

# FREEDOM ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

SEPT 17 '77

VOLUME 38 No 18

15 p

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## SCHLEYER, AND AFTER ?

IN A COLOGNE street on 5 September the head of West Germany's employers' federation, director of Daimler-Benz and former, if not reformed, Nazi was kidnapped. His abductors were a Red Army Faction group, Red Morning, or the Siegfried Hausner Commando, after a man who died as a result of the Stockholm siege in 1975. The objective was to release Red Army Faction prisoners, not for the first time. The eleven named included the three Stammheim "leaders", Gudrun Ennslin, Andreas Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe; the Stockholm veterans, Hanna Krabbe and Karl-Heinz Dellwo among them; Verena Becker, who had been released from prison and flown to South Yemen with four others after the Lorenz kidnapping; and Gunther Sonnenberg, who is severely ill in a Baden-Wurtemberg hospital from a head wound sustained at his capture in connection with the Buback assassination. The outcome

of the kidnapping is still uncertain as we go to press.

Significantly, if also coincidentally, it was on the same day that the federal justice minister, Hans-Jochen Vogel, released plans for more anti-terrorist measures (including further steps against the defence lawyers), while a huge sum of Deutsch Marks has been allocated to strengthening police muscle and adding further touches to the State Security computer. Willy Brandt has been talking of the Weimar Republic and if, not so long ago, Schmidt's government pretended to shrug off the RAF threat (despite the vigour of their reaction to it in practice), they now seem to admit their fears .. Or is this just a new poll-exploiting, panic-sowing policy, preparing the way for a Kohl or Strauss? One cannot tell at the moment whether there is a smile or a scowl on their flabby faces when the Federal Criminal

Bureau reports the existence of at least 1200 "active and dangerous" terrorists, supported actively by at least 6000 more, supported in their turn by a swelling number of far left-wingers. But if it is true and the Staatschutz computer is really overheated with exertion, then perhaps an anti-fascist 'maquis' has sprung up after all; perhaps we have an alternative to the Constitutional State with its blue-eyed boy-scout Hitler superstar mark II - a model of decency, we are now led to believe, when compared to the over-privileged daughters of the economic miracle, declaring war because they're bored with stuffing cavia and crashing purple Porsches ...

But what alternative?

Take this kidnapping. Kidnapping means imprisonment, usually in the equivalent of a death cell. It is cruel and degrading, even for the likes of Schleyer. "Capital punishment or "execution" is a governmental and judicial word for murder, and it is astonishing that Black Flag's last front page should have carried the heading "Buback Execution Document while our comrades themselves referred above it to "execution"... Hell's teeth! Anarchists might justifiably assassinate at times, but can they ever EXECUTE? And does this word sound more convincing in the mouth of the state's enemy? It is this mimicking of the state by its opponents that becomes nauseating when taken seriously, rather than as the parody it should be, a piece of satirical theatre that brings awareness to the audience in order that they should cease to be an audience.

How otherwise, then, does one rescue prisoners from a hardfast fortress like Stammheim? Of course there is no glib answer. And this is particularly true for anarchists, who hold an ethical position and whose particular aims of freedom make it all the more difficult to employ methods of direct action that will adequately reflect them. Imprisonment, trial, execution cannot be among them - unless, say, they are feigned in a cinematic mockery of state "justice" with the express purpose of revealing its true nature. But for that one would need a sense of humour - black humour no doubt - and ridicule: the most effective propaganda weapons there are.

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## Bulgaria Protest

ON the weekend of 10 and 11 September pickets were held outside the Bulgarian Tourist Office and Embassy to protest against the (internal) banishment and imprisonment of a group of anarchist communists. The protest was organised by Social Revolution to coincide with Bulgaria's "Freedom Day" which celebrates the end of the German occupation (and, incidentally, the Invasion of the Red Army). Many anarchists who fought in the anti-fascist resistance have been imprisoned or banished both by Nazis and Communists.

On Saturday lunchtime about 30 comrades gathered in Regent Street, opposite the Tourist Office, and distributed leaflets. They were not allowed on the same side as the Office and were harrassed by the police, even on the far side of the road. When asked what law he was applying a police inspector answered "my law" and a comrade who protested further (threatening to carry out a citizen's arrest) was arrested. Later many comrades went to the anti-racist march in South London, which passed off more or less peaceably. On Sunday

the pickets were more poorly attended. A van load of police arrived on the scene, but disappeared quickly again when they saw how few people there were. (So remember, comrades, to try to advertise such events in this paper and elsewhere well in advance next time!)

Our Bulgarian comrades in internal exile or prison include Christo Kolev (village of Balvan, district of Velik Trnovo); Ljuben Djermanov, Gantscho Damjanov, Athanas Kissjov, Alexander Nakov. Further news has arrived of the banishment of Georgi Zdravkov Casabov (born 1951, town of Kritchin), sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in 1969; Vasil Petkov Uzunov (born 1928, town of Tsch'erpan), convicted several times, having spent more than 26 years in different prisons. Both are currently serving their sentences in Stara Zagora prison. Christo Kolev was never brought to trial, like most of those who are internally banished, and his period of banishment is indefinite.

# Up From Tolpuddle

ON HOLIDAY recently in Dorset I made a visit to a hamlet called Tolpuddle, which has no geographical claim to distinction, being a hamlet of few houses and one shop tucked into the petrol station and situated upon the horrendously busy holiday road from Dorchester to Bournemouth. One of the 'star' features of the village is a pub to which, buses being few and far between, we resorted for what was, ironically in the circumstances of the visit, a 'ploughman's lunch.' The pub, decorated as it was in the most chi-chi bad taste, was called The Martyrs. It had a signboard, so I discovered afterward a drawing by Will Dyson (formerly of the *Daily Herald*) which showed a sturdy giant of a farm labourer in chains, being passed by by clergy and judges - the original had the caption 'Who was then the gentleman?' It is improbable that the inn sign bears this caption, for the section we were in bore no marks of such revolutionary thought.

All the conventional right wing activities of the country folk were reflected there, including the League of the Self-Employed and the 'martyrs' were commemorated in souvenir ashtrays, key rings and cigarette lighters at appropriate prices. What souvenirs of Tolpuddle's history there were were relegated to the bar, usually frequented by the 'non-gentlemen.'

As a final irony to show how far the pub came from Tolpuddle, the lavatories had a contraceptive vending machine, its contents being described as 'Proform Shaped Lubricated Coral: a Luxury "Protex" product. Maximum Sensitivity for Unnoticed Protection."

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IN CASE there should happen to be anyone who had no idea who the martyrs of Tolpuddle were, and with the present state of trade unionism it is possible, they were six agricultural labourers who were each sentenced in 1834 to seven years' transportation to Australia for administering an illegal oath. This oath was a preliminary to the formation of the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers (a Lodge) which it was intended would join Robert Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trade Union.

The act under which they were sentenced was designed (as most Acts of Parliament are) to deal with something completely different - stemming from the Mutiny of the Nore in 1797 Trade unions were quite legal. Several riots (including agricultural labourers') had happened and the unions were growing in power. In 1833 slavery was abolished in the British Empire.

The Dorchester branch of the FSAL was non-violent in its outlook (according to its rules). It had no designs for a strike, either immediately or in the future. Owing more to methodism than to Marxism. The Loveless brothers, leaders of the lodge, were lay preachers and the rules read: "That the object of the society can never be promoted by any act or acts of violence, but on the contrary all such proceedings must tend to hinder the cause and destroy the society itself. This order therefore will not countenance any violation of the Law." Another rule forbade obscenity in either songs or toasts and provided that no political or religious subject should be introduced during lodge hours.

It became obvious by widespread agitation that the Dorchester judge had over-reached himself. (In the following July some Exeter bricklayers were tried for the same offence and were merely, on the suggestion of the prosecution, bound over). Eventually, after some procrastination the government agreed in March 1836 that they should have a 'full and free pardon'. After many months of delay, confusion and poor communication, they all returned. Curiously enough George Loveless only found out about his pardon by reading a London newspaper in September 1836 - six months late.

The TUC has adopted Tolpuddle as the birthplace of trade unionism - which is not correct - and have taken the Martyrs - not the pub - as the seed of its church. It has set up a memorial seat under the Martyrs' tree and endowed the TUC memorial cottages for retired agricultural workers (dedicated in 1934).

The viewpoint of the aims of the Dorset labourers is put more simply, chiselled in stone on a memorial arch to the depressing Methodist Hall. It is from the words of George Loveless at his trial: "We have injured no man's reputation, character, person or property; we were uniting together to preserve ourselves, our wives and our children from utter degradation and starvation." He added "if we have violated any law it was not done intentionally" and concluded, in the original, "We challenge any man, or number of men, to prove that we have acted, or intended to act, different from the above statement."

In the slick surroundings of the 'Martyrs' pub and in a week of the TUC conference it is easy to draw the grim parallel between the hopes of the six deported labourers to the monster they allegedly fathered. Even their moderate reformism has been swept over, not only by the need to make martyrs and respectable roots but by the cynical political and financial exploitation of the TUC.

In my opinion the workers (trade unionised or not) are far from 'utter degradation and starvation', except, of course, in the 'underdeveloped countries' - some of them ex-colonial territories. That this has happened is not entirely due to the Labour movement or the trade unions. It is no coincidence that the emancipation of the slaves preceded Tolpuddle. It is obvious that a generous wage-slavery (but nevertheless slavery) made an expanding consumerist society possible - with the worker a slave of his commercially produced and stimulated desires. Technological advances (after the defeat of the Luddites) made possible even greater profit margins, and more exotic and more useless, fulfillable desires, and the national cake grew larger with the TUC's slice becoming bigger.

Nothing fails like success, and the road from Tolpuddle has seen the TUC becoming a power in the land, with the usual shabby compromises and betrayals, which are the price of power. Strikes have been played down or scabbed against, wage policies have been assented to, wars have been supported, reactionary government policies have been cooperated with. Inside the unions differentials have been maintained, closed shops and inter-union warfare

and poaching have gone on, craftsmanship has been thrown out of the window and over-manning and exploitation of the consumer taken place in the name of the cash nexus, which is the sole motive force of unionism today. The 'utter degradation' that Loveless spoke of, as avoiding, is the habitual performance at the TU conference.

JACK ROBINSON

## small is beautiful

AS Dr Schumacher says in his little book 'People's Power': "The mechanised process of production inevitably leaves certain gaps, and these gaps are filled by people. Man the maker has become man the gap-filler, an accessory."

The untimely death of this unusual technologist certainly leaves a gap in the ranks of those who have rejected the idea that progress lies in a barrel of oil, ton of coal, or perhaps, a keg of gunpowder. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, extreme product of the mechanistic technological society, he came to see that the infection was spreading everywhere.

As an early forecaster of the limits of our technological society he says in 'The Age of Plenty' on the ecological and social dangers we face: "Today, however, those minority opinions of a few years ago are having a wide impact even on official utterances. The limits-to-growth debate is in full swing. The possibility of severe fuel shortages in many parts of the world, which only a few years ago was laughed out of court, is becoming a reality. Concern over environmental degradation and the dangers of ecological breakdown is no longer confined to a few minority groups."

'Small is Beautiful' is Schumacher's most famous book; it deals with the 'proper scale of things.' It is here that anarchists have a special interest, which has not been shared by other revolutionary groups. Like all political groupings they are concerned with control and with expediency, not with ethics.

As he observes in 'People's Power': "A large part of the work done in modern society is moronic; it offers no real challenge and no real reward. It serves the making of goods and not the making of men. The young Dr Karl Marx seems to have foreseen this when he wrote, astonishingly: 'If you have too many useful machines you get too many useless people.'"

I find it curious that so many highly perceptive and intelligent people like Schumacher turn to the Catholic Church. The church of obscurantism, of poverty, of the inquisition, the church that was ambivalent towards Hitler and which even today is a bulwark of the establishment. Perhaps his new book 'Guide to the Perplexed' will tell us. In the meantime let us salute a valuable contributor to the attempts to challenge the anti-human forces rampant in modern society.

