

Our Capitalist Unions

IT is ironic that in the very season when more massive action is being planned by trade unionists than we have seen for years we should also be treated to the spectacle of vicious in-fighting in both the trades union movement and the Labour Party itself.

In-fighting which, it must be said, has nothing to do with the 'emancipation of the masses' but everything to do with either the seizure of the consolidation of leadership, the protection of the institutions of 'The Labour Movement', and the presentation of a 'respectable' face to the electorate in time for the next election.

Not that the massive action itself should not be seen as part of the in-fighting as well, for the right wings of the Party and the unions are very conscious that they have to maintain a credibility in the face of working class suffering that will pull the carpet from under the Militant Tendency and show that the old party that everybody knew and loved and voted for in their millions in the past can still get up and scare the pants off the Tories—without being 'extreme' or unBritish or Marxist or anything horrible like that.

It is in fact extraordinary that the Tories should have chosen (if in fact they did choose) to stand their monetarist ground on the issue of pay for the health workers. For if there is one section of the working class that it absolutely gilt-edged in the eyes of the public it must be the nurses. There is even a TV series called 'Angels' about behind-the-scenes life in our hospitals, which, thankfully, shows that some nurses are not all that angelic in every way. But doesn't that make them more human and, thus, even more lovable?

But Mrs Thatcher and her foul Mr Fowler, Health Minister for the Upper Classes, are so besotted by their own monetarism and their devotion to duty up to and beyond the deaths of others, that they couldn't really believe that the nurses could strike and still retain the sympathy of the public. Like Ted Heath in choosing to do battle with the miners, with their enormous industrial muscle, they have made a serious tactical blunder which may well cost them very dear. Not only are their actions politicising a section

of workers who have in the past been remarkable for putting dedication before pay (The Royal College of Nursing is now considering removing the 'no strike' clause from their rule book!) but they have provided the centre and right of the trade union movement with a prime opportunity to DEFY THE LAW with a tremendous weight of public opinion in secret and sly sympathy with them.

The law is of course that one recently introduced by the Conservatives which tries to ban, by making unlawful, secondary picketing or industrial action in support of somebody else's industrial action. In other words, solidarity.

We must not go overboard, however, in admiration for the new-found courage of Len Murray and Co, for they are very careful, in all their public announcements, to make clear that they are not directing their members to come out on September 22nd, (not like they would direct them to go back to work in an unofficial strike, for instance) but that they are simply asking for gestures, in sympathy, according to individuals' inclinations or abilities or degree of militancy—whoop, sorry!

If the Labour Party does not screw every possible ounce of advantage out of this situation, then it certainly does not deserve to get back to Downing Street come the next election. Mr Fowler has categorically (for the second time) said there is absolutely no more money for the health workers. If he is forced to yield, there will be only one honest way out for him: into the woods with a shot-gun. But we feel he does not have the moral fibre for that.

On the other hand, the terrible railwaymen, everybody's villains a few weeks back, could stop work for an hour in the middle of the day and hardly anybody would notice. All public transport could stop; tanker drivers take an extra hour for lunch; power workers throw the switches; miners leave the coalface an hour early; teachers cut lessons, tailors cut less cloth, bakers bake a loaf or two less, car builders build one car less, bricklayers leave out an hour's courses—all gestures from workers to show their contempt for the Government's mean policies, and all to no avail.

If Mr Leonard Murray and his new-found (?) mate Mr Frank Chapple, next Chairman of the TUC and right-wing convert from the Communist Party, really want to show their contempt for Tory policies, they would call a general strike of indeterminate length to stop once and for all the concept that a government can dictate standards of living to working people—especially those as economically weak but as morally strong as health workers.

But the fact is that they do not have contempt for government policies, because they are in the same game themselves: the game of controlling the workers in the national interest and the continuance of the capitalist system, with, at best, a few rough edges rubbed off.

The end of capitalism, after all, would mean the end of the need for trades unions, necessary only in a class-divided society where there is an employing class (private or state) and thus divided interests necessitating mediators between employers and employed. This is the role of the unions: mediators, trusted by the bosses as

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responsible, right-thinking and law abiding, no less than by the workers, sold on the concept of obedience and the necessity for bosses.

It is not surprising therefore to find trades unions structured just like capitalist firms, with a ladder of success up which the ambitious official can climb, paying himself, with the approval of his fellow climbers, salaries far in advance of the wages of the workers he is paid to represent and with a safe pension at the end of his days—a pension made safe by investing the funds in capitalist stocks and shares. How can you expect TU leaders to fight a system out of which they do so well?

Of course you can't, any more than you can expect politicians to fight effectively against the system which offers them position, privilege and fame which, once achieved, opens doors on to the boardrooms of capitalist companies where the idea of workers' control leaves them all rolling on the floor with laughter.

It is the myth at the back of all socialist parties that, once their members have achieved power they will operate it in the interests of everybody else except themselves. Generations of backsliders in the Labour Party have not convinced the members of the Militant Tendency that their selected front-runners will not be the same in their turn. To get to the top you have to have what it takes to succeed in a centralised set-up, by which time you are convinced that you know better than anybody else what is good for them. At the best you become paternalistic, at the worst dictatorial.

The issue of syndicalism must be raised in this argument—as it is being, coincidentally, in our pages—since it presents the only alternative to unionism which can be logically linked with anarchism, and representing anarchist ideas applied to the industrial scene.

We must always be careful to draw the distinction between that—which must be accurately described as anarcho-syndicalism—and 'straight' syndicalism, which is factually a form of industrial unionism: a higher form of unionism in that it brings together all workers in any one industry rather than the fragmentary *trades* structure of the reformist unions we know today. Unification in industrial unions, however, can work, as it does in Germany today, for the convenience of the bosses, where these are allowed to exist.

It is only when syndicalists are guided by anarchist aims and principles that the purely structural benefits of that form of industrial organisation can be used for revolutionary ends. Those who argue that involvement in the day-to-day struggle will inevitably whittle away revolutionary consciousness had better, first, examine their own consciences about how many times they have marched with others against a particular war, against particular weapons, or—assuming we will be march-

Over-the-Top Cops Lose 2-1

'Passive demonstrators being panicked? Isn't that a contradiction in terms?'

'I think black flags in themselves are threatening, the pirate Jolly Roger is black, isn't it? Well, it always is in pantomime, with a skull and crossbones too, yes, it's very threatening, isn't it?'

'Don't these peace marchers go to Aldermaston, or somewhere, these days?'

THESE pearls of wisdom, incisive comment and informed opinion, etc, etc, were uttered by one of those bastards... sorry... bastions of justice and fair play, a stipendiary magistrate (full time and paid for it). If it wasn't for the fact that an idiot like that has the power to wreck lives with a nod and a wave of the hand (a magistrate can imprison for 6 months and/or fine you £2,000), hysterical laughter would be the only sane response.

3 of those arrested on June 6th during the Oxford St march found themselves in front of this right-thinking citizen on Tuesday (14th Sept) this week. That is, when he finally turned up, having been stuck somewhere south of Croydon (our thanks to the railworkers for their attempt to ensure justice by losing the berk permanently, nice try).

First up was Mark on a charge of threatening behaviour. After a fine catalogue of imaginative storytelling by Special Patrol Group officers Adams and Osborne, remarkable only for the lack of preparation in comparing stories beforehand, a quite convincing performance by the accused and several interruptions by the Magi we came to the moment of truth (whatever that is): guilty or not guilty? Off went the Magi rambling on and everywhere finally declaring that Mark was '96% guilty but unfortunately that wasn't enough.' Acquitted. Exit two pissed off SPG and several happy friends. One down, two to go. Actually, the one sane comment by the Magi came during this trial. On being told by Adams that Mark had 'radical literature in a carrier bag' the wise one declared 'nothing illegal in that. Mind you, you got the feeling that he added the afterthought 'more's the pity', but to think that would be an awful thought indeed. On with the circus.

The next two cases saw that fine comedy duo Batley and Mahoney, pride of

ing in September 22nd—for particular wage claims, while in our hearts and minds we comprehensively condemn the fundamental causes of all wars, all weapons and the wages system in toto.

Anarchists involved in industry (and there must be some!) know full well that the trades unions are a sell-out. What is the alternative? If it is not ANARCHO-syndicalism, what is it?

PS

Unit 3, SPG, engage in that witty patter that, if they had an ounce of personality between them, would place them last in any talent contest. Here we saw that use of the English language that belies any accusation of 'thick-headed cops'. A group of marchers became 'a stampeding herd, sweeping down across the width of the road', later this 'herd' became '50 or so running in single file like Indians', (were the SPG cowboys then?), people were 'terrified, scared, shocked, threatened', flags were waved 'like scythes' words like 'aggressive, stampeding, rampaging, barged, attacked' were sprinkled liberally throughout the police evidence. In the words of Mahoney, the poor members of the public subjected to 'awful abuse' were 'sadly, in the wrong place at the wrong time.' The evil thug responsible for the 'onslaught' on the 'innocent' pedestrians was in fact a quiet, somewhat frail looking youth named Rik. Again the 'evidence' bore little resemblance to reality or logic. Not that the Magi minded, he was sure, no doubt because he managed to stay alert during the police evidence at least, this time. Guilty. Conditional discharge with £30 costs. One all and next please.

John was the 'scything flag-waver'. Again Batley and Mahoney gave 'evidence'. Whilst their literacy and use of descriptive terms were well up to the standard of the previous case their numeracy was somewhat lacking. 2 or 3 became 10 to 15, 5 yds became 15, one saw 4, the other 8 or 9. This did not deter the Magi. After hearing all the evidence he didn't believe anything the accused said, in fact, he was sure John was nothing but a troublemaker, but, unfortunately, the defence counsel had raised doubts about identification and the 'quality of observation', by the police. If the police hadn't 'exaggerated slightly' he would have no doubts at all. But, acquitted.

The one observation the magistrate kept making was how he 'couldn't believe the police would attack a peaceful march, the police are neutral, peace-keepers, they give up their Sundays, when I'm sure they would rather be gardening, to go on marches to protect us all.'

We should be happy that at least two friends managed acquittals, our commiserations to Rik, before this antediluvian relic, but that was only due to police ineptitude. To hope for better luck in the next batch of Oxford St 48 cases (due on 26th October at Wells St Magistrates, London) would be wildly optimistic. We would urge you to support the Defence Campaign to the best of your ability. It's going to be needed. As for the magistrate, one last quote from this prime candidate for compulsory euthanasia;

'Didn't they have black flags like that at Omdurman; those dervish types?'

BRIQUE LEFLIC

Regimental March

I saw the posters in 'News from Nowhere' in Liverpool. 'Workers' March against Racism', London to Brighton and picket the TUC, This sounded fine. Even the information that it was organised by the Revolutionary Communist Party wasn't too off-putting. I didn't really know who they are and anyway they were only doing the organising, it was a *workers'* march. I didn't have the £30 but that was OK, I could work my passage, helping with stewarding, selling magazines, that sort of thing. Last Thursday, the 2nd, I went to Manchester and joined the minibus to London.

The journey took ages. When we arrived we were taken to an old theatre in Brick Lane. I didn't have a sleeping bag but one was found and we slept there on Friday night. On Saturday, we were got up very early and went to a rally in Itchy Park. There were about 200 people, mostly white. As a steward, I was put on anti-fascist watch. By this time I was beginning to feel a bit isolated. The whole thing was strictly organised, even regimented.

On Saturday night, there was a concert at the Fair Deal, Brixton. That was OK, although the organisation was everywhere as usual. If you left the hall, never mind the building, you couldn't get back in.

