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solidarity

FOR WORKERS' POWER

NURSES

Economics of Self-Management

Student Files

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6^D

THE ECONOMICS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

Marx wisely refused to give "recipes for the cookshops of the future". This has not prevented some apostles of "workers' control" from drawing up organisational blueprints for imaginary worker-controlled industries.(1) These are arid and meaningless academic exercises. Nor has it stopped the technocrats of state capitalism, and their sympathisers in the West, from developing the "economics of planning". This pretends to put socialism into practice, but turns out to be just another form of exploitation.(2)

It is obvious that, by definition, workers' management must make its own future, rather than administering the preconceived schemes of revolutionary intellectuals, however well intentioned. Equally, the elimination of all ruling classes, whether based on private ownership or on state-party bureaucracy, is essential for genuine self-management. But this does not mean that it is absurd to ask questions like "How will it work?", or "What problems will it face?". I hope to stimulate some discussion on questions like these, which are too important to be left until after the revolution.

The abolition of money assumes that the scarcity of material things is no longer a problem. This will take generations rather than decades. Britain may be affluent but two-thirds of the world is not. The administration of things will replace the government of people, but important and difficult decisions will still have to be taken in the administration of production.

For example: how will it be decided, under self-management, when and where to build a new power station? Or whether such a power station is to be coal-fired or nuclear? The decision will no longer be taken by a handful of managers. But it can't be left to a workers' council in any existing power station, or even to power workers as a whole. The effects are too far-reaching for that - miners, engineers and construction workers will be directly affected, and a project of such a size will concern "society as a whole", that is all workers in all industries.

Eventually, whole industries may have to disappear. If a sensible international division of labour is to be achieved, it may be necessary for Britain to stop producing textiles altogether, and to accept imports from Asia; or for sugar beet producers to yield to sugar cane. Of course redundancy

(1) E.G. The Dockers' Next Step, pre 1968 Coates and Topham.

(2) For example Preobrazhensky, The New Economics, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1965.

in the present sense of the word will not occur, but changes like these could be painful to those concerned. Again, it is difficult to see how decisions of this importance could be taken solely by the workers directly affected. Everyone would have a stake in what happened.

These examples have several features in common. None of them concerns the everyday running of production, for it is here that the least problems arise. Direct self-management of the internal workings of a car assembly plant or a large office could hardly be any less efficient or any more prone to chaos than the present system! It is where large groups of workers in different industries, regions, and even continents, come into contact in the course of production - and they must, unless you want to go "back to the land" in anarchist fashion - that the difficulties arise.

Secondly, the difficulties aren't merely technical ones. They don't just concern the co-ordination of decisions taken by different groups of workers. They involve direct conflicts of interest between workers. If the power station is built in Northumberland, Yorkshire suffers. If it's nuclear, there's less jobs for miners but (perhaps) the fuel is cheaper. Lancashire cotton workers may have to leave the jobs they grew up in to benefit the workers of India.

Conflicts like these are found in capitalist societies. They are settled over the heads of those concerned, and used to divide and manipulate the working class. But it would be unrealistic to suppose that they will disappear in a classless, self-managed society. Until material scarcity itself has vanished, problems like these will remain.

So the economic problems of self-management don't just concern efficiency, and they don't just have technical answers. They involve conflicts of interest within the working class. I am going to suggest that the only solution is a political one.

Yugoslavia: A Case Study

The case of Yugoslavia is a very interesting one. Since the early 1950's, and in particular since 1960, the official Yugoslav ideology has claimed that the society is organised on the basis of self-management, and uses this very term in its English language literature.

Yugoslav enterprises are in theory run by elected workers' councils, which appoint and control the director and other technical staff. In practice, the actual power of these professional managers vis-a-vis the workers' councils seems to vary greatly from enterprise to enterprise (1). But there

(1) See A. Sturmnthal: Workers' Councils, Harvard University Press, 1964.
International Labour Organisation: Workers' Management in Yugoslavia, Geneva, 1961.
J. Kolaja: Workers' Councils, the Yugoslav Experience, London, Tavistock, 1965.
D.S. Riddell: Social self-management - theory and practice in Yugoslavia, British Journal of Sociology, 1968, reprinted in Anarchy 95, January 1969.

is no reason to see the system as a whole as nothing but a cover for Stalinist one-man management. Many workers' councils do control their directors, so that the administration of production at the enterprise level is often - though by no means always - very democratic.

The problem arises in the relationships between enterprises and between workers' councils. In Yugoslavia, economic problems have been acute, far more so than might be expected for a revolutionary Britain(1). In 1945 Yugoslavia was probably the poorest and most backward country in Europe, and after the break with Stalin in 1948 it was subjected for several years to an economic blockade by the whole Eastern bloc. Its economy has nevertheless grown extremely rapidly, and this has inevitably been at the cost of higher living standards, in order to provide the resources for a very high rate of capital accumulation. At the same time, Yugoslavia has been forced to rely heavily on the world (capitalist) market, which has added to the pressures and distractions in the economy.

The orthodox Stalinist answer to such problems is the complete centralisation of economic planning, eliminating the autonomy of the individual enterprise over everything except the most routine matters. (These are left to the factory manager, who is a complete dictator over such trivia but is liable to be shot for failure!). This type of central planning is extremely, often ludicrously, inefficient, and was abandoned by the Yugoslavs soon after the political break with Stalin. Today the official Yugoslav ideology proclaims "market socialism", which in principle completely reverses the former centralisation and replaces it with almost unlimited autonomy for individual enterprises.(2)

Whether or not this retreat from central planning is a genuine one will be discussed below. It seems astonishingly like the economic "thinking" of Barry Goldwater or Enoch Powell, but without the private property. Workers' councils (or capitalist firms) are supposed to decide what they are going to

(1) The literature on the Yugoslav economy is, on the whole, rather technical and I have not provided references for specific points. The main sources which I have consulted are listed below. Of these the Waterson book is easiest to read, and probably still the best, though now rather dated. (Ironically, he works for the World Bank. Such is the interest of socialists in the problem!)

A.Waterson: Planning in Yugoslavia, John Hopkins, Baltimore 1962.

B.McFarlane: Yugoslavia's Crossroads, Socialist Register 1966, Merlin Press.

J.T.Bombelles: The Economic Development of Communist Yugoslavia 1947 - 1964, Hoover Institution, Stanford, California, 1968.

B.Sefer: Income Distribution in Yugoslavia, International Labour Review, 1968.

Political and Economic Planning - Planning, No. 502, July 1968: Economic Reform in Yugoslavia.

(2) This is similar to the "economic reforms" of Dubcek's Czechoslovakia, or to the Libermanism in the U.S.S.R., only taken to extremes and placed against a background of more or less genuine self-management within the individual enterprise.

produce, sell it on the free market, pay their costs of production from the proceeds, and pocket the profits, if any. If they are unsuccessful in judging the state of the market, or inefficient in producing the goods, then they go bust. Investment decisions - to add a wing to a factory, build an office block, or even construct a new power station - are taken by these workers' councils (or capitalists) on the basis of whether they are expected to pay. For the bourgeoisie, individual self-interest and private profit rule the world; for the Yugoslavs, the self-interest of particular groups of workers.