ALAN ALBON

# A Simple Confession

TRoubled READERS, we dadaists, who even deny the importance of our behaviour, are concerned by the incident involving a book-shredding machine, an order for a book and the absence of charm surrounding the entire matter of Colletts and the Anarchist Cookbook.

The moral enthusiasm of nineteen year old clerks astonishes us. Britain's behaviour is of no concern to us but we do take an eager interest in young clerks who moralise and this with a book-shredding machine.

No great lovers of the pile of literature bequeathed us by the darlings (posthumously) of high expression, we made enquiries on the matter. (By phone).

Mr Warring of Colletts claims a light-hearted responsibility for the affair on behalf of his

employers. He is amused by the sudden notoriety occasioned by the Guardian report which has befallen him.

Mr Cole, director of Camden Libraries, remarks that he is critical of the decision to shred the Anarchist Cookbook as it was on order (he noted for fourteen months) from his library. We believe his authority has been usurped and that this accounts for his annoyance.

Unable to phone the reader who originally ordered this bombshell of a book, we wish to blow the whole affair up out of all proportion. We demand instant apologies all round. All parties to this astonishing British achievement must slavishly apologise and offer compensation to the Anarchists of Britain. (If there are any).

Would Colletts like to explain if they intend to shred all books of which they disapprove? Why, if Colletts disapproves of Mein Kampf, do they not shred it? It is on their shelves. Will they shred the history of Benson & Hedges on the principle that they disapprove of profit made from lung cancer? Lastly does the Anarchist Cookbook come within the meaning of the Anti-Terrorist Act which prohibits certain Irish Nationalist publications from sale in Britain? Is Colletts a branch of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad?

We dadaists, mindful of our responsibility to demolish mindless piles of respectability, praise all involved, including ourselves, for the stupidity of being afraid of a book.

LONDON DADAISTS

## Catalonia

TODAY'S (Monday's) papers report on the march through Barcelona on 11 September (la Diada, or national day) of more than a million Catalans, demanding Catalan autonomy or self-government. The Guardian comments that "Several thousand anarchists and radicals hijacked buses and set them on fire or used them to block streets." But there was also much dancing and singing of Catalan songs.

Catalan autonomy was destroyed with the beginning of the Francoist dictatorship, which

tried to suppress the Catalan culture and language with much the same force that the Bulgarian state is currently applying to the suppression of Moslem and Turkish culture in southern Bulgaria. Now cautious steps are being taken by the Suarez government towards the re-establishment of Catalan autonomy. President of the Generalitat-in-exile, Josep Tarradellas, apparently looks forward with jubilation to his return home. But we can be sure the anarchists will not be satisfied with any Generalitat for long!

## GERMANY

It may be naive to judge RAF actions by our own criteria. The fact is that their own aims remain obscure, not only to the system they oppose. The RAF raises more questions than it so far seems willing to answer. Has the RAF, as the "mescalero" of Göttingen suggested, become obsessed with its own battle with Stammheim to the exclusion of the political situation as a whole, to the extent that it practices a sort of reverse counter-insurgency? No, one might answer. To destroy Stammheim would be to destroy far more than a building. But again, are the RAF capable of destroying it? And one might again answer, No.

This is not to say that the RAF is trying consciously to establish an authoritarian system, any more than did Marx. It is to say that they have shown no visible sign so far of the anti-authoritarianism of their supposed origins. Not even of the imagination of a 2nd June bank raid à la Fritz Teufel, with little chocolate cakes - "revolutionary negroes' kisses" - distributed to the customers...

Who more than us (with the obvious exception of the RAF itself) would rejoice at the freeing of the prisoners from Stuttgart, Hamburg, Cologne, Berlin or Munich? But once freed, and with, say, their strength growing, who more than us - whether we see ourselves within the revolutionary left or outside the left altogether - might get in their way? The RAF's recep-

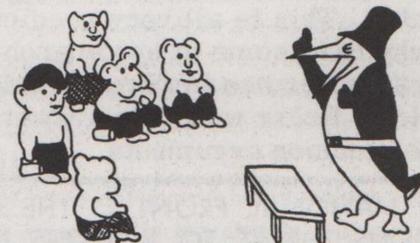
tion of Michael Baumann's criticism of Manson-esque and Stalinist tactics among the guerillas has been bitter, final and improbable; they say it was ghosted by the police. After the resignation from their ranks of the OPEC raider Hans-Joachim Klein, he was declared by them "an imbecile" and rightly or not, feared for his life at their hands. His cause was pleaded by some anarchists in Frankfurt. "Thoughts of liquidation", they said, among other things, "have nothing whatever to do with revolution, liberation, autonomy. There is a 'revolutionary' bloodstain: Kronstadt, Ukraine, Catalonia: annihilation of councillists, anarchists, Trotskyists, democrats, civil rights campaigners. Within this tradition, of which in many places today the revolution would free itself, falls urban guerilla warfare, totally."

Understandably they too were attacked.

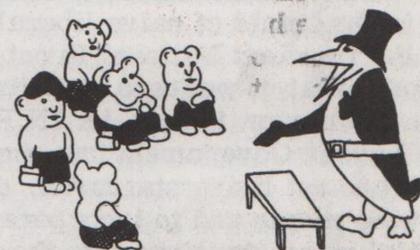
... Totally? Such a judgement depends on the breadth of one's definition of guerilla war - what it should reject and what include. This is why it is vital to have much more open discussion among revolutionaries. This is why, unless the RAF are able to accept it, and even if their attain their present goal, their prospects look bleak.

gaia

## Hamsters



"I'm aware that inflation is a hardship for some of you..."



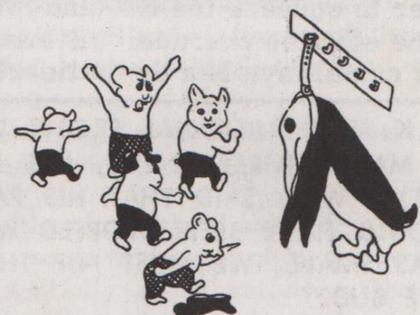
"... but someone has to make the sacrifices so it can be stopped."



"Therefore, we cannot agree to a cost of living allowance at this time."



"This is a time for belt tightening..."



From "THE RED MENACE"  
A LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST  
NEWSLETTER (summer 1977)

# FASCI-BASH

DURING THE last four years the Left in Britain has become obsessed with the National Front, giving it an importance out of all proportion to its actual significance.

The Socialist Workers' Party needs the National Front as much as the NF needs the SWP. Both give each other a clearly identified enemy and an illusion of importance with the endless promise of decisive 'action' and meaningless 'victories'.

For the Trotskyists it is so much easier than getting involved in real struggles of ordinary people where their elitism and authoritarianism are quickly rejected. This is all very predictable but why have some of our anarchist comrades become involved in this diversion? Below we try to answer some of the common arguments.

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"THE NATIONAL FRONT IS THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT TO WORKERS IN BRITAIN TODAY."

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—It is the height of naive liberalism to see the impotent National Front as the major threat to workers in Britain today. The major threat is IN POWER. The Labour Government has shown its ability to cut living standards, divide working people and to incorporate the official union structure into the state apparatus of control. It has developed the technological efficiency of the repressive apparatus of police and army ready to deal with social unrest. In N. Ireland it has shown its willingness to use any level of violence—including torture and internment—necessary to maintain power. Needless to say, the Tories relish the chance to do the same. We have no doubt of the National Front's desire to violently suppress all opposition, but do you really believe that Maggie and Big Jim are going to hand over power to the National Front like good democrats? If the National Front stands a chance of winning the game the 'respectable' politicians will simply change the rules. Already they are considering increasing election deposits in order to squeeze the NF (and SWP) out of the election charade. Ultimately, they can always ban the National Front.

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"O.K. THE NATIONAL FRONT IS NOT A MAJOR THREAT NOW, BUT IT WAS HITLER WHO SAID THAT HIS PARTY COULD HAVE BEEN STOPPED WHEN IT WAS SMALL. WE MUST NIP THEM IN THE BUD."

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—The logic of this kind of argument is that if Hitler had been smothered at birth Germany would not have become fascist, there would have been no Second World War, the V1 would not have

been invented and therefore men would not have walked on the moon.

In fact, Adolf Hitler and all the mini-hitlers who made up his party were the least important ingredients in the fascist phenomenon. Fuhrers are a dime a dozen any day. If Hitler's party had been wiped out when it was small that wouldn't have prevented another similar party emerging to take advantage of the social, political and economic conditions that made fascism possible. The simple fact is that you cannot cross bridges before you come to them, and it is ridiculous to try to annihilate the National Front today because you think that tomorrow a situation will arise conducive to the growth of a party similar to the NF.

Having said this we should add that we see no reason to believe that a situation will develop in Britain's foreseeable future that could transform the National Front into a significant political force.

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"FASCISM IS THE LAST CARD OF CAPITALISM. IN TIMES OF CRISIS WHEN THE RULING CLASS CAN NO LONGER AFFORD THE LUXURY OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IT TURNS TO THE FASCIST PARTIES TO CONTROL AND SUPPRESS THE WORKING CLASS."

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—In Germany the fascist revolution transformed crisis-ridden, laissez-faire capitalism into modern bureaucratic state-capitalism. In Britain the same transformation was achieved by means of the war economy and, in fact, Britain was as 'fascist' as Germany between 1939 and 1945. In other words, Fascism was an historical phenomenon like the industrial revolution: it isn't going to happen again.

Every aspect of fascism that could usefully be incorporated into the modern state has been. We live in a post-fascist state so what have anachronistic fascists like the National Front got to offer. Is it likely that a State with the mass-media at its finger-tips, trade union leaders in its pocket, and a highly trained and excellently equipped army and police-force at its disposal will require assistance from a motley bunch of hooligans, paranoiacs and geriatric ex-servicemen

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"SO YOU ARE IN FAVOUR OF JUST LETTING FASCIST THUGS BEAT UP BLACKS AND MINORITY GROUPS?"

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—It is a bourgeois mentality that is more outraged by the illegal violence of the National Front than by the infinitely greater 'legal' violence of Labour and Tory governments, e.g. Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, Aden, Ireland, etc. Why not "No platform for Labour and

Tory murderers!"

Allowing the National Front to express its views is not the same as allowing thugs to beat people up. Set-piece, ritualistic confrontations in which coachloads of lefties descend on an area for a few hours of street-fighting and then go home are no substitute for the organisation of permanent defence involving as many local people as possible. Already at Lewisham we have seen the SWP's disdain for a popular, broadly-based, anti-racist campaign.

Liberals advocate using the law to ban NF marches. The authoritarian left advocates leaving it all to the 'professional', anti-fascist street-fighter. As anarchists we advocate community responsibility and involving as many local people as possible in stamping out racist hooliganism or attacks on other minorities.

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"THAT'S JUST LIBERALISM. FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS A BOURGEOIS MYTH."

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—The fact that freedom of speech is limited and constantly under attack from the State makes it all the more important to advocate and defend it. The idea (if not the reality) of freedom of speech is deeply rooted in working people in Britain and it needs to be respected and nurtured. The chance to be heard is vital to revolutionaries and to trample on the idea of freedom of speech is suicidal.

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"SO HOW DO YOU FIGHT RACIALISM?"

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—The National Front didn't invent racialism but opportunistically exploits it. Reacting hysterically to the racialism of the NF avoids facing the real problem of the racial prejudice of ordinary working people. Irrational fears are not eradicated by a kick in the balls but by coming to terms with their root causes.

In areas with a large immigrant population the real problems are usually poor housing and working conditions, inadequate social facilities, etc. These problems will not be resolved by provocative slogans and street-fighting but by encouraging united direct action by blacks and whites.

RAY COWPER  
and TERRY PHILLIPS.

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EVER SINCE Robert Moss (who writes Margaret Thatcher's speeches) wrote the *Daily Telegraph*'s main feature on the National Front and the Socialist Workers' Party, and argued that "... the NF and the SWP resemble each other not only in the violence of their language and behaviour in the streets, but also in some of their basic political beliefs ..." the correspondence

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columns of the Guardian, Telegraph and Socialist Worker have been filled by protesting leftists.