On Sunday, we set off for Brighton. This was to take three days, with camping in between. People marched from one place to another four abreast, with stewards to keep the ranks in order. We were given instructions about how to give a good impression and not upset people. Official song sheets were distributed. Dreadful, stilted slogans set to well known tunes. It included the Internationale, but the English to that is dreadful, stilted slogans as well. The tidy ranks set off and that night we reached Redhill. There was militaristic singing around campfires. A stewards meeting was held and people were issued with whistles and snooker cues. The Site was carefully patrolled. We were told to keep everybody in order 'for their own protection'. The paranoia and need for internal discipline was reinforced by the

fascist leaflets scattered on the road to the camping field. (I was struck by similarities, the fascist call was to build unity (national) by 'getting the blacks', the communists wanted unity (class) by 'getting the racists'). We even saw some fascists, perhaps a dozen of them. Later, a midnight alarm brought people out, waving their snooker cues, to run into a group of SPG, who were patrolling the boundaries.

I was becoming more of an outcast. This was relieved by meeting another anarchist. But I was certainly in official disfavour. I was summoned and reprimanded because 'very reliable sources' had reported me for 'speaking to the police'. Well, they could be better company than the endless rhetoric and slogans. I was also told off because other very reliable sources said I had been smoking dope. Hardly likely, I'm allergic to it and would have thrown up straightaway. . . The other anarchist was accused of 'backstabbing'. It seemed that little spies were everywhere. Nowhere was there any concern for individuals, the talk was all of 'the workers' and we were treated accordingly.

The enthusiasm of the marchers was coaxed with promises of hot showers at the end of the day. We weren't told that they had to be paid for. By this time I was sick. I have stomach trouble and it wasn't helped by the uninspiring food. To be fair, I suppose that the organisation was difficult, but these people do expect to organise a revolution, they have very firm views on that. Provision for vegetarians was particularly meagre.

On Tuesday morning, I was told I was to be thrown off the March. I had 'lowered morale by complaining'. I wasn't allowed to speak to anyone. A van was going back to London and I was put in it. They dumped me at Waterloo and gave me some money. Some food and a couple of Tube fares soon demolished a large part of that, and how was it to get back to Liverpool? I found my way to FREEDOM, where I found a welcome and somewhere to stay.

It's been an educational experience. I'm sure that its not just me. Other people were unhappy with the regimentation, the forced speed of the marching, the straight lines. I am convinced that the whole thing was a recruiting and publicity exercise for the RCP. For this greater end, the people, the 'masses' of the fetish were to be used. I am worried for other young people who get involved and brainwashed. Their hard people already have their blueprints for 'after the revolution'. When they have a conference called 'Preparing for Power', they mean it. Anarchists ('bourgeois liberals') have no place. I asked what a small community who are self sufficient, who minded their own business. 'It wouldn't be allowed'.

One thing that I particularly resent is that I wasn't allowed to speak to anyone to exchange addresses. If you see this, Tim, please write, c/o FREEDOM.

ANNA

IN BRIEF MORE ON PAGE 5!

WE know that the old slogan says that whoever you vote for the government gets in, but this is ridiculous. After the collapse of the 42nd Italian government since the war a new coalition has been put together. It contains exactly the same 27 people. These tireless public servants are helped by 57 under-secretaries. 56 of these are also to continue. The other one died last month.

ANOTHER old favourite is that if voting could change the system, they would make it illegal. However, due process must be carried out and this has caused problems in Brazil. The long awaited elections have had to be postponed again. The latest changes in the rules to prevent any chance of a defeat have delayed the printing of the ballot papers.

VELLERAT, Switzerland (pop 68) has declared its independence from the canton of Berne.

WILDCAT



SUNDAY



Armed Struggle in America

Dear Comrades,

Firstly, let me say that I am not a member of any organisation and that I, therefore, write only as an individual. This letter arises out of a deep concern for certain contents in an article published in the Sunday Times Magazine on September 5 this year. The subject of the piece was the upcoming trial, in the United States, of various individuals from various groups, all from the radical left, engaged, since the late sixties, in armed struggle. I think that we were all aware of the arrests that took place in October last year as a result of an attack on a security van and its aftermath. Yet the Sunday Times article has three deeply disturbing facts listed a) the levels of public hysteria in the locality from which the jury is to be selected b) that the accused face a possible death penalty and c) the total lack of a defense committee. Under these circumstances a fair trial cannot be guaranteed.

The reason I have decided to write to you is not simply to inform you of the situation but to ask you to give the case maximum publicity in your journal and, more importantly, to use every pressure and every contact you have to get the American left to set up an active defense committee and to get the facts of the case out and heard on every campus, every ghetto and throughout the US. I realise that there will be a certain reserve on the part of many due to the added component of armed struggle but I am not seeking an endorsement of that. What I am asking for is for pressure to be applied so that we can be assured that the legal rights of the accused be respected and that they receive a fair trial. In addition to this we must express a specifically political solidarity with those on trial because they are a part of the left, hence, a part of us.

Many of us became radicalised during the sixties as a result of the anti-Vietnam war struggle and the black liberation movement in the United States as did the defendants. The inclusion of the Weather Underground, the Black Liberation Army and the Republic of New Afrika can only mean that our entire political experience of attempting to formulate a new politics throughout the 60's and 70's is on trial.

Already, the chief defense lawyer, Bill Kunstler, has accused the police of brutality towards at least one defendant. We are told that machine guns will be inside the courtroom. We in Europe are familiar with all of this from the 'trials' at Stammheim; the April 7 defendants, etc. We

WHILE the media goes apopleptic about the suppression of civil rights in Poland the British state is preparing itself for its biggest show trial for years—and once again its the notorious conspiracy laws which will be at the centre. Following on from the Angry Brigade trial in 1972, the Shrewsbury flying pickets trial in 1973, the pacifists incitement to disaffection trial in 1975, the Persons Unknown trial in 1978 and the recent Bradford 12 case, the state has singled out 10 (at the moment!) Welsh republicans and anarchists for its latest attack.

During the past two years 13 bombs have been planted at various targets in England and Wales. A previously unheard of group called the Workers Army of the Welsh Republic has claimed responsibility for the last six bombs. Early in January police officers from Scotland Yard, City of London, West Midlands, Warwickshire and South Wales forces met in Birmingham to co-ordinate their efforts to uncover WAWR. Towards the end of April and throughout May they questioned and released at least 13 people, and charged a further six with offences under the Explosive Substances Act 1883. Basically what they have done is to arrest the most likely faces that fit the frame and then go looking for evidence afterwards. Nicholas Hodges, Dave Burns, Adrian Stone, Jenny Smith, Gareth Westacott and Dafydd Burns are all denying the various charges brought against them. There is no evidence against any of these six apart from the usual police concocted verbals. Robert Griffiths and John Jenkins (who served a 10 year sentence for his bombing campaign in Wales during the late 60's and has been the object of continuous police harassment since

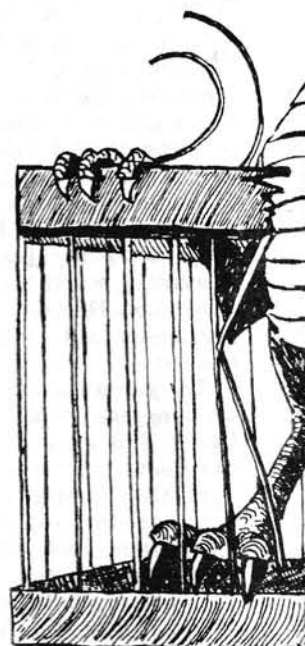
must do our utmost to stop any railroad-ing in this present case.

Before closing, allow me to remind you of the current political climate that exists in America without deigning to mention the vicious mediocrity that parades under the name of Ronald Reagan. Since 1978 there has been a whole series of assassinations directed against the American left: Vernon Jordan (unsuccessful); Allard Lowenstein; Sarah Rubicoff; Robert Hillsborough; George Moscone and Harvey Milk and so on. On top of this, five leftists were murdered and several injured in a televised attack that showed the faces of the killers. The assassins were later to be acquitted by an all white jury. It is in this climate that the comrades of the Weather Underground, the Black Liberation Army and the Republic of New Afrika are being tried.

A legal lynching is about to begin. I ask for your solidarity for them—their lives may depend on it.

Yours fraternally,
VINCENT AUMONT
West Ewell

Armed Struggle



DEFENCE MARCH

his release) are accused of assisting one of the other defendants to avoid arrest.

Dafydd Ladd (who was arrested by South Wales police in London after the dropping in court of the last charges against him relating to the Persons Unknown

A VISIT TO

A number of us anarchists here in sunny Reading spent the afternoon of Sunday 12th September loafing around the rooms and corridors of Reading Police Station. No, we hadn't been arrested, we had sneaked into 'Area Beat Officers at Home' Reading Police Station's very own open day. This is the very same cop shop as will be featured in the serial documentary 'Operation Carter' on TV and it also starred in the 'Police' series some time back.

We first were invited to meet our very own local foot police who, all smiles, hang around our streets and houses, leaning over our shoulders, spying on us, listening in to all the local gossip about us, using the more subtle and cunning means to enforce the law of the state. I didn't like the idea of chatting about police infiltration of society so I skipped that and went onto an exhibition of 'incriminating evidence'. This is the stuff they like showing off at press conferences after a major bust. A fake bomb here, rows of pistols and sawn off shotguns there, fake checks, fake coins, paint samples under a microscope, fingerprints, shopprint plastercasts



in Wales

With their continual delay in bringing evidence or proceeding with the trial, it seems likely that the DPP will authorise prosecution of all the defendants under the catch-all conspiracy laws. Some of the defendants have already been in Cardiff prison for over 4 months and if conspiracy charges are brought, it will be at least another year before the case comes to court.

To publicise what is happening Dave Burns, currently on remand in Cardiff prison, is standing in the Gower Parliamentary by-election on Sept 16th as a Welsh Political Prisoner candidate. His campaign is being deliberately obstructed by the prison authorities but a small group of supporters is actively campaigning in the constituency. Dave stresses that he is standing on behalf of all the prisoners and they are collectively running the campaign from their cells.

The Welsh Political Prisoners Defence Committee are organising support for the prisoners and publishing information bulletins (THE SECRETARY, WPPDC, c/o V P Mature Students, Students Union, Park Place, Cardiff). You can support the prisoners by sending letters and cards to them (Remand Wing, HM Prison, Knox Road, Cardiff). Most importantly however the Prisoners Defence Committee is organising a rally and march through Cardiff to the Prison on Saturday September 25th. It's important that this march is supported by people from all over Britain rather than just South Wales. A coach is being run from London for the march and you can phone FREEDOM Press for details. Bring as many anarchist flags/banners as possible.

case) and Brian Rees are pleading guilty to possessing detonators. There is no other charge against them and nothing to connect the other defendants with their offence, or them with the bombings.

PLANNED

THE NICK

etc: Of special interest (ho, ho!) was an impressive display of hookahs, chillums and cannabis pipes together with cannabis samples which they no doubt make use of themselves when nobody is looking.

This station is supposed to be the largest DIVISIONAL headquarters in Europe. Another fact that took me by surprise was that the Thames Valley is the lowest policed area in the whole of Britain (less police per head of population than anywhere else). They can, if they devote enough time and resources, solve any crime they boast and their record seems to show this. The reason so many breaches of the law are successful is that they haven't the time or couldn't be bothered to give full attention to all of them.