All this of course is a parody of the crudest form of bourgeois economics. But again defer the question of whether the Yugoslav does - or ever could operate in this way. The important thing is that it is apparently intended to do so. What would be the result if it did?

1. It would be very inefficient. How could a workers' council tell whether a new power station would be profitable? It would have to assume (guess) that the extra generating capacity would in fact be used. This would depend, for example, on whether workers' councils in engineering were going to need more power. In turn this would depend on their plans for future expansion. But these plans might depend themselves on their assumptions (guesses) about the availability of power if they did expand! So you might end up with too little generating capacity, or too much, or even (occasionally and by accident), the right amount. In any case alternating periods of inflation and unemployment (under socialism!) would be inevitable.
2. It would be very unfair. Workers in expanding industries, or prosperous coalfields, would be better off relatively to their comrades in declining industries and worked-out pits. Fortunately, growing regions would prosper at the expense of stagnation and decay elsewhere. In reaction against the uncertainties already mentioned, workers' councils would begin to get together to fix prices and control output. Some would be in a stronger position to do this than others, and would profit accordingly. (Workers' Weinstocks?) All this would happen without greed or malice on anyone's part (though these would probably be encouraged). It would be seen as the natural way, the only way, out of a crazy situation. But it would have nothing to do with socialism.

In short, a complete decentralised system would run into all the economic problems of capitalism. This the Yugoslavs are beginning to find out. Regional differences are still very great. Blatantly unjustified wage differentials exist. Monopolies and giant combines - perhaps without the Stokeses and the Weinstocks - but otherwise unpleasantly similar - are springing up.

At the same time, there has never been a complete renunciation of central control over the economy. The State has the usual powers of taxation, and so can determine over the heads of the workers' councils how much of the total production is consumed, and how much salted away for accumulation. It can allocate foreign exchange where it wants it to go, favouring some industries or enterprises and not others. (This is a very potent weapon in a country where machinery and raw materials are often not available at home at

any price). The State still has considerable control over the banks, and even direct price controls have been introduced at times. All this is done by a state machine subject to the ruling, and only party. It is not done by the working class itself.

So Yugoslav self-management is on a knife edge. It can be legitimately attacked, at the same time, from two different directions. In some ways decentralization has gone too far, and the anarchy of the market has been substituted for socialist cooperation. On the other hand, the autonomy of the self-managed enterprise is limited by the powers of a State which is not accountable to the working class, and which curtails freedom of speech and the rights of opposition.

At present it seems as though central planning in Yugoslavia is dying very fast(1). I find it rather difficult to believe that an entire ruling class is about to commit mass suicide in this way. If I am wrong, however, the future for Yugoslavia is not at all clear. It could be that the professional managers will take over where the party officials and the bureaucrats leave off. In any case, a laissez-faire Yugoslavia, however democratically managed at the enterprise level, would hardly deserve to be called socialist.

If self-management is to avoid the injustices and distortions which result from the free play of the market, some coordination and some centralization will be necessary. It is important to be clear on this. Major decisions on production will not be taken by experts (or high-ranking incompetents). Nor will they be taken by members of a political party which claims to represent the working class. They will be taken by mandated delegates from all the workers' councils, subject to instant recall. But the decisions of a central workers' council, however democratic and reasonable, will inevitably involve sacrifices by some workers in the interests of others. There will be situations in which the wishes of minorities will have to be disregarded.

The only safeguards in such circumstances are political ones. Complete freedom of speech, assembly and political organisation must be the absolute right of all socialist tendencies and of all the interest groups in the working class. And "socialist" must be defined very broadly, so that no one faction can eliminate all the others under the guise of being the only "true" socialists. The need for political organisations will be increased, not reduced. Faction fights within workers' councils will need to be positively encouraged. Active steps will have to be taken to decentralize the mass media. The right to strike - however "unreasonably" - must be guaranteed. It is not accidental that the need for complete and genuine socialist democracy has recently been emphasised by libertarians engaged in struggle against a particularly vicious form of state capitalism in Poland(2).

In all this the role of the expert will be greatly changed. There is a danger that, just because people will be willing to listen to reason when society has been put on a rational basis, "expert advice" will not be

(1) See the recent articles quoted above.

(2) Kuron and Modzslewski: An Open Letter to the Party (I.S. 1968).

criticized enough. (I have attempted to suggest some of the implications of self-management for economics itself in the Appendix). The basic problem of self-management, however, is not to do away with planning or expert advice, nor to let the planners and the experts - in whatever form - take over. The solution is to subject planning to democratic control, and this will only be possible with complete political freedom.

APPENDIX: Self-Management and Economics

Bourgeois economics is in a pretty bad way. (To be fair, the same could be said of modern marxist economics too.) Scepticism is unavoidable for a "science" which is still unable to define or analyse satisfactorily such basic concepts as profit, capital, or even money. As a social science, studying and criticising the economic aspects of capitalist society, it is a non-starter. (For example, modern "welfare economics", with its obsession with perfect (sic) competition and its reactionary treatment of income distribution (1).) At the same time, some of the techniques which it has developed - such as input-output analysis and linear programming - may have their uses in a self-managed economy, in the same way that chemistry will still be useful, despite all the napalm and nerve gas.

It has been suggested that economics ought to become "value-free", to become a technology which takes its orders and carries them out, rather than trying to say what ought to happen(2). This is of course impossible at the best of times - your values help to determine the questions you ask, the facts you select to help you answer those questions, and the answers you come up with. It is blatantly absurd in a society where everything is subordinated to the defence of the ruling class. Even a genuine socialist economics could never become simply a technology. (I wonder if engineering is. Does the man who designs a bridge merely execute his orders, making sure that the structure is as cheap as possible and won't fall down too quickly?) But it would have to reduce its pretensions. Again the danger is the cult of the expert, making everything appear as a purely technical problem and thus eliminating the possibility of democratic control. (And incidentally hiding the possibility that the expert might be in for a percentage on the outcome of his "impartial" findings.)

John King.

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FILM REVIEW

'Z'

Z is a political detective story, and as such is emotionally satisfying. It is based on the assassination, in 1963, of Lambrakis, a Greek M.P. In the film, a right-wing plot leads to the murder of a C.N.D.-type M.P. who heads a peace committee in an unnamed country. A young, incorruptible public prosecutor conducts a rigorous investigation, and, with help from a newspaper photographer, the plotters' carelessness, and his own cleverness, he pursues the case regardless of threats and bribes, until he has implicated both high local officials and government cabinet ministers. The plotters are all linked by a secret, National Front-like organisation.

The enjoyment in the film comes from seeing high authorities actually caught and - for the moment - punished. For those on the Left, our conscious or unconscious sense that somehow the authorities can get away with anything (reflected in our assumption of effective C.I.A. influence in numerous countries, or the normally casual acceptance of going to prison for "illegal" activities like sitting-in) makes the public prosecutor's victory deeply satisfying. This is in part because we know it is based on reality, but probably more important is the psychological depression many of us have, stemming from our current awareness of left-wing failures that were long thought to be successes. The Russian Revolution is the most obvious example; the ending of Adalen '31* - which reminds us that although the events of the film brought down the government and began Social Democratic rule, social equality in Sweden remains unachieved - is a recent film example.