Unpleasant though the truth may be to some, Robert Moss is right.

In theory and in practice the traditional 'socialist' or 'communist' party has always represented the movement to increased, centralised state power. A re-reading of the socialist classic The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists reminds one that state ownership was traditionally seen as the panacea to the evils of capitalism. Claims that it will be a 'different' kind of state which will 'own' the nationalised industries, and will somehow therefore 'represent' the workers' interests are exposed as soon as the 'socialists' seize power and set up their new order. The new society differs from the old only in that the state itself becomes the personification of capital, and the party becomes its administrative machine.

But for more than a century 'progressive' representatives of the ruling class have seen nationalisation as a means for stream-lining the capitalist system. Fifty years ago Winston Churchill was the first to call for the nationalisation of the mining industry ... Before that Bismarck had nationalised German railways, and his successor Adolf Hitler made the "nationalisation of all industrial trusts" one of the tenets (if never implemented) of the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Likewise the National Front calls for extensive state ownership - all private traders to require a government licence, granted only if they operate efficiently, abiding by the state norms for wage levels, profit sharing and transfer of capital. The NF would also take over the banks, and abolish that 'den of parasites' - the stock exchange!

Not only are the contents of the party programmes of both 'left' and 'right' virtually identical beneath the variant jargon, but their concepts of 'party', its role to provide 'leadership' for the taking and holding of 'state power' are the same. When it came to 'practical politics' Hitler repeatedly expressed his admiration for Stalin, and recommended that all his party leaders read carefully the (then) recently published autobiography of Trotsky. Himmler admitted to basing his SS on the Soviet secret police.

There has always been a steady movement of personnel between extreme 'left' and 'right'. In fact it can be well argued that fascism is a communist heresy. Fascist leaders tend to come from the socialist ranks. Mosley was Labour MP in Smethwick for five years before he launched his fascist party. Mussolini came from a radical socialist upbringing, edited a left-wing paper and served several prison sentences in the first decade of this century for his activities. Even Hitler, according to Otto Strasser, wore a red brassard in Red Munich in 1919, and applied, if unsuccessfully, to join the communist party.

In pre-Hitler Germany Nazis and communists frequently collaborated—e.g. in the Prussian plebiscite, and during the Berlin transport strike, when an SA man and a Red Front man were jointly posted as pickets on every railway station. The greatly publicized picture of Walter Ulbricht (it appears in virtually every East German 'history' book) shows Ulbricht sharing a platform with Joseph Goebbels. Movement of persons between the SA and the Red Front was considerable. In November 1932 the communist illustrated AIZ featured on its cover SA man Artur Kurek—one of the thousands—leaving the Nazis to join them. A few months later when Hitler took power, whole sections of the Red Front in Silesia, Hamburg and Berlin were taken over en bloc by the SA. These facts only make sense by recognising that 'left' and 'right', then as now, were essentially saying the same thing.

Like all political parties, those of the so-called extreme 'left' and 'right' claim to represent the 'little man' or the 'ordinary worker' against the monopoly capitalist. In reality though they are both essentially middle-class movements. In fact it couldn't be otherwise—the ideology of 'leadership' is by definition, so to speak, a middle class philosophy. All the talk about 'proletarian dictatorships' and 'workers' democracy' cannot prevent the workers themselves seeing through this facade, and rejecting the parties. Only a minority of the working class supports any party in an election—even a tinier minority actually joins the party. Labour Party, Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party have this in common with the National Front—their members are overwhelmingly middle class. Their relative electoral 'successes' from time to time are based on conditions of economic upheaval and insecurity—when the millions of dispossessed yearn for a return to, often imagined, past glories.

Where 'left' or 'right' wins the state power after which they lust, the party leaders quickly consolidate their authority, and translate their 'representation' of the electorate into a massive extension of that state power, and the 'little man' rapidly becomes an even more insignificant little cog in the bureaucratic machine.

Whether his master be called 'fascist' or 'communist' means nothing in real terms to the 'little man'. A master is a master is a master. The worker remains a wage-slave. He still has no control over his working day, he is still manipulated by the media in his leisure time, and still lives in ignorance of the decision making processes that determine all aspects of his everyday life.

Only an academic moron could indulge in a debate as to whether it was 'better' or 'worse' to live under Stalin than under Hitler. That Khrushchev could quote larger figures for mass murders and racial persecutions in Russia was due only to the fact that Stalin had reigned for longer than Hitler.

The evil doesn't lie with 'fascism' or 'communism' in the abstract—rather with the middle class ideology on which they are both founded—the ideology of 'leadership'. The moment one accepts that the rank and file masses need leaders, that they cannot run their own lives and take their own decisions, one pre-determines that the 'little man' and the 'ordinary worker' must remain exactly where they are in class society, at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Minor differences, such as whether the rulers are 'racialist' or not, cannot alter the sameness of these philosophies. The members of the ruling bureaucracy must by their own terms of reference strengthen their position—if leaders are necessary, and they are the self-chosen elite, obviously they must preserve their own position in the system to ensure its self-perpetuation.

The 'fascist' and the 'communist' by the extension of this logic see the 'little man' and the 'ordinary worker' as increasingly insignificant. His opinions are relevant only in so far as they endorse the middle-class ideology—his being is relevant only as an economic unit in production, or as a soldier to mount the barricades. The struggle in society is increasingly removed from society. It leaves the point of production in the factory and moves to the street. It is no accident that the SWP not only sees the struggle in just these terms, but repeatedly states it in its publications by quoting, with approval, remarks made to the same effect by Adolf Hitler!

'Mass demonstrations must burn into the little man's soul the conviction that though a little worm he is part of a great dragon,' and 'Only one thing could have stopped our movement—if our adversaries had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality, the nucleus of our movement' are the two Hitler quotations repeatedly cited by the SWP to justify their tactics against the NF.

Hitler may have believed his movement could have been smashed 'in the streets'. In a very specific sense this may have been true. But in the general sense of fascist ideas—racism, nationalism etc.—we would have hoped for a less superficial analysis from the SWP. Their acceptance of Hitler's 'terms of reference' is, to say the least, un-Marxist! Racism has its origins in the fears and uncertainties of capitalism in crisis; its elimination can only come as one aspect of the transformation of society. It is ludicrous to suggest it can be crushed by crushing heads in the high street. Increasingly both sides are righting a guerilla war 'in the streets'. During the past two months six left-wing bookshops have been attacked and considerable damage done by fire. The SWP headquarters has also been attacked, and some of their full-time workers are obviously in considerable personal danger. But their tactics are increasingly getting to be of a similar kind. Socialist Worker of 27.8.77 carries a report "Socialists Force Front Candidate to Turn Tail" It tells how Ian Bunce, a Dundee bus driver, the prospective NF candidate, was 'persuaded' to stand down. The 'socialists' learned from other bus workers that "he is an idiot no-one listens to" (in which case, might one suggest, he has hardly a threat) and that he is being labelled a Nazi.

"This prompted our members to step up the pressure. Last Sunday evening we sprayed the walls of his home with slogans in 2 ft high letters: 'Nazis live here' and 'Fuhrer Bunce is a Nazi'.

The following day he made a statement to the press saying he did not intend to stand."

These activities, both 'right' and 'left', reduce the mass of people to the role of by-standers. They are essentially 'elitist' activities. The 'battle of the streets' is being fought increasingly in empty streets. This is why libertarians will increasingly find the kind of campaign the SWP is mounting against fascism will bear little relation to what they feel are the real issues at stake.

BOB POTTER.

# Fighting Fascism

Dear FREEDOM

I hope that few readers subscribe to the views expressed in the vol. 38 no. 17 issue by AKM of London.

In the letter AKM stated that "The white working class, especially the low-paid 'unskilled' section of it, is attracted by the Front's policy of repatriating immigrants because this would improve their conditions. In jobs, housing, etc., through the law of supply and demand." Are we to assume then that AKM accepts what the Front say to justify their policies? In reality the implication that all 'immigrants', i.e. black and white, would be 'repatriated' whereas in reality the N.F. would be (and are) quite happy to see x numbers of white South Africans and Rhodesians enter the country. In any case the N.F. would 'repatriate', i.e. shove in concentration camps or push into the sea, even those black people who are by present legislation technically 'non-immigrant.'

AKM's apparent acceptance of N.F. "reasoning" stretches economic justifications - the law of supply and demand, we read, backs up the N.F.'s argument! Accept simplistic economics and ignore a revolutionary socialist analysis of the mechanisms of the capitalist system (which is responsible for unemployment, housing shortages, etc.) but don't, AKM, keep up the pretence of arguing with the "hysterical" Left from an anarchist standpoint.

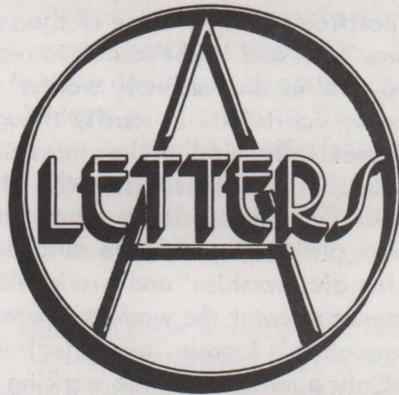
AKM also seems to show a strong inclination to regard the same "hysterical" Left in terms similar to the Right wing/gutter press, e.g. "hysterical opposition to the National Front", "inability to discuss the immigration issue rationally, their hysterical labelling of anyone opposed to immigration as 'racist'"; "when confronted with the arguments of workers who support the N.F. it is pointless to scream about racism and fascism." How amusing of AKM to impute hysteria to others when his or her arguments show a distinct lack of coherence and logic. The SWP and similar organisations (which AKM seems to be referring to) argue (non-hysterically) with white members of the working class that immigration controls are racist because they imply that the crisis is due in some way to the presence or influx of blacks, i.e. their departure or diminution in their numbers would mean more jobs, houses and better health facilities, etc. Furthermore, the Left AKM despises as hysterical and Machiavellian schemers would and do consider as dangerous drive AKM's statement that "For the unskilled working class, black as well as white this (i.e. complete removal of immigration controls) would be a catastrophe, reducing them to a soup-kitchen level of existence." The degree of immigration is not an independent variable. It is ultimately dependent on the needs of capitalists - in the context of post-war Britain this meant unskilled black labour. On the contrary, they have introduced increasingly strict immigration controls. If the capitalists desire immigrant labour how come immigration (a mere trickle) is less than emigration, in the context of a diminishing birth-rate.

One of the essential components in the argument against "national interest" ideas is in persuading the working class that race and immigration are being used as a divide and rule tactic

to weaken the working class at this time of crisis. One should not pander to this tactic by wild and completely unsubstantiated predictions about the effects on Britain of the complete removal of immigration controls. In fact the general tenor of the letter as the whole, the assertion of radical credentials notwithstanding, is contrary to the methods and practice of revolutionary socialism. One fights racism by arguing for socialism against the capitalism which allows and encourages racism and not by scaremongering and irrelevant jibes at the "middle class left."

Yours fraternally  
Doug Lowe

Lincs.



Dear FREEDOM

In reply to AKM's letter in FREEDOM no. 17. In the little political experience I have, the "hysterical" opposition of the authoritarian left to the NF seems to stem from their belief that their own authority would sweep away injustice by suppressing it.

Nevertheless the "contrast" AKM talks about (between left opposition to, and working class support for, the NF) shows, in my view, a complete failure to understand the nature of support for the left.

Extreme politics of both left and right are fed by people looking for reasons for their drop in living standards, their differences being who is to blame. With their hard core support amongst dedicated people, most of whom honestly believe in what they are fighting for, almost regardless of class background (since individual experience can never be the same for two people, let alone a whole class). AKM fails to point out (because he/she doesn't know?) that (at least until the publication of the Runnymede report in 1974) more people have been leaving our islands than coming in (therefore anti-immigration laws are racist).