Next were 'museum' exhibits, mouldy old uniforms and helmets. One thing that often goes unnoticed is that the British police are one of the few police forces in the world that permanently wear helmets as opposed to a hat or a cap. This would seem to expose the lie that Britain is a country with a history of social calm. Also in display were rows of old truncheons all different shapes and sizes from over the

years, many of the Victorian ones colourfully decorated and emblazoned and all designed for clonking people on the head with.

The crime prevention officer gave us a quick chat about not leaving keys under doormats and so on and then it was off to the radio room where we find they have a direct video link with PNC (Police national computer). But a lot of their equipment looked a little old and while we were there they were making a right mess of things. Then we were taken downstairs to see what a police cell looked like, a familiar sort of place to some of us.

The police are pushing the community cop image for all its worth to try and prevent rebellion but I don't think it will have much effect. This was mostly a 'check your car tyres learn your green cross code' affair and they kept well clear of anything remotely related to the subject of, dare I mention the words, civil disturbances. Anyway, after scattering a few leaflets in the form of a mock recruitment leaflet (adapted from *Xtra!*) outside, we went home secure in the knowledge that, if we put eyeholes and mortice deadlocks in our doors, the SPG and Special Branch will be able to smash their way in anyway.

READING ANARCHISTS

IN BRIEF

A referendum in the Swiss Canton of Schaffhausen has overwhelmingly decided that future voting should be compulsory. Anybody failing in their civic duty will be liable to a fine of 3 francs (about 80p). About 30% of the electorate missed the referendum.

21 members of the Christian Democratic Party in Haiti have been given six years hard labour for insulting the president.

A Falkland Islander, Christopher Spall, has been fined £50 for possession of arms. He admitted having three machine guns, eight rifles, 37 rifle grenades, 43 flares, 8,599 rounds of ammunition, 135 loaded magazines and three 105mm cartridge cases. He told the court that there was a moral issue involved, 'I don't believe that we should stand idly by and hide behind the British forces.'

GENERAL Evren, military ruler of Turkey, has replied to 'Communist' criticism that the proposed new constitution decreases freedom. 'I have never said that the new constitution would increase freedoms. . . (It) is for the Turkish people and fits them.' Presumably in the event of any discrepancy steps can be taken to fit the people to it.

COMMENT from Mrs Peggy Stiff, chairwoman of one of the courts dealing with the cases arising from the police swoops on social security claims in Oxford, 'We consider this offence, defrauding the State, is a very serious one.'

SINCE the introduction of a mandatory one month waiting period for young people wanting to get married in northern Yugoslavia the drop out rate has been about 50%. 'Within the 30 days of their announcing their decision to get married every other couple have given up their plans. However, at times the bride was rushed from the ceremony to the maternity ward and on several occasions my colleague and I had to help the bride deliver a child in the office.' (Registry Official)

A Roman Catholic School in Deptford has withdrawn the offer of a place to a four year old girl because her parents are not married. The decision was taken by Father Flood, chairman of the governors, after he had personally written to the mother offering the place, £30 had been spent on a uniform and free meal vouchers issued.

AN unemployed person who is walking the length of Britain to raise funds for a hospital has had his benefit stopped because he is 'unavailable for work'.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTER

Anarcho-Syndicalism?

Dear FREEDOM,
I must admit to being totally amazed by NW's attack on syndicalism. I consider myself an anarcho-syndicalist because I believe that in a highly industrialised society such as ours it is through revolutionary workers' organisations that the social revolution is most likely to be achieved. However, according to NW people who adhere to this theory or try to put it into practice are of a 'trade union mentality', develop a 'gang consciousness' and consider those sections of the working class not industrially related to them as their enemies, irrespective of whether those 'enemies' may or may not hold similar political aspirations. Indeed the theory of syndicalism wanes before our very eyes as we read this article: the tendency of workers organisations based on open structures and revocable delegates is towards reformism, sectionism and authoritarianism imposed by an intolerant majority and immovable bureaucracy; this tendency worsens from 'strong' (likely?) to permanent (inevitable?) in only the time it takes to read one brief paragraph. By the time this letter reaches you I dread to think what syndicalism will have become.

NW lists the principle shortcomings of the British trade union movement and suggests these are some of the less obvious disadvantages of syndicalism; that is rather like holding the working class responsible for the failures of capitalism or the victims responsible for their own rape. Day-to-day issues along with struggles for improved pay and conditions also fell foul at NW's acid pen, presumably then anarchists should not support the NHS workers struggle for higher pay and would argue against the sympathy strikes by NUM, EPTU etc, nor should anarchists campaign to improve conditions which endanger people's health in their work places. Means and ends are vital to the success of a social revolution but I do not believe that this should mean that we exist in an arena where revolutionary actions are the only ones to be supported or carried out.

It is often the case that when individuals find that their arguments are on rather thin ground they will point to someone well known who said the same thing a long time ago and this somehow gives their argument greater credibility. State socialists are particularly prone to such a fallibility and it is one of the many pleasures of being a libertarian to point this out to them. Frankly the fact that NW is repeating something that Malatesta said seventy five years ago impresses me little, no more than he would be impressed were I to merely base my reply upon the defence of syndicalism by Monatte. To say that 'Malatesta's warning... was borne out over and over again in the later experience of the labour movement in many countries and several revolutions' is to place the

blame for the failure of libertarianism to become a powerful force entirely upon shoulders of the syndicalists and as such is hardly justified.

By the end of the article NW's pen is positively frothing at the nib; having earlier warned us that for syndicalists life circulates around work, (I am at present unemployed so presumably, given my beliefs, I should not exist and cannot be writing this letter at the moment), he goes on to infer that in syndicalist society people would have to work—forced labour—and would have to join a union—closed shop. This ludicrous conclusion puts in a clearer light the vague accusations that went before it.

Yours sincerely,
IAN SWAIN

Dear FREEDOM and Readers,
In reply to NW's 'The Poverty of Syndicalism' (FREEDOM Aug 21) we would like to point out;

1. NW confuses the sectionalism and conservatism of existing unions with Anarcho-syndicalist unions. Sectionalism can be overcome by solidarity struggles with fellow workers and other groups in society. Authoritarianism can be overcome by libertarian organization such as doing away with paid officials remote from the work place and a whole host of other measures.

2. To compare direct action over hours, pay conditions, sackings etc with involvement in parliamentary or marxist parties is totally false. The former is about people having some degree of control over their own lives, the latter are worse than useless and are rejected by Anarcho-syndicalists who take the aspirations of the people to their conclusion. By replacing capitalism with complete workers control, and by the overthrow of the state.

3. Like it or not, most of us live in an urban industrial society, in which the vast majority of the people have to spend much of their lives working for the master class, or are thrown on the scrap heap when it suits capitalism. No amount of visionary dreaming will change this situation. Only by recognising the modern world, organising and getting involved in the class struggle can we hope to create social revolution. Without class struggle Anarchism degenerates into Liberal Reformism.

4. Direct Action Movement are now preparing a pamphlet to provide more information on Anarcho-Syndicalism. In the meantime we ask other readers what they think, and NW how he would propose creating an anarchist society. This we say in the belief that the workers' organisations are too important to leave to the authoritarians.

THE MEMBERS OF LEEDS
DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT

MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY!

Dear FREEDOM readers,
Many of you are, no doubt, involved in the animal rights movement. Perhaps some of you were at the demonstration against vivisection at the Huntingdon Research Centre (August 30). This received a good deal of publicity concerning the direct action and violence that occurred.

I cannot, in all honesty, call myself a pacifist, but I strongly oppose unnecessary violence. So how do you define 'unnecessary violence'?

When you challenge all, or part, of the establishment, you are bound to come into direct conflict with the police at some point. The force needed to overcome this opposition should be, in my opinion, the least necessary force, and used with regret. I was disturbed to see many people at Huntingdon, throwing stones from the back of the crowd, at the police, while the people at the front, using direct action, were having to take the consequences not only of their own actions, but of those who, in relative safety, threw stones.

I believe if conflict occurs it must arise as part of the campaign we are involved in, not because we've been done for parking on double yellow lines or because we want to legalise cannabis etc. Otherwise the cause can only lose credibility. People who have grudges to bear should not vent their anger while standing behind others at an anti-vivisection demo.

Another thing that really pissed me off was seeing people, including a group of anarchist punks, shouting sieg-heil and doing Nazi salutes to the police. It was obvious to any with half a brain cell that they were making a sarcastic comment on the authoritarian puppets, but as we all know, the press etc do not have half a brain cell between them. If they had chosen to pursue this point it would, no doubt, have been presented to the public that we were fascists.

Again, anyone with half a brain cell can see that there is a ridiculous and fundamental contradiction that someone, who is for equality of animals, should not be for equality of humans. But people buy papers like the Sun because life is crap and they do not want to think too much. I'm not saying that we should pander to the press, but Joe Public is the person we must reach if we want to change society. So if we get slagged off for being in conflict with the police, let it be because we are anarchists, because we believe that all creatures have a right to live out their lives without persecution, not simply because we feel like bricking a copper.

Remember, they might be bastards, but they're all sucked up in the indoctrination machine just like the rest of us
Sincerely,
CLIXBY
Worcester

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTER

FREUDIAN

Dear FREEDOM,
Pat Flanagan has surely missed the point of D M Thomas's novel *The White Hotel* (Review, 28 August). It isn't just about but against Freud, taking him (like Marx) at his weakest, when faced with the aesthetic and imaginative life.

Thomas treats Freud's theory as a myth in the double sense of a dominant ideology and a plausible lie. Much of the narrative is expressed in terms of and seems to accept the truth of the ideology of psychoanalysis, yet as it develops it reveals layer after layer of truth in which psychoanalysis is wrong and wrong again. The climax at Babi Yar belongs to parapsychology rather than psychology, when the pains suffered by the heroine are shown to be not the result of past repression but the premonition of future death.

Such judgements may be just a matter of opinion, but I find the book at the same time a fascinating and coherent work of fiction and a funny and convincing critique of psychiatric dogma.
NW

COMMUNICATION WANTED

Dear FREEDOM,
Since becoming involved in anarchism it seems to me that there is very little contact between local groups. I would have thought that communication between @ groups around the country would be imperative to make anarchists an effective force. Instead the authorities can pick us off easily because of our small numbers.

I also agree with a 'friend' who wrote to you saying about anarchist punks. Can you include more about them. I am not a punk as such (though I like Crass, Flux of Pink Indians, Poison Girls etc) yet nearly every anarchist I know is a punk and the true punk movement has contributed more to the anarchist stand in the last five years than any group before (correct me if I'm wrong!). The true punks are non-violent and certainly do not conform to the media image of punks that has been built up around the Sex Pistols, The Clash etc. (not that I'm saying the Sex Pistols or other early punk bands are violent etc but that the authorities through the media have contorted the punks anarchy stance, yet another scapegoat for the power-bleeders)

I have come into the anarchist movement through the Animal Liberation movement and would hope that you will include more about this movement in future issues of FREEDOM. The Animal Liberation Movement and the Peace Movement are probably the two movements where direct action can be employed. An encouraging example was the action at Porton Down, where nearly

2000 people invaded the MoD's land to get to the torture laboratories.

I think the anarchist movement should be reaching out to more people in the Animal Liberation and Peace Movements—to show them that their fight is not a separate movement but inextricably linked together; and is summed up in three words that are used to mean various things dependent upon the user but seem to sum up anarchism. They are love, peace and freedom.

We cannot sit back and wallow in small victories; in all aspects of life governments are racing full speed ahead to destroy us, non-human animals, and the rest of the life on the planet. And it is all based on greed for profit and power: the majestic forests of the Tropics are being decimated in short term gain schemes, people are dying of hunger because western society demands a meat orientated diet that uses up at least 8 pounds of grain that could be fed to the starving to yield 1 pound of dead flesh. For us pollution is causing unknown changes in the environment, nuclear waste, and nuclear weapons are escalating, and governments and the wealthy ask for more, more money, more power.