One's satisfaction with Z is, however, dangerous. Though we can make minor criticisms when we enjoy a story, we tend to fit its basic ideas in with our own beliefs. Thus, for example, we might still enjoy the film while criticising a particular actor or scene; but if we find its politics antithetical to our own, it will normally be impossible to enjoy the film at all, because that would be enjoying fundamental criticism of ourselves.

This is where Z is deceptive. Politically, it is a liberal film; yet its basic theatricality - i.e. the successful detective work against the Establishment - makes it appeal to radicals, many of whom tend to read the film's message radically.

But what does Z say politically? Establishment M.P.'s can be good men if they are peace sympathisers; right-wingers may try to plot against them; therefore, beware the right wing. For radicals as for liberals, saying "beware the right wing" is about as profound and controversial as championing free speech.

* See Review in Solidarity, Vol. VI, No. 3.

The implications of this theme go further. The right wing in the film is ugly, violent, repressive, lying, secretive. The peace committee, who lack full credibility because they are smooth, wealthy young men who seem as committed to behind-the-scenes manipulation for the "good" cause as the right-wingers are for bad causes, are clean-cut, reasonable, pacific. They negotiate with the town authorities (who happen to be involved in the plotting). They accept the refusal of a meeting permit and let themselves be channelled to a tiny hall whose location is key to the assassination. They tell their young supporters to cool it in face of attacks by right-wing thugs.

One militant is shown, an aide of the M.P., whom the killers try to murder when he is getting on to them. After escaping the attempt, he dashes to the prosecutor's office and raves about the attempt on his life, accusing high government officials of being in the whole plot. He is right, of course; but the prosecutor, who knows that by now, cuts in and tells him to shut up or be prosecuted for treason. The tone of this scene asks us to admire the prosecutor's calm rationality and to deplore the misguided ravings of the self-righteous leftie, even though the leftie is otherwise treated kindly by the prosecutor.

Later, a worker who has relevant information narrowly escapes a murder attempt. He is innocent and ignorant, never understanding the political implications of his testimony, merely doing his civic duty even against the advice of his family. So far this is realistic - one can easily see a propagandist making the worker some noble, politically aware comrade, and the film admirably shuns this. But the worker is a propaganda device in reverse: he reflects the average man of good will who, if the society has enough men like him, will ensure ultimate, peaceful justice against any evil. Realism in the film, I suggest, would not only have made the worker naive, but would in some way also have stressed the political liabilities of the naiveté. As it is, the worker is an enjoyable, loveable cliché.

Throughout the film the photographer is instrumental in uncovering evidence and getting photographs of key people in the plot. But at the start, at least, his motives are selfish: he is doing it for his newspaper. Later, he seems to become concerned about the actual justice of the case, but this is never clearly separated from his vested interest, and we are never sure how to balance his different motives. This would be reasonable were he someone towards whom the film asks us to have ambivalent feelings; but again, he is treated as basically noble - almost in the manner of the eighteenth-century's approving belief that private vice leads to public virtue, where the newsman's private vice is ambition, leading to the public virtue of justice.

In short, the film is neither radical nor often subtle in its characterisation. It implicitly affirms the virtue of democratic benevolism (support your peace - not pacifist - M.P.; hope for noble public prosecutors who, like knights in shining armour, will purge the ogres from our society). It recognises corruption in our midst, but suggests that the corruption is a benign growth that can be cut out by men of good-will. This is such a common argument today - as, indeed, is my rebuttal - as normally not to merit our attention. The only reason to expose the theme here is that it is so subtly hidden beneath the emotional (not philosophical) veneer of the film.

That the film is based on Greece (though its avoidance of naming the country suggests a symbolic, generalised level of meaning) is underlined in two ways: in Greek, "Z" means "he lives", and has been a slogan of the liberal democratic forces; and the film has an epilogue detailing the punishments which the Junta administered, once it gained power, to those who helped expose the right-wing plot. The epilogue adds that the various government culprits were reinstated by the Junta. The irony is good, but is emphasised with no suggestion about how to get rid of the Junta. The epilogue laments the turn of events without indicating what to do about them, and without reflecting on their relevance to the ideas and events in the rest of the film.

As a work of art - insofar as art can be separated from its ideas - the film is well-acted, fast-paced, often humorous, and almost always satisfying. The important thing is to be able to enjoy it without being taken in by its politics.

Barry Johnson.

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ABOUT OURSELVES

Since the last issue of our magazine in January we have been extremely busy in the publications field. Our latest pamphlet G.M.W.U. Scab Union is a detailed account of how the bureaucracy keeps a complete stranglehold on a major trade union. We believe this to be unique in revolutionary literature.

We have also printed, on behalf of the North West Group, their second pamphlet Building Workers' Pay Deal.* This detailed expose of the activities of the Union bureaucrats and the type of "deal" which they strike with the employers is useful not only for the information which it provides for militants in the industry on what is being done behind their backs, but also as an illustration of what we consider to be a far more important feature of present capitalist development - the integration of the union leaderships into the Ruling Class. Together with G.M.W.U. Scab Union this pamphlet makes an important contribution to the study of modern capitalism.

Work on the book, The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control, 1916-1921, continues, the text now printed and collated, is awaiting despatch to the book-binder, when the cover is ready. The finances available still lag well behind bills which must be paid, and we would appeal again for donations and loans for this vital work. The book should be on sale within a month, thus cutting to a minimum the time which must elapse before repayment of loans.

On February 7th - 8th, a National Meeting of Solidarity was held in Manchester, attended by Groups from Aberdeen, Clydeside, Dundee, North London, North West, Romford, South London, West London. In addition to the cheering fact of having 8 groups instead of 5, as at the London Meeting, a hopeful new development occurred in the holding of discussion groups on the Sunday morning. The most successful of these was on Industry, while others were on Students, Teachers, and Women's Liberation.

It was generally agreed that more could be discussed in the atmosphere of the smaller group, and that the procedure should be repeated at future meetings.

A motion was passed, with no dissentions, that Solidarity magazines should be identified as the journal of their own Group on their front cover. It is in response to this recommendation that we have altered our front cover.

* We do not necessarily accept all the political and industrial points made in this pamphlet.

NURSES

Once again the nurses have hit the headlines over their recent pay claim (1), arousing a great deal of genuine support and sympathy from the public and a nauseating deluge of concern from the Press and politicians both right and so-called "left". Suddenly the nurses had genuine grievances and something ought to be done about the present deplorable situation.

But this "situation" has been building up for years, in fact it has existed ever since there have been nurses. The pay, hours and conditions in nursing have always been amongst the worst of any group of workers in the country. Even the nurses are not fully aware of their position; many don't know their correct pay, or what the prospects are.