Houses stand empty, building materials are stock-piled and industry has been run down because profit and property (the right to prevent others from using) is the rule of the day. Even though some working people may believe the Front's policies, their implementation would not improve their conditions through the law of supply and demand except, possibly where immigrant labour is exploited to keep the wage rates down; but it seems to me that the left solution to this, as far as it goes, is accurate - namely that we should fight for a decent standard of living for everyone.

AKM asks why we should be exceptions to being bourgeois (I assume he means by this owners and defenders of property) and react-

ionary if that is the way all other sections of society are going. I believe anarchism is the right for everyone to act as free and (it follows) responsible and civilised human beings. (At this stage I am wondering whether this letter was put in by the Freedom Collective to fill up the next issue with indignant replies). (It did cross our minds - Eds.)

Finally I would agree with AKM that undermining the argument is the only way to fight fascism and that many left tactics reinforce it, but we would have to be clear in our own minds about how to do this.

Everyone has the right to defend and be defended from any other person trying to enforce their will on them through intimidation, violence or the recognition of social norms (providing that person recognises everyone else's equal rights). In this context the attempt to prevent the NF marching in Lewisham (a march which was intended to intimidate the coloured population (immigrant and native) was honourable, although I have my doubts about the tactics used by a minority.

Fraternally  
Jeremy Gould

Ryde, IW

## MIDLANDS CONFERENCE

Comrades

The second Midlands Federation Conference came under heavy criticism in your editorial (vol. 38 no.19). In particular our statement that anti-fascist campaigns are likely to be more productive than anti-election campaigns seemed to lead you to the conclusion that we may be experiencing difficulty in getting anarchist ideas across.

What you have overlooked is that the statement was made in the context of a Federation meeting, and as far as activities are concerned, the federation is constituted for very specific purposes. One such function is to pool resources in the event of activities too large to be handled by a single group. Therefore, what was not said - because it was unnecessary - was that in the event of an election all anarchist groups would be expected to put out anarchist propaganda at every opportunity, taking regard to the local situation. This has always been the case and, surely, always will, as long as a group calls itself "anarchist." But fascist groups present quite a different problem, given that we feel that their propaganda is obnoxious enough to warrant special comment and that their actions are provocative and dangerous enough to require careful countering, we felt that this was a case for federation wide - if not nationwide - activity. Hence our statement.

Naturally if there is a by-election in our area, whether fascist parties are involved or not, our statement wouldn't preclude the federation aiding the local group with it's propaganda. I hope this clarifies our position.

Salud  
John England

# LETTERS

## ireland

Dear Comrades

It has taken me some time to find my feet again since coming out of prison, but never too late as they say. So I will take this opportunity to thank all the comrades of FREEDOM for the solidarity shown us over the last few years. Unfortunately we were not able to receive any anarchist papers after our first year inside so we are very much out of touch with what is going on in the libertarian world and vice versa.

My four remaining comrades in prison are all in good health and send their regards and best wishes. Noel and Marie Murray unfortunately have only been allowed to see each other once since their sentence began, which is very depressing for both of them, but we hope things might change in the near future. Des Keane should be out in a few months. Bob Cullen still has some time to go but is in very good form. Once again many thanks for the publicity you gave our case and that of our comrades.

Yours in solidarity  
Col Langmore

Dublin

## portugal

Emidio Santana in his report on Portugal says of the Marxists "They were more interested in political plots and coup d'etats than in revolutions." Having just finished Orwell's Homage to Catalonia wherein he makes precisely this point I feel forced to draw the obvious conclusion which Santana and Orwell evidently don't feel obliged to draw for reasons I can only guess at; which conclusion is that in 1974 Portugal, as in 1937 Catalonia the Marxists had no intention of fomenting and promoting any revolution to which the anarchists would be the only direct heirs. It is a dangerous undestimation of the Marxists to assume in either case that they had lost somehow their revolutionary intent. What they had lost, indeed never possessed, was any aim of protecting anarchism through Marxist revolutionism. Since anarchism is a considerable third force in Iberian politics we may assume Marxist control of that area is as unlikely in the future as it has proved impossible in the past.

Dyfed Trevor M. Artingstoll

### ANARCHISTS AT WORK

Dear Comrades,

After a useful first meeting on 30 August, we have decided to get together regularly to exchange experiences, and come up with some answers to the problems we, as workers, face with unions, management, industrial action, isolation, etc. We aim to be an open and active group, so all anarchists and independent militants from all walks of working life are encouraged to join us.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 27th Sept. 8pm at Rising Free, 182 Upper St., N.1.

Dave,

London Workers Group.

(see Contact Column also)



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Published by Freedom Press, London E.1.  
Printed by Women in Print London SE17 and Magic Ink, Margate Kent.

## In Brief

A GROUP of us from Single Step bookshop have been talking about how to oppose the National Front at their march in Manchester on October 8. We felt that just to break up the march wasn't enough. One idea we had was to dress up in Hitler uniforms, run around shouting sieg heil and generally taking the piss.

If you're interested in doing this, or something like it could you contact me so we could work together, to a greater or lesser extent. I've got in touch with various groups around the country so there is a lot of scope for the imagination.

We're having a meeting of various groups in Lancaster (eg. anti-racist committee, women's centre etc) on September 19, when further details will be discussed.

Contact: Nick James, 87 Dale Street, Lancaster, tel: 63261.

A libertarian group has been formed in Dorking, Surrey, as the result of a split with the Young Liberals, who didn't like "our attitude to the Liberal Party." The group, which comprises 17 people, had a statement printed in the Surrey Advertiser in July (reprinted in Peace News, 12 August). The Dorking Libertarians there described their ideology as "in one sense" collectivist, "believing in 'mutual aid'" .. but "our group's main concern is for liberty and the defence of the individual." This is seen in the context of the fight against property - basis of capitalist production - bureaucracy and the party dominance of the local authorities. Their main current activity is campaigning in the locality against nuclear power. (See Contact Column for further details).

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST CONFERENCE to be held in Manchester on 22/23 October. Creche and possible transport from London. Details from Manchester SWF, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester, M1.

1. (To President Harry Truman, in a letter inviting him to the West Coast)

If you want to come up, I can put you up. I have a swimming pool and a pool table. I shoot very badly and if you are any good with the cue, you could win enough to pay your expenses.

2. The emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself.

3. (To a clergyman who thanked him for all the enjoyment he had given the world)

And I want to thank you for all the enjoyment you've taken out of the world.



# FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

WE WELCOME news, reviews, articles, letters. Latest date for receipt of copy for next issue (No. 19) is MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER.

No charge is made for use of the Contact Column. All items for insertion must, however, arrive by the Saturday before publication date. Frequently valuable publicity for events has been lost by comrades not taking this factor into account.

NEXT DESPATCHING date is THURSDAY 1st October. Come and help from 2 pm onwards. (You are welcome each Thursday afternoon to 8 pm for informal get together while folding FREEDOM or despatching).

## Groups

**ABERYSTWYTH** Mike Sheehan, Neuadd Caerleon, Victoria Tce., Aberystwyth.  
**BOLTON** contact 6 Stockley Ave, Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516)

**CORB**y Anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants

**COVENTRY** Write John England, 48 Spencer Ave., Earlsdon, Coventry.

**DORKING** Libertarian Group, Howard Fuller, 6 Oak Ridge, Goodwyns, Dorking, Surrey (tel. 87814).

**EAST ANGLIAN** Libertarians, Martyn Everett 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex

**EXETER** Anarchist Society, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, University of Exeter.

**LEAMINGTON** & Warwick c/o 42 Bath St., Leamington Spa

**LEEDS**, Tony Kearney, 4 Ingle Row, Leeds 7

**LEICESTER** c/o Blackthorn Books, 74 High-cross Street, Leicester

**MANCHESTER** contact Al on 061 224 3028

**NEWCASTLE** anarchist group, 91 Beaconsfield St., Arthur's Hill, Newcastle NE4 5JN

**OXFORD**, Martin Harper, Keble College

**PORTSMOUTH**, Carolyn Cahm, 2 Chadder-ton Gardens, Pembroke Park, Old Portsmouth

**READING** University Anarchists: Contact at Freshers Fair, or write to Anarchist group, Students Union, University of Reading,

**ST. ALBANS** John Morton, 21 St. Peter's Road, St. Albans, Herts

**SHEFFIELD** (1) Tikka, 4 Havelock Square.

(2) Anarchists-Libertarians-Situationists Flat 1 1 Victoria Rd., Sheffield S10

**STOKE** anarchists, 52 Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent

**THAMES VALLEY**, Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 6 Congress Rd. Maidenhead. (tel. 062 2974)

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE**. Anyone interested in forming group contact Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Mipton Road, Weston-s.-Mare, Somerset

**LONDON FEDERATION** of Anarchist groups  
Anarchist Black Cross, 123 Upper Tollington Park, N.4. (tel. 691 6533)

Anarchy Collective, 29 Grosvenor Ave., N.5. (tel. 359 4794—before 8 pm)

Brixton Anarcho-Situationists, 8 Heywood House, Tulse Hill SW2 (tel. 674 6402)

Clapham, 3 Belmont Rd. SW4 (tel. 622 8961)

East London Libertarians, 123 Lathom Rd, E.6. (tel. 552 3985)

Freedom, 84B Whitechapel High St., Angel Alley, E1 (tel. 247 9249)

Hackney Anarchists—contact Dave 249 7042

Kingston Libertarians, 13 Denmark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames (tel. 549 2564)

London Workers Group, Box W, 182 Upper St., N.1 (tel. 249 7042)

Love versus Power People group, Desmond Hunter, 4 Swinton Street, W.C.1.

South London College, Knights Hill, West Norwood (tel. 674 7886)

Zero tel. 555 6287

**KENT** Anarchist Federation

Canterbury, Steve Dawe, Canterbury Anarchist Group, 12 Claremont Place, Wincheap, Canterbury.

University: Dave Norman, Univ. of Kent Anarchist Group, Keynes College, Univ. of Kent, Canterbury

Sevenoaks: Jim Enderby, 70 Bradbourne Road, Sevenoaks.

**MIDLANDS** Anarchist Federation: See Louise Crane, 13 Arden Terrace, Bravinstone, Leicester (tel. 82345)

**NORTH WEST** Anarchist Federation, 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516) (monthly newsletter, meetings)

**ANARCHIST** Students Network for contacts list & information on next conference write Exeter University Anarchists (see Exeter grp)

**SCOTTISH FEDERATION**

**SCOTTISH** Libertarian Federation:  
Aberdeen: Blake, c/o APP, 167 King St.

Dundee: Mike Malet, 1 Lynnewood Place  
Edinburgh: Gibson 7 Union St. (557 1532)

Glasgow: C. Baird, 122 Benneray St. Glasgow G22 (336 7895)

Stirling: D. Tymes, 99 Rosebank, Sauchie, Clacks.

## International

**AUSTRALIA**

Canberra: Alternative Canberra Group, 10 Beltana Rd. Pialligo, ACT 2809

Victoria: La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC La Trobe Univ., Bundoora, Vic 3083.

Libertarian Soc. Fed of Aust.: c/o 4 Roosevelt St., Reservoir, Vic. 3073

New South Wales P Stones, P.O. Box 26, Warrawong, N.S.W.

Sydney Fed. of Aust. Anarchists, Box 97, Broadway, 2007 Australia.

Sydney Libertarians, P.O. Box 54, Darlinghurst 2010

**NEW ZEALAND**

The anarchist movement can be contacted via P.O. Box 2052 Auckland

P.O. Box 22-607 Christchurch

International Books, 123 Willis St., Wellington

Daybreak Bookshop, P.O. Box 5424 Dunedin.

U.S.A.

**NEW YORK:** Libertarian Book Club, Box 842 G.P.O., New York City, N.Y. 10012

S.R.A.F./Freespace Alternate U: 339 Lafayette St., New York City, N.Y. 10012

**MISSOURI:** Columbia Anarchist League, P.O. Box 370, Columbia, MO 65201

**EUROPE**

Denmark, Anarkist-Synd. Bogcafe, Studiestraede 18, DK 1455 Copenhagen

Germany (Anarchist Federation of Baden) ABF Info-Büro, Postfach 161, 717 Schwabisch Hall, Germany.