The benefits of carefully using the technology we have got would be incredible, but instead it is money, profit, wealth in a world of consumerism. We are constantly bombarded by propaganda that brainwashes the majority to think that things are going quite well enough, just a little hiccup now and again but nothing to worry about, all you have to do is work and earn that measly wage so we can bleed you dry and use you for our wars.

Blindly we are rushing headlong into destruction and the only voice of sanity are anarchists, non-violent, advocating love, peace and freedom, but most of all getting out and reaching out to the people and using direct action where ever necessary to stop the rich power crazed remnants of human beings from destroying our world.

LINDSAY HART
Upton-on-Severn

QUESTION!

Dear FREEDOM,
I invoke Andy's Rule number 1 (Institutions and Political Relevance FREEDOM 7 August) that 'everything must be questioned, whatever the consequences.' I question the idea behind Wildcat (same issue). Does the chap with the gun and the conservative suit (with a small 'c'), who is presumably meant to be Jewish, speak for all Jews? For the Zionists? For the Jewish Chronicle? For Menachem Begin? For himself? Is the Wildcat cartoonist a card-carrying member of the National Front? Am I paranoid or have I misunderstood the meaning of the cartoon? Will someone please explain it?
Life,
STEVE

RUBBISH BUSTER!

Dear Friends,
For the fun of it, I sent in a subscription to PLAIN TRUTH magazine, to see what silly rightwing super-Christians are up to. Even if you haven't seen this mag, I expect you can guess what they say.

It's dangerous stuff. If you believe in Christ, then you will survive the coming nuclear war—all 'the elect' will survive. Nuclear war is to be God's way of punishing the reprobate and anarchists. Readers of the PLAIN TRUTH are made to believe that revolutionaries, peace campaigners, etc, are evil and are working against God's plans for our world.

This junk has got to be seen to be believed. Subscription to the PLAIN TRUTH is free—and you can get free books too—so subscribe now, and every time you see another ad, subscribe again (use a different name and address if possible, or their computer might rumble you).

If we all do this, we'll bust 'em.
(Do look at a copy of this rubbish—it's so inspiring).

Love,
THEODORE GREMLIN



double size issue for peaceniks beatniks kool
kats hepcats and bohemians everywhere edited
and published by bebe zoot 67 chiswell green
lane st albans herts single issues 25p inc
post sub for six issues £1.50 contributions
not welcome correspondence rarely answered

For Jeff Cloues
and Dennis Gould

FREEDOM CONTACTS

ABERDEEN

Subversive Graffiti Collective, c/o 163 King St, Aberdeen (includes the ex-members of Aberdeen Solidarity). Activities include production of a local free news-sheet.

BASILDON

Are there any anarchists out there in Basildon, Essex area? Contact—Mark, 27 Little Lullaway, Basildon Essex.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Bedfordshire and isolated Anarchists, write John 81 F Bromham Rd, Bedford MK40 2AH

BELFAST

Anarchist Collective, Just Books, 7 Winetavern St, Belfast

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham 'Angry', c/o Peace Centre, 18 Moor St Birmingham DAM, c/o Peace Centre 18 Mare St, Ringway Birmingham

BRISTOL

L Bedminster, 110 Grenville Rd, Bristol 3
Box 010, Full Marks Bookshop, 197 Cheittham Road, Bristol 6

BURNLEY

BAG, c/o 2 Quarrybank.

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Anarchists, c/o 186 East Rd, Cambridge
East Anglian Anarchist Federation c/o Grapevine, 186 East Road.

CANTERBURY

Alternative Research Group, Students Union, University of Kent, Canterbury
Canterbury Anarchist Group, Contact Address: Andrew Savage, 177 Old Dover Rd.

CARDIFF

c/o 108 Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Rd, Cardiff 2
Whistle Blowers, Box 999, 108 Salisbury Rd.

CLEVELAND

25 Liverton Crescent, Thornby, Also produces 'Common Cause' local anarchist paper.

CLYDESIDE

Clydeside Anarchists, Box 3, 488 Gt Western Rd, Glasgow G12

COVENTRY

Coventry Anarchists, c/o G Fyfe, 23 Radford Rd, Leamington Spa

CRAWLEY

Libertarian Group, Ray Cowper, 1 Bluebell Close Crawley W Sussex.

CUMBRIA

2 Forestry Cottages, Millfield, Hutton Roof, Penrith

DERBY

Black Ram, c/o Forum Books, 86 Abbey St, Tel: Derby 368039

DONCASTER

Doncaster Anarchist Centre, 49a Doncaster Market Place

DUBLIN

Love & Power, Whelan's Dance Studio, 51 South King St, Dublin 2

ESSEX

DAM, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gdns, Saffron Walden, Essex
Oral Abortions, The Catskills, Maldon Rd, Gay Bowers, Danbury

EXETER

Anarchist Collective, c/o Community Association, Devonshire House, Stocker Rd

FORMBY

Floating Free, 58 Freshfield Rd, Formby, Merseyside L3 73HW

GLASGOW

Subversive Graffiti c/o Box 1984 Glasgow Young Anarchists, c/o Box 1984,

'Practical Anarchy (monthly free broadsheet, send large sae) c/o Box 3 Rendezvous Group, c/o Box 68; produces councillor leaflets. Calderwood 15/GPP pamphlets c/o Box V2

All at Glasgow Bookshop Collective, 488 Gt Western Rd, G12. (Kelvinbridge Subway)

HUDDERSFIELD

Huddersfield Anarchist Group & DAM, Box DAM, c/o Peaceworks, 58 Wakefield Rd, Huddersfield

HULL

Hull @ Group, 23 Nott St, (moving in Sept to 24 Albany St)
Libertarian Collective, 70 Perth HUS 3NZ

KEELE

Keele University Anarchist Group + North Staffs Libertarians, c/o R Knight, Keele University

KEIGHLEY

Anarchists, c/o Simon Saxton, 1 Selbourne Grove, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD21 25L

LAMPETER

Anarchist Group, c/o Adian James, SDUC, Lampeter, Dyfed SA48 7ED Wales

LEAMINGTON

and Warwick, c/o 42 Bath St, Leamington Spa.

LEEDS

Leeds Anarchist Group, Box LAP A, 59 Cookridge St, LS2 3AW
DAM + Federation of Leeds Anarchists, Box RU.

LEICESTER

Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Libertarian Education, 6 Beaconsfield Rd, (tel 552085)

The Anarchist Society, Societies' Room, Student's Union Building, University of Leicester, University Rd, LE1 7RH

LONDON

Anarchy Magazine, Box A 84b Whitechapel High St London E1
FREEDOM Collective, Angel Alley 84b Whitechapel High St, E1 (01-247 9249). Aldgate East tube, nr Whitechapel Art Gallery.

Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh St, WC1, Meet Thursdays 7pm
London Workers Group, 11 Leyden St, E1.

121 Books/Anarchist Centre, 121 Raitlon Rd, London SE24 Tel: 274 6655

Anarchist-Feminist Newsletter, c/o 121 Raitlon Rd, SE24

Pigs for Slaughter+Anarchist Youth Federation, c/o 121 Raitlon Rd
South London Anarchist Group (SLAG) c/o 121 Raitlon Rd
South London DAM, c/o Raitlon Rd SE24

South London Stress, c/o 121 Raitlon Rd SE24
Squatters Defence Network, c/o 121 Raitlon Rd SE24.

Toxic Graffiti, c/o 121 Raitlon Rd, SE24.

West London Anarchists contact John Sanders, 4 Naylor House Mozart Estate W10.
Martin Nicholas, 186 Mount Pleasant Road, London N17

MALVERN

and Worcester area, Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrige, Worcestershire.

MANCHESTER

'Wildcat' or 'Solidarity' at: Box 25, 164/5 Corn Exchange, Hanging Ditch, M4 3BN

MERSEYSIDE

Box LAG, 37 Bagot Street Waver-tree, Merseyside L15 2HA.

MORECAMBE & LANCASTER

North Lancs Libertarians, c/o Cliff M Poxon, 13 Carleton St, Morecambe, Lancs LA4 4NX

NORWICH

Norwich @ Group, c/o Box 6, FREE-WHEEL, 52-54 King St
NOTTINGHAM

Jackie Veevers, 7 Irene Tce, Basford, Individuals Anonymous 12p SAE, above address

OLDHAM

Nigel Broadbent, 14 Westminster Rd, Failsforth.

ORPINGTON

Rik Fuller, 60 Ramsden Rd, Orpington, Kent

OXFORD

Oxford Anarchists, 34 Cowley Rd

PAISLEY

Anarchist Group, contact through: Student's Union, Hunter St, Paisley, Renfrewshire

PLYMOUTH

Anarchists, 115 St Pancras Ave, Pennycross

PORTSMOUTH

area anarchist group, c/o Garry Richardson, 25 Beresford Close, Waterlooville, Hants

READING

Reading Anarchists, Box 19, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St

RHONDDA

and Mid Glamorgan, Henning Anderson, 'Smiths Arms', Treherbert, Mid Glamorgan

SHEFFIELD

Anarchists, c/o 4 Havelock Square S10 2FQ

SOUTH WALES

DAM, c/o Smiths Arms, Baglan Rd, Treherbert. Write for anarcho-syn-dicalist contacts in Treherbert, Rhondda, Pontypridd, Penarth, Barry and Cardiff areas

SURREY

Damp Squid Anarchists (North Surrey) Tel: 01-399 3197

SUSSEX

Brighton Anarchists, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Brighton East Sussex
Hastings Anarchists + Poison Pen, 92 London Rd, St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex
Sussex Anarchist Society, c/o Hastings Anarchist Group

SWANSEA

Black Dragon, Box 5, c/o Neges Bookshop, 31 Alexandra Rd, SA1 5DG, West Glamorgan

SWINDON

area, Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon

TAYSIDE

Anarchist Group, 3L 188 Strathmartine Rd, Dundee

TYNE & WEAR

Newcastle Anarchist Group, c/o 2 Priory Court, High St, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 3JL

WAKEFIELD

Anarchist and Peace Group, c/o Fazackerley, 36 Bowan St, Agbrigg, Wakefield, West Yorkshire

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01-247 3015

literature

'The Bourgeois Role of Bolshevism'. Reprint of 1930 Guy Aldred pamphlet. 50p inc p+p from GPP Reprints, Box V2, 488 Gt Western Road, Glasgow G12

'Alaska: Anarchy and Solidarity' is a newsletter and correspondence group for our northwest corner of North America's Northwest — it includes northern British Columbia and the Yukon Territory, too. We just started putting out the newsletter this year to link-up with other anarchists, Wobblies and the libertarian left in our neck of the woods.

'Archipelago' is a populist, multi-media journal based on Southeast Alaska, although not limited to this region. We began producing this journal in 1977 with newspapers, cassette tapes, books and records.

Contact: Box 748, Douglas Alaska, USA 99824

'I am starting work on a publication called 'Anarchist Artists'. If there are any anarchist groups, singers, poets etc, please contact me at the address below'

Gaz of Black Ram
c/o Forum Books
86 Abbey Street
Derby

CARDIFF DEMO

ON the 18th Sept (Sat), there will be an anarchist counter demonstration in Cardiff. The demo is intended to counter a Wales TUC organised 'March for Jobs' on the same day.

Anarchists from the rest of the land are invited to join the Cardiff anarchists on this demonstration.