The Pay

At present (2) student nurses get £395 during their first year, rising to £450 p.a. for the second year, and £480 p.a. in the final year. This is called a training allowance rather than a grant (although they are supposed to be students) enabling the government to take back about one-quarter of it in tax, national insurance and superannuation. This leaves about £6 to £7 per week as take-home pay for an official 42 hour week. Added to this is the meal allowance which was awarded after the last pay claim. This led to the famous "pay-as-you-eat" scheme resulting in them being worse off than before, or living on a starvation diet (or both).

Staff nurses (3) get from £785 to £925 p.a. or about £11 to £12 per week for a single person after stoppages. A married man with one child will get about £15 per week, which is just about the level at which he can claim social security benefit! When you think that some married male nurses are expected to keep a wife and family on this pittance and are told that they are members of an honourable profession it is just a laugh. Sisters or male charge nurses get £970 increasing to £1,315 p.a. maximum or about £18 to £25 per week before stoppages.

Hours

No one pretends that nursing is an easy job, but it would attract more people if the hours compared a little better with other jobs and professions. Obviously shift-work is inevitable, as nearly always a 24-hour service has to be provided, but the shifts worked could be made a lot more convenient for us.

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- (1) Those with good memories may recall that we hit the headlines in 1965.
 - (2) Up to April 1st, 1970.
 - (3) Staff nurses are those who have completed their three years student training and have passed the State Registration Examination.

The total number of hours worked is officially 84 per fortnight. This does not include meal breaks and tea breaks. This is consistent throughout the country, but the way in which they are split up varies from hospital to hospital. Most hospitals use the "split-shift" (1) system quite a lot. This means that you start work at 7.30 a.m., carry on till 9.30 a.m. or 1.00 p.m., then have a few hours off and have to come back for a few more hours in the late afternoon and evening, completely ruining one's free-time that day.

Of course the average nurse works far more than the official 84 hours per fortnight. It is virtually impossible to get off duty on time owing to the pressure of work and the fact that no allowance is made for handing over to the next shift coming on duty. Between 15 and 30 minutes each day when you are officially off is always spent explaining the work to be done, etc., to the next shift. This is quite apart from extra time often put in if someone on the next shift is late or ill when you have to wait until a replacement is found.

The net result is that a staff nurse probably works an average of 45 hours minimum per week. In nearly every case no overtime is paid for the extra hours worked! Overtime is only paid if eight consecutive hours are worked at the weekend; (after 12 noon on Saturday) and this is paid at time-and-a-quarter.

Type of Work

Our work can be roughly divided into skilled and unskilled; both these categories may include useful or useless (futile, irrelevant and unsatisfying). The useful skilled work that a nurse does is fairly obvious and is what we are supposed to have been trained to do. The useful unskilled work includes many jobs such as cleaning and tidying up although this work is being more and more taken over by untrained staff. There are also a number of jobs such as bed-making and washing patients which, although not skilled, are important in making contact and establishing human relationships with them. Also this is the time when many patients can tell you about their personal worries as well as potentially important medical symptoms. Nurses, like all other workers ideally should be more than just alienated technicians.

The useless time-wasting work that we do accounts for quite a lot of our time; easily 25% is spent in this way. It largely results from nurses not being encouraged or even allowed to use their common sense or initiative. Instead they are forced or indoctrinated into using inflexible rules and routines. The ritual recording of fluid input and output on charts, four-hourly temperature, pulse and blood pressure readings, information about patients and treatment being kept in four or more different books (often the

(1) In industry in general they are very unusual, but in some services, e.g. bus workers, they are paid some proportion of their hourly rate for the time they are not working in between parts of the shift.

same information). Many of these things are vitally necessary in individual cases but the point is that they are often done out of pure routine and depending on the whims of the sister in charge of the ward.

The lack of equipment and facilities on the wards makes things even worse. In some hospitals we have to spend hours boiling instruments for lack of modern sterilizers - in nearly all hospitals the shortage of space is so bad that every available corner is piled up with things that should be immediately available. The space between beds is so small a lot of time and energy is wasted trying to do anything near the patients.

Conditions

Young people taking up nursing find themselves thrown into a system of hierarchy and petty discipline that is almost unbelievable.

At work the hierarchical system is first seen as a division between the administrative staff (Matron, assistant matrons and other administrative sisters) who dictate to those on the wards how the place is to be run. The administrators have no real understanding of what the needs are and what is going on in the practical work of the hospital. There is a huge communications gap between those who give the orders and we who do the work of looking after ill people, which I take it is what hospitals are built for.

Each ward itself has a sister in charge who has almost absolute power over nurses, especially the trainee nurses. Some of the sisters are very good, but quite a lot of them can make a junior nurse's life absolute hell if she doesn't like or approve of the nurse for some reason. Often I have seen student nurses in tears because of consistent victimisation and bitchiness day after day by a sister. If a nurse tries to stand up for herself she is just labelled a trouble-maker and life is likely to be even worse. She just carries the label with her throughout the hospital, as the sister writes a report on each student nurse who has been in her ward. In some hospitals the nurse has to countersign the report, but she is still unable to argue about what it says. For more extreme "breaches of discipline" the nurse is sent to the matron where once again (although theoretically she is allowed to defend herself) because of the supreme power of the matron the nurse cannot argue with her. She is immediately sent out of the office if she tries to put her own case, leaving the matron and sister to make the final judgement. What it amounts to is that if a sister or matron want to they can get a nurse sacked without her having any chance of defending herself at all in practical terms.

Meal breaks are from half-an-hour to one hour, of which 10 to 15 minutes is spent queuing for a plate of cold unappetising badly cooked food which is practically thrown at you. Of course the sisters and doctors fare slightly better. At least they have their food brought to them in a fairly civilised manner in a separate dining room, although why this segregation is necessary, when all hospital staff are human beings working equally hard and equally appreciate a decent meal and break in the middle of the day, God knows.

Usually we have very little say in when we can take our time off - any special requests for a day off have to be in weeks beforehand - although it would be relatively simple for the nurses on each ward to decide collectively how they want to arrange their working week.

Most junior nurses are either forced, or strongly encouraged, to live in nurses' homes. ("Strongly encouraged" means that to decline the matron's hospitality an 18-year-old girl has to have a letter from her parents saying that they want her to live out, and the authorities may then consider the request.) These nurses' homes are run by wardens and home sisters under the dictatorship of the matron.

The rooms are small and depressing, and encapsulated in petty restrictions. No visitors are allowed in nurses' rooms, not even parents! Any visitors you have have to be taken to a common room (if you are lucky enough to have one of these). All visitors have to be out by 10 or 11 p.m. Nurses have to be back by 11 p.m. or 12 midnight if they have a late pass (one a week is allowed usually). To be out later than this a "late late pass" is required.

There are no cooking facilities, so you are forced to eat the lousy slop they dish up for you.

Training

The present system under which student nurses are trained is terrible. At the moment there are two completely different ways of becoming an S.R.N. Firstly, academic qualifications decide whether you take a two-year or three-year course. Five G.C.E. 'O' levels are required by most hospitals for the three-year course. The second way is to start with two 'A' level G.C.E.'s as well and then do a two-year course.

