its own a commitment to practical activity is not necessarily a bad thing, however it can turn into a moralism when results of your actions are not forthcoming. When the answer appears to be to try harder, to totally immerse yourself in activity, it opens up the rift between those who see a need to develop a more theoretical approach in finding the breaking points in the system or those who wish to develop a critique of your practical activity. A discussion on anti fascist aid for Bosnia based upon a critique of this effort degenerated into an attack on the unknown individuals who had

written the critique (the substance of which was things like 'What have these people done for the movement').

As a piece of rhetoric 'Some Questions for the Anarchist Movement' was meant to engage anarchists in a critical discussion of what anarchism could actually mean. From the response to my talk, and the lack of written response, it appears to have been a total failure. On what level it has failed I am not sure, maybe I am beyond the point of no return with my Situationist embers theory (in terms of creating an inaccessible language etc). On the other hand it would appear that moralism may have set itself fast, albeit a moralism disguised by an urge to perpetuate practical activity and to attack those not operating at such a level of activity etc.

Act 2 : This Films Crap, Lets Slash the Seats

Ken Loach's film on the Spanish Civil War "Land and Freedom" sent the left into a rabid panic - never had such a debate about something related to the cinema been had since we tried to work out whether the usherette owned the means of production. Not having seen the film I can't comment on its message, accurate portrayal, emotional impact, etc but I will relate the furore it caused in the Sheffield 'revolutionary' milieu. From its screen premiere there was heckling outside the doors as every man and his dog tried to give out leaflets relating the truth or non-truth of the film to their revolutionary cause. Apparently the SWP block booked the cinema early in its run to drill the troops with the official line - now I'm all for rowdy behaviour and festivities in areas where we are supposed to adopt a dropped jawed respect to our cultural mentors, but this is taking the piss.

Confessing to having little knowledge of the Spanish Civil War beyond left communist critiques of socialising the economy and the biggie about the anarchists joining the government to deter fascism, defend democracy, etc I thought that the main line of assault would be the trots trying to get one over on the anarchists by having the concrete proof that the anarchos cocked it up by doing something the trots would have loved to have done anyway if they had the opportunity. The fractions of the factions were getting pretty restless outside the cinema with parties accusing other parties of having no right to be here etc etc. Eventually a series of meetings was called by the big guns to regain territory. I missed the Militant meeting but the SWP meeting provided sublime entertainment.

The nature of the SWP here in Sheffield, formed more through contact with them rather than any anarcho critique, has really driven my need to get to the bonom of revolutionary politics as it were. If at times I appear like a lapsed christian trying to refine my faith then so be it. For instance I have made a rather confused attempt to discuss what people may term 'the middle class' - particularly those who attain a modicum of social power within the capitalist system but are still far from being owners of some 'means of production' etc. What I am interested in are the power systems that operate to keep society free from the explosive struggle that would present the understanding of and attack on capitalist

economics. This could then be simplified down to equating all people with a certain job (teachers, social workers) as being the class enemy. Thus they are earmarked for destruction etc. There are arguments about how conscious these workers are of their roles, and that power can often be accepted as something 'normal' to society's functioning (eg the power of the parent, the power of the husband, etc). Thus if we wish to earmark them as class enemies then shouldn't we do the same to the majority of our class who hold reformist views. This debate is opened up in the letters section with a hostile discussion which made me consider my own dogmatic views on the subject. As it is, I am more interested in how jobs that involve a degree of power affect those concerned right down to how they exorcise their guilt (this was the nature of the article on LETS in CH3 but it would appear that I did not put this across particularly clearly!)

It is a common Class War joke that the SWP are actually the Social workers Party etc. The preponderance of teachers in the party is perhaps more telling - this could be partly due to the fact that the SWP recruit heavily on the academic campus and that the only 'credible' job for the graduating 'radical' student is in the education system. The attitude and conduct of members of the party (in my experience) is incredibly condescending and superior. Whether this is something that is developed in the party or whether it is the teacher carrying across their petty classroom power could be debated - but when I witness the party in action dealing with some 'unruly element' (ie anarchists) then I am reminded of the shit I saw dealt out at school to unruly elements within the 'learning' environment. I will return to the subject of power, responsibility and work elsewhere, but some of the night's dialogue can be retold.

The meeting (about 50 SWP members, about 15 anarchists, and some others) was introduced by a woman who declared herself as a journalist at the local newspaper... draw your own conclusions here. The speaker had his technique nailed down pretty well and presented a good history of working class resistance in Spain only to drive home the inevitable conclusion about how the anarchists, on their own, totally cocked it up and spoilt it for the worldwide proletariat. On the question front the first person to speak was an anarchist who complemented the speaker on the bulk of his speech and then challenged his dogmatic anti-anarchist trawl by giving accounts of various crimes against the working class committed in 'revolutionary' Russia - Kronstadt, secret police, Taylorised factories, oppression, etc. The reply this invited was perhaps inevitable, but still no doubt incredible. Instead of discussing the details of Russia and Spain we were instantly treated to a tract from the most pompous 'revolutionary' I have ever seen. Thus, we learnt that all anarchists are middle class, that anarchism is a Sunday afternoon, spare time, politics that involves wearing black and posturing around, that it has no theory beyond causing mayhem, also that Trotskyism was nothing to do with all the 'bad bits' of the Russian 'revolution' and that nobody cheered louder than the SWP when the Stalinist regime collapsed. Add a few personal insults delivered with the upmost condescension then there's a recipe for destruction.

However the sight of various anarchos straining their arses to ask a question to counter these

LAST FEW DAYS

DOWN WITH BOREDOM! DOWN WITH SURVIVAL!

THE CRACKS IN THE RESERVOIRS ARE THE CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM.

When money rules the system there's always going to be a struggle in progress. But when the struggle is between who says they can best run the system - the economy - and who thinks they have the best rules and regulations to somehow make the economic system provide for us all, then there is always going to be the same losers : Us - the working class.

The rule of money means it has to go on creating profit - to give it a reason for existence. The capitalists have no qualms with this - they don't mind seeing people fucked over again and again so they can reap the benefits of the system for themselves using the power they have. For them it is perfectly acceptable to ask staff at Burger King to clock off from work when there were no customers in the restaurant, only to 'hang around' until another customer came in.

Socialist bosses like to think they can run the system a bit better, promise us they won't take all the profit and make us work too hard. But when we do have to work hard at our designated and meaningless jobs we are told we are working hard to keep the economy strong. We are even told by some dreamers that we can run the economy for ourselves - somehow create a self managed monster. This is like tinkering with the steering on a car that has no

brakes- the best place for it is the scrapyard.

The ones that are most fervent about changing the system are often the ones that want to convince us that they will make the best managers. People like the Socialist Workers Party. Well, if we are going to keep a money system then we might as well keep the old bosses who lose no sleep about making us work hard. What use would a world be with miserable workers ruled by bosses and miserable bosses feeling poorly about making us work too hard?

Why don't these vociferous revolutionaries champion the day when money is abolished and people treat each other as equals, and why do they feel the need to boss us about in what, they tell us, is our own best interests. Could it be that they think we are all stupid?

Well that would make sense. For a party that is made up of middle managers, school teachers, social workers, journalists and other types that have a large say in our miserable lives then they would have to think we were stupid. The truth of the matter is that it is these very people that keep us from finding out, that syphon away our disgust at the current system, that hound shoplifters and school dodgers in their journalists columns, that keep the lid firmly on society. The veil of normality.

Reactionary views are hammered into peoples heads - they do not arise out of some malformed human nature. They need to be tackled at the stem and combined with our own lucid visions of how we could create and live in a world community without state or money.

Yorkshire Water provide a case in point. We have been presented with a shambles where a market mentality rules and the biggest turd floats to the top - a chairman with a salary of £156,000! Well we certainly don't believe in 'nationalising' this crucial service to save us all from dysentery. And we would like to use this as an example to those who ask the question : Who would flush away the turds / clear away the rubbish / etc in a society that had no bosses. Just because we refuse meaningless work and drudgery, because we refuse to take our roles in lubricating the wheels of capitalism, does not mean we will spend all our time rampaging through the streets singing crude songs and hurling petrol bombs (this activity would be confined to the weekend).

We are the architects and builders of a new world, we do not fear the ruins of the violent struggle that will occur when we finally destroy capitalism. The dams, pump houses, water processing plants we build will be a monument to the rain that falls from our skies. We will furnish these buildings with banqueting suites, dance halls and lush green football pitches. The doors to our libraries will always be open as people satisfy their hunger for a knowledge of how to provide for the world human community and begin to re-pay with respect all the horrors we have subjected this earth to.

Physical and intellectual work will always be there, it will be devoured. All of life, every minute of every day, will have a meaning. Your imaginations are the blueprints for what could be possible.

bluws did not detract the journalist chair from selecting more party members to back up the original load of irrelevant bollocks with more backslapping and recalled anarchist rumours. I decided to leave the room as I was in danger of exploding into someones face and I had my little daughter with me (I'm not into the hunt tradition of bloodiog them young). On reaching the door I was tagged by the 'exit-man' who was to make sure that everyone leaving had been converted to the faith and had bought both a paper and a ticket to the 'rally for socialism' with Paul Foot speaking. I asked him what the fuck was going on, why didn't they take on some discussion etc. The reply was beautiful - it was all done in the name of democracy - ie as the anarchos represented one tenth of the 'audience' they would thus be allowed one tenth of the floor contributions. Brilliant! I suggested that by deliberately winding up and baiting the anarchos with their nine in ten contributions then they would bring the self fulfilling prophesy to bear - that all anarchists are rowdy and violent (another school days tactic - call a kid stupid enough times in front of the class and they'll end up 'stupid'). As the meeting broke up I asked someone to hold the kid and put some questions to the original baiter asking him for some backing to his '@Sunday afternoon theory' - he then had the audacity to say that he didn't mean what he said. By now the prophesy was fulfilling itself all across the room and I lost control asking him all sorts of ridiculous questions about how much power in shaping society was actually present in this room and about how most people here fetishised in turning their social power into the ultimate economic power (all in the name of our 'stupid' class of course). perhaps I should have just punched him to satisfy his warped ilusions. As it was I went out and produced the Last Few Days poster which is included here and was flyposted around towo (and tom down). The words in the poster were just as confused as anything I said on the night. So it goes. Like British Rail used to say, "we're getting there", when it was patently obvious they weren't.

Act 3 : Converging on/in Liverpool

This meeting was called by various groups with an aim to discuss and possibly bring together various smaller discussions that had been developing around the fractured nature of our current struggles. As it was the turnout from various groups was poor. Subversion and the ACF made up the numbers which were boosted by various Liverpool comrades and a core of people from the Communist Workers Organisation (CWO). There were three brief talks given in such a manner that discussion was invited rather than a stated 'group' position erected to be defended / attacked etc. Significantly though there could be some broad interests detected - the first talk by a comrade from Subversion covered the outloies of a debate that may well have been occurring within Subversion, whilst the other two talks presented by the ACF were broadly based on a plea to bring revolutionaries (as individuals and small discussion type groups) into some form of organisation, and a large chunk from the ACF's handcrafted 'Manifesto for the Millenium'.

The second day of discussion, which had loosely been set up as an invite only session based

around ACF/Subversion to develop the first days discussions (particularly around 'Where is the Struggle') in a more conducive manner, managed to loosely fall apart as the ACF decided beforehand to use the opportunity to put the final touches to their manifesto.

Thankfully the meeting ran pretty smoothly - there was no blood boiling arguments, though the discussions moved pretty swiftly with many people having much to say. It was obvious that the topics presented were giving rise to a variety of views and this made tangible development very difficult. For instance, if a comrade made a contribution that you felt you wanted to either challenge or expand then you waited until it was your turn to speak, which on most occasions meant that a couple of other comrades would speak before you adding something totally different or addressing something even earlier, and by the time it came round to your turn to speak it seemed quite irrelevant. This is why the proposed invite only session for the second day made some sense, especially when the subject matter is open to many interpretations and it is accepted that 'a best possible line on this issue' is hard to come by. Of course the CWO were all sorted on what they thought of it all (ie these 'new struggles') and tended to use the chaotic nature of the discussion as a proof that these 'new struggles' (or indeed the anarchist movement) was a load of old tosh. This wasn't helped when the third discussion (following the ACF delivering a depressing 'balance sheet' of the current situation) started flying all over the place no thanks to a comrade from the CWF who had strange ideas and started preaching on things that were probably best kept to himself (ie I don't drink, I keep fit, etc). There were some sobering moments when people entered the fray directly from the official dockers support rally and started asking what the people (and groups) in the room could do in the here and now to support the dockers. Of course the dockers dispute was like a breath of fresh air for many people... i mean these workers are like the working class from a turn of the century 'pop-up book on marxism'. Of course I am excited that they have decided to struggle and that they have instigated a degree of international solidarity, but not because they are an obvious example of the working class proper.

Up until the meeting and particularly during the meeting I realised the futility of continuing CH as some sort of sensible/serious theoretical magazine. I had contributed a short flyer called '20 things You Never Knew About the New Struggles' that was perhaps indicative of my desire to have the most correct analysis (I will comment further on this leaflet later!) but my enthusiasm had overtaken me and I had cross-pollinated what I enjoyed doing and what I thought I was dutifully doing. I enjoy writing and commenting on how I see this society moving - this is normally concerned with capitals movement as this is what affects me (and all of us). My comments on proletarian resistance are more scattered due to the single person nature of CH I explained earlier. In commenting on the dominant forces in society I prefer to develop a style that uses a rich source of language and subject, this may be termed situationistic.

In terms of advancing the necessary theory then using myself as an individual is abruptly bankrupt. The things I wanted to talk about (and

the things I had previously talked about in CH) were of immense importance - ideas of democracy, progress, class analysis, technology, human nature. Individual's ideas being put across in individual's magazines like CH were like the individual voices coming up from the floor to the discussion - a hint of progress was impossible to locate.

So workshop one was called 'Where is the Struggle'. This was mainly concerned with the gruesome task of unpicking a class nature from the 'new struggles' such as against the road development, policing, animal rights, etc. As this was due to be continued to the second day I had produced the enclosed '20 things...' flyer (actually written in an afternoon in work). I never actually read these points but indicated that they were available with my other literature. The comrade from Subversion introduced the subject in a roundabout way by discussing the changing nature of capitalism in terms of how it is moving towards a just in time methodology and a fluid network of transport (currently roads). From this it was suggested that the identification of an obvious productive class (as the traditional focus of class struggle) was now expanded into more of 'society' as the people responsible for production included the programmers, planners, distributors, etc. Personally I felt that this line of assault can be dubious as it can seem that you are trying to convince everyone that there are easily definable class boundaries based around an expanded sphere of production - and all this can achieve is some kind of self satisfaction amongst the revolutionaries knowing they have got class 'sorted out'. Though the speaker went on to discuss the road struggles as a consequence of the expansion of capitalism it seemed that the damage had been done regarding dabbling with a class theory. The first few contributions from the floor threw around a general uncertainty about how to define class and the debate moved towards listing certain jobs and considering them in the productive process.

I will add here my own views / experiences on this, as I didn't actually get involved with what I saw as an impossible exercise. This view tends to look more at the maintenance of a system of social relations that in turn keeps the capitalist system producing and investing surplus value. For instance, at a similar type discussion in the NAN conference we were having identical difficulties in locating all jobs to a productive capacity. A comrade suddenly suggested that we should all indicate whether any of us actually held a job that produced anything, something tangible, a commodity to have and hold (well, to buy back and hold). Not one person in the 15 or so assembled could say that they did! Now from here it could be possible to expand the definition of 'production' to include enough things to convince ourselves we were all in this 'productive working class'. However, my own case bears out the difficulty in this. I work in the education industry, and to put it bluntly it exists to produce one thing - workers fit for the factory, office, supermarket floor without any capacity to be critical or confident to self organising, autonomy, etc. So, yes, I do contribute to the productive process but only in the capacity of maintaining a domination (to maintain an exploitation). I earn a wage (a low wage) and so I can demand, when the collective workers decide via the union, a better wage, and so I can contribute towards the impending collapse of

20 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT THE 'NEW STRUGGLES'

It would be advisable to read my articles in CH #1, particularly 'New Struggles in an Old Framework' and 'Some Questions for the Anarchist Movement'. I appreciate that my 3 volumes of C.H. have not had great circulation! They were produced concurrently for the bookfair and beyond that I have mailed a few copies out to comrades I correspond with.