The march begins at 11am. It meets at Ipswich Road (off Colchester Avenue) — 11am. It then proceeds to the Centre of Cardiff for a Rally at Sophia Gardens.

We can put people up for the nights of Sept 17th and 18th. If you come down on the Friday go to '108 Bookshop' 108 Salisbury Road, Cathays, Cardiff to find out where you will be sleeping.

Locally we will be preparing a leaflet, making banners, etc . . . Let's bring anarchy onto the streets and have fun. Hold the 'left' to ridicule.

@ Best wishes, @

Tomos

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BRIGATE ROSSE



Between Stalinism and Leftism

1. A DIVERSIFIED MOVEMENT

WHEN speaking of the armed groups in Italy it is necessary first of all to emphasize the extent of this phenomenon, and also to distinguish different tendencies within it. During the summer of 1977, for example, the Italian police claimed to have identified about a hundred armed groups, of which only four or five were classified as 'stable', the others being considered 'variable'. At the end of the same year there were over 300 members of these armed groups in prison, of which 152 belonged to the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse, or BR). (1) According to the Italian Communist Party (PCI), 'in the course of 1978 these groups carried out 2,365 armed actions, ie, 10 percent more than last year (37 killed and 412 injured). The majority of bombings and shootings are claimed by the left: 619 as opposed to 55 claimed by the right. One can also note a big increase in the number of these groups. The PCI recorded 209 different groups in 1978, although the bloodiest actions still were due to the BR.' (2)

Almost all the more structured groups with a continuous activity have an ideology of leninist inspiration. Among them, the Red Brigades represent the more orthodox marxist-leninist tendency, while many of the other groups are in-

fluenced by the ideas of Italian 'workerism'. (3) With respect to structure there are, on the one hand, the stable insurrectionist groups, which present themselves as parties 'of a new kind'. On the other hand, there are the variable, 'marginal' organizations which claim to be the armed expression of specific sectors of the Movement*: women, youth, delinquents, etc, and which 'form and disband as the moment or occasion demands, changing their name each time'. (4) They inhabit what is called the zone of 'diffuse terrorism', the growing milieu of individuals and impermanent groups which adopt violent modes of action, from stealing from supermarkets to attacks on minor government officials and factory foremen. The NAP (Nuclei Armati Proletari, or Armed Proletarian Cells), for instance, was created with the objective of supporting prisoners' struggles. These two types of groups also have different conceptions on other questions, such as the type of violence to use, their objectives, their relation to the masses, and so on. The marginalist and workerist groups put forward the idea of the 'armed movement' in opposition to the insurrectionalists' concept of the 'armed party'. Among the insurrectionalist groups the best known are Prima Linea and, of course, the Red Brigades; in fact, these are the only ones which still really exist today, and

there seems to be contact between the leadership of the two groups.

Prima Linea, which regularly carries out armed actions, has a position halfway between that of the Red Brigades—entirely dedicated to the notion of the 'armed party'—and that of the 'marginalist' groups. For Prima Linea, the question is to reconcile 'terrorism with mass based urban guerilla activity: the only strategy that will avoid separation from the popular struggles, that will allow an enlargement of the bases of support and which will prevent a retreat into total clandestinity. Their members do not live underground but work normally, agitating in the factories, and alternating between clandestine armed actions and the social camouflage of everyday life.' (5) This model of the 'new party' is quite different from that of the Red Brigades, as we will see.

There is a further, anarchist, tendency which is very small. The most well known group here is Azione Rivoluzionaria, though it lacks organizational efficacy; the majority of its members are in prison at this moment. They were the only group to attack members of the PCI, which marked a rupture between them and the other armed groups in relation to the Communist Party.

Presently, the Red Brigades are the best organized and implanted armed group in Italy, the only group which could, attempt to be the pole of convergence of all of the other armed groups. This is mainly due to their apparently superior 'effectiveness'. Without dismissing other hypotheses, we can perhaps explain this situation by two factors. First it is necessary to take into consideration the importance of the stalinist tradition in the post-war Italian left; second, we must understand the consequences of the road the Red Brigades have chosen: namely, their decision to operate within the framework of 'political autonomy', rejecting the perspective of directly linking itself to the mass movement.

2. THE PARALLEL PARTY AND THE STALINIST TRADITION

We will begin with the importance of the stalinist tradition in Italy. From the end of the war until the electoral campaign of 1975 (still very much centered on the corrupt nature of the Christian Democrats) the PCI had always strongly attacked the Christian Democrats (DC). Up to this time, the party followed a double policy, combining legal with illegal activity. The latter was preserved in case of the need to oppose anti-fascist violence to the fascist putschist tendencies which, until very recently, the whole of the Italian left considered a great danger. This double policy was increasingly called into question by the progressive strengthening of the strictly legalist tendencies within the party, proponents of 'eruocommunism' and collaboration with the DC. As a consequence of the debates among the leadership of the PCI provoked by the coup in Chile, the legalist line got the upper hand. But for an important part of the party—above all for the old militants and functionaries marked by the experience of Stalinism and the Resistance and also by a 'class' hatred of the DC with its corruption and cold war line—it was very difficult to accept the new direction signalled by the 'historic compromise'.

This hard-line tendency of the PCI has come to be called the 'parallel party'; it is not officially recognized but it is tolerated. It groups old stalinist cadres, the majority of whom were linked to a clandestine military organization that the PC created during the war called Volunta Rossa. After the war, this organization was converted into the internal police apparatus of the party, its 'iron fist' for dealing with its opponents. It was officially dissolved (others say it went into clandestinity again) during the Cold War. Even so, actions claimed by Volunta Rossa took place in the 1950s in Regio Emilia. Their objectives of 'popular justice' against the bosses and their technique—rapid and effective actions—have a curious resemblance to those of today's armed groups. Some who hold leading positions in this parallel organization of the PCI still today occupy important positions in the local apparatus of the party and openly proclaim their stalinist positions (for example, Vidal, who as a Comin-

tern cadre in Spain in 1936 was responsible for the murders of Berneri and Nin).

More generally, the parallel party forms part of the anti-fascist milieu which is still very strong in Italy. (6) The constant preoccupation of these people has been to build a united front against the danger of a fascist coup d'état. After the right-wing bombings which occurred in 1969 in Milan, fascist terror again appeared a reality and the problem of fascism could hardly be seen as a mystification. Indeed the bombings created a certain fear within the workers' movement. The workers believed that it was a violent response of the conservative sectors of the State to their social agitation of 1968–69. The political consequences of these events were very important. The anti-fascist front was reinforced by leftist groups of leninist inspiration, and still today attack

the fascists, particularly the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano, neo-fascist party with parliamentary representation). Apropos of this, it should not be forgotten that it was not until 1973 that the PCI condemned leftist violence against the fascists. We could say, therefore, that the confluence of the organized leftists and the PC, and the former's acceptance of the political institutions, is the result of the anti-fascist activity since 1969. It is within this terrain of anti-fascism that the BR's have their place.

From the start, then, the BR wished to take on the role of anti-fascist defense, and at the same time to occupy the stalinist political vacuum opened up by the evolution of the PCI toward the 'historic compromise'. It should be pointed out, however, that this relationship between the BR and the 'Parallel party' is neither so simple as this nor so direct. On the one hand, this 'party' does not have a structural form with which contacts or links could be established. On the other hand, not all classic stalinists of the PCI agree with the BR; far from it, in fact, as some even propose their physical liquidation, in the name of the same logic of the fascist danger which attracts other stalinists to the BR! Nevertheless, to understand the phenomenon of armed struggle in Italy and the impact of a group like the BR, it is necessary to understand, first and foremost, that in Italian society stalinism and militant anti-fascism are an expression of a political culture with considerable roots amongst the communist masses and certain popular sectors. It is to these militant principles and traditions which the BR refers itself and to which it appeals in seeking its social basis of support.

3. THE EFFICACY OF 'POLITICAL AUTONOMY'

This said, it remains to be explained why the BR was successful where other groups failed. Although a great variety of marxist-leninist (maoist) groups sought to occupy the political terrain vacated by the PCI only the BR had the wits to understand that it was not possible to compete with the PCI in building a party of the classic type, based on mass organizations. The BR chose another road: the creation of a clandestine military organization, without direct links to 'mass work' in the maoists' traditional style. From the beginning, the BR believed that the revolutionary alternative should be presented at the military level, the level of big-time politics, in direct confrontation with the State.

When, in 1968, while the student movement was still very active, the Collettivo Politico Metropolitan di Milano decided to 'redefine marxism-leninism', it took the first steps in defining the orientation of the BR, formed from the group some months later. The leftist organizations Lotta Continua and Potere Operaio were criticized for their 'immediatist' conception of class struggle and their defense of proletarian autonomy, as well as for their corresponding underestimation of the political dimensions of the struggle and of the political instruments needed for it: in a word, of the party. The hypotheses was that the party could be reconstructed at a military level. (7) Ten years later, the conceptions of the BR have not changed, but merely become more precise, above all with respect to their fidelity to leninist principles. 'The conscious and imperative project of the communist vanguard is to create the conditions of an

alternative to the existing state, to organize strategically the revolutionary potential of the proletariat.' (8) But they have revised the typical marxism-leninism of the present day by affirming that the vanguard—ie, the armed party—cannot 'firmly consolidate the organization of proletarian power other than by the most rigid clandestinity'. (10) For these groups, 'the vanguard armed struggle is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the building of a politico-military organization of the proletariat. The other indispensable condition is the autonomous initiative of the masses.' (11)

Aside from these intervanguard polemics, it appears evident today that the Red Brigades adoption of a strictly military and clandestine line, refusing any mass practice, has kept them within the limits of an armed group, from both the political and security points of view. From the latter point of view, such a line protects militants from exposing themselves in mass activity, as the members of the other armed groups frequently do. This does not mean that members of the BR refuse all and any involvement in (for example) union activity, but that they refuse any identification with leftist-oriented mass activity. Politically, their strict clandestinity prevents the BR from gauging its political efficacy otherwise than by the success of their actions against the political institutions, unlike the other armed groups who attempt to create factory organizations linked to their armed parties, provoke factory revolts. etc.

4. REFLUX OF THE WORKERS' STRUGGLES AND THE CRISES OF LEFTISM

In their development the BR and the other armed groups were able to take advantage of the convergence of two social phenomena: the 'eurocommunist' evolution of the PCI, and the crisis into which the leftist movement entered into around 1974–75. As we have just seen, for the BR the fundamental political question is the confrontation with the State. According to the BR, leftism underestimates this 'moment' and consequently doesn't engage in Politics as the BR understands it. In 1968 such criticism of the leftists fell on deaf ears, as this period saw the social movement reach its height. But the years 1974–75 saw the reflux of the movement in the factories and a consequent crisis of the extreme left. With the decline of the workers' activity, the unions were able to reorganize, integrating newly developed forms of struggle into their structure and absorbing or neutralizing the militancy of the leftist groups. The latter, after a brief phase of growth, gradually became institutionalized, above all as a result of their electoralism. Thinking that they could participate in political power side by side with the PCI, in practice they often supported this party against the DC. The PCI, now involved in the 'historic compromise', abandoned its traditional post-war oppositional role for a policy of 'national salvation' and a social contract. These transformations provoked feelings of frustration and impotent anger among many leftists and radical factory militants. 'Progressively,' recalled a participant in the armed movement, 'we witnessed even our own organizations evolve toward the institutional struggle; they were becoming vaguely 'democratic' and increasingly disassociated from the interests of the workers... It was only then that we decided to take up armed struggle as the only form of struggle. This was in the autumn of 1974.' (12)

The revival of union and PCI activity was naturally stronger and more rapid in the industrial North of the country, above all in Milan. It signalled the failure of the leftists, whose idea had been to build a 'workers' leadership based on the Alfa/Pirelli/Siemens' industrial triangle and arising from the 'hegemony of the mass worker', a concept dear to the 'workerist' school. But it was exactly these mass workers who, suffering the consequences of the reorganization carried out in the 1970s in the big industries as well as the social consequences of the crisis, who became quite attracted by reformist unionism. This is one reason why 'Milan became the most favourable terrain on which to revive the hypothesis of the party,' in its armed form. (13)

Thus the years 1970–75 produced a situation in Italy which was very favourable to the proliferation of armed groups, due to the impasse reached by the autonomous tendencies within the working class, by the re-emergence of reformist control over the workers, and by the frustration this produced among leftist militants and active workers. The armed groups of this first phase came especially from the 'workerist' circles, closely linked to the experience of the production line worker and very critical of the political conceptions of the BR, particularly of their idea of the armed party created from above, to which they opposed the idea of a party formed from below, on the basis of workers' organizations and factory nuclei. Today, however, it is evident that this project has not withstood the test of time. Such groups, more easily persecuted by the police, increasingly isolated from the very workers among whom they intended to militate, and, undermined by the incompatibility of clandestine and mass activity, are today—and this is particularly true of Prima Linea, the best known—in the shadow of the BR, whose military efficacy and rigid structure ineluctably came to dominate them.