Girls who do not have the required qualifications start as "pupil nurses" and become State Enrolled Nurses (S.E.N.) after two years if they pass the State Assessment Examination. They then have a lower status and pay and are unable to become sisters should they want to. They are just used as a cheap labour force to make up for the shortage of nurses. But in fact they are often doing the same work as the S.R.N.'s. Furthermore they were discriminated against in the first place largely on the basis of irrelevant educational qualifications. Even with the present shortage of student nurses the hospital in which I am working at present refuses to accept potential students without the required academic qualifications, even if they are qualified in some other speciality such as psychiatric or orthopaedic nursing.

Student nurses have no say at all in how they are trained. They work on the wards and are aware of the constant changes in nursing procedures required by advances in medicine. Yet the sister tutors from whom they have to learn are completely divorced from the wards and teach what they were taught perhaps years before. This results in utter confusion for the poor student nurse who has to learn two methods of doing the same thing - one to please the tutor and the other to please the ward sister under whom she is working.

They are used as cheap labour on the wards often doing all the menial tasks - and yet at the same time they are often left with the responsibility of running the ward entirely alone; particularly at night. The administrative authorities cover themselves by saying that a student nurse in charge of a ward always has a senior person to consult if she cannot cope, but the "senior person" is usually sitting in an office or busy in some remote part of the hospital in contact only by telephone or the occasional visit, which doesn't leave one feeling particularly confident in emergencies, especially as decisions often have to be made immediately by those on the spot.

If a student is conscientious about trying to apply what she has learnt, she is constantly frustrated by the lack of time in which to do her job properly. Moreover, after getting up at 6.30 or 7.00 a.m. and working a hard day at the hospital one doesn't feel much like studying at the end of it. It is this combination of student and worker, being neither one nor the other, getting the worst of both worlds and being exploited which ever way you look at it that makes many nurses give up before they have finished their training.

Shortage of Nurses

There are about 240,000 people in nursing in England and Wales, of which just over one-half are unqualified nurses (either student, pupil or auxiliary nurses). Of the qualified many are doing administrative work. This means that the actual nursing of patients is largely done by unqualified nurses.

As medicine advances the need for nurses increases in three ways. First, the annual turnover of patients increases, modern policy being to discharge patients sooner, the average stay of patients in the hospitals becoming less. Consequently patients in hospitals are generally iller and in need of more intensive care nowadays. At the same time the type of work being done with more advanced procedures and investigations also makes a heavier demand on nursing time. Thus the pressure on the nursing staff is increasing and just to keep conditions as they are, let alone improve them, requires a considerable increase in the number of nurses. But in fact the numbers are falling. Last year the number of student nurses in all hospitals in England dropped by more than 7,000 to only 46,000, compared with 1968, and there was a drop of 3,000 in 1968, compared with 1967. This decline has not been offset by the number of pupil nurses taken on. They only make up about 50% of the deficit. This shortage will become even more serious in a year or two when the decline is reflected in the number of staff nurses.

This drop in numbers is partly due to few applications to the training schools, and partly to the high drop out rate. A minimum figure for the average drop out rate before qualifying is 30% and in many places it is over 50%. In my year 22 of us started and only 11 took the S.R.N. exam.

So the poor pay and hours and conditions (including the training and general oppression of trainee nurses) (1) means that less people are taking up

(1) If it wasn't for the very high proportion of foreign nurses working for the N.H.S. the shortage would be much more acute.

or staying in nursing, leading to an even greater work load and worsening conditions for those who stay on, this process goes round in a vicious circle. As a result the nurses suffer, the patients suffer through lack of proper care and the people in general suffer, as the wards and even hospitals have to close down whilst new departments and even whole hospitals are unable to open.

Agency Nurses

A large number of qualified nurses are now leaving the national health service and working for nursing agencies. Originally there were only a few of these supplying private nursing homes, but because they pay more, many staff nurses are now leaving the N.H.S. and being re-employed back to the hospitals via agencies. In some hospitals up to 50% of the qualified staff are from agencies. The hospitals are forced to pay the higher rates in order to keep the wards open.

Working for an agency a nurse gets about £20 to £22 a week gross for a 40-hour week, but from this 10% to 12½% is taken off (before stoppages) by the agency as commission. Thus these agencies get rich off the backs of nurses for no outlay at all other than a pokey little office and a telephone.

Many nurses are attracted by the higher pay and added advantage of being able to choose to a certain extent how many hours they will put in each week. On a short-term basis this seems fine. But in the long run the agency nurse is not only exploited by the agency, she is also often not fairly treated by the hospital. Firstly, she has no security in her job - no work, no pay (on her days off, holidays, or even if she is ill). Second, she may often be regarded as an inferior being by the hospital establishment - someone who considers money a factor of some importance. Third, she often has very little choice where she is going to work, she just gets sent to any hospital that needs someone. Once at a hospital agency nurses are often shunted around the hospital doing different jobs each day, not feeling part of the ward "team" and not having the chance to learn the job on the ward properly - inevitably leading to falling standards. Thus, the only people who really gain are the mercenary agents who deal in other people's labour.

Attitudes

Nurses in this country have been apathetic and timid in their attitudes towards these terrible conditions for four main reasons.

Many of them come from middle-class backgrounds, and those that don't are soon indoctrinated and imbued with middle-class ideology by the whole set-up. Also a sort of Florence Nightingale mentality is consciously perpetuated by the system and those that run it. So the result is that most nurses feel so bloody noble healing the sick and comforting the dying that any sort of protest beyond just complaining (endlessly amongst themselves, and to their friends) would be beneath them, even if it would be in the long-term interests of the patients.

Secondly, the exploitation and overwork often makes them too tired and lethargic to do anything about it, even if they do not have any "ethical" objections to militant action.

Thirdly, the subtle and notso subtle control and discipline of the hierarchy keeps isolated would-be protesters in check quite effectively.

Finally, because most nurses are women, they are more likely to accept the existing oppressive system. This attitude comes from our status and our role in society in general. It is exploited to the full in the hospitals.

However, the degree of exploitation has reached such a degree that unrest - particularly among the new student nurses - is beginning to come to the surface. This probably goes with the general unrest and dissatisfaction of young people in society at large today. Also the male nurses are beginning to learn the lessons of their brothers in industry. Some hospital administrators think that it is a result of the evil influence of trade unionism, but as usual they completely fail to understand the situation among their own staff.

Nurses' Representation

1. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) was set up in 1916 as the nurses' representative body. It is not a trade union, being concerned with much wider aspects of nursing, such as training and discipline. Today it has 67,000 nursing members. It has been the dominant influence in the nursing profession and is controlled by the senior members of the nursing hierarchy. It poses as a benevolent mother figure making matronly noises towards the nurses when conditions are nearing a crisis, and occasionally adopts a slightly stronger line just to keep the annual subscriptions rolling in. However, when it comes down to the question of really doing anything, it makes the usual union compromise with the employers. Moreover, in dealing with many of the nurses's grievances, particularly those not concerned with pay, it is the attitudes and power at work of its own controlling hierarchy that result in many of the problems and conditions of nurses now existing in the hospitals, as I have already pointed out.
2. Unions. The two with the largest membership are the Confederation of Health Service Employees (CHSE) with about 46,000 nursing members, and the National Union of Public Employees with 40,000. There are nothing equivalent to shop stewards' committees, as in industry, to give collective strength from the "floor" to the rank-and-file nurses. This is partly because of our own attitudes as a group and partly because of the attitudes of the senior members of the profession who would rigidly oppose any such attempts to achieve this. It would threaten their own dominant position and control over us.

