

However, we must realize that the error of the Collective, in this and other similar matters regarding Edward Pickersgill's incorrect practice, is of secondary importance. As Lenin shows, in "Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder": "There are compromises and compromises. One must be able to analyse the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to distinguish between a man who gave the bandits money and firearms in order to lessen the damage they can do and facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives bandits money and firearms in order to share in the loot."

The Collective made honest mistakes, which arose from good sentiments. Edward Pickersgill deliberately trampled revolutionary progress underfoot.

The basic understanding agreed to in the Collective on the question of putschism only once appeared in print in *Alive Magazine*. Edward Pickersgill openly promoted that the word putschism should be freely used in the magazine without any explanation being given. Other comrades put forward the position that the word should not be used at all but that if it were used it must be clearly explained how this word is being used by the *Alive Production Collective*. This position was argued vociferously with the ideological quack.

On the one occasion when the concept of putschism was presented in the magazine, the use of the word was very carefully explained. This reference to putschism appears on page 12 of issue #117 of *Alive* in Anne Holterman's essay "Proletarian Reality Versus Bourgeois Idealism". We should look carefully at this passage on putschism.

Putschism is first mentioned in reference to the line of contempt

for comrades. The essay states, "Unless this line of contempt for all comrades is rooted out it will lead time and again to putschism." This is an incorrect formulation. The line of contempt for comrades will lead to individual rebellion against collective authority and not to "putschism" as stated in the essay.

The next paragraph starts by presenting a clear and concise explanation of putschism. "Putschism is individual rebellion against the powers that be. On the large scale putschism is the mentality of pulling a coup d'etat rather than seizing state power by mobilizing the whole working class and all its allies. Putschism is an expression of idealism with regards to gaining control of the country's destiny."

The subsequent sentence notes that, "putschists, though, are not always running around trying to topple governments." This statement lends little to the overall analysis and serves simply to try to prepare conditions for the subsequent "development" of the concept of putschism.

The definition continues by pointing out that, "Putschism is the idealist notion that it is more effective and expedient to implement your line by intriguing and creating a conspiracy than to actually mobilize the masses to support your line."

The analysis then becomes shaky. The statement, "This attitude also expresses itself in the life of the revolutionary organizations", is a poor bridge between the actual definition of putschism and the presentation, by Anne Holterman, of Edward Pickersgill's label for individual rebellion against collective authority within the *Alive Production Collective*.

The essay continues by noting, "Thus, we have individual rebellion against the revolutionary leadership. Most often we witness this putschism as a 'conspiracy of one' to pull a coup against

## GEORGE STEFFLER WE'VE SEEN THAT LOOK BEFORE



Bloodshot eyes bugging out  
to the point of blurred vision,  
jutting jaw aping anger,  
head held up in pompous pose,  
lips silently moving in prayer.  
We've seen that look before.

Isn't yours the rabid complexion  
colouring the scared rabbit-like faces  
guarding the state, nervous and irritated  
at the bold who demand an explanation  
of the guardians' anti-people crimes.  
Yes, we've seen that complexion before.

Isn't yours the dagger-like stare  
of some bombastic jurist,  
gesticulating from on high,  
viewing his betters as less than equal,  
as beneath his lofty self-image.  
Yes, we've met that stare before.

Isn't yours the gaze gracing the visage  
of conscious counter-revolutionaries,  
revelling in conspiracy and intrigue,  
misdirecting the daring movement  
destined to smash capital's chains.  
Yes, we've encountered that gaze before.

Isn't yours the squirming expression  
on the quisling's cowardly face  
in the unexpected moment of exposure,  
employing semantics to try to pass off  
shit's smell as a flower's fragrance.  
Yes, we've known that expression before.

Isn't yours the snake-like demeanour  
of the few oppressing the vast majority,  
of that class and of its lackeys  
whenever caught in their blood-sucking acts.  
Yes, we have seen your like before.  
To us, you and they are loathsome.