## Meetings

**LONDON** Tues. 27 Sept "Anarchists at Work" discussion, 8 pm at Rising Free, 182 Upper St., N.1.

**MANCHESTER** Sunday 18 Sept. North West Anarchist Federation mtg. 2.30 pm at B.E.R.C., 4 Charles Street, Bolton (tel. Bolton 387516 for further details).

**MANCHESTER** every Sunday 8 pm at the Sixty-Eight Club ('a political venue with a sociable atmosphere') events & discussions. Sun. Sept. 18 film made by Sheffield Women's Film Co-op. in conjunction with National Women's Aid Federation; and a play performed by women portraying life in a 'battered women's refuge.'

Sept. 25 Prisoners Rights Action Group report on Strangeways jail, discussion led off by members of PRAG

**NEWCASTLE** u. Tyne October 15-16, conference of British Withdrawal from N. Ireland Campaign, at Cradlewell Books, 235 Jesmond Rd., Newcastle 2. For details, sleeping space, &c. contact Newcastle Anarchists, 91 Beaconsfield St., Newcastle NE4 5JN

**LONDON** Central London WEA autumn programme: Problems of Modern Africa; Music, right and left; Political Economy of Women, a historical perspective; Social Psychology... Full programme from Sidney Billson, 33 Compton Road, N.1 (SAE please)

**LEFT WITHOUT MARX?** Part of the cause why libertarians have failed to create a coherent alternative to Marxism is that they have failed to understand it. Libertarians interested in a study group on Marx contact Left Without Marx, 15 Marcham Rd. London E11 3LE

**LAND** for the PEOPLE every Tuesday at 8a Leighton Cres, London NW5 (Kentish Town) upstairs No. 8 (tel. 267 1184 or 485 3572.)

**BIRMINGHAM** Lib Soc. meet Suns 8 pm at Fox and Grapes, Freeman St. (Moor St. sta.)

## Desires

I'm looking for a room in a shared house, in South London, starting mid-October (man, aged 25). Please contact Freedom, Box M.

Somebody required 'to teach thick anarchist Spanish' at weekends, in London. Write Alan Albon c/o Freedom Press

Anarchist Gay Lib Group—to put anarchist ideas ideas across within the gay movement, Anyone interested in forming such a group contact

Alan Bray, Flat D, 23 Great James St., London WC1 (tel. 405 8850 Fri. evngs/weekends).

**CLAPPERCLAW** unique folk band will play free (expenses only) at your next benefit or event. Guaranteed fun. c/o 87 Bulwer Road, London E.11 or tel. (01-555 5248).

People With Disabilities libertarian group. Enquiries c/o Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N.1.



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see pg 7 (overleaf)

# FREEDOM'S Anarchist Review

17 Sept '77

## CONRAD'S ANARCHIST PROFESSOR • An undiscovered source

AMONG THE MOST STRIKING characters in Joseph Conrad's body of fiction is the anarchist Professor in *The Secret Agent*. When the novel was published in 1907, a reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement*, in a short but perceptive notice, found the Professor, Chief Inspector Heath and Adolf Verloc to be its most interesting portraits, but "it is the Professor who principally increases Mr Conrad's reputation, already of the highest." (1)

The Professor, whom Conrad calls "the perfect anarchist", is the only character in the book without a name. His motto is "No God! No Master!" He walks the streets of London with a bomb in his pocket to discourage the police from approaching. He need only press a rubber ball for an explosion to take place after an interval of twenty seconds. This, however, does not satisfy him, and he works fourteen hours a day in his laboratory to construct the "perfect detonator." "Madness and despair!" he exclaims in what are perhaps the most famous lines in the book. "Give me that for a lever, and I'll move the world." Lost in the crowd, "miserable and undersized", he meditates confidently on his power, keeping his hand in his trouser pocket around the rubber ball, "the supreme guarantee of his sinister freedom." At the end of the novel, he is the last one off the stage, prowling the London streets while "averting his eyes from the odious multitude of mankind. He had no future. He disdained it. He was a force. His thoughts caressed the images of ruin and destruction. He walked frail, insignificant, shabby, miserable - and terrible in the simplicity of his idea calling madness and despair to the regeneration of the world. Nobody looked at him. He passed on unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men."

As a literary character some have found the Professor grotesque and unconvincing. To Irving Howe, for example, he is so far-fetched a monstrosity as to constitute a serious weakness of the novel. "Seldom did Conrad miscalculate so badly as in his view of the bomb-laden 'Professor'" writes Howe, and "it is difficult to regard this grimy lunatic as anything but a cartoon." (2) Yet, as will be seen in a moment, the Professor was based on a real person. Moreover, Conrad himself meant him to be a serious portrayal of an actual revolutionary type from the late nineteenth century. "I did not intend to make him despicable", he wrote to R.B. Cunninghame Graham shortly after the novel was published. "He is incorruptible at any rate. In making him say 'madness and despair - give me that for a lever and I will move the world' I wanted to give him a note of perfect sincerity. At the worst he is a megalomaniac of an extreme type. And every extremist is respectable" (3)

Conrad, in fact, though he tried to conceal it, went to a great deal of trouble to fashion his characters and story after actual personalities and events. The subject of *The Secret Agent*, he remarks in the "Author's Note" to the novel, "came to me in the shape of a few words uttered by a friend in casual conversation about anarchism or rather anarchist activities." The friend (whom Conrad does not identify) was Ford Madox Ford, who a decade before had belonged to the anarchist circle gathered in London around the precocious Rossetti sisters and had contributed to their paper, *The Torch*. Ford's conversations with Conrad, however, were much more than "casual." And not only did he supply Conrad with anarchist literature, but he also introduced him to Helen Rossetti, the driving force behind *The Torch*. Conrad became deeply interested in the subject and, despite his later disclaimers, read everything about it that he could lay his hands on. Besides *The Secret Agent*, moreover, he wrote two short stories dealing with anarchists, "An Anarchist" and "The Informer," the latter being a kind of work in progress in which we first encounter the Professor of the novel. In all three works, he betrays a knowledge of anarchism of the 1880s and 1890s based on a careful study of contemporary pamphlets and journals, of memoris of anarchists and police officials, and of press reports of incidents involving anarchists. Conrad always tried to conceal the extent of this research, which was

considerable. In his "Author's Note" to *A Set of Six*, (4), which contains both "Of 'The Informer' and 'An Anarchist' I will say next to nothing. The pedigree of these tales is hopelessly complicated and not worth disentangling at this distance of time. I found them and here they are. The discriminating reader will guess that I have found them within my mind; but how they or their elements came in there I have forgotten for the most part; and for the rest I really don't see why I should give myself away more than I have done already."

Professor Norman Sherry of the University of Lancaster, in his meticulously detailed study of *Conrad's Western World*, has done an impressive job of tracing the sources of Conrad's characters and plots (5). Thus "An Anarchist", as he shows, was based on an actual mutiny in the penal settlement on the Ile Saint-Joseph, French Guiana, on October 21, 1894, accounts of which appeared in the anarchist press (6) By the same token, the source for *The Secret Agent* was an actual episode, the famous Greenwich Park explosion of February 15, 1894. Despite his pretence of ignorance, Conrad's data for this incident came from a whole array of pamphlets, from which, as Sherry writes, "specific details of revolutionary activity, attitude and character were derived" (7).



"He's an MI5 man disguised as a spy."

So deeply, indeed, did he immerse himself in this literature that, after the novel was published, "a visitor from America informed me that all sorts of revolutionary refugees in New York would have it that the book was written by somebody who knew a lot about them" Conrad tells us in his "Author's Note" to the book.

But on whom did he model his character of the Professor? No such person figures in the actual incident, about which much has been written. The scholar must therefore look elsewhere. Professor Sherry suggests a number of possibilities, including the German-American anarchist Johann Most and a British anarchist doctor named John Creaghe, or a composite drawn from features of both men and possibly others. Yet neither Most nor Creaghe, for all their affection for dynamite, possessed what Sherry rightly considers the most startling characteristic of the Professor, namely his habit of always carrying an explosive in his pocket. This idea, says Sherry, Conrad may have derived from an Irish terrorist named Luke Dillon (known as "Dynamite" Dillon), or perhaps it was simply "an imaginative invention of Conrad's, since no such explosive-carrying person existed in anarchist circles in spite of the melodramatic and sensational image which anarchists had in the minds of the general public". (8)

Professor Sherry, however, is mistaken. For all his ingenuity in ferreting out sources, he has neglected to follow up a clue provided by Conrad himself. In the window of Adolf Verloc's shop, writes Conrad in *The Secret Agent*, were "a few apparently old copies of obscure newspapers, badly printed, with titles like *The Torch*, *The Gong*—rousing titles." *The Torch* is clearly the journal of the Rossetti sisters mentioned above, and *The Gong* Professor Sherry takes to be *The Alarm*, another anarchist paper published in London in 1896. (9) What Sherry has overlooked, how-

ever, is a similar reference in "The Informer" to The Alarm and The Firebrand, the latter being an anarchist weekly published in Portland, Oregon, between 1895 and 1897. The Alarm, accordingly, would seem to be not the British journal of 1896 but its American predecessor and namesake, edited in Chicago during the 1880s by the Haymarket martyr Albert R. Parsons. A search of its files confirms this supposition. On the last page of the January 13, 1885 issue, the bomb-carrying Professor springs into life. Here, by all appearances, is the original of Conrad's character:

**DYNAMITE:** Professor Nezzeroff Talks About It. And Other Explosives; A Good Word for Tri-Nitro-Glycerine. A New and Vigorous Child. He Carries a Bomb in His Pocket; How the Professor Carries Explosives Around with Him in Street Cars. Collated from the N.Y. 'Voice !'

There has been a great deal of discussion in the newspapers as to my nativity. I was born in New York. My mother was a Highlander, my father was a Russian, and I am an American citizen. I have diplomas from three colleges, and have devoted my life to the study of medicine. When I was a boy I fought in the Crimean War, and I bear the scars of five wounds. The wholesale massacre disgusted me with autocratic rule. I determined to devote my life to the welfare and elevation of humanity. I have kept my word, and no man or woman or child can today say that he or she has been wronged or injured by me. I am going to tell you some secret statistics which I have. I belong to two secret societies, and get some State secrets from Europe forty-eight hours after they have transpired. Russia has 3,000,000 men under arms today, exclusive of the police, the paid spies and other civil supporters of the govern-



"Really, officer! Do I LOOK like a suspicious person?"

ment. Germany has 2,500,000; France has 2,000,000; Austria 1,000,000; England 800,000, counting the militia; Turkey half a million; the rest of Europe 2,000,000. In all there are over 10,000,000 soldiers who are supported by the laboring men of the Old World. Yet, when I propose to use a bomb costing \$25 in place of a Krupp gun costing \$150,000, I am called a fiend. If we want to kill each other let us do it on business principles. Gunpowder kills at the rate of 1,200 miles a minute, dynamite at 200,000. If you use my explosive you can defend yourself against the armies of the world.

When I went to Boston the other day three detectives, one a woman, followed me and tried to find out where my college is where I teach how explosives are compounded, in order to put a stop to my career. Now, I have the same right to educate men in chemistry as Professor Chandler has, and I won't stop until every workingman in Europe and America knows how to use explosives against autocratic government and grasping monopolies. I have the receipt for forty-two explosives in a burglar proof safe, and should I die, they will be published to the world in order that all may know how to deliver themselves from tyrants and those who wrong them. I can take tea and similar articles of food from the family table and make explosives with them more powerful than Italian gunpowder, the strongest gunpowder there is. I will [the next few words are illegible] do with ten pounds of pure tri-nitro-glycerine, of whose composition England knows nothing, because the only men there who knew about it were blown up by it. I take it through the street in my pocket; carry it about in the horse cars.