I have also been told that these new struggles are just like redundant struggles from past-times by various revolutionaries (such as from the CWO) and I find it hard to challenge these arguments. The era I have been politicised in (ie 1980's) has been full of activity. I didn't get involved in revolutionary politics because of some university course or whatever. I have had to suffer low paid work, evil landlords, police hassle, dole hassle, poverty. I am not casting around for some motivation for change, there is no need for that. There is much about this society I hate. The economics of capitalism, the state system, the education system, the whole system that prevents us from realising the absolute poverty of our lives (not just in terms of quantity but quality as well), and the various pseudo-oppositions to this society. It is a complex web of affairs that demands we understand it in order to best direct our efforts in hastening its end and creating communism. I am sorry, but I don't like to be told to sit comfortably and wait patiently until the right struggle emerges (ie militant workers?). I am neither patient nor comfortable.

1. In my opinion they seem to be increasingly against the effects of capitalism. Thus capitalism exists as a system to keep the capitalist class maintaining what they want ie 'wealth' (in commas because we would hopefully have a different definition of this), and power. By its nature it needs to run quicker and quicker to keep profit ticking over, and so it attacks the environment (health etc issues), the good conscience (animals protests), the commonality, the open space (road protests).

2. These new struggles immediately express a need to question our domination by the capitalist system, and a need to understand the systems that dictate our living conditions. But they don't necessarily question it or indeed refuse it.

3. I argued in CH#1 that they should be seen in this way, as opposed to how they are traditionally seen by Greenpeace, FoE, CWF etc. Thus to see them as part of the class struggle. But this class struggle as we would like to see it is often very weak. It is then assumed that we are somehow maximising this by posing these new struggles as 'contradictions' and not resolvable 'unpleasantnesses' (terminology used in my article). This simplistic assumption I develop is not adequate. Hopefully this is why we are having these discussions.

4. By relating things to the heart of capitalism - ie how the class system functions and what is in it for them (Marx work, Aufheben's work, etc) we can decide on what we want to attack and what we see as a direct attack by our class.. This basic compromise (ie the wage/labour relationship) is seen as the motor of class struggle. We try to spread the idea that this system is incredibly unfair by giving our analyses or reporting on struggles that express this relationship.

5. As anarchist / communists I assume we don't believe in money or wage labour and so we also spread the idea that capitalism cannot be managed by anyone including 'socialists' or 'ourselves'. Connected to this, but not relevant here, are the ideas of how 'revolutionaries' develop a warped vision of a warped human nature - stupidity, incapability, greed, banal fascination, violent individuality - and how this forms their ideas of change as a process and a destination. I am working on this for further articles if anyone is interested in contributing...

6. We have the motor of class struggle, can we discuss a brake on class struggle? And what do we mean by the concept of 'social revolution' to release this brake?

7. This is where I see the new struggles directing themselves. People beginning to demand control over their own lives and to make choices on what they see as 'wealth'. This, to me, is where we can put forward our arguments on how we can control our lives (and not the economy) to live out Marx's words of from each to their own ability to each to their own needs. ie NOT a case of working our bollocks off to enable us to stockpile mountains of glittering commodities in our 'own cathedrals' (homes). I am not being sarcastic here.

8. Of course the struggles are only the tiniest seeds of such a social revolution, and they are instantly open to recuperation. This includes a recuperation to maintain capitalist profit (green shopping, environmentally friendly factories, etc) and to maintain capitalist ideological domination (to turn critical thinking into either uncritical thinking (ie individual consumerism, democracy) or critical unthinking (ie an interest in how we treat animals becomes a morality etc)).

9. If we wish to release the brake on class struggle how can we intensify this activity? What disciplines, efforts and organisation does this demand as anarchist / communists?

10. At a basic level we can try to understand the power systems and the state system. To understand how reactionary views flourish without associating this to a lumpen proletarian stupidity! To challenge education, the role of the media, the ideology of individualist consumerism, the role of culture, the family, etc.

11. Whilst I don't believe in fantasies of decadent capitalism (an illness contracted, it seems, from examining the mechanisms of capitalism inside an objective vacuum) I am aware that 'wealth' is defined and obviously created by capitalism (see 'Some Questions...' in CH#1).

12. There is a conflict between what some revolutionaries see as the motor of struggle and what I see as the brake on struggle. I do not see the benefits of demanding a 'wealth' that is alien to me and then demolishing it. I prefer to refuse 'wealth' as it stands and demand control over the definition and fulfillment of my desires as part of the communist society.

13. This is a difficult situation, and I am prepared to compromise in terms of what I see as practical to the destruction of capitalism and the creation of communism.

14. Autonomism talks of capital reacting to our demands against it. If it cannot turn demands 'against it' into demands 'on it' then it goes on new offensives. The new struggles portrayed as struggles against the effects of capitalism are thus easily recuperated (for the time being).

15. I see the motor struggle, ie the wage demand and the workplace site, as the better attack on capitalism because this is what will plunge it into crisis. But I passionately want to discuss and develop the possibilities and practicalities of a future society, and I want to resist directly against the horrors of modern society as part of the improvement of my life and health as a (revolutionary) subject of capitalism. There is the old joke about one revolutionary scolding another revolutionary for campaigning to save the whale by stating that whales will be left free in the future classless society, only to be greeted with the reply that the scolded revolutionary wants to live in a classless society that has some whales left in it! (But then again 'Extinct is Forever' has been used to sell products and ease consciences by the Body Shop International).

16. What does this imply we should actually do? Is there a conflict of interests in revving up the motor and easing off the brakes?

17. In understanding capitalism we don't want to get the best ways to operate it, we need to develop something to replace it with that is feasible and relevant to our class. This is where we need to see the brake on class struggle... not just as something that stops us from understanding the mechanisms (and so the evils) of capitalism, but as something that also stops us developing ways of understanding power and social relations. I think it is impossible to be 'against Aufheben' in terms of these new struggles, but we need to be more than Aufheben. They develop the ultimate analysis of the mechanisms of capitalism and assume that in doing so they are releasing the brake on class struggle. But communism is more than just 'not-capitalism'!

18. I would also agree to the argument that intense industrial struggles (such as with the miners) bring about new visions and new ways of relating that prevail themselves in the struggle. Here we see the solidarity and mutual aid that lies at the heart of human nature. Capitalism will resist an economic attack as ferociously as possible, and so force this new conditions on us if we are to see a victory to our struggle, yet at the same time allows us to see the need to go beyond a simple economic (pay and condition) struggle.

19. But we are left with protests against the effects of capitalism and against the loss of self-control in our lives. However this struggle can contain its own divisions with many people refusing the poor quality of life, and many others too poor to appreciate that a good quality of life cannot be bought. This is the underlying nature of some of the analyses of the road struggles in the Home Counties as being irrelevant middle class affairs. The situation of Pollock has made people sit up and take interest in as much as these struggles can be part of the working class struggle.

20. But can we expect such struggles to manifest themselves into an attack on capitalist economics? Maybe only as part of a general refusal of work and a push to organise our own lives beyond pockets of hedonists 'politicised' by raving and road protesting. This then becomes part of the building of communism, and it throws a whole new light onto our 'roles' as revolutionaries and class struggle militants.

capitalism. But this doesn't make me sleep any easier at night when I see our college implementing ridiculous GNVQ courses that prepare kids for meaningless schemes, when I see the lazy and arrogant lecturers not giving a toss about it. So I cannot consider myself as contributing to the emancipation of our class.

Returning to the Liverpool conference (!) it almost seemed inevitable that the line of assault developed (ie jobs) would come round to mentioning teachers, though this was where it ended. Contributors then began to discuss the road struggles, and it was ironic that an early contribution asked what was important was that those involved in the road struggles saw themselves as taking part in the class struggle (obviously as working class people). I think that such a line of argument is too much to ask - I mean, if those involved in the road struggles had a clear line on class analysis, maybe they could help us revolutionaries a little!

For my part I suggested that it was important to see these struggles as anti-capitalist struggles. The line of arguing I used (verbally and in the handout) was that the occurrences that were being struggled against were natural occurrences of capitalism - ie its need to expand and reorganise. So, you don't want to see playing fields lost out to roads - tough shit, that's profit - you don't want to see sewage pumped onto heaches - tough shit, that's cost cutting - you don't want to see calves cramped into cages - tough shit, that's market ideology. This line of assault has its weaknesses and strengths (see part 2 for this). In directly exposing capitalism it attempts to sabotage any recuperation of the struggles - thus the apparent piece of mind, piece of health, piece of conscience that is fought for (and sometimes offered) cannot be a solution as we are talking about a basic contradiction to capitalism and not an unpleasantness. But the weakness of this assault is that the class system, which lies at the heart of capitalism, must then be seen through the understanding of capitalism in its entirety. So not only are we attempting to fight against recuperation but we are attempting to get people to critically educate themselves about the totality of the system that has dominated and exploited them for their lifetimes. When we are talking about a deprived community in Pollock we can convince ourselves that this is somehow easier, or that the class system is understood 'previously'. What we have to understand is that we are dealing with the whole system that maintains a fear of critical thinking, confidence, solidarity and that this forces those who come to make such distinctions to act out their desires in an opted out fashion. I mean, if we all 'worshipped' and strove for a 'harmony with nature' rather than a 'harmony with what commodities appear to bring' then the world would be a..... so it is positive to redefine our own meanings of wealth even though such attempts are acted out in isolation (hedonism) or sold back to use as pseudo commodities (green shopping etc). How can these struggles against the effects of capitalism (seen as a need to understand capitalism) be combined with the workplace struggles (ie against capitalism)? What demands would this place on revolutionaries in terms of our organisation, literature, actions etc.

Interlude (Refreshment Break) A Short Dialogue with SPLAT (or good guys finish last)

1. A letter from SPLAT : 5/11/95

Dear CH, We want to say a few words about the article 'How the Other Half Lives...' in Vol 3 of Communist Headache which we received a couple of weeks ago.

In some parts it appears to agree with our position on class which opposes that of all the other so-called revolutionary left groupings who continue to tell us that our main enemy is the never defined Ruling Class. It was therefore encouraging to find that the article does not mention 'the ruling class'.

However, at the same time, it is not encouraging to see that the article appears to want to concentrate on the fuzzy area between the working class and the middle class, and suggests that this is of considerable importance. We do not agree, and assume that the writer makes this mistake partly as a result of your aim "to develop a radical methodology for examining this society."

To put it as briefly as possible, we maintain that the enemy of the working class, the enemy that dominates us in every aspect of our lives and does all it can to ensure we remain a dominated class, is not a non-existent, hence never-defined, Ruling Class (or Boss Class or Capitalist Class) separate from the middle class. Our real and clear enemy is the middle class.

The fact that the so-called revolutionary Left have for decades exhorted to accept (and still continue to) that our real enemy is a class of people separate from the middle class cannot be excused by saying that it is merely a flaw in their thinking resulting in generations of false and misleading propaganda directed at our class. It is far more serious than that, for it has meant confusion and apathy in our class which in turn has meant degradation and suffering, and the brutal truth that our class is today no nearer to emancipation than it ever was.

This will remain so until a substantial number of working class people clearly see that those who dominate them in every way are the middle class as a whole, and not just one undefined section of it.

When they do see this - which is an absolute prerequisite - a beginning can at last be made to the massive task of building a well-organised movement of working class people who are resolved upon their class's emancipation.

About 3 years ago we published a pamphlet outlining our arguments called 'WHY THE REVOLUTIONARIES HAVE FAILED'. It is revealing that not one group among those we call 'the libertarian-communist-anarchist-socialist-revolutionaries' was able to publish any kind of critique of the pamphlet.

It's possible that none of you has read this pamphlet which for some time has been out of print. We have asked around and managed to

find one that is enclosed. We look forward to getting your comments on this letter - and what about a critique of the pamphlet?

Best wishes Mark and Andy (SPLAT)

2. A letter to SPLAT : 12/12/95

Thank you for your letter and your copy of 'Why the Revolutionaries Have Failed'. I already have a copy and found it good reading (I will give my views on it below), however I am sad to hear that it is no longer in print. I would advise other people to contact distributors (such as A.K.) to see if they can get a copy. I have passed the copy that you sent on to another member of Sheffield Anarchist Group.

Firstly I will comment on an apparent similarity between our concerns. Communist Headache was partly instigated because of feelings (of infuriation!) that were invoked when I read the literature from 'the libertarian - communist - anarchist - socialist revolutionaries'. It seems that your writings may share a similar motivation. However, it sometimes seems that you want to prove all such revolutionaries to be heading towards this same dead-end - for instance you categorically state that not one group published any kind of critique of your pamphlet. I know of critiques existing in Organise (possibly the major serious anarchist magazine) and also in Echanges. I enclose photocopies for you of the articles (not to prove anything but to give you for your own interests). Contrary to what you may think debate does occur (but, yes, the AWG were a joke!).

Secondly I will comment on my article and on the aims and limitations of Communist Headache. Primarily this magazine is not internationalist in its writing, but that does not mean I shun internationalist magazines or debate (I would recommend the ICG publication 'Communism' for the best material). The current issue of Communism talks of how Western Europe and USA act as a kind of showpiece for democracy and capitalism. Thus in other parts of the world proletarians suffer blatant oppression we have this mystique of a rich lifestyle with high levels and high qualities of consumption. Everyone has something to aim at etc etc. So I think it is important to analyse the dynamics of our society and to emphasise where and how class struggle will occur, and how it will be interpreted. In some respects there is now a twofold reason - firstly because class struggle occurring is always a positive thing in itself and secondly because it smashes the illusion that tries to glue our whole world together.

I stand by the decision to examine the 'fuzzy area between the working class and the middle class' and to 'develop a radical methodology for examining this society'. Perhaps this is where we again diverge in our ideas? It is likely that we both see the 'traditional' attempt to see class identity and class struggle as insufficient in that it is impossible to pin down a model that is all inclusive and also supremely distinctive in dividing the whole of society - ie those working and those maling / bossing / or whatever. But it appears to me that you wish to search out a perfect model by considering all of the middle class as the class enemy, and of including the idea of the ruling class as merely a top level of this class. We are also interested in such a model of society but we don't see it as being so simply

LAST FEW DAYS

DOWN WITH BORKDOM; DOWN WITH SURVIVAL!

WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER AND WHAT WE SHOULDN'T FORGET

Remembrance Sunday passed with us honouring our glorious dead. But now the reality has returned: while the brutal war that raged in the former Yugoslavia, with the former Yugoslavian worker butchering worker, has an apparent peace, with the leading gangs carving up the territory, we have returned to the headlines of Princess Di's philanthropies with an upper class sports star, the queen mum's hip replacement, and a less miserable form of existence under capitalism, then we are deluding ourselves. Fascism, with all of its horrors, was a way of strengthening German capital. Not one corner of the world is exempt from the same system. It involves us submitting ourselves to the law of capitalism and money - to struggling to earn a meagre wage and so furnish a meagre existence. When we start to get collectively pissed off then the bosses, authorities, politicians, etc have to see that we are kept in line. That means our collectivity and our resistance is smashed. Fascism, as exhibited in Germany before the war is one method, all be it a very extreme one, of keeping the workers divided and exploited (and killed when necessary). Democracy is another way, especially when we can be forced to submit our wills to capitalism and put our faith in money and bosses, in return we are given an 'interesting life' where we are told that we are fascinated by the race between Blair and

Oasis to top the charts and grab the number one slot. War is the ultimate way of controlling the workers and reshaping the organisation of capitalism. When we remember our grandparents and loved ones butchered in World War II we are genuine with our grief. When we convince ourselves that we were uniting behind a better way of life, a less miserable form of existence under capitalism, then we are deluding ourselves. Fascism, with all of its horrors, was a way of strengthening German capital. This made it a threat to British capital, and so a war was declared. Dresden was reduced to smouldering ruins through a pre-planned British attack - the town was made of wood and contained 1000's of fleeing soldiers. Different styles of managing capitalism create different symptoms of the same problem. That same problem is that a system that needs to grow and depends on exploitation cannot be extended beyond human limitations. When solutions fail then war is the outcome... this is what has happened in Yugoslavia. The immediate period preceding this war was full of strikes, riots, occupations, demonstrations and impossible demands. A concerted refusal of capitalism. The tragic fact is that this anger was then channelled into various nationalisms, where people are convinced to blame other

'outsiders' for the problems in capitalism. In the midst of all this confusion the 'luxurious' democracy that we live in is promoted as the pinnacle of what is possible for living. Those of us who have to endure the misery of low paid work, the poverty of housing conditions, the banality of television, know much better. Of course not everybody in Yugoslavia is intent on ravenous bloodshed - resistance to the war, and to the nationalisms that perpetuates this war, exists on all sides of the boundaries. These people are passed off as deserters and taken not to be shot. Now the 'peace' process is underway we have some new boundaries, new states and a population brutally cut down in numbers and forced to begin 'business as usual'. Workers are terrified of the horrors of war and confronted with a nationalism that says it is ok to live in misery and poverty as long as it is done for a boss, a state and an economy you can 'identify' with. It is an attempt to make class unrest a thing of the past. By actively showing our disgust and rejection of the system we live in we can offer support... this implies we have to start the process now. But the consequences of living in our 'luxurious' democracy means that our collective confidence of doing things for ourselves is drained away. We are polluted with more and more mindless products and images, and become mesmerised by the technology and complexity that supports these systems. At times it seems the only answer is to become more individualised, more competitive, more untrusting. This is what the system would like us to do. This becomes the condition of our lives. The alternative is to ask questions of why and how things are done, to tear away at the fabric of society. What lies beyond should not invoke fear, but great excitement. An urge to come together and develop new ways of working.