5. IDEOLOGY AND MODE OF OPERATION OF THE BR

By now the reader will have a general idea of the political principles guiding the BR. Both in their vanguardist conception of the cadre party and in their statist conception of 'socialism' the BR can be seen as a marxist-leninist organization. However, they differ from the other, more orthodox m-l groups in Italy on other questions. The core of the BR's analysis is the idea that capitalism is in a crisis caused by the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, which will inevitably result in a confrontation between American imperialism and Russian social-imperialism. Here the BR modify the classic leninist idea of the transformation of imperialist war into civil war. For the BR it is necessary to unleash the 'class civil war' in the imperialist metropolises now, in order to forstall a third world war. This political position is both influenced by the maoist notion of 'people's war' and 'red bases' and by the workerists' emphasis on the subjective factor. In the present period, 'in which the principal contradiction is between the metropolitan proletariat and the imperialist bourgeoisie,' the BR regard the Christian Democrats as grouping 'those politicians most closely related to imperialist circles.' (14) Through military confrontation with these 'imperialist politicians'—a task that falls to the 'revolutionary vanguard'—'the class struggle take the form of civil war.' (15) Here we see a convergence between the BR's analysis and the classic anti-fascist ideology of the 'parallel party,' which believes that the legalist line of the PCI robs it of the ability to oppose either an eventual attack on the Soviet Union or a fascist coup in Italy carried out with the collaboration of the DC.

With respect to its mode of operation, the BR obey the laws of all military and clandestine organizations. The ideology of sacrifice and centralized discipline, hallmarks of all such organizations, are here carried to an extreme justified by the stalinist ideology of the party. The BR don't hesitate to declare that it is through their activity that a 'new proletarian person' will be forged:

The political identity of the revolutionary militant means, first and foremost, the Party. It is through the principles, the strategy, the program, and the discipline of the Party that the militant, freely and autonomously, recognizes himself. (16)

The stalinist tradition serves as the cement of the clandestine structure, contrary to what happened within the armed groups in West Germany, where the militants, influenced by a sort of anarcho-individualism, rapidly came into conflict with the principles of clandestine military organization. (17) Unlike the members of these German groups, the BR members (or at least the majority of them) do not always live in total clandestinity. They also lead 'normal' lives, so that they are, for instance, involved in union activities, mainly in the PCI-dominated unions, where they present the image of active but not extremist workers. But this changes from the moment that the militant goes into total clandestinity, which is the

inevitable logic of this type of activity.

The experience of the Italian armed groups gives us a good idea of the functioning of a leninist clandestine organization inside modern society, and the political content of the social relations created within it. In an interview published in an Italian wide-circulation magazine, a militant of an armed group (not the BR) has given an account of a professional of armed struggle. The militants are obliged 'to lead a double life and to follow strictly a certain mode of behaviour, which is the proof of their suitability as militants; they cannot frequent political circles or mix with comrades from the movement. . . All in all, they must lead a regular life. They cannot freely leave the organization, as this is a decision taken centrally. To join the organization the candidate has to present excellent credentials, and even then is followed during an 'apprenticeship' period. Intimate personal relations are forbidden, as these can cause conflicts with the organization. Living as a couple is prohibited unless the relationship is legalized. . . The public image of the clandestine activist has to be that of a model worker. At work, he doesn't discuss politics.' (18)

The same principles regulate the attitudes of these militants in prison. For example, during a revolt in a special prison at Asinara (which 'houses' many members of different armed groups), an anarchist prisoner, Horst Fantazzi, managed to send out a chronicle of the revolt to the journal *Anarchismo*. The prison Struggle Committee expelled Fantazzi from the prisoners' organization and ostracized him within the prison, on the ground that the text had not been ratified by it before being sent out. This exemplifies much behaviour like that of the PCI under fascism, when party members in prison ostracized anyone not in complete agreement with the Party.

The least one can say is that it is hardly by employing such means to combat the old world, both in their own organizations and in relations to others, that the armed groups are going to usher in the new. On the contrary, they do no more than to perpetuate the forms of the old.

6. THE ARMED GROUPS AND THE PCI: FROM CRITICISM TO CONFRONTATION

Given the stabilizing role played by the PCI in the functioning of the parliamentary system and social institutions of Italy today, it is quite normal that the strategy of the armed groups responds to the political line of the party and is sensitive to its tactical changes. We have already seen how the development of armed struggle was closely related to the victory of the line of the 'historical compromise' within the PCI. To a certain extent, the political attitude of groups like the BR toward the PCI has changed in response to the difficulties encountered by the 'eurocommunist' line and also according to the events unleashed by the armed struggle itself. From the beginning, these groups considered it necessary to carry out a political struggle against the present direction of the party—the Berlinguer line. They never question the party, simply its present leadership. Basically, they consider the PCI as a secondary force in the tendency toward the creation of a 'world imperialist state' while they regard the DC as a primary expression of this tendency. Neither is the PCI viewed as the expression of a tendency of national capital in Italy, (19) with interests in the fortunes of Italian capitalism at the world level. At most, it is seen as an expression of the 'labour aristocracy'. Like all other m-l groups, the BR believe that the rank and file of the party have been hoodwinked by the eurocommunist leadership, and that their armed actions will cause the ranks to open their eyes and rediscover the 'correct line'. The BR are quite explicit about this: 'The solution will inevitably be found in the armed struggle, about which it will be necessary to take a position. The PC itself will be involved in this process. We here reaffirm our unitary position in relation to all comrades who chose the path of armed struggle.' (20) This attitude—which the BR share with other groups of the extreme left, such as Lotta Continua and Potero Operaio—is based on the idea that 'the deepening of the crises and the growing class confrontation is progressively reducing the viability of reformism. Such an

analysis, however, fails to understand the historical and structural roots of reformism within the working class, and views its strength only in periods of economic expansion as inherently stabilizing. This type of analysis is therefore incapable of seeing that after the period of the reinforcement of the unions in the factories comes the growth of the role of the reformist party in the management of the crises.' (21) Moreover, this underestimation of the role of reformism in periods of crisis results in 'viewing the State almost exclusively in its repressive aspect.' (22) In conclusion, 'such a practice (in relation to the PC) not only made the armed groups incapable of building an alternative to reformism inside the working class, but also left them indirectly dependent on the reformist project, insofar as their initiatives were directed against those sectors of the capitalist apparatus (the DC) which reformism was also attempting to push to the side.' (23)

After the Moro affair, which should be understood as an attack on the line of the 'historical compromise,' the 'armed party' was obliged to modify its tactical attitude toward the PCI slightly, but without altering the basic analysis of which we spoke above. In fact, the PCI's call for an 'upsurge of democratic consciousness' against terrorism, its campaign of denunciation in the factories, couldn't leave these groups indifferent, the BR above all. In their 'Strategic Resolution No 5' the BR denounce the Berlinguer line as 'representative of a bourgeois front' and an 'instrument of the imperialist state of the multinationals.' According to the BR the PCI, in collaboration with the 'union bureaucracy,' have in practice 'denounced the revolutionary vanguard, trying to destabilize and later smash the resistance of the working class.' (24) In this new situation, it is no longer sufficient just to criticize and condemn 'eurocommunism'. It is necessary to pass to the attack, and the Berlinguer line becomes a target of the armed struggle. After a first attack on a party bureaucrat in Genoa, in charge of the relations between State enterprises and the PCI, the BR directly attacked the Party's policy of denouncing BR sympathizers in the factories, killing the Communist trade unionist Rozza who had informed on a BR sympathizer to the police. This new step in the confrontation with the PC had contradictory consequences for the strategy of the BR. The reaction of the PCI to this attack was very rapid and the whole of the Party apparatus was mobilized in a reaction of self-defense. If up to then the BR's actions always had the goal of causing difficulties for the 'eurocommunist' line, the killing of Rozza was understood as an attack on the Party as such and unified the whole bureaucracy around the apparatus. For the first time there was no convergence between the objectives of the BR and those of the 'parallel party.'

7. THE RELAPSE OF THE 'MOVEMENT' OF 1977

The events of 1977 shook up the Italian extreme left and the armed groups. This movement had very special characteristics. (25) While it spread mainly among the youth, especially the socially marginalized, it also demonstrated a quite sophisticated political consciousness, able to alternate violence with the satirization of reformist institutions and those of the State. Nevertheless, this movement quickly reached a political and an organizational impasse. The mass assemblies which were the organizational forms of this movement were unable to extend beyond the student and marginal milieu. The attitude of the PCI also had an important bearing on this outcome. The PCI never attempted to co-opt the Movement but, on the contrary, from the beginning it did everything possible to oppose it and to isolate it from the working class. A part of the Movement reacted strongly against this isolation, expressing its frustration by introducing new analytical concepts to deal with the situation. The 'social worker' and the 'diffuse factory' were the concepts through which they sought to give expression to the idea of a new revolutionary subject, after the failure of the political project based on the 'mass worker' of the 1960s. This situation was further aggravated by the crisis of the radical factory militants who, very marked by a 'workerist subjectivism',

were forced to recognize their impotence in introducing the new discourse of the Movement into the factories. Once more, after a period during which events had overtaken them, the armed groups rediscovered a favourable terrain for recruitment.