The Campaign

However, as a result of the acute shortage of nurses, which was becoming increasingly apparent, it was obvious that some changes in pay had to

be made by the Government. A £100,000 recruitment drive a few years ago had done nothing to alleviate the shortage.

Linked with this was the mounting unrest of the nurses over pay and conditions - particularly among the younger junior nurses. The result of this constant pressure from the "floor" was an emergency resolution of the 1969 Annual Congress of the RCN called for improvements in the pay and conditions of the nurses. The "Raise the Roof" campaign organised by the RCN, starting at the end of 1969, was opened.

The RCN began calling for reforms for the profession by asking the Government for higher pay, a 38-hour week and proper student status for trainee nurses, as well as an end to petty restrictions - often imposed or supported by high-up RCN members themselves. In fact, nurses themselves have been complaining about all these things for years, and judging from past experiences, many of us felt that relying on organisations that just compromise would mean that not much was likely to come of the latest campaign.

They began putting out slogans such as "Fair Pay for Nurses". They started lobbying M.P.'s and distributed 1,000,000 printed letters for the public to sign and post to Crossman, forcing him into action. Action committees were set up in the RCN branches with representatives from the hospitals in each area. Demonstrations were organised.

The whole campaign, however, was controlled from the top. The slogans and demands were already prepared. The meetings were dominated by speakers from the platform - the establishment - and any independent militant spirit was crushed wherever possible. The nurses were told that they would not strike; we were not left to think about this and decide for ourselves - even though many possibly would not anyway. Eventually most nurses stopped attending the meetings - they could not be bothered to be talked at yet again. The whole campaign was a typical example of manipulation by the senior officials and the apathy it leads to.

Happily, some of the demonstrations got a bit more out of hand, some of the nurses becoming too enthusiastic and militant for the respectable matrons of the RCN, with the latter's appeals for "restrained and dignified protests befitting to the profession".

The Claim

The claims put forward by the staff side of the Whitley Council (which determines hospital pay, hours, and conditions) presented by the RCN and the unions were:

Pay: Student nurses £525-£625 (32%) and £700 -£800 for students over 25.
Staff nurses £1,000 - £1,250 (27%)
Sisters and charge nurses £1,400 - £1,600.
Of course, for higher nurses' grades, higher claims were made; up to 54%

Overtime should be paid, and the hours should be reduced to 38 per week from 42.

The Deal

The management side of the Whitley Council - that is the N.H.S. - replied on 13th January, 1970, by offering 22% spread over two years until April, 1971, and a ban for two years on the discussion of hours, overtime and training.

The staff accepted the 22% offer, but said they wanted it immediately without a ban on discussing the other issues.

Finally, 20% starting on 1st April, 1970, until April, 1971, was offered by the Government and accepted by the staff side. At the same time, no ban on discussing the other factors was imposed, nor on negotiations for higher pay after April, 1971.

So finally a 20% average pay rise was obtained from 1st April, 1970. The details of the rise have just been worked out - and the rise will not come into effect until June (although back-dated to April). The individual rises vary from grade to grade. In their leaflets and speeches, the RCN said the campaign was for better conditions and pay for all nursing staff - and they were right. The upper echelons of nursing, who are on the committees finalising the details, won't do too badly - £2,500 to £3,700 p.a. But ward sisters will now get £1,200 to £1,554 p.a., i.e. £23 10s to £29 10s per week, or a rise of £4 to £4 10s. Staff nurses will receive £930 to £1,182 p.a. or £18 to £23 per week, only £2 10s to £3 10s per week increase, before stoppages. Both still nowhere near a realistic level. Enrolled nurses' pay is increased to £801 - £969 p.a., i.e. £16 - £19 per week, or £2 to £2 10s increase. Finally student nurses will now get £525 to £624 p.a., or £10 - £12 per week. This is only a lousy £1 10s to £1 17s per week rise before stoppages. Meanwhile, in March, at the hospital where I work, each student nurse was issued with a leaflet saying that the price of meals is going up - at the beginning of April!(1)

Once again, organisations such as the RCN and the unions - claiming to represent their members - have made the usual dirty compromise with the authorities, leaving the junior nurses almost back where they were before. Apparently they were just to provide the steam to get the whole campaign going, while the qualified ward staff have done little better.

Ironically, the public, who were behind us, now think that we are all 20% better off and cannot have much to grumble about. But what good is even 20% extra of £6 or £11 per week, after the tax man and meal charges have taken their whack.

The whole way through, the claims for nurses on the wards were much too small, and furthermore no improvements on conditions, hours, overtime pay or training were pushed for, and yet these constitute some of our biggest grievances. The final agreement reached between the RCN and the Unions and the Government was nothing but a sell-out.

(1) Also, on 2nd April, 1970, the Department of Health announced a 10% average increase in lodging charges for resident hospital nurses.

The Future

Until we learn that relying on other organisations to fight on our behalf will always end like the latest deal, we will never achieve what we want.

First of all, we must start trying to build our own organisations based on all the nurses working in the hospital and controlled democratically by them. We should elect committees of recallable delegates from the ordinary working nurses to represent all the nurses in the hospital. Nationally, delegates from each hospital or group of hospitals should be elected to negotiate for us. Again, these delegates must be recallable.

Then, having established a nurses' hospital committee, we would have enough collective strength to fight for better conditions and greater freedom within the hospital. Similarly, nurses' homes should organise on these lines. Only by keeping together in this way can we avoid individual victimisation. There are signs that this process has already started in a very small way - for example, a sit-in over the bad food in one hospital canteen.

Future Demands

At present within our existing system the chief feasible demands are:

1. Minimum pay of £20 per week for student nurses (as in Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland) and £30 per week for staff nurses.
2. A 38-hour working week.
3. Overtime pay.
4. An end to split shifts.
5. Working hours and off-duty to be arranged collectively by the nurses on each ward.
6. Abolition of restrictions on ~~where~~ student nurses may live.
7. Abolition of petty restrictions in the nurses' homes.
8. Collective management of the nurses' homes by nurses and staff.
9. Improved training for nurses.
10. Free meals on duty.

Ultimately the student nurses, staff nurses and sisters should decide collectively on the work done on each ward and department, while the hospital as a whole should be run from the nursing point of view, by a nurses' council of delegates representing all the nurses. Similarly, there should be student nurse staff councils to work out the students' training courses. But I don't think these ideas will ever be accepted within our present system.

S.R.N.