Not long ago I was traveling with some friends in a car, and an old woman came and sat down on the two bombs I had with me. A good little nitric and sulphuric acid, with pure glycerine, such as ladies use, mixed in the proper proportions, and five or six pounds of it, such as could easily be carried in the pocket, would destroy the big post office down town. No confinement is necessary for tri-nitro-glycerine. In the open air it will expand 1,300 times its own size at the rate of 200,000 feet a minute. You can learn to make tri-nitro-glycerine, and if you carry two or three pounds with you people will respect you much more than if you carried a pistol. But don't use dynamite till the government becomes autocratic, and you cannot obtain your rights at the polls.

PROF. MEZZEROFF<sup>(10)</sup>



"You go in the state coach, dear, I'll mingle with the crowd..."

NOTES:

- (1) The Times Literary Supplement, September 20, 1907, 285, reprinted in: Norman Sherry, ed., Conrad: The Critical Heritage (London 1973), 184-85.
- (2) Irving Howe, Politics and the Novel (Cleveland, 1957), 97
- (3) Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham, C.T. Watts, ed. (Cambridge, 1969), letter of October 7, 1907.
- (4) Volume XVIII of Conrad's Complete Works, Century edition (New York, 1924).
- (5) Norman Sherry, Conrad's Western World (Cambridge, 1971), 205-334. See also Eloise Knapp Hay, The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad (Chicago, 1963), 219-63; Ian P. Watt, ed., Conrad: 'The Secret Agent' (London 1973); and Avrom Fleishman, Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad (Baltimore, 1967), 187-214.
- (6) See, for example, "The Massacre of the Anarchist Convicts in French Guiana", Liberty (London) April 1895.
- (7) Sherry, Conrad's Western World, 205.
- (8) Ibid., 283
- (9) Eloise Knapp Hay, in The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad, 237, wrongly surmises that The Torch refers to Lenin's Iskra (The Spark) and The Gong to Herzen's Kolokol (The Bell).
- (10) Compare C.W. Mowbray, a militant English anarchist and member of William Morris's Socialist League: "General Sheridan of the American army said 'arms are worthless', and that dynamite was a lately discovered article of tremendous power, and, such was its nature that people could carry it around in the pockets of their clothing with perfect safety to themselves, and by means of it they could destroy whole cities and whole armies." The Commonwealth (London), November 29, 1890.

NOTE: Paul Avrich's article on Conrad's Anarchist Professor is reprinted from Labor History, Vol. 18, no. 3, Summer 1977.



"Fred's doing very well at this anarchy business—in fact he's making a bomb!"

# PEEK A BOO

Powers of the Courts dependent on imprisonment, HMSO 50p  
 Report on the work of the Prison Department 1976, HMSO £ 1.65  
 Report on the work of the Prison Department 1976, Statistical Tables  
 HMSO £ 2.15

NO MAN ever destroyed another man except with the best of possible motives. No laws, rules or regulations curtailing the liberty of the individual were ever formulated except in defence of the liberty of the individual. We are the victims of a universal love that would destroy us to keep us pure and holy. Behind closed doors good and worthy men measure the chains that bind us and of their compassion we revolve in a larger or a smaller circle. Each year by Command of Her Majesty, the Secretary of State for the Home Department sends me the report of the year's good work and there within those baby blue covers lies buried in prose and figures tragic man in all his imprisoned miseries. For the Guinness Book of Records gives the information that 1976 provided a daily prison population of 41,443 which is the highest recorded this century but there is always room for more, for in 1976 1,200 new places were provided to house the reluctant army and between 1977 and 1981 4,700 additional places will be created. There is concern over the number of mentally disordered offenders admitted to prisons but there is good news for the brewers in that there is a decrease in the number of drunks "received into prison in default of payment of their fine." There is usually very little to amuse in the pompous jargon of any government, or private, handout but in paragraph 13 of the Powers of the Courts we are informed that in the Taking of Fingerprints, Section 33 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 relating to the taking of fingerprints of those of 14 years of age and over it should be left to the discretion of the magistrates as to whether refusal should mean imprisonment, for to quote, "to confer a wider discretion on magistrates in the knowledge that it would be used wisely in appropriate cases, and not for relatively trivial infringements of the law, such as riding a bicycle without lights."

One can be cynical in these matters for when prisons are short of staff and packed out to human bursting point the good liberal platitudes of reducing prison offences become suspect. And one leafs through the pages to read that in 1969 there were 10,539 people sleeping two to three in a cell and in 1976 it has risen to 16,435, so while not doubting the goodness of the various councils one feels that they are preaching to the converted when telling those in authority, when there is no room for your genuine villains it is pointless to cram in those who fiddled a fare or a television license.

There were 20 suicides last year while one young man was drowned while on the run, one man was murdered by another inmate, one died of self-administered drugs and "a young inmate died of congestion of the brain following self-injury." It is the Statistical Tables that one finds intriguing for they spell out but never answer. In Gartree prison with a population of 239 there were seven incitement to mutiny charges while Featherstone with a prison population of only eight had five inmates punished in one year. One had always been led to believe that no one hardly ever wanted to escape from an open prison yet in 1976 68 prisoners took off for pastures new. 16 women escaped from open prisons and 19 from closed prisons and remand centres but with the women prisoners there was no attempt or incitement to mutiny. One woman committed suicide and that single 1 marks that column like unto a broken cross. It is the last two pages that spell out in word and figure the meaning of prison when one is given the numbers of those who had to be restrained by order of authority. It is curious that while the inmates of the open prison cheerfully take to the open road at the drop of an eye there is no record of any restraint having to be used on them for of the 288 men and women forcibly restrained all occurred in closed prisons. 16 were put into loose canvas restraint jackets, 178 in Protected rooms, 162 restrained or confined, 19 body belts, 3 handcuffs, 5 ankle straps, and 325 in Special cells. From this number one learns that there were two women placed in body belts and 12 put into Special cells. It is so easy to indulge in canting moralising about these matters but in all the propaganda, the baby blue covers and the pretty pictures of smiling and helpful Butlin's Holiday

ay Camp style prison guards these figures in the last page of the book of Statistic spell out the meaning of any prison anywhere, for in the end it reads, conform or suffer physical violence.

One can argue and many do that there is nothing to choose between the violent prisoner and the tough warder but one of them is there by choice and it ain't the prisoner. And the question is what would you do if you were attacked by some young slob late at night and the answer comrade is kick back, scream and run like hell which solves no one's problem for I accept the morality of the rabbit, defend when attacked. Yet the great liberal conscience has been having a ball of a time in the matter of Yolande McShane. Peter Dunn who shall remain nameless wrote that "The use of official police film, which showed Mrs McShane urging her 87 year old mother to take an over-dose of nembutal, was an act of voyeurism which degraded not only the programme makers but also the millions of viewers who watched it." As one who contentedly allows himself to be nightly degraded, in glorious three tone colour £ 2.50 weekly on the rental, I find the mass protest at the showing of this police file complete hypocrisy. In the end all we ask of the writer, the actor or the artist is to amuse us be it farce or tragedy and this is why we buy our daily paper and switch on our television screens. It had been reported that Yolande, for good solid commercial reasons, was trying to talk her mother into killing herself and after the spiel she means in the matter of a bag of nembutal tablets in a bag of sweeties. The police with the hindsight knowledge of the nuns fixed up a hidden video tape camera and that was the evidence that convicted Yolande to two years. Yolande has now finished her time, almost, and ma's £ 40,000 waits for her, for ma died a peaceful death some months later in complete control of her faculties so every one seems to have come out of it rather well including the viewers and the weeping liberals. The police openly and officially released this video film to the television networks and after its screening came the Great Inquest on should it have been shown? If it had been a press photograph of someone being kicked unconscious as with the fun fair at Notting Hill or the playing of the Watergate tapes it would have been accepted as normal news but this was attacked because it was in the form of TV shown film. The hypocrisy of the protest lies in the fact that over the years the television companies in various documentary programmes have always used the secret camera and shown it to the watching viewers. The face peering round the edge of the door refusing to be interviewed, the two silly slob employed by the post office secretly filmed using post office parcels as footballs. Did they agree to be shown on the TV? The answer is that Yolande went along with most of the TV making and anyone could have sat in open court and watched or listened to the evidence. I am all for the showing of this TV film for let justice be seen to be done. We who sat through it can rightly be said to be millions of voyeurs but we were also forced to act as a jury in the matter of Yolande McShane. We live in a world of secret cameras and hidden microphones. Of State and Private secret police who open our letters and tap our phones. To waste time protesting in the belief that THEY will stop is futile. The answer is to find out where and when THEY use these things and learn to live with them by not being trapped by them.

Every shop has its hidden TV cameras, London Transport watch you through secret mirrors as you try to slip by without paying your fare. Secret mirrors watch you in public lavatories as you piss and the streets of Soho have police cameras watching every mackintosh move. If, as in supermarkets, the cameras are openly displayed then petition to have them clearly identified. Demand of LT and the public piss holes that their secret two way mirrors shall not be secret but comrades never never accept any, State, Private or Commercial secret police to stop bugging you, opening your letters or tapping your phones because the great bleeding heart liberals stated that officially it is illegal. That is why they are a secret police because they live and operate outside the public law. Protest, accept but learn to come to terms with 1984 and defeat it by accepting that it is there. Learn from Yolande.

ARTHUR MOYSE

# HARD FACTS ABOUT CUBA

## TWO BOOK REVIEWS

Sam Dolgoff, The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective, Black Rose Books, Montreal.

SAM DOLGOFF is, essentially, a documenter, and a very good one. His collection of basic writings on one of the fathers of anarchism, Bakunin on Anarchy, presents in one volume almost everything by Bakunin that had any lasting relevance. His The Anarchist Collectives - on the agrarian and industrial ventures into something very near to anarchist-communism in practice during the Spanish Civil War - is a book in which the eye-witness reports are at least as important as the commentary. Both are invaluable additions to the shelf of any late twentieth century anarchist or student of anarchism concerned to know the best of the practice as well as the best of the theory from the libertarian past.

In both these volumes one is aware of Sam Dolgoff almost negatively. He deliberately effaces himself. There is no photograph of the compiler, and there are only minimal biographical facts. There is not even a very personal style to the introductions and the passages of continuity that come via his typewriter. We are aware of a great deal of work done by that almost anonymous somebody who uses the name of Sam Dolgoff, but our attention is always turned with skilful modesty towards the subject rather than the author.

The same applies to his latest book - another collection of documents with interlinking commentary - The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective. This is a short book, yet it sets out to deal with at least four inter-related subjects: the inconsistencies of most writers about Cuba in the western world; the record of anarchism and the anarchists under Castro's dictatorship; and the true nature of that dictatorship.

It might have turned out to be a sectarian exposure of persecutions endured in the cause of the true faith. But Dolgoff has evaded that easy pitfall, the ploy of martyrdom, in a number of ways. He does not begin by talking about the anarchists. He starts his powerfully counterpointed study with an analysis of the accounts of liberal and Marxist-Leninist critics - often former supporters - of Castro's regime, and shows how a reluctance to abandon their illusions entirely blinds them to the fact that the faults they expose in fact point inexorably to the development of the Cuban political structure into a totalitarian state.

In contrast, Dolgoff brings in the anarchists; their record, then their criticisms. He presents first of all a well-documented account of the crucial role of the anarcho-syndicalists in developing working class organizations in Cuba, an account that will surprise even many anarchists who were unaware of the strength of Cuban anarchism and its close links with the Spanish movement. He shows how the Cuban anarchists have consistently opposed authoritarian rule whenever it has appeared in Cuba, presenting always the alternative of an economy and a polity based on free cooperation and participatory decision-making. The more any regime, whether the commonplace dictatorships of Machado or Batista, or the militaristic-communistic rule of Castro, has substituted authority for the voluntary principle, the stronger the anarchists have been in their denunciations, as opposed to the Communists who reached accommodations with Macadado, Batista and Castro in turn.

All this is presented largely in documentary form - in the eye-witness accounts of Cuban and foreign anarchists (including Augustin Souchy) and in examples, from the anarchist press of Cuba and of other Latin American countries, of the clear-sightedness with which the anarchists charted the progress of the dictatorship.