The BR regarded the Movement of '77 as a type of non-political agitation, concerned only with defensive actions. They did not, for instance, hide their disagreement over the street fighting which was a feature of this period. As Sergio Bologna points out, non-political activities can in no way 'influence the institutional balance of the State or the machinery of government. By the way they conducted their Turin trial and the Moro kidnapping, the BR demonstrated to the left-wing workers and to the Movement of '77 these forces' inability to act politically, ie, to have any influence at the institutional level.' (26) Even though this only demonstrates the BR's purely bourgeois conception of politics, the fact remains that a part of the Movement of '77, and above all the more violent 'autonomist' wing, accepted these criticisms as correct, and associated itself with the positions of the armed groups, and in particular with those of the BR. It was not by chance, we may add, that the Moro kidnapping occurred immediately after the failure and the break-up of the Movement of '77; the moment was well chosen by the BR to demonstrate their political efficiency, their capacity to act at the level of the institutions, in contradistinction to that of the crisis-ridden left, of the Movement and of the Autonomists. Of course, many of the militants who passed from the autonomist movement into the armed groups did so without great ideological difficulty, thanks to their leninist conceptions of political action, political power, and revolution. Enzo Modugno of the review *Marxiana*, clearly pointed this out when, in 1977, he criticized those who wanted to exclude the gun-toting autonomists from the Movement: 'It is necessary to understand the reasons why these individuals resort to the gun. These autonomous groups cannot be reduced to three or four homicidally inclined youth; . . . what is today called the ideology of the P 38 was only yesterday the political line of the revolutionary parties.' (27)

8. THE BR AND THE WORKING CLASS

Before dealing with the consequences that the actions of the BR and the armed groups have had for the workers' movement, two points should be made clear. Firstly, many members of the BR are workers. However, it is not by this criterion that we judge the BR to be 'separated or not from the working class.' We consider the BR to be a particular and momentary expression of a traditional tendency within the Italian workers' movement, the stalinist tendency. Secondly, it is important to understand the BR's position on the process of self-organization which dominated the Italian workers' experience since the end of the 1960s. Basically, the BR consider every and any workplace struggle to be defensive, lacking in any political content (in the institutional sense). The only political actions are those which are part of the 'offensive movement of proletarian resistance,' ie, those which have a 'politico-military content.' (28) On the basis of this extremely militarist conception of political activity, the BR reject any expression of autonomist factory organization as a manifestation of 'centrism' (note the typically stalinist terminology). To these autonomist factory organizations, the BR oppose the idea of 'organs of the proletarian State.' (29) Here is an entire political programme in a nutshell.

In describing the reaction of the workers to recent events, we will schematically consider three aspects of the situation: 1) In the present social economic crisis, a large part of the working class feels an insecurity provoked by the worsening of their living standards. This sentiment is projected—and channelled by the State—into a demand for order and social stability, for the repression of criminality and of the armed groups.

2) It was in such an atmosphere that the political parties and the mass media, as well as the State's ideological appara-

tus, could organize demonstrations protesting against Moro's death. For its part, the Left condemned the BR on two counts. On the one hand, it evoked the danger of a fascist coup, thus resurrecting the old anti-fascist sentiments; on the other hand, employing the well-worn ideology which presents the police as 'workers', it tried to appeal to people's emotions over the five police agents shot dead during Moro's kidnapping. The truth is that the demonstrations which took place were the expressions of a total mobilization of political society. Even sectors of the population not normally disposed to act closed their doors in sympathy. In many factories, workers were paid during the strike of protest at Moro's death. But we should also point out that many people who came onto the streets did so neither to praise Moro nor to bury the BR, but simply to express their confusion about the event.

3) In the following days, all this created a feeling of unease among many factory militants, even among activists of the union left and of the political groups who did not identify themselves with the climate of national unity that the political parties tried to create around the event. This uneasiness was expressed, for example, in Milan, over a proposed demonstration against the murder of two militants of *Autonomia*, killed by the police (or by fascists) after Moro's assassination. In the Milan factories, there was a big debate on whether or not to strike and join the demonstration. Despite the opposition of the PCI, the workers and the factory organizations ended up participating massively; for many, though, this was only reasonable as they had already demonstrated in favour of Moro! In any event, more than 100,000 people, almost as many as for Moro's burial, came onto the streets, and it was evident that the demonstration carried an implicit criticism of the Sacred Union desired by the PCI.

9. THE PCI AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE AUTONOMIST MOVEMENT AMONG THE WORKERS

Following on the heels of the Moro case, the PCI attempted to profit from the general mood of confusion to witch-hunt the radical factory nuclei and to tighten its control over the working class in general. But this policy met with little success, mainly because the workers themselves did not support it. The right and the left within the unions also reacted against this policy as both feared that it would allow the PCI irreversibly to reinforced its repressive power within the factories. The union right maintained that only the State should exercise the function of repression, while the left, fearing that its own members might be caught up in the PCI hunt for extremists, opposed any wave of repression in the factories, though they nevertheless clearly distanced themselves from the BR.

The PCI has accused groups of radical workers of being potential members of the BR. Even in those factories where the PCI is strongly represented, however, the workers have rejected this attempt at criminalisation and denunciation refusing, as they say in Italy, to become the State, to internally police the factories. Only some bureaucrats (like Rozza) from the Communist union apparatus have dared to denounce sympathizers of the armed groups to the police. Nevertheless, there have been cases where the PCI has achieved positive results in its crusade against the activities of the extra-union militants. A good example is what happened to an autonomist workers' collective at the port of Genoa. After distributing a leaflet entitled 'Neither the BR nor the State,' this group was violently denounced as 'brigatisti', which led to its isolation and political weakness. One should recall that after 1977 this group had achieved a certain strength in the port, since the war an untouchable fief of the PCI.

At the same time, however, reformism made other uses of anti-terrorism, above all as a stick with which to beat any combativity in the factories. But here too, things didn't go so well for the PCI, at least in the cases we know of. In SIP (National Telephone Company) in Milan, during the general assembly of workers intended to ratify the contract (May '78), the union attempted to use the anti-BR, pro-national unity line, to justify the need for 'a reasonable attitude in

this period of crisis.' The workers' reaction was straight to the point: We don't care about these stories; we're here to talk about our concrete situation as wage labourers. This case exemplifies the attitude of the mass of workers to the BR: not only do they fail to see what all this military activity has to do with them, but they also recognize that all of the political forces are making capital out of it, from the PCI to the Christian Democrats. For the workers, it is all Politics with a capital 'p', in the traditional sense—ie, exactly the sense in which the BR understand it; an activity completely separate from the workers, from their conditions of existence, from their problems and struggles. It is moreover significant that the union now have much more difficulty in calling protest strikes whenever an armed action is carried out. As a worker said to some journalists during one of these strikes, 'Will you go on strike if they kill me?' while another commented, 'Now that they're knocking off one a day, I won't have much of a wage at the end of the month if we go on strike for all of them.' (30) In January '79, when the PCI called a protest strike against the killing of Rozza by the BR's, 3000 out of the 6000 workers of Alfa-Romeo in Milan stayed at home on sick leave (and for two more days following the strike) in a clear manifestation of the desire to separate their interests from those of the Party and above all of their refusal of such political strikes.

On the other hand, one slogan of the BR, the simplest, is quite well received by the masses, when they insist that 'those responsible for the difficult situation of the people are the corrupt politicians of the DC.' This slogan was in fact used by the PCI for many years. Further, in relation to the BR, the workers very often manifest an attitude of expectation, seeing them as those who can 'do justice for us', beating the corrupt politician, the hated foreman, the exploiting boss. All of this makes it even more evident how substitutionist these types of actions are.

Today in Italy, after a few years during which its control was severely weakened by the development of the autonomist struggles of the workers, reformism has returned to dominate the scene, including the factories. It is true that oppositional tendencies still confront the line of 'national sacrifice', but these nuclei of opposition, above all in the service sector, by and large feed off the demagogic and unsophisticated way in which the PCI presents its policy of 'historic compromise' and 'national salvation'. As the economic crisis deepens, fear conquers a growing number of workers (though this doesn't mean that the situation could not rapidly change); and, more than the political spectacle offered by the BR, the actions carried out by the armed 'workerist' groups run the risk of reinforcing that fear, facilitating the acceptance of the reformist project. The case of Alfa-Romeo in Milan is worth considering in this respect.

This enormous factory, the stronghold of workers' agitation since 1969, is something of a thermometer of the Milanese working class. An autonomist workers' collective is active inside the factory and has led to some important struggles. (31) When the factory management decided to reestablish compulsory overtime, this collective mounted pickets at the factory gates. Their action, however, was not well received and they failed to carry the majority of the workers with them. For the first time ever, some PC-goons tried to expel the workers of the collective from the factory. Shortly afterwards, an armed group sabotaged the machinery. The workers, in response, fearing that they would lose their jobs because of the risk of the factory closing down, showed less hostility to the union policy of sacrifices, working an extra Saturday to recover production lost because of the sabotage.

The radical factory collectives which still exist, more or less throughout Italy, have only just begun to discuss, though hesitantly, the question of terrorism. Their main and immediate problem is to defend themselves against the PCI's attempts to outlaw them. Thus far, they have done so by exploiting the contradictions of the PC, in particular its changes in attitude toward the DC, by refusing to discuss the question of the armed groups with the Party, and by opposing the question of the workers' living conditions to

that of the 'danger of terrorism'. Nevertheless, many workers' collectives have already explicitly criticized the armed groups and their adverse effects on revolutionary activities in the factories, attacking in particular the substitutionist character of their actions. (33) But these collectives have yet to discuss the basic principles of the armed groups, or the problem of the State and its relation to revolutionary activity. Indeed, the echo found by political terrorism in Italy among many militants from the leninist left has been in large part due to the inability of this current to deal with the problem of the State. Each time that the social movement has had to confront the State, in 1972 and again in 1977, leftism was capable only of an electoralist response, in contrast to which the BR could present themselves as 'effective' in the realm of political action. It is in this sense that we can say that the relation between the radical factory nuclei on the one hand and the BR and the armed groups on the other reflects the impotence that the former feel in relation to the reigning social reality above all in the factories. In the same way, 'the experience of armed struggle expressed and still expresses, for a part of the proletariat, the need for a radical break with the present state of things. The problem resides not in the need to exorcise this necessity by tactical means, but to locate it within the worker himself, since only when this necessity is expressed through a process of self-organization will it then have a role, one based not on strictly political objectives like that of the confrontation with the State, but on the process of the growth of class power.' (34)

10. THE IMPOTENT ARMS OF LENINISM

In modern capitalist society, any armed activity must necessarily be based on an organization of a military type. As such, it cannot escape the logic of the State which, in the last resort, determines the whole of its organisational functioning and internal social relations, as well as its relations to the social environment.

Therefore, the model of the armed struggle organizations is perfectly compatible with the bolshevik conception of the revolutionary party. For the BR, as for the German RAF, this organization must be built on, and through, armed struggle. As has already been pointed out, the RAF 'added to the substitutionism of Lenin, who replaced the proletariat by the Party, by replacing the Party by the armed struggle.' (35) It is, then, quite correct to see in the emergence of these groups and activities 'more the product of the end of a period than the signs of the emergence of a new one.' But these old conceptions of revolution and the leninist foundations of these groups are not merely evident in their form of organization. They are also to be found in the content of their revolutionary project, in the violence against the State which they see as the essential aspect of social transformation. This is why it is wrong to see these groups as raising 'the problem of the destruction of the State.' On the contrary, their conception of the revolution remains an essentially political one—the objective is the destabilization of the State—while their principles of functioning rapidly lead toward the creation of a mini-State organization, a mirror-image of the enemy it is fighting against.

Furthermore, we might also refer to the famous 'military question' of the revolution that many people also believe has been raised by the activities of these groups. To be sure, the 'military question' was one of the specific aspects of the bourgeois revolutions of the past, characterized by the weakness of the working class and the resulting strategies of class alliances. The end of the nineteenth century in Europe, the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia and, later on, the upheavals in the countries which freed themselves from colonialism, provide us with plenty of examples. Today, however, in the countries where capitalism rules in its most developed form, not only can the social revolution not be conceived as a 'party question', but it also cannot be conceived as a 'military question'. In modern societies, where wage-labour relations have become generalized throughout private and collective life, the subversion of the capitalist order can only be realized through the takeover and control

of the productive apparatus, through its transformation on the basis of new social principles, under the control of the producers themselves. While the attempt to accomplish this is bound to lead to violent confrontations with the bourgeoisie, its State and the political and social forces which defend state capitalism, there can be no doubt that these confrontations will mainly occur within the framework of this process of taking over the apparatus of social production (because its control is the key to political power in society) and not on the traditional and specialized level of military action. It is therefore hard to imagine what use the 'military experience' of the armed groups would be. On the contrary, the success of the anti-capitalist forces in these confrontations will depend on their superiority and not on any so-called military efficiency of a specialized group (which in fact would be difficult to imagine, given the efficiency of the repressive forces of the State).