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RED SATAN STRIKES AGAIN

A Study in Contemporary Demonology:

A red Satan visiting one university after another? Revolutionary maniacs running amok amongst the innocent and unsuspecting masses of students? It appears that the minds of some figureheads in the Establishment have indeed embarked on a magical mystery tour as the only explanation of the current wave of student sit-ins, occupations, and industrial 'unrest'. A noisy gaggle of University vice-chancellors, Union bureaucrats, and assorted Tory notables from Powell upwards has suddenly discovered the cause of all the troubles of the Establishment. Behind the scenes, in every college and factory throughout the land, they detect the evil machinations of a group of sinister nihilists out to install red 'Readers' Digests' in every toilet and otherwise to destroy for the sheer joy of destruction. In short, a fanatic sect of revolutionary maniacs, disciples of a mysterious red Satan.

One version of the myth has it that there is this 'older' figure, steeped in superior knowledge, leading by the nose a group of 'easily influenced people' who are 'basically children'. This view, which sees students and workers essentially as hysterical adolescents, unfortunately fails to tell us why is it that all these informed, rational professors and supervisors, as well as all enlightened and informed critics, who are not taken in by the Evil One, are so singularly powerless to thwart his fiendish machinations. Could he be using Black Magic?

One possibility may be that this new Mephistopheles is, somehow, deluding everyone by a secret, arcane backroom conspiracy, known only to his most trusted Seraphim. Oddly enough this version is put forward by those University administrators and Union officials who are steeped in backroom manoeuvres, committee conspiracies, and the manipulation of mass meetings through suitable biased chairmen. It seems that these people have been manipulating in the backroom for so long that, their imagination damaged by their practice, they can no longer see politics to be anything else than manipulation of the majority by a conspirative minority. Seeing students, youth, and workers basically as naive children easily swayed by their emotional rhetoric it is unthinkable to them that anyone else could be persuading them of the need for social change by rational argument.

Those who believe the world is wonderful, or could be cured by a few tinkering reforms, are becoming hard-pressed indeed to explain the rapid increase in the number of people who do not think the world is all that neat, who reject the road to reform as the road to nowhere, and may not even think the reformers are all that wonderful. Since, by definition, the system cannot be wrong, the new social movement is 'explained' by means of its 'charismatic' leaders. Every college and factory has its wicked Pied Piper who is bewitching the population against the authority of the Boards of Governors, Management, and Vice-Chancellors. Everything is neatly explained as the tautology comes full circle.

Some prefer it hot. The ~~conspiracy~~ has the force of a secret nuclear weapon; this is the view put forward by one of the greatest living authorities on the intrigues of Mount Olympus, Enoch Powell. According to the gospel by St. Powell: "In the political sphere the technique is comparable in importance and novelty to the development of the nuclear weapon in the military sphere. A method has been discovered of achieving immense results with negligible effort, thanks to a sort of gearing or leverage which brings the majority into play under the direction and control of the minority", (Observer, March 8). The practice of the student movement is re-interpreted by a mind haunted by the "gears and levers" realities of the Tory party power elite.

A few centuries ago it was a crime punishable by death to deny the existence of the Devil. For if he ceases to exist, and ceases to be responsible for all the evil in this world, then something must be wrong with the rule of God. This cannot be. The Devil must exist, and must be all-powerful; everyone else must be weak, susceptible, temptable, and tainted by Original Sin. How else explain the 'easily influenced crowd's' unwillingness to be influenced by those who rule by divine authority.

Satan is all-powerful. Whence floweth his power? Surely not from God. We must go back to the Original Sin. Back in the Garden of Eden, the original Agitator whispered to Eve that if she ate the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge she would become god-like. And woman being 'weak', not to mention 'treacherous', she succumbed. So we all have within ourselves a treacherous part which, if we are not careful, will succumb to the whisperings of the Agitator. Its name is Freedom. The Agitator plays it like an organ, leading us this way and that way against our more scholarly judgement. But the Good, Brave, and Holy Boards of Governors, Union Officials, and Managers amongst us have staunchly resisted this evil pull and are now setting to the rest of us the shining example of The Good. And - curiously - having sacrificed so much for the good cause, all these saints, even as they resist the Evil One's blandishments, covet his powers.

Paul Hoch.

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WOMAN'S WEEK-END

A women's liberation conference, the first of its kind, happened at Ruskin College, Oxford, over the weekend February 27th - March 1st. Some 500 - 600 women (and a few men) from all over the country came to take part in a meeting that was originally meant to be a small discussion group, and turned into a significant event. The participants were mostly young, some representing women's organisations, others affiliated to political groups on the Left, some activists of trade unions, and many interested individuals, inexperienced in political militancy.

They all came to discuss the discrimination against women in the legal system, in the economy, and in education. They came to reject the stereotyped image of women, which, being one side of the currently accepted differentiation of the sexes' roles and an essential prerequisite of the consumers' society, is transmitted through the mass media, magazines, etc., incorporated in the education system, and internalised by women and men alike. But mainly, perhaps, they came to share with others the experience of being a woman which under "normal" conditions is a very isolated and lonely one. The frustrating internal contradiction of being formally emancipated, socially still oppressed, and psychologically somewhere in between, with which women (and in turn men) today have to live and function, started to show on the surface.

The unexpected response to the idea of having a meeting indicates the genuine urgency of the situation of women both in society at large and within the revolutionary movement. The need for liberation, the awareness of this need and the readiness to do something about it were all there. The meeting itself was for many the first opportunity to articulate the needs, to discuss and analyse their condition and to look together for ways out of it.

The discussion touched many different aspects and at least as many different levels which in combination define women as an oppressed group.--

Formally it was carried out under four headings: Women's Social Role, Women and the Economy, Women and Revolution, and Further Activities. Apart from these four general sessions, one evening was spent in small groups, each dealing with a specific aspect of the issue: sexuality, women and racism, women in education, the relation between women's struggle and the revolutionary movement, strategy.

To a large extent, the meeting as a whole was occupied with describing realities, exchanging information, specifying demands and calling for action. To a lesser extent, first attempts were made to connect the complex of isolated realities, to analyse the existing situation into common principles, to theorise.

As far as descriptions and actual demands go, there was a real sense of solidarity and of a common cause. But when analysis of the situation, connections, basic principles and strategy were suggested, different points of view and conflicting attitudes were expressed on each problem dealt with. Generally speaking, two basic positions could be detected, that of feminists and that of socialist revolutionaries. The distinction is essentially between those who see the women's struggle for equality as an isolated one, and those who connect it with the general struggle for a social revolution.

Amongst the latter, an additional important distinction must be made. One position is of women who still reduce the so-called women's question with all its complexity to basic economic causes and see the general struggle for a (politico-economic) revolution as a sufficient condition for women's liberation. The other position is held by a growing number of women, who see the last type of struggle as necessary but insist on its insufficiency and on the need to extend it by relating the revolutionary theory and human relations directly and consciously to the present subordination of women outside and inside the movement.

Women members of revolutionary organisations, along the whole spectrum of the Left, are becoming aware of the inadequacy of socialist theories, programmes, language and practice in their relation to women's position as full members of society. And since the "women's question" and the women's condition is also the condition of human relations in society - there is growing dissatisfaction with theories which do not relate to the internal mechanism of these relations, to women's essential experiences, desires and needs. And this applies to women as such, whether working class, middle class, black, white, or what have you.