As for the dictatorship itself, Dolgoff analyses its special character with clarity and shrewdness. Some of us who are not blinded by romantic illusion have long regarded Castro's communist protestations as insincere, aimed mainly at getting Russian military aid and have seen him as an



"... an extreme yet not untypical example of the Latin American caudillo, the military adventurer ..."

extreme yet not untypical example of the Latin American caudillo, the military adventurer who seizes power for his own glory without dedication to any real political ideal. I aired this idea in a review in the New York Nation a couple of years back and, interestingly enough, was not invited again to write for the paper; its liberal editors were unwilling to abandon their own ambivalence towards Cuba. Now Sam Dolgoff argues the same thesis with much more strength, since I was merely working an enlightened hunch, while Dolgoff shows from a great variety of sources, some even pro-Castro, how the country has been relentlessly militarized. Recent events have shown that Latin American armies, when they take over a country, can turn either to the right, as in Chile, or to the left, as in Peru, but in the long run it makes little difference, since the whole structure of society is in either case dominated by the military machine. In Cuba, as Dolgoff's evidence shows, the process has been developed to an extent unknown before even in Latin America; education, agrarian co-operatives, industries, everything is under the control of the great and powerful army which Castro has built up with Russian arms, and at the top of the pyramid stands the "Lider Maximo" as Castro likes to call himself, the red fuhrer of Cuba who crushes all criticism and opposition, the most formidable of all the South American caudillos, and one of the few leaders in the world who up to now seems to have effectively used the Communists instead of being used by them.

The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective, is not only a telling documentation of the betrayal of a revolution, it develops into a first-rate analysis of the nature and causes of that betrayal.

**BY G. WOODCOCK**

# THE OTHER AMERICA

William O. Reichert. Partisans of Freedom: A Study of American Anarchism. Bowling Green University Popular Press, \$25.00.

WILLIAM O. REICHERT BEGINS HIS Partisans of Freedom rather characteristically with a statement that is partly untrue in a minor way, but true in a larger and much more important sense.

When I first started this study some ten years ago, the only published histories of American anarchism were Eunice Schuster's Native American Anarchism and James J. Martin's Men Against the State. While both these works are still valuable as a source of information concerning the ideological viewpoints of those who have embraced the idea of anarchism, they both primarily focus upon the individualist phase of the idea and thus leave out of consideration the many other facets of anarchist thought.

In fact, of course, Rudolf Rocker's excellent Pioneers of American Freedom, dealing mainly with early libertarians, had also been published as early as 1949, but, though he discusses Rocker at some length, Reichert seems to have been unaware of this late work. Yet in a broad sense the implications of his statement are true; the only books that purport to be histories of American anarchism before Partisans of Freedom are indeed concerned mainly with native individualists, and Reichert's book - subtitled "A Study of American Anarchism" - is the first history to which we can turn with a fair confidence that we shall find reasonably adequate references to virtually every libertarian writer or activist of any significance from the late eighteenth century to the contributors to such World War II journals as Politics and Retort, Why and Liberation.

Perhaps the saddest thing about Partisans of Freedom is that the research has been so industrious and yet the presentation is so amateurish. The book is speckled with spelling errors that cannot all be blamed on the typesetter; there are sentences that neither work grammatically nor make sense; names are often mis-stated, so that we have two references to Jerard Winstanley and Wystan H. Auden appears as William H. Auden; the indexing is erratic and - to give one example - I found an entry for the Rudolf Rocker Publications Committee to which there is a single reference in the text, but no entry for Rocker himself (to whom eleven pages are devoted) though there is an entry for his companion Molly Witcop; the principles on which the "Selected Biography" has been compiled are totally obscure, since hardly any of the books referred to in the text are included. An efficient editor could have improved greatly what is at present a good book marred by a multitude of irritating flaws.

Having said so much, let me go on to recommend Partisans of Freedom, warts and all, as an extraordinarily useful reference book and an inspiring account of the "other" America which foreigners and sometimes Americans themselves are liable to forget when faced with the excesses of the White House, the Pentagon and all the lesser tyrannies that infest the Republic and make it so sangerous an international presence. We have always known the "other" American existed, but Reichert shows how strong and how unbroken has been the libertarian tradition right from the moment of America's emergence out of colonialism.

It might indeed strain the definition of anarchism to accept some of the figures Reichert presents as more than libertarians. Yet Deists like Elihu Palmer and Come-Outers like Nathaniel Rogers who taught and wrote at the turn of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century are very clear in their rejection of political power and of rigid authoritarian institutions, while many of the abolitionists were definite in their views that the legal enslavement of the blacks was not the only kind of slavery that had to be fought against; there was no point in making black men free if white men remained under the shadow of oppressive laws.

Reichert is more detailed in his study of the lesser individualist anarchists than earlier writers, but what gives his book its special importance is the way he weaves in the European-influenced non-individualist anarchism which was mainly to be found among immigrant workers from the 1880s onward, and shows that the two strands of individualist anarchism and anarchist communism were not in fact as clearly separated as has often been assumed. There were direct links, for example, between Benjamin Tucker and the anarchist communists, Emma Goldman moved with an astonishing ease among libertarians of all shades of opinion, and Ammon Hennacy combined all shades of opinion within himself. Thus it is essentially one tradition that Reichert offers us for examination, and in this I think he is right, not only about American anarchism but about anarchism in general. Anarchism must be seen as a single way of life and thought, and the apparent differences are due to the external conditions to which anarchists have to apply their beliefs rather than to deep doctrinal differences. In this connection Reichert is completely correct when he links the individualist anarchism of men like Warren and Andrews, Spooner and Tucker, to the fact that America in the early and mid-nineteenth century was a largely empty land in which there was room for men to move around and find places to live as they wished, while by the time anarchist communism made its appearance there were whole groups of people - the immigrants especially - who were becoming as much imprisoned in urban and industrial ghettos as their European counterparts.

Partisans of Freedom is a large book - 590 pages of text - but so much space was needed for the task Reichert set himself: to introduce every anarchist of significance with an adequate paraphrase of his teachings and enough biographical information to set him in a historical context. The famous and the unwillingly notorious are here, such as Parsons and Goldman, Berkman and Sacco and Vanzetti, but so are such almost forgotten people - famous in their day - as the liberators of Eros like Ezra Haywood and Moses Hermon, and people like Marcus Graham and Hippolyte Havel and Randolph Bourne who have perhaps never been given the attention they deserve. A necessary consequence of this insistence on giving each individual his due is that the broad historical sweep is not so strongly evoked as it might have been. It is really American anarchists rather than American anarchism that Reichert is studying.

Yet, despite all criticism, Partisans of Freedom is a book to be thankful for. At last, within one set of covers, we see the breadth and variety of the Other America, and the view is heartening, showing a strength and continuity which assure us that recent American manifestations of libertarian beliefs and action have been no passing phase, but an intensification of an ongoing trend that exists as a perpetual challenge to American industrial gigantism and political imperialism.

Partisans of Freedom is too highly priced for many individual readers to afford and a cheap paperback edition for wider distribution would be welcome, particularly if the opportunity were taken for a thorough editing out of the remediable flaws of presentation.

## Consumerism

# From Grandfather To Grandson

THERE HAS been great change in libertarian thought from the nineteenth century to this, the twentieth, but there are elements which linger on and form a strictly twentieth century brand of thought.

There was a stream of moralism in some anarchist thought which can best be explained by quoting from Hans Koning's *Death of a Schoolboy*: "We tried hard to show ourselves to be different. For instance we were pledged not to drink alcohol ... it was based really on the daily spectacle of the workmen of the town boozing with their bosses' blessing. A public drunk would bring an indulgent smile to the faces of a police guard, the same man who'd crack the ribs of a boy painting an anti-Habsburg slogan on a wall.

"It was also a reaction against the materialism of our parents, those who were well to do, that is. Materialism, for while they were all very churchy, they were collaborators, sellers out to the powers that be. And for what? To get fat and old in peace. They worshipped their own bodies, that's what it came down to. That is what made us ascetics. ... And we, who believed in the brotherhood of a Slav nation and called each other brother and sister, wouldn't have thought of trying to seduce such a girl. Nor could we, as the others in school did, mess around with some poor kitchen maid or waitress who dreamt of getting married.

"You couldn't very well speak up about exploitation and class war and do that.

"That exhausted the supply of girls, except for the whores and we were pledged never to go near them either, that also being considered exploitation and degradation of a fellow human being. Moreover, the brothels of Sarajevo had been installed by the government of his Catholic Highness, Emperor Francis Joseph ... we never doubted they were a weapon against the people."

The early anarchists, as all anarchists, were concerned with showing their difference to the society they despised. As proponents of a different society they were and still are concerned with showing its excellence and desirability in the face of the present society.

The bourgeois state had always put on a persona of morality, temperance, moderation and chastity but behind it there took place the reverse, the gratification of vice. There was a difference between public and private moralities. The "moral anarchists" of times past took this public morality and extended it to all areas of their lives, so that it became the one conscious morality of their lives. It was a morality of abstinence which mirrored the poverty of their existence, and curiously they were more Judaic in their morality than those who openly professed a Judaic religion and who were generally opposed by these anarchists. This was a form of self-discipline rather than the externally imposed discipline of the authoritarian socialist parties.

The public drunk was an example to the policeman of manipulation by indirect means, as in certain aspects of colonialism; if one introduced vices unknown or unusual to the natives they tended to dissipate themselves and were consequently incapable of revolution. The bosses enjoyed seeing their workers drinking and so on because in doing so they were, and are, manipulating themselves by indulging in their desire for satisfaction in a world of frustration and generally without quality, by means of things external to their frustration. They were internalising themselves in that they engaged in the satisfaction of frustration in private ways, outside of their public lives at their places of work. Their humanity, the satisfaction of desires, was placed in the private areas of life. The way to end their frustration would be to make the satisfaction of their desires into a totality, i.e. make it both public and private by removing those engaged in internalising their humanity - the bosses and so on.

The "moral anarchists" tended to be infected with the idealism of a romantic love of their land and other such ideas, as opposed to the materialism of the people they saw around them, with their tendency towards collaboration with the bourgeoisie or the colonial state. The materialists of that time (up to the first world war) were those Koning described as sellers-out. But theirs was not a strict materialism. Such people worship their own bodies (in an unconscious way) in the sense that they are incapable (because of overwhelming fear and ego-centrism) of doing anything which might make them the slightest bit uncomfortable.

As regards the principle of chastity, again this is the bourgeois concept of morality, and bourgeois moral concepts, even divorced from their religious setting, have remained imprinted on the consciousness of the revolutionary. Bourgeois morality has entered and remained within the behavioural conscience. (The most obvious example of this is the principle of authority which became weightily established in the revolutionary movement itself). Hence, Koning has his character talk of the male seducing the female. The only way sex can be approached for these people is in a proprietarian, i.e. a non-revolutionary way. Sex is not seen here as the intimate communication of two free individuals, but as the conquest of one by the other. The same is seen in old anarchist articles (*Sheffield Anarchist*) which refer only to male emancipation, excluding the female as an apolitical being. The seduction of the working class girls is seen as conquest but in a class setting, derogating the kitchen maids and waitresses to a socially inferior status. Such a thing may be true of their position within bourgeois society, but how can such people gain dignity if the revolutionary does not recognise it and so be emancipated in thought, before being emancipated in deed by the revolution itself? The revolution is brought forward by bringing communication and participation to those who would otherwise only know of conquest in sex.

The brothels present a remarkable picture of manipulation by indirect means. The recognition of such precedes the recognition of the commodity society as a society of seductive illusion.

This statement by Koning's character is placed midway between two worlds - the world of the moral, abstinent and sacrificing anarchist of the revolutionary catechism and the folkish idealism of the nineteenth century (found still later in such areas as the rural regions of Spain during the civil war), and that of the amoral anarchist of desire rather than need in the manipulative society of the commodity.