CONTACTS: C.H. PO BOX 416, SHEFFIELD, S11NY

stated in that we have a clear enemy who will always act as our enemy (because of their human nature?) and so will need to be physically destroyed on a one by one basis.

Our society is extremely complicated and the class system is as much about power relations as anything else. It is the working class that hold the key to struggle while it is the middle class who remain the class enemy. But this is not to say that the middle class do not see the oppressive nature of their behaviour, and that this is something that the system tries to hide (ie the generation of middle (oppressive) class consciousness and its rejection). This can partly be built down to the idea that proletarians are all thickos and so need the right people to guide them along (thus the SWP is a party of schoolteachers and social workers). So oppressive behaviour is seen by some oppressors as positive and necessary because there is this myth we are all stupid, even though this myth is perpetuated by the oppressors!

I do not see immiseration as being totally quantitative (in that it is represented solely on a scale of wealth and so is a simple function of economic crisis theory); it is also qualitative. This means that the bullshit we are fed as to what makes an ideal life - from in-car CD players for when the traffic density gets out of control to microwave cuisine for the person who has no time between working and needing to forget about work - slowly becomes less and less credible. Currently there is a massive push to counteract this middle class epidemic - such as new agency, but it could be used to highlight the true nature of the oppressive middle class (in terms of the system they support and operate) and so it could be turned into class struggle. We are seeing this with the road struggles in that the foulest effects of capitalism (beyond things like poverty and misery of wage labour which are said not to exist!) are now starting to creep into the open.

The arguments around teachers are a good example. You say never support them, we would say to stress their oppressive roles and to get them to fight for revolutionary education and organisation, to make educating and organising become a non-specialist activity. Thus when they are on the picket lines fighting for more pay or smaller class sizes, and they feel like proletarians, we would wish to point out the good feeling that kids feel being free from a restrictive, institutionalised 'education' system that can, at best, only teach the following: **BE GOOD TO CAPITALISM AND IT MIGHT BE GOOD TO YOU.** This is the 'fuzziness' that we are trying to analyse - not for the sake of uniting 2 class enemies but for the sake of developing the class-becoming-for-itself.

Finally I will add more comments about your pamphlet 'Why the Revolutionaries Have Failed' and comment upon the 2 reviews of the pamphlet. It is good to see you recognise the function and identity of the state, however I think it is important to smash it by both physically refusing it as proletarians and by making demands on the functionaries of the state in every possible way to reveal their true nature. Thus we would not just hold up banners that proclaim 'Behold Your Future Executioners' but we would cut through the bullshit that makes certain functionaries see themselves as doing a necessary job. Later you suggest that capitalism

is "only an economic system... it cannot be touched...working class people cannot get hold of it and kick the shit out of it" and that "strikes are therefore part of the struggle against a class of people, not specifically and primarily against an economic system". I would argue that communist class consciousness involves the understanding of the capitalist economic system and its outright refusal. I know you do not suggest this, but to specify attacking the people could imply that we would make better, fairer managers of capitalism. As we begin to understand the system of capitalism we understand the totality of the system that prevents us from understanding capitalism. Again, this enables us to place demands and physical force on the middle class.

Regarding the review in Organise! #28 I would suggest that it is favourable and some points were promised to be taken on board by the ACF. The disagreements regarding the middle class are quite vague - on the one hand the ACF seem to agree that the middle class is an enemy, but on the other hand they seem keen to impress the existence of the ruling class as some kind of justification for capitalism. As I said earlier, I am not interested in drawing up clear lines of assault to enable us to go out and destroy our 'proper' class enemy, I am interested in capitalism as a system of social relations that helps to maintain and disguise the economic rip off it performs. I would suggest here to obtain a copy of 'Whatever' (from Folder 19, 28 Silver Street, Reading, RG1 2ST) : it contains an article called "Class Analysis for Anti-Capitalist Struggle" which provides a better statement of this kind of approach.

As for the Echanges review (issue 70/71) then there are a few more points to consider. Echanges immediately pin you down on your strict definition of the role of revolutionaries - something that they are strongly against. They see your interest in the middle class as merely a way of presenting to revolutionaries the new (and correct) targets - ie the middle class. I do not wish to be drawn here on Echanges ideas of organisation, function, politicisation, etc but I am sympathetic to the view that we cannot just define a middle class and then start telling people to bump them off. It is a pity that Echanges do not develop the dynamics of this dominating of the middle class to back up their arguments - this is something I have tried to do. And in doing this I hope to understand how the (middle class) structures exist to prevent workers learning the 'decisive points of the opposition between labour and capital' (ie I am with Echanges on the idea that it is wrong to tell people who their real enemies are but I also recognise that these enemies are the worst types in that they appear as your friends - the democratic system functions in such a way).

So there is much for us to discuss. I feel that CH can only move forward with further criticism and discussion and I appreciate your ruthlessness in identifying our differences rather than looking for total agreement.

3. A letter from SPLAT : 15/1/96

Dear CH, There are a number of things in your letter about which we appear to agree. These, unfortunately, are somewhat negated by the kind of statements with which we don't agree. We

shall take only those which, at this stage of the discussion, we feel need comments.

You say "It appears that you wish to search out a perfect model by considering all of the middle class as the class enemy, and of including the idea of a ruling class as merely a top level of this class. I am also interested in such a model of society, but I don't see it as being so simply stated in that we have a clear enemy who will always act as our enemy and so will need to be physically destroyed on a one by one basis."

You go on to justify this by saying that the middle class do see the oppressive nature of their behaviour, and this is something that the system tries to hide.

We are not searching out models, perfect or otherwise. We make it quite clear that the middle class as a whole is our enemy. We are fully aware that they have a hierarchical structure - every society in history that had a dominant minority had a hierarchical structure throughout. (We accept that your article in CH3 - which provoked our initial response - shows you are more or less aware of this. Incidentally, this article was just on 6000 words and contained quite a lot of waffle... the worthwhile points could have been made in little more than a quarter of that number.) We are just not interested in seeking out a particular 'level' of this hierarchy as you apparently still are. It should be crystal clear to genuine class-struggle revolutionaries that there is not a section/level which constitutes a third class - the so called ruling/capitalist/boss class - and no-one, certainly not any of the failed 'revolutionaries', has been able to reasonably argue, let alone prove, that there is.

The middle class as a whole will never act as anything but our enemy. There are a tiny few among them who realise that their class dominates the working class and all that that entails, and may honestly fight to the end to change it. There are also a few 'liberals' amongst them who feel some sort of guilt and may see the oppressive nature of their class's behaviour, but these latter are not worth having as allies because not only are they too few, but they will cease to be allies when the crunch comes. (there are already examples of this - students, to name but one.)

At this stage in your letter, we were beginning to wonder how - and why! - you've managed not to understand the main points of our pamphlet.)

Later in your letter, you return to the Aunt Sally about destroying the middle class "on a one by one basis" with the statement that "we just can't start telling people to bump them off." What the hell was the point of implying that we said anything like this?

We are not going to tell working class people what to do! Once a sufficient number are aware of the class of the class of people who are keeping them down and begin to do something effective to change it, the middle class will not just sit there. Do we really need to spell out how things would then develop?

You said quite a bit about the capitalist economic system. Why? Hundreds of books and theses have been written about it, all with

differing views - and were not going to join in this constipated intellectualism.

We believe we can easily show how the middle class's economic system maintains their dominance - as indeed it is designed to do. A number of working class people already see this. There is no way that working class people could believe that we are, as you suggest, implying "that we would make better, fairer managers of capitalism". A real revolution by the working class will end the capitalist system very quickly.

Your position on teachers is another example of some pretty woolly thinking. Your letter states: "You say never to support teachers. I would say to stress their oppressive roles and to get them to fight for revolutionary education. Thus, when they are on the picket lines fighting for more pay, and they feel like proletarians, we would wish to point out the good feeling that kids feel being free from a restrictive, institutionalised education system that can, at best, only teach the ethic - be good to capitalism and it might be good to you. This is the fuzzyness that I am trying to analyse - not for the sake of uniting our 2 classes, but for the sake of developing the class becoming for itself." (We don't understand these last two sentences.)

Well, of course, we say never support them; and we mean never! We think you would agree that we should never support the police in any of their campaigns. Teachers play a role that is worth that of the police. It is they who implement the 'education system'. Obviously, there is much more to be said about 'education' than the short piece in our pamphlet, but you should at least have tried to deal with that before saying we are wrong about teachers and that there are times when we should support them and "get them to fight for revolutionary education".

There are two main things that must be said about this last statement, the first of which needs to be prefaced by the observation that either you are ignorant about the role of teachers, or (as we suspect) there are teachers among your group and this blinds you to the reality.

Middle class people (including that insignificant and minute number of working class people) become teachers for various reasons, none of which has the remotest connection with revolutionary class-struggle politics. Few, if any, go into the education business thinking that it is about 'an extension and complement to the voluntary acquisition of knowledge through learning'. The techniques of teacher training colleges soon put paid to any such silly notions. As we've said elsewhere, even if any of them did start their careers believing that schools should be run in a totally different way, a way that would expose to the working class children how they are an oppressed class, how that situation could be changed, then attempted to put this belief into practice, they would quickly find themselves facing the fury of the 'educational authorities'. These 'educationalists' would accuse them of crimes they themselves have always been guilty of, like 'rape of innocent children's minds' and so on - such teachers would then be out on their nuses before you could say Gillian Shepherd. The 'educationalists' still don't feel they have a tight enough grip on the minds of the working class children, eg the current debate between teachers, the church, business and

government about how to indoctrinate children even more effectively with their crap ideas on right and wrong...

The second and most obvious thing to be said about your position on teachers is that 'revolutionary education' depends on the revolution having begun. To advocate supporting teachers and trying to persuade them to accept the importance of revolution by the working class themselves, alone, is destructive, hence counter-revolutionary, at a time when all our energy and activity must be concentrated on persuading working class people that it is the essential and only way of freeing themselves from the domination of the middle class. This is the crux. Our main priority has always been and will continue to be to stress that working class people can only stand a chance of freeing themselves when a substantial number of them clearly see that it is the middle class - not individual members of the middle class - but the middle class as a whole who are stopping them.

It is only then that we can begin the gigantic task of showing our working class sisters and brothers a possible way forward. All political 'revolutionary' theories to date which claim to be concerned with the 'emancipation of the working class' have totally failed. We must throw them out together with all the middle class 'revolutionaries' who still put them forward because for them there is no alternative.

We must find new ways - new ways based on recognition of the fact that the middle class is the dominating class and therefore our enemy.

Best wishes
Mark and Andy (SPLAT)

(Reply sent but not reprinted here)

Internal Bleeding - Part Two

After Liverpool...

The method of analysis that has been called 'Potential for Extension' proves possibly most useful here. The diversity of opinions on issues such as the road struggles indicates that such a method is not a simple step by step procedure to follow - though it is certainly better than throwing the whole thing out. These ideas need to be glued together in a better fashion than I achieve here.

As revolutionaries we have a task to understand society - primarily the capitalist aspects of society (marxist method) and to some extent the actions, defamations, forces, etc on what we could call the social fabric (this is loosely the anarchist method). Problems of overemphasising this understanding of the social fabric are both elaborated in and exemplified in past work in CH. What can occur are moralist 'exclusion principles' such as shown in the animal rights movement, or impossibilist ideas such as devoting a fixed image of society and declaring war now based on this image (all teachers are bastards because they must be conscious of what they are doing - could the same be said of all Sun

readers? - you know how these arguments go). These exclusion and impossibilist ideas are often intertwined - although both are contrary to the approach of 'potential for extension'.

So it is useful to begin a discussion on struggle (or perceived struggle) with an analysis of capitalism's development (of course for the astute autonomists then this capitalist development is a function of our previous struggles). To then discuss the society it is impacting upon creates some problems. For instance, I mentioned that I didn't agree with the idea that road struggles proves an expanded working class. I agree that it does create an expanded working class though what is immediately important for the potential for extension is how this expanded working class sees themselves in relationship to the system. Thus to say capitalist development makes you, you and you working class might not be useful in extending the struggle. It makes the issue of class the primary issue and the issue of (say) the road the secondary issue - when it would appear that the road is the primary issue to those concerned with the struggle.

I still feel it is useful to present the apparent primary issue (the road) as coming directly from capitalist expansion and re-shaping. This provides a tangible link which can then be linked back to the real issue of class. I also still feel that this is open to recuperation simply because capitalism is difficult to visualise and certainly 'frightening' to confront - and that it also exploits this fact and offers itself open to certain compromises. These tendencies are counteracted by the community that the struggle engages. This is another factor we should analyse when we measure the potential for extension. A community can function as a means to support each other, to break down the mystifications and totality of capitalism, and to talk out a vision of what is possible (the communist society).

My preoccupations with the systems of the status quo and the 'brake' on class struggle are perhaps indicative of a fascination of a certain anarchist approach - it is how they fit into the more important analysis of potential for extension that is important. And it is here where they lose their static quality (all that is solid melts into air...).

It is worth mentioning the views of those who 'oppose' struggles such as road protesting (opposition can vary from refusing to support them, refusing to discuss and propagandise them, theoretically arguing against them in terms of their lack of theory, misplaced theory, etc). Some communists I know rightly point out that the decision to invest in a road policy has its roots in smashing large sectors that, if strikes occur, can cripple production, and that a switch to a road policy has possible effects that are now being realised. Thus road protesting is in fact a base indicator for capitalist policy and all that will happen is that the government will rethink their policies. So the money generated from the huge private civil engineering companies will be handed over to the soon to be privatised railways. This point cannot be argued against, though it is dangerous to develop a simplified methodology for potential for extension based solely on how revolutionaries perceive that any struggle attacks the economy. There exists tender balances between reasons for working, quality of life, social desires, insecurity, isolation, etc etc.

LAST FEW DAYS

DOWN WITH BOREDOM! DOWN WITH SURVIVAL!

HARD DRUGS FOR A SICK SOCIETY?

When Leah Betts opted for a chemical high and popped an ecstasy tablet her body was unprepared for the substances entering her living systems. This was because ecstasy - a designer drug - can be cut with numerous other substances - anything from aquarium cleaner to dog worming tablets. It was these poisons that began to kick in to the fluids of her body, and induce her comatose state. Make no mistake, we are talking in terms of market forces, of capitalism, here. This is what killed Leah Betts.

Consider, a designer drug is designed for a designed market, in this case the burgeoning rave scene. This is the same as a market researcher pushing a product on a recognised market - a scam which occurs particularly when young children are the market - anything from Sonic the Hedgehog pasta shapes to Lion King fizzy pop.

Because a designer drug can be manufactured in a laboratory and treated as any other product (to buy and sell) then it can exist to make money for people. This is the story of our lives - we work for a living and the bosses make their living by ripping us off whenever and wherever they can. This always includes making us work harder for less money and diluting our lives with diluted products. If the ecstasy can be cut with some common or garden chemical then it means more money for those co-

ntrolling the drugs flow. When heroin was cut with baking powder a highly addictive product was inadvertently created. When designers at Nintendo create a game like Tetris that keeps kids glued to a monitor screen all night they are hailed as heroes. When designers at Birds Eye perfect the ultimate microwaveable concoction of addictive additives, flavour enhancers and colourings they are labelled as entrepreneurs. The drug culture is no different.

We should also make the point that Leah Betts' father, being an ex-copper, should know all about the ruthlessness of drugs dealings - I mean, it was his gang that controlled the Stoke Newington drugs. We can't mourn the death of Leah Betts as a special case. She was a victim of the brutal system of capitalism. Of course there are things we could do about it...

Drugs, drugs, drugs... what can we say? The world we envisage is a world based on free association and cooperation. Money will exist only as a curious artefact in our free museums. Of course we cannot deny that people will wish to experiment with their bodies and minds - and they should be free to do this. The strong sense of community that would exist would imply that support was always available for those pushing their limits, and anti-social behaviour resulting from drug use would not be tolerated.