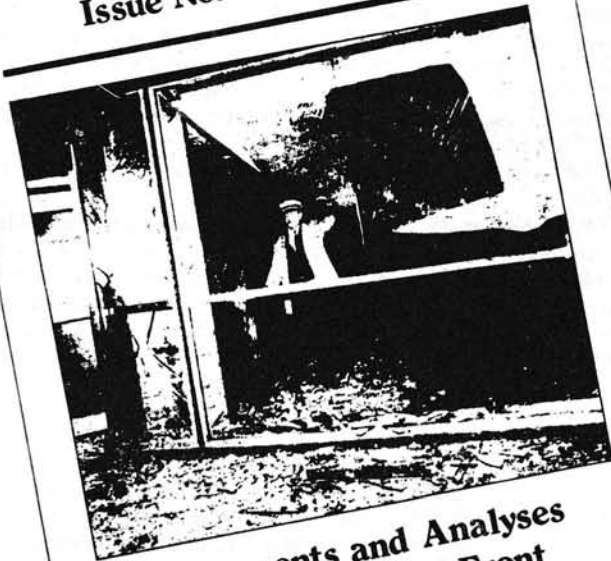
The recent experience of the Portuguese 'revolution' of 1974-75, despite its limits, makes this point clearer. When the right-wing putsch of November 25th took place, what remained of the Portuguese proletariat was insufficient even to consider opposing a coup which clearly represented the beginning of a period of the imposition of law and order. What this implies is that the workers were unable to develop and organize a different and clearly anti-capitalist social project, so that the defense of the 'revolution' was delegated—automatically and without discussion—to the specialized apparatuses of the 'military question,' the populist sectors of the Army and the armed cells of leftist groups. The result is well known. In other words, here as elsewhere, the 'military question', was raised because the *social question* had been buried (or solved) beforehand. In fact, if the bourgeoisie is able to push the class confrontation to the strictly military level, the proletariat will be smashed in advance. Earlier in history, the much more important example of the Spanish revolution of 1936 also showed how the development and predominance of military activity meant the neutralization of the social revolution.

If the present crisis of capitalism deepens, if social confrontations erupt and spread, and if the wage laboring masses begin to lose faith in the system, then, little by little, we will see capitalism and its State forced into a situation where the choices will be few. The use of the traditional mechanism for integrating the working class will basically depend on the capacities of the parties and the unions to control the responses of the proletariat. If this does not produce results, the capitalist State will be obliged to use its repressive machine, with far greater force than the armed

struggle groups have obliged it to use up to now. If, despite all this, the working class is able to find in its struggles the determination and initiative to go further, to organize itself on a new basis (refusing leaderships, the delegation of power and strategies of class conciliation) to build a framework for subverting the present order and system of production, then circumstances will be transformed. The politics of a radical social movement will replace military strategies of the apprentice officers of the 'brigades' and 'armies' of all kinds, devoid of any anti-capitalist perspective for the mass of wage labourers.

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NOTES

1. Monicelli, "L'Ultrainistra in Italia, 1968-1978" (Bari: Laterza, 1978), pp 160-161.
2. "Le Monde", 7:1:79.
3. 'Workerism' was a political tendency that appeared in Italy in the sixties around the journal "Quaderni Rossi" (later "Classe Operaia"), whose best known theoreticians were Tronti, Cacciari, Rosa, Negri, Scalzzone and Bologna. Tronti's book "Workers and Capital" (several chapters of which have been translated and published in "Telos") is a basic text of this current, which had a strong influence on the Italian ultra-left in the sixties and seventies. Workerism emphasized the 'subjective factor' in social change and, drawing on the experience of the struggles of Southern workers in Northern Italian factories, looked to the 'mass worker'—in contrast to the skilled craftsman of the past—as the agent of change. The recent evolution of most of the workerist theoreticians attests to the Leninist basis of their theories: Tronti, Rosa and Cacciari have joined the PCI and today are part of the Party's ideological apparatus, while Negri and Scalzzone play a significant role within the neo-Leninist tendency of *Autonomia Organizzata*. (Both were recently arrested, accused of complicity in the Red Brigade killing of Aldo Moro.) In his latest text, Tronti defends the eurocommunist conception of the State, characterizing it as 'neither more or less than the modern form of the autonomist organization of the working class.' Only Sergio Bologna and the group around the journal "Primo Maggio" have opened themselves to a critique of Leninism.
4. Monicelli, op cit, p 160.
5. Ibid, p 164.
6. It is interesting to note that Italy is the European country with both the strongest Communist Party and the strongest fascist party, the MSI.
7. Collective text, 'Note sul' esperienza di lotta armata,' in "Collegamenti" 1:3-4 (1978).
8. Brigate Rosse, 'Risoluzione della direzione strategica delle BR.' in "Moro, una tragedia italiana" (Rome: Saggi, 1978), pp 103 and 106.
9. Ibid.
10. 'Parla un terrorista,' interview with a member of an armed group, in "Panorama" 6:6:78.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. 'Note sul' esperienza di lotte armata,' op cit.
14. The PCI-controlled National League of Cooperatives, which groups firms from a number of sectors, including agriculture, commerce and construction, is the third largest economic group in Italy, with investments in other countries (especially in the Third World).
15. Interview of BR spokesman in "Espresso" (September 1971).
16. 'Note sul' esperienza . . . ' op cit.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. "Le Monde" 26:1:79.
20. See Sergio Bologna, 'La tribu delle talpa,' in "Primo Maggio" 8.
21. Sergio Bologna, text on the BR (unpublished, but circulating in Milan in radical political circles).
22. Monicelli, op cit, pp 151.
23. 'Risoluzione della direzione strategica . . . ' op cit, p 95.
24. 'Secundo documento delle BR' January 1973.
25. Monicelli op cit pp 183 and 185.
26. See the articles on Italy in nos 9 and 10 of "Spartacus".
27. "La Repubblica" 12:6:78.
28. 'Note sul' esperienza . . . ' op cit.
29. Ibid.
30. 'La Bande a Baader' in "La guerre sociale" 2 (1978).

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

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I suppose we are due for a second round of books on Poland shortly bringing up to date the analyses—or more often hero-worship—of 1980 and 1981.

Meanwhile I thought I'd do a round-up of what is currently available on the subject.

First two from Penguin: *The Book of Lech Walesa* (203pp ppr) (£2.50 + 32p post)—A collective portrait by Solidarity members and Critics; and *The Polish August* by Neal Ascherson (320pp ppr) (£2.95 + 42p post)—an eye witness account by a Scottish journalist.

Confusingly, with the same title is *The Polish August* Edited by Oliver MacDonald—to my mind a more valuable book which comprises Documents from the Beginnings of the Polish Workers' Rebellion in Gdansk August 1980. The book seems not to credit the translator whom I can only suppose to have been the editor, but here in the Solidarity Strike Bulletins, Statements and other Communiques and facts are the bare bones of what happened devoid of the sometimes unhelpful flesh of interpretation. (174pp ppr £4.00 + 55p post):

Michael Dobbs, K S Karol and Dessa Trevisan are the joint authors of *Poland—Solidarity—Walesa* (128pp ppr) (£4.95 + 94ppost). A large format paperback—profusely illustrated—and if a picture is worth a thousand words—a valuable book. But the Commentary linking the pictures is a little superficial—consisting of three short essays—one by each of the authors on the background to the events leading up to the 'Polish Summer', or the rise of 'Solidarity' itself, and on Lech Walesa.

More valuable are three shorter—and cheaper—pamphlets: *The Strike in Gdansk. August 14th—31st 1980*. Edited and translated by Andrzej Tynowski (50pp ppr) (£2.00 + 25p post)—which again consists of extracts from the Solidarity Strike Bulletins for that month together with an Introduction and Afterword by the translator; also another eye-witness account—published by the War Resisters' International—*The Polish Summer* by Robert Polet (ppr) (£0.75 + 19p post); and lastly a broadsheet published by Collective Inventions (US) *Poland 1982* (£0.15 + 19p post) from a more avowedly anarchist standpoint.

To keep our own house firmly in order I should mention three new titles hot off our own Aldgate Press and published by FREEDOM Press. First, *Journey through Utopia* (339pp ppr) by Marie-Louise Berneri (£1.95 plus 62p post)—first published by Routledge in 1950 a year after the author's tragically early death, it has now been re-issued. From Plato to Huxley via Thomas Moore, Winstanley, Bellamy, Morris and many others it remains the most sympathetically critical study of that uncharted land.

Next, *Anarchy in Action* by Colin Ward (152pp ppr) (£1.50 + 36p post)—a reissue of one of the anarchist 'classics'

of the 70's—which remains one of the few anarchist books looking to the future rather than the past. And lastly in this section: *Fighting the Revolution* (44pp ppr) (£0.75 + 19p post) a reprint of two of the anarchist pamphlets that first appeared as supplements to FREEDOM in the 1970's on Makhno, Durruti and Zapata.

[Note: we can give full trade terms on the three above titles].

Next some new books: *Das Adress Buch Alternativer Projekte* 1983 (526pp ppr) is an international directory of Alternative projects published in Germany. Although the text is in German, the information contained in this book is worldwide and very useful (£3.95 + £0.66 post).

Two new joint Soil of Liberty/Cienfuegos Press publications: *Milly Witkop-Rocker by Rudolf Rocker* (20pp ppr) (£0.75 + 13p post) is a beautifully produced tribute to one revolutionary by another. *The German Guerilla: Terror, reaction and resistance* (106pp ppr) (£1.50 + 36p post) comprises interviews with Hans Joachim Klein, with Ralf Reinders, Gerald Klopfer, Ronald Fritsch and Fritz Teufel; and Background, chronology and philosophy of the RAF.

Next an unpublished work by William Morris—*The Novel on Blue Paper* (79pp ppr) £1.95 + 31p post). Edited and with an Introduction by Penelope Fitzgerald. It is not only previously unpublished, it is also unfinished (although begun in 1872 and Morris lived on until 1896) and untitled—its present title deriving from the very obvious reason.

For the holiday season why not send a Chartist Postcard? We have some beautifully reproduced postcards of the massacre at Peterloo. (£1.50 for 10 + 19p post)—to bring your friends down from any holiday euphoria with a bump!

From New Zealand a beautiful book: *Things of Iron and Things of Green: A nucleonic narrative about Love and War* by Bill Millett (64pp cloth) (£7.50 + 66p post); originally conceived and finely produced—poems interspersed with line drawings and woodcuts and prose around the theme of love and war.

Lastly—two bargains: Kenneth Rexroth: *An Autobiographical Novel* (367pp ppr) (£1.00 + 94p post)—one of America's finest contemporary writers tells his own story in his own way. Tom Mann (Ed) *The Industrial Syndicalist* (390pp ppr) (£1.00 + plus 60p post)—a facsimile edition of the complete run of Tom Mann's Journal from 1910—1911 with an Introduction by Geoff Brown.

[We can give full trade terms on the above two titles].

All the titles mentioned in this 'notes' are available from FREEDOM Bookshop, In Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1, at the prices—plus postage—mentioned. North American purchasers please convert £1—plus postage—at \$1.75 (US) or \$2.20 (Canada). JH

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