A great number of recent journals and pamphlets on the question, mainly from North America and Britain, are available. A list of some of these is put below and recommended.

In the present comment no attempt has been made to analyse the women's question and its wider implication. This deserves a longer paper, which must result from discussions in the group.

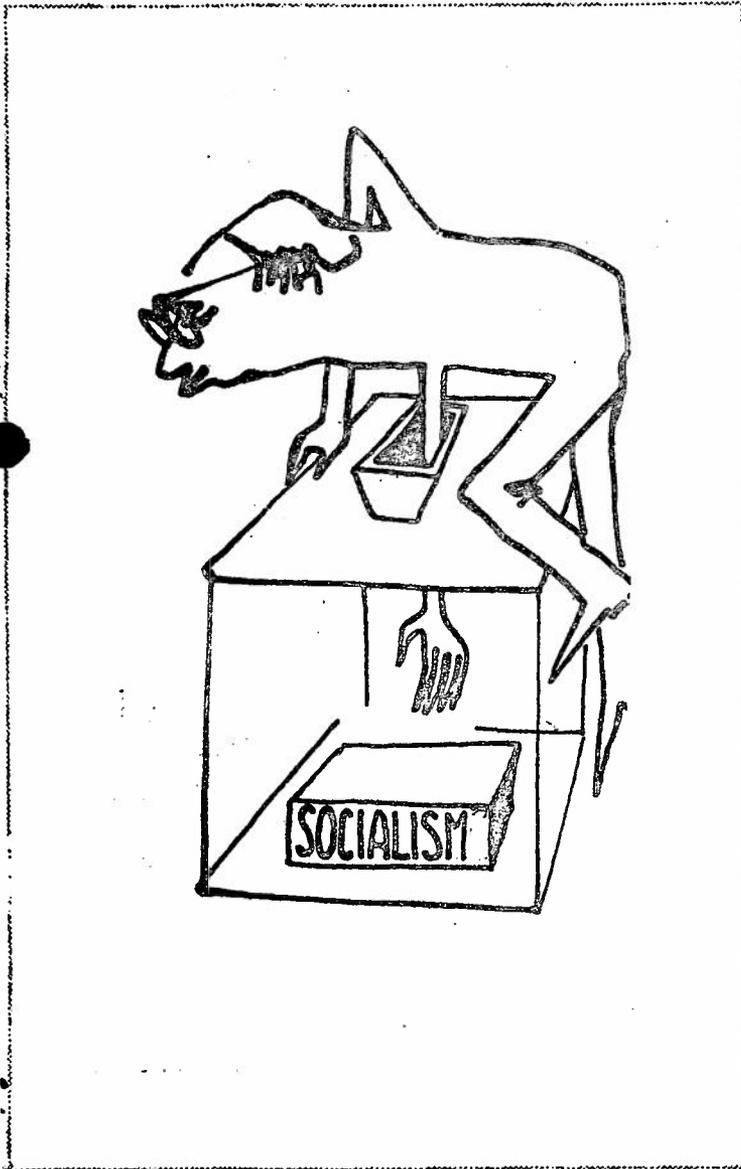
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1. Sheila Rowbotham: "Women's Liberation and the New Politics". Mayday Manifesto, pamphlet 4.
 2. Juliet Mitchell: "Women, the Longest Revolution", New Left Review, Nov/Dec, 1966.
 3. Roxanne Dunbar: "Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution", New England Free Press.
 4. Naomi Weisstein: "Kinder, Kuche, Kirche as Scientific Law, Psychology Constructs the Female". New England Free Press.
 5. Laurel Limpus: "Liberation of Women, Sexual Repression and the Family". Agitprop.
 6. RIPSAP: "I am Furious (Female)", Radical Education Project, Detroit.

7. Beverly Jones and Judith Brown: "Towards a Female Liberation Movement", New England Free Press.
8. Pat Mainardi: "The Politics of Housework", New England Free Press.
9. Lyn Wells: "American Women: Their Use and Abuse", New England Free Press.
10. "In a Man's World". Anarchy 56, October 1965.
11. Newsweek, March 23rd, 1970.

These are all available from Agitprop., 160 North Gower Street, London N W 1.

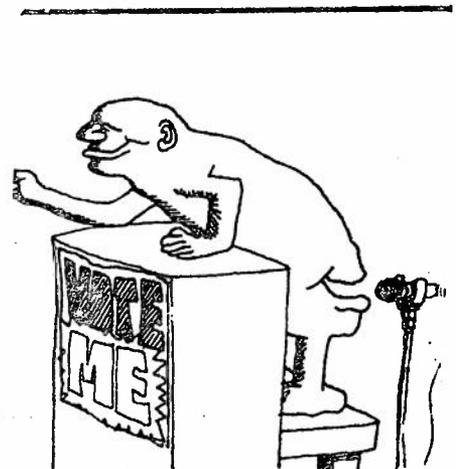
12. "Notes on Women's Liberation: We speak in Many Voices". News and Letters, 415 Brainard, Detroit, U.S.A.

S.L.



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THE K.A.P.D.

B.Reichenbach replies to the article in the last issue.

May I confine myself to only a few corrections of mistakes:

1. Nobody had been expelled from the KAPD "because they had warned in 1920 against Russian Usurpation of the Third International for their own political interests". There was not much difference between Rühle and us about that; we ourselves had been sceptical, but we thought it would be useful to join the EC CI provisionally enabling us to have close contact with the Russian Workers' Opposition - within the Bolshevik Party - and explain also our politics to the delegates of the other Communist parties affiliated to the Comintern.
2. Rühle had been delegated to the Second Congress of the Comintern, 1920, in order to protest against the "21 Thesen", to be discussed at that congress and to contact members for the Workers' Opposition. In spite of the commission - which he accepted - after some discussions with Sinovjeff and other leaders of the Bolshevik Party Rühle left Russia before the Congress even started. Moreover, the decisive difference between the KAP and Rühle was his rejection of the Party - of any party - as an organisation of the proletariat. Instead he was a prominent propagandist of the so-called "Einheitsorganisation (Allgemeine Arbeiterunion (einheitler)", AAU(E). This was the typical approach of Rühle's Syndicalist District KAP Organisation (East Saxony), declared at their special congress (April 1920): that all parties are rooted in bourgeois parliamentarianism and are therefore of no use in revolutionary times. Therefore the organisation of any party had to be repudiated - typical Syndicalism.
3. The KAPD was not "thrown out of the Comintern despite its moans". The KAP declined to join the KPD and, after having consulted the regional membership organisations, declared the withdrawal from the Comintern.
4. I didn't declare that a revolution in traditional marxist terms is nowadays "inconceivable" to me. I did say that I can't see any development in this direction. After all, the social structure of the "Proletariat" has changed since Marx's days. The workers aren't any more the underdogs, but have developed from a unified class into various groups on the social ladder, many of them with typical bourgeois interests and mentality.

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