Drugs, drugs, drugs... We would like to suggest a few more addictive and dangerous drugs: television, celebrities, voting, Mcadowhall, nationalism, painkillers, tranquilisers. The list could go on.

The furore about Leah Betts' death is also a direct attack on the rave scene. Concerned parents - is your son or daughter showing signs of raving? If the answer is YES then they could soon be lying in a coma. What bugs the authorities about the rave scene is that it is bringing people together again to enjoy themselves and define and create their own entertainment. That this then spreads to things like rampant pirate radio and home produced music bugs them even further. Of course the rave scene is full of unscrupulous characters - from the club owners who turn off the water taps and pump up the radiators, the DJ's who present themselves as the new celebrities, to the ethics of designer drugs that strive to create a trip where you can 'come down' the next morning and be prepared to face another day of drudgery at work with no serious side effects.

We only have to look at how the authorities smashed the football community when they used the pretense of Hillsborough to end terracing. Standing on a terrace singing and shouting is a good, rowdy activity... people come together and ideas are discussed, seeds of revolt are nurtured. Now that has passed. We are asked to sit in a bucket seat and enjoy the entertainment. What happens is that people then demand their 'moneys worth' from what they see on the pitch, and this is impossible to fulfil. Pressure is exerted on chairmen, managers, players to come up with the goods or face the prospect of empty stadia. In the meantime we are presented with new activities to fill the void... buy a satellite dish, join a fantasy football league, play on your Nintendo. So long as you do it all on your own...

Act 4 : Tearing Up the Plans

The concept of analysing the potential for extension of a struggle can provide a key back into a critical analysis of the various revolutionary movements. Taken as a stock term 'potential for extension' can seem quite logical, but it demands that a set of practices and procedures be followed to enable 'potential for extension' to be measured. I would suggest that those who hold revolutionary ideas have attempted to fuse together three basic categories:

- (i) An analysis and understanding of 'society'
- (ii) A vision of a future society
- (iii) A strategy and an understanding to enable (i)-(ii) dynamic to occur.

Of course it would be clever to suggest that the analysis of potential for extension is in fact part of the strategy (iii), but this sort of obvious logic is like someone tying a knot in their shoelaces in order to remind themselves to tie up their shoelaces. However, it could be noted that certain groups do hold on to that category (iii) - ie what constitutes activity - can be nothing more than understanding, communicating and commenting on certain struggles based on their potential for extension. But this does not strictly defy this loose model because it is necessary to be selective about which struggles are to be examined, and this is not based on their 'physical' criteria such as mass of people involved, moreover it is based on a grounded political analysis of society (and often a rejection of other interpretations).

Though for many revolutionary groups, the contents of (iii) are an examination of the potential for extension and also certain practices beyond this examination. I could not begin to suggest that even the most diehard activist eschew a critical examination of the potential for extension to such an extent that they actively support anything that moves.

So potential for extension involves looking at (i) (ii) and (iii) - how is this attempted across the milieu? Firstly we can note that it is not strictly a 'molecular' model that exists as (i) (ii) and (iii). Each section overlaps and as it changes so does it change its other sections. This normally occurs from (i) (analysis) outwards - ie a shift in reality, or understanding the dynamics of society, creates a rethink in either (ii) (vision), (iii) (strategy) or both. Of course, certain groups refuse to change from their political model - which is normally expressed by this activity - and so refuse to take account of changes in reality, behaviour, dynamics, etc... or worse than that they bend round an interpretation of certain real changes to fit their ideology.

But in general the analysis, vision and process of change are all highly interlinked. Concepts such as trade union consciousness or a nightmare fetish of human nature (based upon a partial analysis of our current alienated existence without understanding the nature of alienation) create visions that demand a society regulated by order, money, wage labour or state ownership, and so this demands a process of centralisation and discipline, or even the super-convenience of anarcho-syndicalism.

In this section I will look at how some sections of the revolutionary milieu examine society and so take up their plans of action. This involves a closer study of concepts (i), (ii) and (iii). The analysis of society (i) draws itself from the interpretation of the history of theory and practice (such as marxism) and the individuals' own experience and ideas of the proletarianisation process. Revolutionary individuals are drawn into the milieu and find a model that best fits their interpretations. Certain groups are responsive to individuals' input and allow their 'group' understanding of society (and so perhaps their physical activity) to be reconsidered and reformed. Other groups harden their interpretations of society and become critical of those who pander to the individual. This hardening of the understanding of society is traditionally achieved along the lines of Marx's economic analysis of capitalism whereby he concentrates on the 'rarefied' process capitalism and its benefits to the capitalist class (ie crisis theory emerges). All the while the individual is in the cross-fire of all the other groups reaching out with their own analyses and understandings of society - in fact certain groups gain the virus of expansionism a develop a strategy of simply appealing to other individuals (what usually occurs is a fascination with merchandising, posters, stickers and slogans and a mentality in the group that devotes most of its time to discussing new merchandising, posters, stickers and slogans...). This cross-fire can turn into a great deal of negativity whereby groups define themselves as not so and so, or not the same as so and so.

The traditional analysis of society has been along the lines of the workplace, as this seems to fall in line with Marx's body of thought and present itself with a deal of ease to the revolutionary groups in terms of concentrating on the struggle (ie examining the potential for extension and finding it always positive) and putting forward a process (trade unionism, syndicalism) and a vision (work for less hours in the same job/factory). The shift away from this has always struggled to surface (its recent history is covered in CH #1). That Marx talked about alienation is often ignored by many marxist revolutionaries (or it is treated as a curable outbreak of workers' rash) but the screwed up state of our minds does now concern many revolutionary groups. This then ties in with the 'new struggles' etc as these represent capitalists trying to get away with as much as possible by playing out its 'crisis' in the theatre of our alienated minds. Of course some groups refuse all of this and refuse to devote any thought to issues such as environmentalism arguing that they are not on the proletarian terrain. For instance the road struggles are ignored because they do not attack the reality of capitalism's existence, and quite often demand reforms that guarantee the smoothing over of capitalism's running. An attack on the workplace is supported because - somehow - the labour/capital relationship is attacked, even though most workplace struggles concerning wages and conditions are inherently reformist etc. What is important is to consider the subjective forces and conditions of capitalism, and how people are re-assessing their situation in any struggle, and how each particular struggle tries to control the individuals' re-assessment of their situation in respect to the particular struggle.

An analysis of society has been crucial to my thinking and to many extents this is why this magazine existed. There is evidence that similar analyses are emerging from other magazines that seemed keen to steer away from such areas - articles on class composition and changing nature of workplaces etc - however magazines such as Here And Now which devote themselves to a full blown examination of society without preceding it with a particular 'correct' viewpoint can struggle to gain acceptance in the revolutionary milieu. In the next sections I will refer to the meta-politics of anarheim which derive from a certain understanding of society. It would seem obvious to me that a better understanding of modern society is required in regard to situations and efforts to create situations where proletarians can begin to create and fulfil their own desires. This involves understanding the issues of community, culture, play, etc and using them to buttress the struggle in and against the workplace.

Examining the struggle for potential for extension in terms of a vision is fairly straightforward. This involves assessing whether parts towards a certain vision are consciously expressed, or whether these parts can be illuminated within the struggle by the influence of the revolutionary group. Many struggles and actions express a more communistic manner of living though on their own these are not necessarily revolutionary. In most cases it depends on the factors at work that forced those who are manifesting this new way of living into their actions. This can involve a degree of guilt or unrestrained individual greed etc. Though positive strands are often to be found - for instance there is a new idea of wealth based on experience and appreciation of nature within the road protesting milieu - whether we call this anti-consumerism, primitivism, or whatever is beside the point. The problem with extricating a vision in terms of positive potential for extension is its openness to reform. This can lead to situations where workplace struggle is stated as the only visible struggle even though it is often presented totally devoid of a vision (perhaps a little less sweat and grime is promised), and where struggles such as environmentalism are classed as secondary, etc. The rich visions that are fostered within the ecology and environmental movements are what draws in proletarians - it is translating such visions to the relevance of refusing wage labour and capitalist production that provides the difficult task.

How potential for extension ties in with strategy is normally based on a negative factor which suggests that potential for extension doesn't exist because the struggle is open to reformism. Thus reformism here implies a strategy of capitalism (usually the caring left wing of capitalism) will be presented and more than likely accepted by proletarians encountering and entering the struggle. This can range from political pressure / campaign groups to trade unions. The possibility of non-workplace struggles evolving into workers councils etc is pretty far fetched, but what could be described as positive is the process whereby involved proletarians begin to reinterpret society and gain an understanding of, and capability to, change this society. To tap into this potential implies a balancing of forces between both how critical / uncritical you are of a movement, and how you try to expand it as a movement (in view of the fact that you will be

swelling the ranks and power of the reformist movement...)

Act 5 : The Emergence of Meta Politics

Differences in strategy and vision emerge through differences in interpreting society. There is always a tension between using a body of theory (marxism) to use as a guide when interpreting society and between applying an anything goes approach. Of course the degree of rigour with which theories such as marxism can be used can greatly vary (as described in the previous section). Certain bodies of theory have played an emphasis on further analysis of society, and grounded themselves new practices - we can think of situationism with its enquiry into 'the spectacle' and its activity of exposing society for the sham it is, creating unmediated situations or exposing mediated situations. Situationistic practices remain popular mainly because they are tolerated at a certain academic / avant garde level of society and they are more often than not recorded or documented to scrape the participants out of a particular fix (boredom with the revolutionary movement, impending poverty...). Situationism (this term is used because of the self-privileging the situationists gave themselves for their actions specific to their analysis of their time) is still a fairly loose ideology, and it is vaguely attached to the anarchist movement, which is now examined further.

At the start of this long trawl I noted how my work received a hostile reception with some individuals in the anarchist scene. This then gave rise to some ideas on moralism and an aversion to practical activity that develops a degree of hostility to others not so practically minded etc. Critiques of the anarchist movement have recently re-appeared with the publication of Green Apocalypse, the labelling of the Sucking Pit, and the stock slogan "If anarchists can tolerate each other they can tolerate anybody". All of this is rooted to a lack of a coherent body of theory and a lowest common denominator of just analysing society as it appears and taking whatever action seems necessary. It was earlier noted that a body of theory can be used ideologically to strongly interpret reality or it can be used to shape an analysis of society. That some anarchists use a theory to shape their views (eg class struggle) only makes matters worse for internal wranglings because an equal number of anarchists have a vehement hatred of marxism. As anarchism is increasingly driven by its practical output conflict can emerge with what constitutes correct practice and what makes incorrect practice (where incorrect practice is criticised not because of its incorrectness but because it constitutes, in the eyes of the other, inactivity - the highest sin).

An intensive and unmediated analysis of society can also create anarchist meta-politics - this be a new term but its manifestation is familiar to those around the anarchist milieu. I draw this analysis from my own experiences - again noting that it is not a specific of anarchism (if such a thing could exist) but something that is often expressed by tolerated individuals. As society is understood more and more for what it is in the present (how it appears, how one interacts with it) and less and less in terms of its history (marxism) it is possible to discover all the foul

power relationships and malformed ideas that exist within our class. Vegetarianism is the prime example of meta-politics. Here a microscopic aspect of society (animal eating) is plucked out offers a degree of discomfort to those 'fully informed' and so a 'political' stance is made - I will not eat meat, wear leather, etc. Politics becomes meta-politics when one makes it their politics to judge others on how they interpret ones original politics. What is meant here is the ritual hating of others who (for instance) eat meat. This arises from this intensive and unmediated (by theory such as marxism) analysis of society which is often inseparable from anarchism. There are other ways this manifests itself.

Act 6 : All That is Solid...

Again I am concerning myself with something that is common to the anarchist movement, a trait that I have been guilty of exhibiting myself in previous issues of this journal. This occurs when individuals gain an understanding of society as it is and partition blame on certain sections for what they do or don't do. This is the heart of the discussion on teachers / social workers as being class enemies or whatever. For such a strong analysis on what appears to be the dynamics of this society there exists an incredible lack of understanding of the dynamics of the struggle to a new society.

Recently a comrade has been arguing about the evil roles of teachers, social workers, etc in a discussion on class struggle. He appeared to take such arguments to their logical conclusions when he talked about how proud he was to have never done a days work. This suggests that all people are stupid who can't see through the system and resist it. The argument about teachers and social workers concerns the former's role in consciously preparing kids for capitalism and the latter's role in patching up the cracks in society (indeed a similar critique should then be applied to all charity work such as with the homeless and indeed even to local anarchist groups which, contrary to views peddled by the trots, consist of poor and angry working class people who come together partly to get involved in initiating things that will improve their lives in the here and now - of course our comrade who has never worked a day in his life does not need such things).

The class role of those shaping and restraining the working class has a history of argument, and most analysis (including mine) neglects to consider the dynamics of a possible struggle in terms of the potential for starting, and its expansion. Earlier I gave my gut reactions to the SWP and their teacher-like behaviour, this is something I stand by... it concerns power relationships and responsibility. Marx and Engels wrote down something about the ideas of the ruling class being the ruling ideas, and that the control over material production (and material producers such as factory labourers) exists concurrently with the control over mental production (and mental producers such as teachers). This is enough for astute marxists (many of whom are teachers or academics) to justify themselves as working class. The 'historical materialism' used by other revolutionaries to counteract this notion is often the experience they have gone through at school.

However it is usually expressed that teachers should have knowledge of what they are actually doing (fucking up our questioning of society) because they are considered as somehow more intelligent. If this were not the case then it could be argued that everyone who perpetuates reformist or counter revolutionary views has no place in 'our class' or is a 'class enemy' etc. And this would include most workers who read the daily rags and slog their guts out for survival in the (materially productive) factories (of course this attitude is common for the revolutionary who has never worked a day in their lives). we can then get to the situation where we are condemning those who are not revolutionary and should be. Thus we could argue that teachers (as labourers of mental production) should rebel against the nature of production and we should not support them when they rebel against the terms of their exploitation. But we are willing to support labourers of material production rebelling against the terms of their exploitation and try to, somehow, attempt to aim for the revolutionary position of workers rebelling against production out of their own (revolutionary) desires... again there seems to be a divide based on 'intelligence'. Of course, syndicalists and hard core crisis theorists have no qualms about people rebelling against the terms of their exploitation without questioning its nature.

The debate on teachers can be read about here in the letters section, or in the document discussed in the article on class (following this) or in the dissolution statement of the Wildcat groups a few years ago. There is much to be said, but I will try to concentrate on examining potential for struggle (from a low struggle startpoint) and examining my own experience in the education system.

(1) Potential for Struggle

It has been favourable to look towards workers in struggle for the revolutionary spark. Various analyses exist that range from trade union consciousness theory to the increase in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and various 'endpoints' have been attempted to be transgressed through notions of 'but it is only a struggle for a fairer rate of exploitation' (see documents later). What is immediate is that when workers decide to struggle they begin to shed alot of the baggage that forces us into a particular perception of our world - they question many things, are more open in communication, and through these two processes begin to construct a revolutionary vision and praxis (thus notions of trade union consciousness and ideas of trade unionism in our increasingly fractured and saturated world are counter revolutionary). Some comrades wrote of the ruptures describing the levels of communication on the street...

We cannot fool ourselves that big workplace struggles are going to occur on the scale of the last miners strike. The idea of a big section in industry striking is that there is the greater effect of the impact on the economy, on how other workers are 'dragged' into the struggle, how worse conditions are imposed on other workers etc. Though this is an important point, it is one that appeals to the trade union consciousness school of thought who tend to ignore the subjective conditions of the proletariat and their attempts to shed these imposed subjective conditions. The reorganisation of capitalist

industry, the terrain of community, and the further increase in individualised lifestyle is capitalists attempt to end the big struggles of the past. Various revolutionaries agree to various parts of this idea... for instance the documents 'Technology and Class' and 'The City, Social Control, and the Local State' in Subversion #17 give indications of what we could be considering within these capitalist concepts. However, sporadic workplace struggle will still occur and, it is argued, this struggle puts the working class on the spot as both the producers of wealth in our world and as the exploited class. Of course, such struggles such as against road developments put capitalism in the spotlight in terms of its effects but those who argue that these struggles go nowhere do so on the basis of their susceptibility to reformism. It is hard to make distinctions on the basis of this 'susceptibility to reformism' as all struggles are bombarded with reformist ideas - capitalism won't just roll over and die! There is the argument that workplace struggles (beyond the pull of trade unionism) are less open to reformism and always liable to spread - though this excitement can sometimes be generated on the pretence that somehow our working class will unconsciously make a revolution by pushing capitalism into crisis.