The whole problem of morality in anarchism runs deeper than merely historical narrative; there are such problems as how we treat the supposed drunkenness of Nestor Makhno, and the appearance of Giovanni Baldelli's book *Social Anarchism*. Looking first at the question of censure in the case of Makhno, I don't know how a modern anarchist could follow such a line of thought when, if true, the revolutionary insurgents were merely engaged in something they enjoyed. Did they steal the alcohol from the people they protected? Did they deny the people of the free Ukraine anything in drinking after a battle? It was a mark of a good military leader to drink with the men after a hard day; by doing so Makhno affirmed his existence upon the same level as the rest of the insurgents and did not arrogate himself to the level of the people that he fought against. To drink with the men was a social activity, in other words a creative activity.

*Social Anarchism* is the conclusion of that stream of anarchist thought which takes of all this society purports to be and then calls it anarchism by virtue of the fact that there is no state or authoritative institution involved. The whole idea of ethics is that of the imperative, the very thing which we despise. Any ethical content to society must come as the flowering of the free and guiltless desires of people who were only allowed the manipulating desires of the commodity society.

¶ ¶ ¶

BAKUNIN, as the major anarcho-syndicalist thinker, put forward a system of materialism. He put it forward in opposition to the theological and idealistic moralities abounding at that time. Bakunin had principally to argue against the people who thought in terms of the human soul and god. Instead of idealism - the reliance upon ideas, immaterial substances to explain things - Bakunin turned to the materialistic world of science, which was largely attacked by the theologians and idealists. In doing so he had to accept the principles of causation and hence determinism. This fortunately opposed the theologians and idealists' principle of free will but unfortunately also opposes the anarchist principle of liberty.

The consequence of such thinking was the statement that men and women were socially determined, that their individual natures were the result of history. He stated: "... man does not choose society; on the contrary he is the product of the latter ...". People do choose society, however, in that they have the ability to choose (as they choose to be anarchists rather than archists), but are presented with a false choice - the utopia of the commodity, the practical security of present society;

(Cont pg 15) →

# AN AUSTRALIAN VIEW ON CONSUMERISM

I WILL ARGUE that the consumer society is an integral fact in our economic capitalist system and has a nature which is detrimental to the welfare and wellbeing of the individuals in its society, unless we change not only the psychology of consumerism, but also the system in general.

If we are talking about the consumer society, we have to take into consideration the influence in our society of capitalism and the free enterprise system. It is argued that the old capitalism with its exploitation of labour, its poverty, its depression and unemployment have disappeared or, to say the least, altered to a more humane kind of capitalism. I am prepared to argue that this, in fact, is a misconception. Events in Australia and all over the world have proved that the economic situation of the capitalist system is fighting a losing battle. There is an increasing awareness of working class populations in non-socialist countries, particularly since the end of the slaughter in Vietnam.

The Keynesian economics, the philosophy of the welfare State, streamlined economic planning, partnership between private enterprise and benevolent government intervention have all provided vast areas of the community with an immense variety of consumer goods. The viability of those consumer groups, the rises in living standards and changes in consumption patterns are used as an argument that this recent development of capitalism is the best indication that there is little or no need for social change. If we look at this recent development closer we find that there are few articles of technological furniture in our artificial environment which have not made a dismal transition from luxury to convenience to necessity - like the automobile, which has become an outright curse that many thoughtful people now talk seriously of eliminating. We have become so technologically muscle-bound in so many ways, that the major preoccupation of our technics is to unscramble the chaos of our own making. In short, the artificial environment has treacherously turned into public enemy no. 1, and the losses threaten to cancel our gains.

Economics and politics are certainly faulty, but to change our society it needs not simply adjustments in our political and economic institutions, but in the behaviour of individuals and the ideas which animate them. As in a primitive world goods were invented to meet physical needs: food, clothing, shelter, tools; now we have a new kind of goods-producing society, and the more we are frustrated the more we are driven to produce still more goods. It is not surprising then that workers demand more money - to buy a car, for instance, may be the passport to the psychological fulfilment they cannot find in their work. We have created a world of substitute satisfaction and destruction.

The hypnotic appeal of television is that it conceals the emptiness of one's life. Drugs and excitement, as in spectator sports, fill the intended gap. All this keeps the wheels of industry turning and ensures the intend-

the nothing, the barbarity and chaos of a primitivist and falsified anarchism; or the slavery of a totalitarian community. Men and women do have this ability to choose but the choices made tend to recreate our present oppression. Instead of creating our own world we recreate a world of authority which is not for the sake of us but for that of an elite of strangers. Bakunin did not have the benefit of the immaterialism (or even the modified materialism) of the existentialists (even though there were existential thinkers around at the time), and so could not recognise the importance of choice. This was also partially due to the fact that his world was one of need and necessity; there was still no real abundance of necessities. The working class was still deprived of the necessities of life. Now, however, society is generally well supplied (apart from areas of the third world - perhaps it might be better to say a potential abundance of necessities). After all, the world we wish to create is to be a world free from constraint and limitation which working in a determinist frame could so easily endanger. The libertarian frame can only imply a freedom of choice, the ability to satisfy one's desires and to follow a creative and constructive direction in life.

Elsewhere Bakunin has this to say: "...that every man should have the material and moral means to develop his whole humanity ..."  
"...to organise society in such a manner that every individual, man or woman, should at birth, find almost equal means for the development of his or her faculties and the full utilisation of his or her work." So it would seem to me that Bakunin, even though he talks of determinism, is amenable in his thought to an existential expansion in the sense that

ed profit for the ruling 2 per cent as direct satisfaction would not. What we need to establish is a heightened "need-orientated" consumer society.

Alienation, an important factor for consuming on psychological grounds, comes not only from boring, non-challenging tasks, but from the ultimate value to society of what is produced. As society grows wealthier, more people are involved in making things or providing services of less and less significance. Consumer society produces many things which add little or nothing to satisfy realistic needs. These things are produced over and over because of their imperfections. Fashions and fads compel us to discard, and buy new.

As I mentioned before, this attitude also includes the increasing fact of obsolescence which is best demonstrated by the "need" to exchange the old car every second year. The production of trivia and substitutes is an outstanding example of the kind of consumerism which makes people believe that they are unable to live without paper nappies, production of which is devastating to our ecology, achieved as it is by the destruction of trees. An extreme example of trivia is the "executive toy", or of substitutes, white bread, to which artificial wheat germs are added. Such production also leads to a variety of non-jobs, like car and other insurance, and an ever increasing army of public servants to administer and regulate the functioning of the capitalist consumer society.

Another result of consumerism is the steadily increasing waste of financial resources on advertising, dishonest sales practices, inferior products, door-to-door selling, and snide practitioners of eat and grow rich, at the expense of the defrauded consumer. Figures for advertising in Australia for 1975, released just recently showed that the advertising agencies handled money in excess of \$460. Fifty per cent of this is attributed to only 30 overseas agencies, of which 18 are American.

Advertising in the mass-media, especially on television, has become a contentious issue. Governments and educational bodies, aware of the influence on society at large, have taken steps to reduce certain kinds of advertising (cigarettes, for instance). This has been done against the tremendous influence of certain lobbies who are putting pressure on the government to compensate for loss of profits. The government, on both state and federal level, is endeavouring to protect the consumer by legislating and establishing consumer Affairs bureaux.

I realise that consumerism is an established and inescapable fact in our and in the so-called socialist societies. In an open society based on cooperation and mutual aid, it would not arise. But as long as we are not prepared to change the system of our society in general, the chances of eliminating consumerism are negligible.

HANS POST

the development of one's humanity is the same as the achievement of creativity with its necessary freedom and desires. A person's faculties are those areas of experience and sensitivity which are either limited or attacked by bourgeois society. The work mentioned here can only mean creative and joyful occupation. This can only exist in freedom and stem from the desires of the individual.

¶ ¶ ¶

MY grandfather (who died recently) was a man of both morality and fatalism. His morality was hard and Judaic like that described above, but he was not religious. He could see only the waste and hypocrisy of the church and congregation. He had one great saying - marriage was just a form of legalised prostitution. In saying this he could see the degradation of the female and the conquest of the male. But his was the world of universal property and so his moral judgements could not cope with the breakdown of the idea of property in human relationships. His fatalism was based on a system of complementary determinism and successive failure of the forces of emancipation. As his grandson I can only hope for a change to come and that the manipulated rise up and make their own emancipation successful.

NIK

Note: A discussion of Hans Koning's work by Paul Berman can be found in FREEDOM's Anarchist Review of 15 May 1976 under the title "Revolutionary Feelings." The present writer is a member of the Syndicate of Initiative (Revolutionary Insurgents).

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## Kirkdale Sch.

Dear Comrades

I am impressed by Steve Haisman's letter about Kirkdale School in FREEDOM. May I add some power to his elbow by trying to dispel a few current myths about free schools. And some power in terms of hard cash. Many people argue that such schools are all very well for the current happiness of the children - but is it fair to protect the young from the competitiveness of current society, as one day they must struggle for themselves as adults in the economic jungle? Let me cite my own experience. From 1945 to 1953 I worked at Burgess Hill School. Kirkdale seems to resemble it in many ways. A constant moan from some quarters was that we let the children spend far too much time climbing trees and sloshing paint around, instead of compelling them to concentrate on the 3 Rs. Now that "my" generation of pupils are fast approaching middle-age, I can report on the facts about their subsequent careers. Those who preferred professional careers to digging ditches for a living (the latter job being remarkably ill-paid and hard on the back - I've tried it) seem to have achieved their aim irrespective of their lack of academic standards early on. I forebear to cite actual details, but some or two who couldn't really read by the age of ten years now occupy posts such as consultant physician, PhD science research worker, a big-time TV actor (who had no family pull) and so on. These are the sort of examples who illustrate that much of the theory of teachers and educational psychologists is quite unsound in practice. Most "progressives" tend to favour an environmental explanation of human behaviour as an act of faith, but experience has forced me to the conclusion that while early environment is conducive to the formation of social attitudes, sheer ability is largely genetically programmed and has little to do with early educational experience. Naturally most schoolteachers will hoot angrily at this - they have their jobs to consider.

It might be argued that if more ex-pupils of Burgess Hill School had not accepted the challenge of our competitive economic society, they would have been "morally superior." Oh yes? At least the choice was theirs.

I am not arguing that we should not offer children the stimulus of literat-

ure, science and scholastic riches, interestingly and attractively presented, at as early an age as they care to profit from such stimulus. Some will lap it up and demand more. But the choice must be theirs. One of the main failings of the conventional school is the pig-headed lack of recognition of the amazing individual variation between children from the cradle onwards. I realise that there is no arguing with many hide-bound "class conscious" socialists. They actively support those forerunners of 1984, the Comprehensive Schools. They want to implement the myth that we are "all equal" by seeing that the products of the school system are as like as peas out of one pod.

What Burgess Hill School did give the children - in so far as it gave something positive - was the chance to develop as individuals. And so am I advocating that we support a form of education which may produce social mis-fits? Well, I find that those who fit too snugly into the social mores of contemporary society, whatever their place in the class hierarchy, are pretty dull characters individually, and in the mass a danger to all libertarian ideals.

I tried to describe Burgess Hill School as it was at the time (around 1948) in a Freedom Press pamphlet Youth for Freedom, now long out of print and largely outmoded in most of its content. What I did not mention in that pamphlet was that in the big crisis in the 1940s, when the staff syndicate had to buy the school from its owners to keep it going, various well-wishers around the anarchist movement chipped in with gifts and loans, which made our practical effort at syndicalism practicable. So how about it comrades? Many of you having read Steve Haisman's article will be saying "If only I could help!" You can, comrade - oh yes you can! At Burgess Hill we found the good wishes of such "anarchists" as Herbert Read very encouraging - but he never sent us a penny, whereas less illustrious and more practical comrades came across with the lolly. Even hard cases like Frank Leech of the Glasgow anarchist group sent us a bit, and believe me, in this wicked world money is a great solvent of many problems. So leaving the real hard work to comrades like Steve Haisman and his colleagues (all of whom are unknown to me personally) I am sending Kirkdale £10. Why don't you do the same - or do you prefer to be like Sir Herbert and send them your very best wishes?

TONY GIBSON