This potential for struggle, and then potential for expansion, is how we should approach all our analyses. The literature I mentioned earlier suggests that these potentials are under assault and it is useful to consider the education industry here. Teachers (etc) in Sheffield are often on strike or threatening strike... this is mainly over insufficient pay increases. In some ways, the amount of pay a worker gets is irrelevant - what matters to them is how their pay increases with the overall increase in the cost of reproducing their perceived standards of living. (Obviously I am not talking about the low paid 'unskilled' or unemployed workers who are always struggling to maintain any standard of living). For instance lecturers where I work enjoy a good standard of living and a good salary, to such an extent that cuts in education costs are needed. However, these lecturers (as do other workers) build up their lives to match their financial situation (expensive and long summer holidays, skiing at Easter or Xmas, decent car, home computers on the internet etc) and so feel 'the pinch' as much as anyone else failing to maintain a standard of living through an insufficient pay increase. When a pay rise is granted other areas are cut back on such as increasing the class size and diminishing the resources budgets. Traditionally education workers strikes have remained isolated - this is perhaps because they are not part of the jigsaw of dependency - and are generally settled after a week or so of negotiating or unrest. Of course it could be put forward that the low social standing that teachers have in the working class (historical materialism again!) prevents their potential for extension (as was not the case with health workers).

The purist argument about the total counter-revolutionary nature of teachers is based upon the premise that teachers do not and cannot challenge their role as 'soft cops' (ie controllers and conditioners of our class). I would think that this would be the case in the first instance as though teachers may struggle for a wage that matches their expectations they are also aware that one false move may result in their sacking such is the current situation. This can create a

delicate dilemma for the teacher who wants to rebel against his/her role as soft cop because they feel they are best placed to 'intervene' but also are scared shitless of losing their job through poor class discipline or results. Thus, as a section of the working class I do not think that teachers' workplace struggle has much potential for extension. However, if a different struggle blows up and spreads across the world to other wildcat strikes, riots, etc then what is necessary is to look at how other sections of our class will contribute. Here teachers have an important role... whilst the emphasis would be on discipline and control the possibility would be with communicating what is really happening (as many kids 'see' the world and its limitations through their education). I will leave the argument at this point as it becomes too much speculation... both the documents discussing teachers mentioned earlier and the article in Whatever comment on actualities and speculations.

(ii) Powers Repression and Compensation

Not too much can be said here, only enough to emphasise the need to realise the power relations that permeate our society. That they will no doubt polarise in the event of an extensive struggle suggests that these analytical pursuits are nothing but a flight of fancy. To consider class as social power is a useful argument, however the existence of such a system of social power is not as simple as first considered. There could be a case of distinguishing between those holding real power and those who either pretend to hold real power or hold this power on behalf of someone else. Also those who remain powerless do not necessarily struggle to destroy this power system, and remain open to the illusions of attaining some power etc, whilst those who have to exercise some power may feel 'uncomfortable' with it. This was the nature of the text in the argument 'How the other half lives...', though that seems to have been misunderstood.

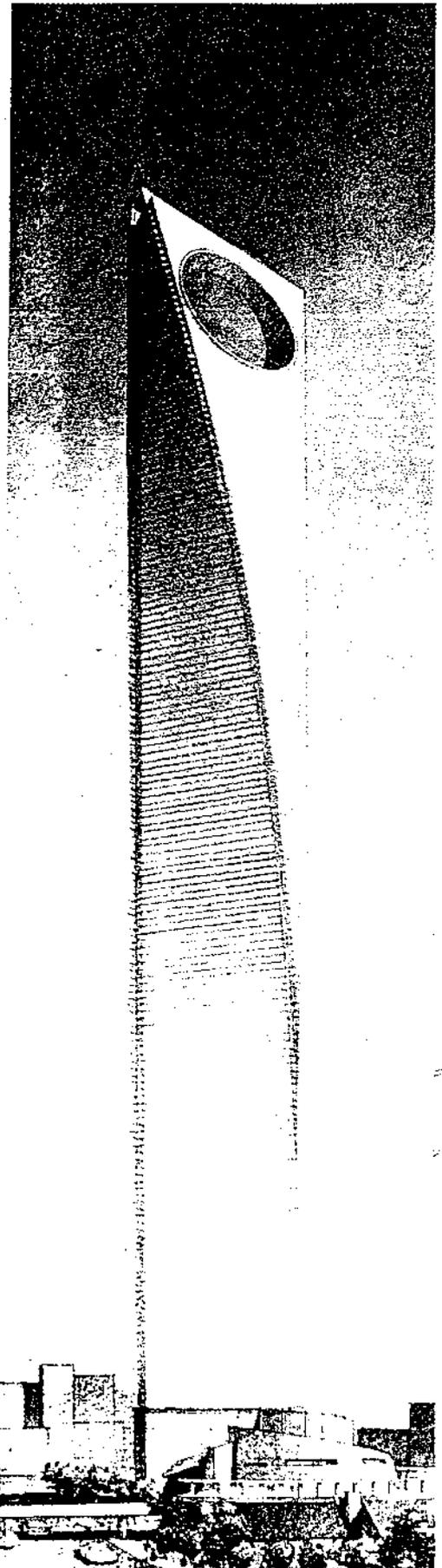
[Like the screen at the end of the movie Two Lane Blacktop a burning hole appears representing that the film has nowhere to go but to contribute towards its own destruction]

CAST-

Thanks for support and communication
 - Paul Armchair, (the late) Proletarian
 Gob, Mark / Andy / SPLAT, Mike +
 Steve Here and Now, Fabian and
 Stewart, N At Aufheben, Mark S.,
 comrades in Sheffield Anarchist Group.

A joint collaboration between the
 International Communist Conspiracy
 and the Communist Wormhole
 Organism.

God bless you all, motherfuckers.



CLASS THEORY FOR BEGINNERS : Whose right, whose wrong and whose checking for spelling mistakes?

The Reality of Conflict....

This article is written for 2 basic reasons. Firstly to deal with accusations that I have a certain theory (ie the wrong theory) on class, and secondly to examine whether a 'most correct' theory can exist or should be chased like a holy grail. It begins with a review of a good article on class that I find useful in both its honesty and limitations.

What I have said on class appears in certain articles in Communist Headache #1-3 and may leak through in other articles or flyers I have produced, particularly as I have considered myself within the class struggle tradition during my politically active years (even if I didn't know what this meant!). Class struggle was touched upon in volume 1, and while I was writing this I had been putting together a critique of workerism that had arisen from my 'internal' disagreements with the various revolutionary groups I had encountered and had developed into a discussion on class (... this document may yet surface in some form, though it informs this article in an embryonic capacity). In the meantime I churned out the article 'How the other half lives...' in volume 3 which was driven by an urge (gut reaction?) to investigate how those in society whose job it is to regulate, control and reinforce anti-communist conditions are likely to feel grieved and act out this grievance. I will return to a discussion of 'How the other half lives...' in a future piece I am writing but I would like it to be considered as an attack on the reformist conditions that exist to prevent class consciousness developing (in the specific case it was a discussion on LETS but it could be trade unionism etc). As it was, I was accused of developing some kind of well defined 3 class theory (akin to Class War in their book Unfinished business) and at the same time accused of demolishing this model. Obviously it is a subject open to interpretation. The original intentions to illustrate forces operated to maintain conditions favourable to exploitation, domination, alienation, mystification, etc were either ignored or criticised (see letters exchange elsewhere in this issue).

A recap. This system we call capitalism has at its heart the desire to create more profit - there are those who thoroughly believe in the system and simultaneously surf the wave of profit making. In the classic analysis this meant the owners of the means of production, but now it includes many others such as the hangers on from the top echelons of the finance industry. The system of capitalism demands a structuring of society to make it run more smoothly - this is the class system - this is where we, as proletarian revolutionaries, have been unable to hold in our utter distaste at what passes for a worthwhile life. Communism exists as our only alternative to capitalism - as communists we realise that exchange and wage labour need to be abolished

for ever (not by 'outlawing' them but by developing communist consciousness). We do not pretend that organisation and planning will not be crucial - in fact we relish the challenge of taking part in such a process. But we live in a capitalist system that has imposed a class system firstly as a necessity and now also as an accessory to its survival. This class system is kept in place by many forces, like the thousands of intersecting ropes that kept Gulliver tied down when he awoke washed up on the beach in Lilliput. Furthermore, these forces are not all obvious, so they cannot be slashed like ropes holding us down. People are made to feel that the ropes are part of themselves, and cutting them away would be like dismembering a limb or slashing our skin. If we can be made to submit our wills to capitalism then that is a great victory for capitalists. If 'normality' is hammered into our heads as something NEVER EVER to stray away from then this is another victory. If we can substitute our desires, creativity and needs into craving after an endless stream of sterilised images then this is yet another victory. And if we, as revolutionaries, can satisfy ourselves with a 'nice', 'compact' and 'correct' analysis of class then this is perhaps the saddest victory of all.

I will consider in detail the article 'Class Analysis, for Anti-Capitalist Struggle'. The article is a straight forward, well written 10 page polemic - I suggest it is read by anyone attempting to read this article (copies from ETV, F19, 28 Silver street, Reading, RG1 2ST).

I am in immediate agreement with the first few lines, especially "the background of all present radical struggles is an attack on the social relation of capital, whether or not this is realised by the participants" and that the author insists on extending this "understanding of class relationships" into practical activity. We are then taken back to the origins of the idea of truth, as it is suggested that "minor disagreements on class analysis... can turn out... to rely on disagreements on the nature of truth". It is argued that truth is then replaced by science which can bend to the will of capitalism by both re-interpreting society and justifying its re-interpretation. The author then makes an example of how sociology is used to accurately group society and so enable certain marked sectors to be sold certain ideas and so re-inforce their sociological grouping. I would agree that this process is a major part of capitalist structuring but I feel that these imposed sociological groupings need to be understood if we are to maximise our class struggle. Because we are interested in the class-for-itself as the communist conscious class, and that this makes such sociological class analysis a nonsense, it does not mean we can ignore these capitalist imposed groupings. This is what I tried to do with the article in CH#3. The author takes a staunch anti-sociological stance but then insists on basing theory on "the active relationship of different groups, with each other, and with capitalism and the struggle against it". I would certainly agree with this method, but I wouldn't consider it anti-sociological by a long shot.

Class in history is then traced as a common thread of denied and alienated social power, and the form that this takes is such that it best facilitates the continuation of capitalism. So we have slavery, peasantry, and the structure we live under now (which is not static), all of which exercise alienated social power and attempt to

involve those alienated from their power in participating in their own alienation. I feel that, in many ways, this struggle to keep those alienated participating in their alienation best provides a praxis for understanding the structures and forces that operate in our society.

For the meantime the author avoids making a bold (and rash?) statement like I am inclined to make, and instead considers some other forms of class analysis. The simple Trotskyist analysis ("class position is determined by whether or not a person owned capital") is first discussed and is argued to totally miss the real fault lines in all modern societies. Such an analysis is obviously very attractive and it is important to consider why this is so. This isn't attempted in the essay, instead the contradiction of holding such an analysis is presented by considering the Soviet Union and the mixed economy of Great Britain. The Trots that I know seem keen to scream about this ruling class of bosses with sickening salaries. To them we are seen as lovable workers who love our work and so are incapable of having any thoughts beyond putting in our work efforts. The Trots with bad intentions have no qualms about putting themselves in the bosses chairs because they, personally, are sick of seeing the bosses totally ripping us off, those with 'better' intentions perhaps see us incapable of organising the economy for ourselves and take it upon themselves to guide us along for our own 'benefit'. Such a view is reflected in the make up of parties such as the SWP. They are crammed full of teachers, social workers, journalists, etc - people who hold a great deal of social power and have a say in the running of society (or at least in consciously lubricating the wheels for the continued running of society). People who have obviously accepted that the working class are incapable of doing anything for themselves beyond exercising a robotic desire to perform meaningless, alienated work. While we are seen as nothing more than droids then 'class struggle' and 'revolution' cannot be seen as anything more than getting rid of people who hoard all the profits of our droid like existence (labouring) and replacing them with people who promise to be not so greedy.

The article then discusses the communist analysis. The author seems keen to play down the economic side of any analysis ('impoverishment') and instead play up the concept of alienation from labour. This again is something I would agree with (see also the long article in CH#1 which reshapes the Situationist method with the critique from Barrot). It is the actual use of such theory that is important (subtly hinted at in this title), and this is immediately developed in the next section "Class Theory and its Use". The author states that "the utility of class analysis is in identifying the material interests of the different social groups, both in the day to day running of capital, and in the ongoing struggle against it". I feel that this sentence is extremely important, but also that it is written down almost as if by accident... it's impetus is not expanded. The next line goes straight on to say that the proletariat is seen as the revolutionary class because it has no material interest in the maintenance of capitalism, and this is followed by a brief explanation of the functions of the ruling class and the middle class. So we go from developing a utility of class that can be applied to the reality of our situation (ie why and how do the working class see this utility of 'material interests' in the way that they do?) to

applying it to how we want it to be (ie the proletariat must be revolutionary because it has - according to our analysis - no material interest in the maintaining of capitalism and so surely must appreciate that fact?).

The article then discusses proletarian struggle, arguing that such struggle is anti-capitalist when (and increasingly if) it occurs. It is then admitted that the proletariat exists primarily as a class defined by capitalism. Again I would suggest that it is difficult to present a utility of class analysis as the material interests in maintaining capitalism (a negative value for the proletariat) to a class that is defined by capitalism. I am not trying to pick holes here, I am only interested in developing what is stressed in the title of the essay - ie class analysis for anti-capitalist struggle.

The remainder of the article attempts to do this. It pins down that which destroys us as "not the rich or their functionaries, it is the social relations of capitalism". And that the "relationships that act against our own liberation and the liberation of humanity as a whole" can be defended by capitalist class, middle class or even the working class. Working from this standpoint the author discusses their own experiences in society and the class struggle. The use and abuse of power is considered in the education system, the trade union system and the policing system.

The article concludes "the function of, and need for a class theory is to understand how to destroy capitalist society by and through the creation of anti-capitalist modes of living". Again this somewhat final statement is something I can agree with, but is this different from the earlier statement regarding the utility of class theory? And what is there to be made from the staunch anti-sociological approach? I would recommend that people read the article and draw their own conclusions. What is important is that we build on any ideas that we find useful or confusing. I admit that I was confused by some of the article, and in the following section give my ideas on class and class theory. At the back of all of this is the questioning of the drive to get the 'correct' analysis of class and satisfy ourselves with our watertight answers. To say we need to forge together class theory and its practical use to further our ideas would be putting it mildly. All the time we see the separation of attaining class consciousness from the conscious development of theory/activity to enable class consciousness to be developed. This is something we need to be aware of.

...The Conflict of Reality

Without wanting to sound like a science fiction writer I think that there are three separate 'realities' we need to consider if we are to use class theory. Within each 'reality' there exists groups of people who are defined by their actions and ideas. I will define these 'realities':

(1) There is the 'consensus' reality which is the mixture of views that are hammered into people's heads, and the network of forces that exist to keep them in place.

(2) There is the class system as it exists within (and obviously for) capitalism - ie the reality which is denied.

(3) There is the communist society which exists only as a movement borne through our practices in the current society and our aims and visions.

Beginning with (1). This is the reality of capitalist society as it is constructed and passed around as the dominant discourse. It is an extremely sociological society, and is becoming increasingly so all the time (see the article on the cult of information in CH#3). It is ok to talk about abstract 'images' being the driving force in a 'spectacular' society, but what this means is that certain categories and styles are created that have certain attributes and signify other more 'abstract' things. Thus people are made to chase these categories and attain their 'abstract' qualities (which includes a notion of 'class') by physically attaining their attributes. This is a double victory for capitalism. Whenever people are chasing certain categories they are least likely to be questioning the true meanings of their lives and the structure of the society around them, and they are also doing their bit for the economy because chasing a category involves a certain degree of consumption of the right commodities.

And so while the author of the article on class disapproves of capitalist's programming of categories (social class C1, B2 etc etc) I think that it is important to understand how this sociologicalisation of society is powered, and how best to combat it (or to look for where it is being challenged or stretched etc). Class, as such, doesn't exist in this reality. Some comrades use the term 'class in itself' to describe those in this society who feel they should be committed towards communist society. Inevitably this includes 'the workers' as there is some kind of base connection made that a plumber in capitalist society will be unable to envisage a communist society without seeing themselves as a plumber. Variations on this theme lead to Trotskyists justifying their existence (to themselves and the 'workers') through a need to organise all these workers who wish to carry their tools through the revolution and then recommence business as usual (one is reminded of the films 'Carry on Doctor' 'Carry on Cabby' as some kind of Trotskyist conspiracy!).

All that we can do with this current reality is to explode the forces that keep the consensus in check - by both attacking the forces and presenting, practically where possible, better ways of doing things. There is always a tension that exists and it shows itself in many ways. Currently we are seeing the limitations on the expansion of capitalist domination by the burgeoning presence of its effects. Thus the road development, the criminal justice act, the treatment of farmed animals, etc are all affecting people. This jolt can cut through the consensus reality, and there is a ease for us to apply our efforts here. However, just because people protest at the effects of capitalism does not mean that they will relate these outcomes to capitalism and their own lives. As I said in CH#1, the consensus reality will always try to paint these occurrences as an 'unpleasantness' or a 'blip' - and certainly not as a contradiction.

Similarly with workplace struggles... there is no necessary connection to exploding the consensus reality and applying the movement towards communism. 'Revolutionaries' get excited because workplace struggles means it is the

'workers' (who will of course be the same 'workers' in the post revolution society) who are struggling and so it must be a communist struggle. 'Revolutionaries' with a higher degree of 'understanding' will still get excited at the prospect of workplace struggles because they see the motor of capitalism being attacked - they see the 'crisis' of their 'crisis theory' beginning to bear fruit. This is where the antagonism of capitalism comes to light, with the antagonists of capitalism only playing a 'bit part' in terms of an awareness of what they are doing. It could be argued that conscious activity will eventually emerge from workplace struggles as capitalism retreats and enforces a harsher regime which demands a degree of organisation and retaliation - we could talk here about the miners hit squads and the role of the pit communities. But conscious activity should always be fought for, unless we want to see the continued growth of shop floor 'management teams' whereby the crisis of the company is put across as being the crisis of the worker 'teams' and the individual workers etc. Some of the implications of this are discussed in the reprint of the article on wage demands.

The situation in (2) is the concurrent reality to (1). It is the reality of the class system as it exists to best continue capitalism. It is assumed that those who understand the nature of class society (outside of the capitalists themselves) are themselves in the 3rd 'reality' ie they are part of the movement towards communism. Thus this reality of the capitalist class system proffers a strange contradiction. It needs to be exposed for the cruel system it is and immediately struggled against with the communist vision. So there is little sense in basing our 'targets' in this actual reality, because it is the consensus reality that dominates. The society we want will be a society of total involvement, with an end to meaningless work. We don't appeal especially to productive workers because they would be better plying their wares for the communist society. Every struggle that occurs in reality will offer itself as a chance to understand the forces that operate in consensus reality and to understand how these forces operate on (and are operated by) individuals.

Everybody who toils in this wretched society is capable of considering the communist society. The reality of class society will eventually confront them all - we should base our interventions and efforts as it best fits how the reality of class society reveals itself and how the organisation of communist society necessitates itself. This includes addressing the agents of restraint (ie those who maintain the consensus) wherever possible. A journalist I know had a colleague who rushed out to sensationalise a story of a 'somebody' tuming themselves into some body by throwing themselves off a famous bridge in the city - when the reporter realised that the person involved was a close personal friend they refused to deal with the story - this is the reality of the role confronting the perpetrator. If the agents of restraint cannot be addressed directly then it is a case of using the struggles of those specifically restrained against those doing the restraining.

Finally there is the communist society that exists only as a movement : as a vision in our hearts and a set of practices in our minds. The practices include attacking the other realities and adding to the dynamic between them (this dynamic from

1 to 2 to 3 is the basis of class struggle and will be considered in a later pamphlet). As a movement this can be considered as the class-for-itself, a communist conscious class. The members in this class consist of the revolutionaries who, at the moment, are only defined by their revolutionary activity and by the visions they hold. Whilst these people may make all efforts to live in a communist 'style' what is important is their activity in escalating the struggle. This struggle can be seen as attacking the other realities and offering the reality of a communist society. Can such people be 'sociologically' defined? It would appear that most people in this class-for-itself would be from the working class as it is defined in the 'reality' (2) - for instance, productive workers, unemployed, service workers. Could they also include people who hold positions contradictory to emancipation from the old reality? Here we can consider how the movement towards communism relates to the other realities. Thus, the people that do not express the movement towards communism include those who toil under the current system as productive and service workers, those who operate as 'agents of restraint and control' in the current system (eg state workers, teachers, police), and those who see a personal gain to be had in the current system (loosely defined as capitalists). But, this reality is only a movement towards communism - a vision and a praxis. It involves seeing through the consensus reality of capitalist society, and of using this knowledge to further understand how consensus reality is maintained...

After Cease To Exist (Political X-Files)

1. That was now but this is then.

Agent Fox Mulder checked the corridor, closed the door to his office, sat down, and switched on the monitor. The screensaver message flickered: The Truth is Out There. Mulder scrubbed the message from the screen with a quick flick of the mouse... the words made his throat tighten - he felt like puking his guts up. It had become an advertising gimmick that had the public grasping at it like they devoured the stories of alien abduction. It was all a set up... mere fear fantasies of the loss of control, the brutality of human nature in the uncaged other, the threat of the outsider, etc. Since the collapse of the cold war the abduction hysteria had filled the vacuum. Mulder's X-Files were blazing a trail and it made him retch.

Mulder had been applying his efforts to producing a covert, radical magazine. He wanted to use his insights and commitment to communism to fuel a magazine to bring his desires closer. Recently it had become a difficult task - Mulder realised that his commitment to communism had been the force for his writing in that he wanted to express his feelings and frustrations as part of the communism he held in

his heart as a hope for the future. The concept of producing a magazine to further a theory or a possibility for communism had slowly been losing its apparent sheen. Some things were always there. A vision of a stateless, moneyless society based on cooperation and mutual aid. The fight against wage labour through class struggle. But things were now becoming unstable - the 20th century had seen failed revolutions giving rise to questions on discipline and organisation before, during and after the revolution, the web of forces the form the totality of what is seen as society was becoming increasingly complex and difficult to break

Mulder began typing on the keyboard: *<It is not a case of extending beyond theoretical end points, the problems we face involve unravelling a political hyperspace. We acknowledge that the tradition that we stand in defines both our ideas and total limitations>*. He drew back his arm, clenched his fist, and powered a punch clean through the glass of the monitor screen. The electronics crackled and a trickle of blood rolled from the agent's hand as he plucked a shard of glass from his knuckle. He held his head in his hands and started a barely audible weeping. Mulder had been criticised for writing without a 'collective' editorial overview, this didn't bother him. He had been criticised for just re-hashing old ideas from the past. This had nagged him, not because he felt hurt through being criticised, but because he had been slowly realising the futility in pushing for a theory that was increasingly losing its meaning. He had considered the alternatives... to invest his ideas and energies in something that is a deal more comfortable and 'sussed' - whether this be the 'lets go to work' attitude of anarcho-syndicalism or the 'wait for the crisis' attitude of left theory. Elsewhere he had been accused of 'Cardanism' because he dabbled in the understanding of the intricacies of modern society. The weight behind such an insult was that he had denied the working class as the antagonist to capitalism by suggesting that new conflicts (such as based across the terrain of bureaucracy etc) were now the way forward. Mulder knew that the class struggle would be the method that disposes of capitalism, but he also knew that capitalism had tried to mask the emergence of the realisation of class struggle as much as possible. And so everything said beyond outlining what is communism is open to speculation and eventually to re-creation. Mulder wondered if creating written enquiries and developing theory is worthwhile doing...

He had talked of capitalism as breaking the rules of fair play as laid down by Marx in his theoretical extrapolation to crisis point. This was his contribution to speculation (and re-creation). He wanted to understand how these rules had been transgressed and how the working class is restructured within its own minds in this transgression. The tradition of speculation that Mulder had tried to trace attempted to blow away these actual restructurings that led to imaginary restructurings of class (including its non-existence). He saw Cardan as seeing the task as simply resolving the tensions that emerged from the newly imagined (non) class system - Mulder wanted no part of this. The situationists had attempted to understand this transgression by both attacking what it saw as a vital part of it - the cultural industry - and by developing a new language to immediately address the struggle in

these imagined terrains. Mulder felt this critique to be still valid, indeed the process had moved further on. Whilst those following in the tradition of the Situationists (Situationistists practicing Situationisticism) had been gradually creating their niche in the circus of official opposition (as a lunatic fringe) Mulder felt that there was a seed of enquiry that needed to be nurtured... a reading of 'Capital' can now be placed alongside a reading of Burroughs' 'Algebra of Need'.

Mulder's train of miserable thought was interrupted by the beeping of a fax machine. He shuffled his chair across to the sleek piece of technology putting out a sheet of A4 paper. The message was headed as a new case to investigate - a city in a nearby state had recently witnessed the phenomenon of people's time being directly stolen from them, and of reality being tampered with by a replacement of an endless stream of sterile images to pursuit in a pointless spiral. Mulder knew his contact was playing tricks on him, joking with the agents communist tendencies. But now was not the time to play such tricks. The agent poured a hot cup of coffee, stirred in 15 spoonfuls of sugar, and deposited the concoction into the machine.

Mulder picked up his pen in a last ditch attempt to get his feelings onto paper... but nothing would come. Between the cloak of despair and the cloak of the superhero there existed nothing but a criticism of what currently existed. Mulder knew that he had to use this to move beyond its limits into something other than 'theory'. He began writing out of desperation:

"There is an underlying fear to confront a human nature as it exists in our current society. The Trotskyists devour this situation like a hungry dog encountering a plate of entrails. Never afraid to admit that the working class can achieve nothing more than a trade union consciousness (an outdated pseudo concept that considers a definable productive working class as a precondition) they now assume that people are basically too stupid to achieve anything unless they come under the tutelage of a party organised by individuals who have a history of organising and naturalising power relations (you know who you are). Crisis ideology dodges this question and falls upon an article of faith - that is that the working class (and mainly the productive working class) are bound to strike at some point and that the demands of different sectors of the productive industry may well dovetail and create the conditions to push capitalism into a 'headless chicken' phase of rabid acts of defense. It is hard to see who is fooling who here. The fight against capitalism will depend upon the working class seizing the means of production, but I would like to think that this seizing of the means of production would be driven by a desire to control our own lives and fulfil our desires away from the crippling grip of the economy (and not because the bosses can no longer meet our demands). What would a trade union consciousness express? a demand for access to more consumer crap, a demand to bury our denial of being creative individuals and sensual beings in the buying of commodities, and so a demand for more wages? Is this all there is to economic crisis... something that we spring accidentally, something we can't appreciate? I sometimes think that people hold onto this viewpoint - for instance some leftists who refuse to recognise all struggles outside of the workplace (not because

they create a difficulty in analysing in a particular framework but simply because they don't contribute towards expressing the crisis movement). Similarly the need to see all technological development as necessary towards the enrichment of our lives, to see it as an opportunity to force the gap between what we workers can afford and what we workers could afford (crisis, crisis, again and again). A critique of technology, or progress, even if it used to develop the class struggle, is seen as heretical by many revolutionaries <I'm having trouble programming my VCR - You can now program it using a light pen and barcode in the Radio Times - Does this make communism x degrees nearer?>. The stupidity and anti-social behaviour that people exhibit is part of the system that we live under. Each day we live within capitalism each day these attitudes became further ingrained in the individual or passed on through the monitored and imposed social structures. Tensions exist between those fighting against the hostility that permeates our class and those seen as maintaining these hostilities. How we see these tensions is important to our class struggle - this can range from trying to pin down the sections and structures of our class that maintain these hostilities (the family, culture, education,...) or trying to address our class directly as it sinks into this barbarism...>

Mulder realised he had been scribbling frantically and had lost some control of what he was doing. He examined what he had written and felt the same yearning and despair. He resisted the urge to screw up the paper, yet deep down he knew he was hammering harder and harder at the same endpoint - a node in a system that couldn't be transversed. He stepped his mind back, desperate to find a way forward... he had been reading an exchange of articles on the need for Labour Time Vouchers in the 'communist' society. Even what could be assumed - that is the vision of the society we desire and the good feelings that can be felt imagining your activity being exciting, meaningful and with obvious results within your own field of perception - was being eroded away. 'Libertarians' who were afraid to speak their minds - that they have an utter distrust of and distaste for human nature, that this human nature is now beyond the point of no return, and so the 'control' of this human nature will be a priority in the 'communist' society.

Mulder had a copy of the 'libertarian' 'marxists' Hahnel and Albert book 'Looking Forward' - this took such theory to the limit describing a society based upon an imposed niceness ('participation') with a horrendous new economic system ('participative'). Mulder was willing to entertain discussion on some possible structures of the communist society - for instance he envisaged library structures as a key area. But tonight this irrelevant. He pushed his pen hard onto the paper and the ball point cracked open - ink slugged out onto the scribbled notes. He would either have to retrace them or throw them away. He carefully picked up the paper, held it steady for a slight moment, the screwed it into a ball and tossed it into the bin.

Mulder knew what came next, he couldn't postpone the ritual. Slowly he pushed his chair back on its castors till it came to rest in front of his filing cabinet. He slid open the bottom drawer which was stuffed full of his famous X-

Files. He removed a false back that revealed a handful of other files. These were taken out and laid across the agent's desk. For the thousandth time he began to examine them...

Careful readers are now advised to examine the X-Files that follow this passage before proceeding to part 2 of 'Cease To Exist'.

2. Into the Endgame.

The fabric of human society was not such a rich tapestry etc etc - it had become a thick poisonous fog that permeated all feelings and relations. Mulder knew he was deluding himself if he thought he could appease himself with simply stating what could be and arguing why it wasn't. Life was becoming increasingly more intense - and arguing why things weren't was becoming a lost cause... here's another critique of architecture to add to your collection etc etc. To him, theory had always existed as something to examine and analyse the conditions and machinations of what was being applied, paying little regard to how peoples were affected. It always contained its own justification - a whole body of revolutionary economic theory existed, justified by the faith in a theoretically determined impending crisis - new mountains of cultural theory were being chummed out and this 'discipline' had become an end in itself, a pointless pursuit, a career. Mulder knew that this dilemma was drawing him into its inescapable claws.

Practical activity existed more as a way of stating what could be in the most direct fashion. But now the trends were heading towards escapism and nomadism, as people gave up on a life and chose to barricade themselves in treehouses / internet nodes / dancefloors / etc etc in fact anywhere which resisted or rejected the way of living they had chosen to reject. What practical activity could exist against the systems that batter the human conscience into a pulp fit for capitalism. Before such systems could begin telling people how and what to think they had to establish themselves as bringers of truth and happiness. What practical activity could topple such a system by showing a better way of living, when these systems existed themselves as part of the current way of living to show that this misery is the only way of living. Anger existed at the ruptures in the seamless covers - a smoke bomb in a fur shop, a Shell garage shut down, cyclists closing down a busy high street... Mulder knew that these were the contradictions of capitalism, but they were painted as the unpleasantnesses. What good would it do in putting this point across? No matter how tightly bound this theory was, it could only exist for those looking for it.

The agent turned in his bed. The realm of sleep would come to him. He knew some decisions would have to be made about his own practices. The Endgame was drawing closer. Rational logic in decision making seemed impossible. He considered resorting to some pure chance mechanism. Yes, this may be the only solution. He decided that if it was raining in the daylight hours when he awoke, then he would recommence things in a whole new way. To try a totally different line of assault. He immediately felt at ease with himself. A vision came to his waking mind.. a piece of music, a track from

Aphex Twin's 'Selected Ambient Works vol 2', a television screen, split in four, separate images recording the same scene from a choice of angles, he concentrated on the pictures, it was a forerunner of a petrol station, devoid of all activity. Almost immediately a vehicle appeared on one of the four screens to be subsequently seen in the other three screens. A front angle, a side angle, two distant shots. Figures emerged from the vehicle cloaked in the baggy rags of youth. Concurrently a figure approached each screen, and one by one the images were reduced to a level of interference and then a blank greyness. Mulder was now asleep, undisturbed by the rain that battered against his window with such a ferocity to suggest that it would never cease.

What justifications exist for carrying through such a project. With this issue the limitations have been firmly encountered. What more could be said.

A blind practical approach that envelops anarchism and a 'most correct theory' approach of intellectualism are not dialectical ingredients. When theoretical work appears that I disagree with then I feel obliged to answer the case. But what forms the basis of disagreement. Without understanding this then all that remains is a game of virtual tennis - passing back and forth a body of theory - adding to it, changing it, asking for new balls (please) etc etc.

What I am reduced to is just a senseless repetition of minute details of insignificance. Should I really keep stating my lack of understanding of why someone should adhere to eg crisis theory. Any theory that predicts a violent change from the way things currently are exists as something yet to be realised. Of course there exists certain restrictions on how to use such a theory. The more you hold it dear to yourself the less it becomes necessary to analyse why it has not yet arrived and how (and if) you can accelerate its possible arrival. And so the more the tensions exist between those holders of the theory and those who devote their lives to hammering away in the here and now. This tension is tightened in a two way process of resisting/stretching - stretching/resisting. It was all well and good to be sure of what should be happening and how things really are (class struggle?) but how does this relate to what actually happens (autonomism?) and why certain things do not happen in a certain way (primitivism?).

This magazine was originally began to report on such occurrences and non-occurrences. As a single person project it was immediately limited on what it report on practically (for obvious reasons) and theoretically (for reasons such as 'individualism' etc). So what can become of it? It is an individuality that fires this project, an urge to learn and share my ideas and experiences. It expresses both a positivity in change and a positivity in wanting to discuss change. When the positivity of wanting to express change dries up then the magazine will cease. Whether such a positivity for change actually dries up is something we do not like to face. Revolutionary periodicals appear and disappear. If I no longer gain a 'pleasure' from this project then I will invest my energies elsewhere. In drudging towards this issue I have come quite close to that situation. Some kind of change is imminent. In the mean time there remains just contradictions.

X-File # 0001

date: 1984

Outcome?

1 more issue produced
then a 'split' in the group

journal: Workers Playtime

title: Class struggle and the Idea of Revolution

We do not believe that strikes, or any other mass class struggles automatically lead to a growth of revolutionary consciousness — an awareness of the need for social revolution as the only real solution to oppression and exploitation, the alienation and loss of community that characterises this society.

To explain what we mean by this, it will be useful to look at two versions of the fallacy. One holds that workers are in possession of a merely 'trade union', or reformist, consciousness — that is to say, they behave like the dogs in Pavlov's experiments. On their own, workers may be able to work out which levers to press to obtain extra food pellets or avoid electric shocks, but by themselves they cannot divine the existence of the cage, or a world outside, since they have been born and reared under laboratory conditions (capitalism). They must therefore be either injected with a consciousness-raising drug ('revolutionary theory' or else forcibly set free by a benevolent animal liberationist ('Revolutionary Organisation')). An obvious feature of this mode of consciousness is that in order to be a revolutionary, or to fully appreciate the benefits of having a revolution bestowed upon us, it is helpful for us to be put through repeated doses of pain and failure, the more the better. For workers in struggle, repression and defeat are held to contain valuable 'lessons' which can be 'applied' later. How well we respond to the revolutionary imperative will indicate how well or badly we have absorbed these 'lessons'. In relation to the miners strike, the interpretations of the left are dealt with in Playtime 8. For now, we would point out two things. If this is a true model, it would imply that it would be possible for the working class to create communism without realising what they were doing. It would also suggest, in the light of the 'lessons' of 1926 and the last five years, that the miners would have to be worse than pig-ignorant to even think of going on strike in the first place. Our objection is simply that we are not animals, neither can we rely on capitalism and its ally, the left, to herd us towards revolution.

We can remain in the laboratory, however, to illustrate a second theory of 'revolutionary consciousness', the pathological (spontaneous) version. Certain dogs go mad or become infected with rabies ('class anger') due to the cramped conditions in the cage (alienation), or the introduction of foreign microbes (anarchism, situationalism, autonomism), and go on biting all the other dogs, who in turn become so violent ('enraged') that the cage bursts open at the hinges. In one moment the scientist (bourgeois) is torn to shreds and the dogs discover absolute freedom ('take their desires for reality', "every dog will live in his own Battersea Dogs Home", etc). Apart from the fact that, in practice, rabies causes blindness, thus making it difficult to distinguish between the scientist, the cage and the other dogs, and normally ends in early and painful death, our objection would be that being mad to that extent would make it difficult to establish communist social relations, for which it will be useful to know the difference between our desires and reality, to communicate with one another beyond just foaming at the mouth.

Revolutionary consciousness is neither an automatic extension of militant class consciousness, nor something which simply has to be added to it — any more than revolution is simply an extension of 'militant' class activity, or an application of revolutionary 'forms' of activity to the struggle. Getting back to the miners strike, revolutionary groups have variously identified *tactics* ('generalising', 'democratising' the strike); *strategies*

(rioting, vandalism, blocking roads); or *social organisms* (women's support groups, the 'community of struggle'), as containing the essence of revolution. We do not agree; revolutionary consciousness is just that — the desire for revolution — not an awareness of the best way to extend, consolidate or win a particular strike; and revolution is what it implies — the overthrow of capitalism and the development of a community in which the institutionalised divisions of class and market exchange have been dissolved; not simply the next step up from a general strike, or a mass insurrection.

A revolution cannot take place without revolutionary *ideas*, and revolutionary ideas do not emerge automatically from reformist and defensive struggles, however massive or bitterly contested. The revolutionary idea is a recognition that revolutionary change is worth pursuing, even when revolution itself may seem so far away, or what lies beyond it so hard to imagine, that to believe in it is practically an act of faith. All the same, it is a cliché that when revolutions happen, the professional revolutionaries are the most surprised; rarely do our notions of revolution match up to the reality. The revolutionary idea does not in itself help us to get from here to the revolution we desire to see; moreover, the possession of such an idea is worse than useless if we do not constantly test it against our own and others' experiences of struggle — for then it becomes mere *ideology*, a barrier to understanding and effective action.

To tell workers that revolution is a Historical Necessity, and that revolution is the inevitable consequence of an understanding gained through a direct experience of mass struggle, is usually an act of self-mystification. Very few of today's revolutionaries could honestly say that they first perceived the need for revolution in that way (unless, of course, we use that argument to 'prove' that there are no revolutionaries, as some have tried to do.) For most of us, it has been a matter of *finding the words* to express a feeling about our own lives and the world; words which we did not invent ourselves, even though we may have had to modify, edit and add to them again and again in the process of understanding what revolution means. We do not often get a chance to test this understanding by participating ourselves in mass struggle.

Little wonder that the miners, faced with a barrage of propaganda telling them that the best way for them to win the strike would be to follow a course of action which (by the way) leads logically to revolution, and that they should 'link up' with other workers because it is in their interests 'as workers', have remained impervious to such 'revolutionary theory': *as workers*, our only interest is revolution, precisely to put an end to that status. Moreover, the assorted leftists and ideologues who infest picket lines, for the most part carry proletarian credentials which even according to their own criteria of correct consciousness would have to be forged, made up or borrowed from a friend. The most that many of them have done in the way of 'class struggle' is worrying about whether they'll be found out, or lying awake at night fantasising about a mass movement in whose ideological embrace they could hide their (self-inflicted) shame. They have forgotten that what brought them to revolutionary theory in the first place was a revolutionary *idea*, the *proposal* of a revolution which would put an end to the 'thousand dull blows and daily humiliations' which fill their lives under capitalism. So instead of using revolutionary theory as a weapon of clarity, making sense of their own experience and activity, they turn it into ideology, a shield which they can use to blank out their own past, and a mystifying

veil with which they will disguise to themselves and others the possibility of a different future. This is the origin of the Party mentality. 'Revolutionary' groups are full of people who claim to have come from nowhere in particular, and, in practice, seem to be going straight back there. But today's 'revolutionaries' cannot be compared with the generation of proletarians who will overthrow world capitalism. At least we hope not.

There are moments during struggles, those moments when autonomy is experienced, when revolution may seem an immediate possibility. When the strike or riot is over, the experience fades to a memory, frequently one that people don't have the words to express; and the idea that revolution is possible comes to seem quite utopian. In the attempt to retain hold of this experience, people look for the language to describe it in the existing political traditions. It is at this point that every variety of leftist Creeping Jesus slithers out to meet them. For every one of these reptiles, the strike is just an opportunity to sell more papers. For those of us—who believe that the only solution to the horrors of capitalism is revolution, not leftist palliatives, the need to make our ideas available is just as great. Not because holding them gives us any advantage or privilege, nor because we believe they are the last word or the definite answer, but because in spite of their failings they have helped us make sense of our own experiences, thereby convincing us that the revolutionary solution they point to is correct. There is nothing 'special' about revolutionary ideas; they are not the property or domain of 'intellectuals', but the product of the experience of generations of revolutionary militants.

It would be tempting to fetishise the moment of clarity when anything seemed possible; or else fall into the other trap, of trying to account for the apparent 'impossibility' of revolution — the fact that it seems so far away — by filling in the gap with comforting notions about the 'inevitable march of history', which will cause the old world to collapse and reveal communism as the only alternative to annihilation. But revolution will not be the end of history, and communism is not inevitable. There are times when capitalism appears to create conditions favourable to those who wish to destroy it; but it will not destroy itself.

Class analysis is essential to understanding capitalist society, but it does not give us the key to the revolutionary process which will put an end to all classes. Capitalism will not lay the social, economic or political foundations of communism. The increasing integration and co-ordination of production and the market (the 'socialisation of production') which takes place under capitalism cannot create a unified proletariat; in fact, this 'socialisation' has gone hand-in-hand with increasing social atomisation. The proletariat will only discover itself in the process of revolution. Until then, it can only be defined negatively, as all those dispossessed by capitalism. The proletariat emerges as a community of *opposition* to capitalism and *for* communism; it starts to actively reject the divisions imposed by capitalism, as well as the roles capitalism assigns us — 'workers', 'unemployed', 'dependents', etc. Society is polarised into the most fundamental class division of all: for and against the revolution.

This 'community of opposition' is not the same thing as the sort of 'community of struggle' which has emerged during the miners' strike — an alliance between different groups (local retailers, miners' dependents, etc) acting in support of the strike and in defence of their own sectional interests, closely tied to the sectional interest of the miners. The experience of the strike is certainly extremely important, because in practice it reveals interdependence, demonstrates that social relations are not 'natural' fixed or 'eternal'. But this kind of semi-autonomous organisation is also developing in the mining communities where

most of the miners are working, where the 'resolve' of the scabs has 'hardened' during the course of the struggle. Scabs are now actively campaigning for a return to work, supported no doubt by other sections of their local community (miners' families, shopkeepers, police, local employers etc), also intent on defending 'their' interests. The difference is that this last sort of revitalised community is renewed precisely around the defence of *normal* capitalist social relations — narrow self-interest, class conciliation, and so on. While the scabs have been justifying their miserable, craven posture in the way scabs have always justified their actions — HP installments to pay, TV licences to buy — the possibility for a change of attitude to capitalist reality exists among the strikers (many of whom have found that since the strike began, they hardly watch TV any more.) Significantly, some have begun to talk about the future in such a way as to suggest that in some sense they prefer being on strike to being at work, in spite of the hardship.

The kinds of organisation and activity generated by mass struggles like the miners strike cannot be said to portend revolution, or prefigure human activity and social organisation in a communist society. Nevertheless, isolated and partial struggles can disrupt the routine of daily life under capitalism to such an extent, that they give rise to moments when a proposal of revolution can suddenly seem the most blindingly obvious proposal of all. In these moments, the exhilaration of struggle, a sense of power and freedom, the intense feelings of solidarity, can make the return to normality an unbearable prospect. Such moments vanish, just when they began to seem more real than reality itself. But they leave behind them a sharper awareness of the misery of daily life, and the possibility of something different.

X-File # 0002 date: 1984 Outcome? Group ceased to exist
journal: L'Insecurite Sociale Soon after publishing this
title: Wage Labour and Demand Struggles

Today we can see the limit of all struggles for simple demands in the actual development of class struggle: — its unofficial origin bypassing the unions, its progressive demoralisation, finally sinking back into bitterness. What is needed at the moment is a social mobilisation which is increasingly against wage labour itself, and which goes beyond the framework of the single company or trade. But this is going to be much more difficult than the major strikes of the '70s, for it means that the working class will have to stop acting as an economic category of capitalist society; in other words, as waged workers trying to get a better return for our labour in the futile hope that this will improve our lot. Everything that is mutilated and repressed by capitalism as it reduces us to packages of commodities must finally emerge in the struggle of the working class.

The struggles which broke out in Europe in the 70's, for example in Spain and Italy, demonstrate through their weakness and the difficulty of going further, that the working class movement is finding it difficult to confront the problem of changing the basis of its struggle. The weight of ideology and its institutions obstructs this change, not only reflecting the weakness of the class struggle, but also playing a very active part in it. The domination of capital rests on two things: firstly, the invisible conditioning of individuals, which leads them to produce and reproduce competitiveness, atomisation and subordination in every aspect of their lives, and secondly the visible location of individuals within organisations (unions, parties, etc...) whose role is to discipline them. It's the extent of the class struggle, its advances and retreats, which allows us to consider the questions attached to the abolition of wage labour: what, in practice, are the responses to this inertia? What form and content will assist them?...

The experience of those working class struggles which have at least partially gone beyond putting forward lists of demands shows that their form of organisation is that of assemblies with the ultimate power decision on the actions undertaken. This is the only organisational form allowing everybody to genuinely participate, which generates unity, and where decisions and their implementation are directly connected. Any important struggle throws into question the forms of struggle which capitalism adopts to ensure that its domination is accepted. So it's no surprise that our struggles develop forms of organisation that already

express the communist revolution, and which represent a step towards it.

In saying this we don't wish to introduce any separation between the form and content of struggle. While the "councilist" form will undoubtedly be necessary for a future revolution, it's no guarantee against its eventual degeneration. Only the autonomous activity of the working class — in large numbers — can permanently overthrow the social relations of capitalism, without compromise, and without coming to a halt within forms it's employed in the past. Beyond such terms as 'council', 'committee' or 'assembly', which could just as easily disguise the persistence of relations of exploitation, the working class must organise itself in communities of action emerging directly from the struggle.

When we say that the abolition of commodity society will be a social process which overturns all the relations between people, we aren't appealing to recipes drawn from history. This struggle of disintegration of all social dislocation, leads workers to seek points of leverage in their material circumstances which will make any going back more difficult. The human community won't be achieved in a fortnight, and it cannot come about on the basis of any significant and lasting breach in the relations between people. Life cannot continue without social organisation. If the working class does not set up autonomous mass organisation which can express and implement social transformation, the immediate joy of insurrection will be swiftly replaced by savage repression from those forces which want to restore the old order, with the active consent of one part of the population.

Just as everything depends on the ability and power of the working class to take charge of their own destiny, so the concrete reality of this autonomy depends on the formation of communities of action which allow workers to transform their daily lives through the immediate results of their decisions. In their recent struggles, Polish workers spontaneously created sovereign general assemblies and strike committees only to see this break with the society of exploitation turn into the emergence of Solidarity, a permanent structure of negotiation, a union like any other. The superficial view of this process quickly glosses over the importance of working class self-organisation, and sees only an

absence of any will to place capital itself in question. But this ignores the fact that in any struggle of importance, the refusal of exploitation by the working class always spontaneously takes the form of collective bodies in which the division between the representatives and the represented is rejected, and a community of struggle aims to maintain the power of decision-making. From the moment that the Polish workers wanted to negotiate their wage conditions at national level, it was logical that a union would emerge from their movement, complete with experts in negotiation and manipulation of the workers. And it was logical that as this structure emerged, the self-organisation present at the beginning of the struggle should be undermined. While the principal reason here was the inertia and inability of the working class to spread the revolutionary process, we must not gloss over the problem of self-organisation, because all the priests of wage-exploitation, from the Bolsheviks to the Socialists — including Walesa on the way — struggle pitilessly against this autonomy.

THE BURDEN OF UNIONISM

However militant workers are, they will always run up against not just the union machinery, but also a deeply interiorised trade union logic. This logic is expressed through unions and parties as a tendency to claim power for themselves. But it is also expressed within the working class as a tendency to become involved, passively or actively, in organisations which lie outside of them. The burden of these organisations is only one expression of the survival of capitalism in the working class — as ideology, as a type of social structure, and as a relation between people. The pretence that possession of a 'theory' means the possession of truth would have no real standing if the workers didn't have the conviction — reinforced every day by the conditions of life under capitalism — that general questions are the province of specialists and that their own experiences aren't important.

These interlinked tendencies derive from the same reality and lead to the same dead end. Politicians and trade unionists who seek to impose their point of view by any means possible, always have the means to do so faced with workers powerless to respond to their flood of words or to thwart their cunning. They only "betray" because they are trusted in the first place. No-one can betray people for long if they don't want

to be betrayed and act to ensure it doesn't happen.

The working class has been lulled to sleep by the myth of trade unionism, set in an equally mythological history (General Strike, World War against fascism, Parliamentary socialism, the Welfare State, Nationalisation, etc.) According to this myth, unions struggle to improve working class living conditions. In reality they've never done anything of the sort. They only negotiate the price of labour power. When union policies prevail strikes are broken rather than extended. They merely fulfil their function as capitalist institutions, and in the last analysis they only succeed because they are listened to. Their power is based on apathy, on acquiescence, on insufficient resistance by workers.

Their deep roots ensure that the idea of organising outside these 'representative bodies' doesn't arise, or appears unrealistic. This 'habit' only breaks down to the degree that unions, as loyal managers of capitalist crisis, oppose spontaneous social movements. But the return of militant workers to the bosom of the union, and the appearance of neo-unionist ideology (representation, the delegation of power) outside the unions, as occurred in Poland with Solidarity, remind us that even under such circumstances, illusions won't simply fade away.

The working class doesn't just fight capitalism as a force which lies outside it. If it was only a question of the material power of the exploiters (of their repressive institutions), capitalism would have been abolished long ago, for it has no power aside from alienated labour. It can only survive to the extent that it succeeds in persuading us to accept our situation. Its most powerful weapons are those which create the objective situation of the working class: organising social relations involving an ideological viewpoint, relations between people which continually recreate the basis of capitalism. Workers not only undergo a systematic indoctrination by the ruling class, they are also dispossessed of their reality as a class through those divisions by locality, trade and nation, which are implied by the domination of capitalism.

The most important obstacle to human emancipation is the continual re-emergence of capitalist reality inside the working class itself. The working class isn't outside capitalism, it's born into it, lives in it, participates in it, and makes it work. As long as capitalist social relations survive, they constantly violate the working class. It's a contradictory situation, for while capitalism continually tends to reduce the working class to the status of an object, it also continually

appeals to our abilities as living labour capable of modifying and transforming ... and thus also capable of refusing exploitation and the denial of our humanity through the commodity. Working class struggle, in its most important aspect, is a struggle against itself, a struggle to rid itself of all traces within it of the society it fights.

This struggle isn't continuous but contradictory, composed of periods of partial or total retreat. It's not only in terms of 'Militancy' that the retreats or advances of the working class are measured, but also by the attitude it adopts to the problems it encounters. Opposing the unions often appears to some workers to 'isolate themselves from the whole labour movement', to 'hinder solidarity', etc. It's therefore necessary to show how unions oppose struggles and their extension.

Union officials are generally the only 'link' that extends between different workplaces. Breaking it leads to fear of isolation. It's a problem often troubling workers who have broken with their unions.

But experience shows us that the unions use their 'power of co-ordination' to systematically isolate and divide struggles. All possible links between workers in different workplaces must be encouraged, both during and outside struggles, but above all, so that when a struggle breaks out direct contacts can be made. Such links are equally useful for spreading new forms of struggle (when they actually exist!), so that the experience of autonomous actions and organisation in defiance of unions and politicians is as widely known as possible.

Certain practises assist the development of working class autonomy:

- The absolute control by workers of their struggles (in terms of goals, strategy, and methods), but without excluding criticism of these choices.

- The rejection of all delegation or substitution of power. Everything is discussed, decided and carried out by the workers themselves, whose decision is final.

Because of the openness of their activity, the sovereign general assemblies can more clearly unmask the policy of the unions, and to some extent disarm it. This organisational form isn't a remedy for all ills, but it allows strikers the chance to take decisions and responsibilities for themselves, and to at least partially escape from the limitations of unionism and the passivity associated with it.

- Strengthening unity and extension of the struggle; solidarity, support, contact and exchange between different workers in different workplaces, and confrontation with hierarchy and competition.

- Examining past and present struggles without any illusions about the degree to which workers experiences in them have been passed on. There is no simple process of workers self-education in relation to the ups-and-downs of their struggles. There is no working class memory except for a limited period of time or amongst a minority. For example, amongst British workers who experienced the militancy strikes during the early seventies, how many remember what happened?

Groups of workers in a workplace - whether completely informal, or structured around a platform - can make a direct and visible contribution to the development of class consciousness and to the attack on the roots of capitalism. When such groups have appeared in countries where autonomous class struggles are in motion, they have often turned out to be too fragile to survive the decline of the movements which gave birth to them, or to survive the resulting isolation and demoralisation. Thus in France, such groups as the 'Action Committees' of 1968 progressively disappeared. The difficulties they encounter are not much different from those which affect the whole working class movement in moving beyond a basis of wage rises and reforms. The situation of self-styled revolutionary groups is scarcely any better, even if their method of organisation promises a longer survival.

Moreover, the content of such focal points for discussion and/or action, in putting forward the idea of workers self-organisation during and after struggles, depends on the nature of their break with the forces of capitalism. For some it will be unionism, for others new human relations appear in the course of struggle, in discussions with other workers ... We don't have to wait for the appearance of workers groups according to some pre-planned process and with pre-established content reproducing the experiences of the past. They are only aspects (in a limited framework) of the contradictory and complex relationship between the working class, wage labour and the attempts to go beyond it.

X-File # 0003 date: 1984 Outcome? No Follow up....

journal: A Communist Effort

title: The Progression of the movement (extracts)

1) TOWARDS CIVIL WAR

It is true that the dynamic definition of communism, as long as capitalism remains unchallenged by even the beginnings of insurrections on a global scale, remains negative — this is its motive force ... = the destruction of all forms of capitalist domination, which themselves can be analysed as far as present possibilities allow us to gather information, think about them and discuss them, etc. Positive descriptions remain imprecise or abstract, such as the realisation of (in the dialectical sense of becoming real and gaining consciousness of) all our passions and desires, of our very being, or the supersession of art and philosophy (which has never been a definition, but only one way of describing communism). Particularities are hard to pin down, if one leaves aside the rubbish of pseudo-revolutionaries who would have us believe that a "new society" means "cheap fares" or "small is beautiful" or "a Bolshevik party in power implementing its 'historical' program". But if there is no revolution in the next month, and even more so if there is, I am still in favour of talking about precisely what we mean by communism, what each of us thinks certain aspects of it will be like. All communist revolutionaries have some ideas about it — to deny this would be a perfect example of overly pretentious objectivism, or even "followism" in the mould "Waiting is the only important thing we can do".

Some of us may have hang-ups about the left of capital, including a fear of changing into programmatists or bureaucrats, or ..., but doesn't our very activity, our intervention NOW, have any relation to our views on how the movement will progress, on what will be "generalisation" and what will be "setbacks", on what will be "radicalisation", etc.? Doesn't any kind of analysis of present manifestations of the movement rest on an understanding of what it will become, on possible futures for it, on the characteristics which are still deficient and on those which are possible gateways to escalation? More globally, oughtn't we to be confronting our ideas on possible futures for the movement on a planetary level which would be part of what some comrades have called "an analysis of the period"? As revolutionaries, that is as people who want the generalisation of all the proletarian assaults on capital in every way and area, and as people who fundamentally feel the necessity for something which has a name (communism), why should we shy away from thinking about what some aspects of the progression of the movement towards it will be like?

The conditions where this becomes more and more possible will be and are being created by the movement itself and are the same as the conditions for victory. Note that I am certainly not saying that the minority of the proletariat which is presently revolutionary (subjectively) has only to think out everything in its head and all will be portentous of imminent victory. But the movement, the Old Mole, has already created a specifically and consciously communist milieu — which has never been totally empty in the last 150-odd years — and it has created possibilities for us to have a certain practical weight. (Those who want to misinterpret this remark will do so.).

It is surprising how little is spoken of what each of us thinks about how the movement will progress, namely about what is a gateway and what is a dead-end. It is not enough to say for example "negotiation is a dead-end" and "anti-union workers' assemblies are a gateway" — TRUE, certainly, and also NECESSARY, but not enough.

Let's imagine a situation of a wildcat general strike which has been set in motion by masses of proletarians in progressively more lucid opposition to their enemies and their enemies' lackeys (unions,...) and which is developing towards insurrection and civil war by means of:—

- +++ occupations which unemployed proletarians as well as wage-slaves are beginning to rally to;
- +++ attacks on the strategic-ideological-military centres of enemy power such as police-stations, barracks, party-halls, etc.;
- +++ requisition and subversive use of
 - (1) present products, such as arms to fight troops, big meeting-rooms for discussion, communications networks for a global call-to-arms and rapid link-up, etc.;
 - and (2) the productive forces themselves, in order to produce such products (notably food and arms) as are required by the power of the nascent Workers' Councils.

(That is, imagine that a movement goes just beyond what were the highest highest point of class struggle in the last decade-and-a-half.)

If this came to pass, proletarians at this time would have to make some pretty crucial organisational decisions, including how to link up, how those who have not been delegated to conferences of delegates from their own base assemblies could be in possession of all information regarding these conferences preferably while they were in ~~progress~~ progress, how the armed side of class war can be won when all the proletarian side's strategies in the military sense would probably be easily known to the enemy,

The immediate step to the functioning of the official commodity economy -- wage-labour, buying from shopkeepers, etc. -- would be a fairly automatic result of the seizure of an area. But the problems would still exist of how to prevent an "unofficial" commodity economy -- black market, wide boys -- from thriving, and of how to develop the first stages of a property-less, money-less, commodity-less society given that its enemies would still exist, would be armed, and would be trying to drown it in blood. Similarly, partisans of self-managed wage-slavery would still be trying to pervert the movement into committing suicide by means of introducing another official commodity economy through sundry bureaucrats. (LR does not touch on these problems from this angle, and the "host of other questions to do with production and distribution in a socialist society" are legion, in particular -- but not only -- concerning the beginnings of communist society, which will occur when the military problems faced in class war will make themselves faced at every level.)

As I see it, it is useful to have a look at these problems, insofar as they can be partially seen now. LR and RE, who both to this partially (all analysis, this included, is partial -- I refer to the unchallenged gaps), do not talk of the concrete nature of what will be "the mightiest civil war humanity has ever seen" (Rosa Luxemburg), despite RE's mention of wreckage and rubble.

Whether we know it or not, our views on the content of intervention and on theoretical analysis of class struggles are INEXTRICABLY BOUND UP with how we think they might progress, on what we think are their weak points which might lead to defeats, and what we think are their strong points which might lead to intensification of struggle (radicalisation, arming itself, spreading,...).

The moments of self-organisation of struggle, especially in the form of standing general assemblies which have appeared intermittently in embryo form in dozens of areas (Spain, Poland,...) are the highest moments of class struggle in recent years. Revolutionaries should declare themselves in support of these, even if their surmountable shortcomings must be criticised, and should openly declare that the generalisation of this form, the Workers' Council, in all senses, is part of the gateway to victory in civil war and revolution.

Social relations under capitalism, from wage-labour to the social lie, hinge on the fact that everything is alien to the vastest part of the world's population, the proletariat. Most proletarians are herded into forced labour where they are allowed to touch, use and reproduce the productive forces (including their own existence and in a wider sense present social relations, as well as machines, etc.) according to the needs of whichever capital it is which accumulates the surplus value that the exploitation of their labour-power sets in motion, i.e. brings into existence for future realisation or reinvestment if possible. Other proletarians are forced into the same thing but purely in the terrain of reproduction of the physical existence of that major productive force -- the proletariat itself. Domestic unwaged labourers come into this category, as do nurses, roadsweepers, etc. Still others are not even allowed near the productive forces, but are maintained at whatever subsistence level the "period" of capitalism prefers, given the bank-balance of whichever State it is, or whether there is any ~~xxx~~ possibility that they will be herded into wage-labour at a later date (less and less likely), politico-economic considerations, etc.

This poses the question -- the concrete historical question -- of what is the opposite to alienation? What can we know about it now, even in descriptive terms? Isn't it true that we will feel qualitatively different emotions in communism? Isn't communism more than just a quantitative variation on capitalism?

Insofar as we can know anything about it now, the following will be true:

(1) +++ People will have a better, more fluid, more conscious idea of what they need, what they desire -- one of the reasons being the profoundly dialectical one that there will be no unnatural barriers to them actually getting it!

(2) +++ The new social relations will be able to be described, as they already have been, in ways such as:

*** a society where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

*** the free construction of situations in all aspects of life.

*** a society where

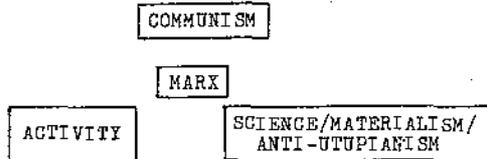
"the eye has become a human eye, just as its object has become a social, human object, made by man for man" and where "the senses have therefore become theoreticians in their immediate praxis."

(Add Manuscripts).

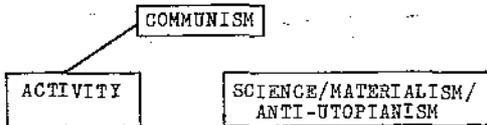
(3) +++ People will have to be able to organise material production and distribution according to their needs (which is not simple but will need a lot of thought) and according to their conscious negation of markets and private property, which will obviously be consigned to prehistory where they belong.

X-File # 0004 date: ? Outcome? possible spoof file?
 journal: ?
 title: A contribution to the critique of Marx

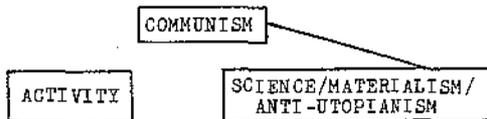
By way of summing up, I would like to restate what I have already said in a slightly different way. The dilemma which Marx found himself in was very much the same as that which still confronts communists today. Marx yearned for communism at a time when only capitalist struggles offered any chances of success in the reasonably near future. Like most present-day communists he was frustrated by inactivity too. The third source of tension was that he wanted to have done with utopianism and to be 'scientific'. We can thus represent Marx's dilemma graphically by a diagram which shows Marx occupying the middle ground between 'communism', 'activity' and 'science' (we could just as well call this last factor 'materialism' or 'anti-utopianism').



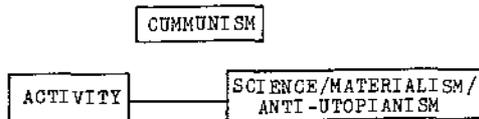
Marx wanted to close the three sides of this triangle but, in the conditions of his day, it was impossible to do this. Try as one might, only one side of the triangle could be closed. One could try to be an active communist, i.e.:-



but this left one open to the charge of being utopian, since one's 'activity' was like thrashing about in a vacuum. One could be a scientific communist, i.e.:-



but, since science demanded that one recognise that communism offered no prospects of anything but the very longest-term success, one was bound to be accused of inactivity, or at least of standing aside from the mass struggles that were in process. Finally, one could be active and 'materialist' (or 'scientific' in the sense of engaging in what Engels called "the already existing" movement), i.e.:-



but - as we have seen - this could only put one's commitment to communism at risk.

The answer to this riddle is, of course, that only the working class as a whole, rather than individual revolutionaries, can bridge the three sides of this triangle. Until the workers do close this triangle, all we more or less isolated revolutionaries are stuck with this dilemma. What makes it particularly painful is precisely that there is no solution at the level of the isolated individual revolutionary (or revolutionary group). However distasteful it might be, in the absence of communist consciousness among the mass of the working class, the individual revolutionary has to give up something. The only choice we have is to decide which one of the three factors we have represented in our diagram ('communism', 'activity' or 'science'/'materialism'/'anti-utopianism') we choose to abandon. Without becoming sentimental, this is the tragedy of anyone who desires to be a revolutionary socialist under present conditions - and Marx demonstrates that tragedy particularly well.

SEDUCED AND ABANDONED...

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your declared interest in the 'Study Group'. We have decided for the moment, though, that this should be, in effect, for people close to the CWO, members, supporters and sympathisers. This will allow the achievement of a number of things. This state of affairs will continue for the time being. Unfortunately we do not believe that a huge diversity of people from different political tendencies is right for the declared aims of the 'Study Group' just at present. This need not be the case for ever.

In our readings of your texts we have found a number, obviously, of radical divergences from our political standpoints, analyses and principles. We believe that these should be addressed in a quite different manner. The suggestion has been that a particular comrade engage in informal discussions of these differences so that in the future there is a well-explored clarity with regard to them. We hope that we shall have some contact in

the

near

future.

3-Dialectics

Handy Hint - Place this volume close to your eyes. Try not to focus directly on the ideas but on a theoretical point behind the ideas. Move the volume away from your eyes slowly approaching an arms length distance - do not refocus your eyes, keep them trained on the same theoretical point. This is the difficult part. A 3-d idea will slowly emerge. Do not try to see it in its entirety or 'snatch' at a part of it... it will disappear. Be patient.