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HONG KONG CORRUPTION p2 : CAMILLO BERNERI p9-10

firemans strike HOW MUCH IS A LIFE WORTH ?

WE HAVE BEEN inundated with a jet-stream of propoganda from both sides in the present confrontation between the firemen and the government for a wage-claim between 10 and 30 per cent which is over the government's laid-down limits. To some extent much of this brou-ha-ha is a 'demo' by the government of how they are standing firm against inflationary wage claims. The firemen, of course, have no option but to press their claim, go on strike and rely on the obvious public sympathy for their position, and wait, without strike-pay, for something to give.

The position is complicated by the drafting of army, air-force and navy fire-fighters, the existence of part-time firemen and the supposed neutralism of the fire-masters or chiefs who are available for instructing novice fire-fighters.

Undoubtedly the firemen are public servants with a greater claim to popularity than the similarly placed police. Their record of service deaths and injuries is higher and the sob-appel approach of a fireman carrying a child is a surer card to play than the proverbial policeman escorting the proverbial old lady across the street. - nobody ever got beaten up in a fire station. Strangely enough the emphasis of the fire service's function is the preservation of life - not the preservation of property - which is responsible for more firemen's deaths than that of saving life.

The government, like the fire brigade, is trusting to public opinion to exert pressure on the firemen to go back. Public opinion, which may just be something got up by the newspapers, is a fickle jade and may depend upon a fluke, deeper political motives behind the press, or a mere wave of sentiment occasioned by a lucky or unlucky accident.

It is claimed that the recent unofficial power-workers' strike was called off by pressure of public opinion but one is inclined to think that



it was union hostility, the threat of unemployment (which hovers over all contemporary industrial relations) and the lack of strike pay, which made it a fiasco.

The organisation of public sympathy (although all strikers are in fact members of the public) seems to walk along a razor's edge between special cases and blackmail. Reared on a TV-glass teat diet of emergency ward pap - public opinion of the nurses emerged from their wage struggle still regarding them as ministering angels; firemen still have the smoky halo.

§

But in the shadow-play of wage claims and

anti-inflation counter claims the realities of life and death shoulder their way to the front of the stage. How much is a life worth? How much should we pay those who daily risk life and health? How much should we pay those who daily save the lives of others?

We know that man as raw material is worth very little. Man (and by that I include woman) is expendable in war and in industry. But occasionally the courts, for the very important reason of administering property and insurance claims, assess the value in terms of solid cash of a human life at a cash value acceptable to the bereaved and which will not financially

(cont pg 7)



Dr. Owen — The Hypocrite's Oath

Question: What is the function of a police force?

Answer: To preserve law and order.

Q: How does it perform this function?

A: By impartially collecting evidence which leads to the arrest of a wrongdoer who is then taken to court for trial and, if found guilty, punished.

Q: This weighty function demands the highest qualities of probity and reliability of those to whom it is entrusted, does it not?

A: It does indeed.

Q: What would happen in the event that almost an entire police force were found to be deficient in these qualities?

A: Hong Kong.

Q: I beg your pardon?

A: Hong Kong. Nothing would happen.

§

HONG KONG is one of the last British Crown Colonies. It is ruled by a Governor, Sir Murray Maclehoze, appointed from London. The British Minister responsible for the colony is the Foreign Secretary, Dr David Owen.

Hong Kong's economy is based on the exploitation of cheap labour including that of children. It is attractive to foreign investors. According to one source, 'Expatriate businessmen enjoy a flat income tax of 15 per cent and expect to get a full return on their capital in five years. There are beggars and some people starve.' The industrial accident rate is staggering.

The State has two ways of warding off the revolt that a situation of this kind must lead to. The first, the liberal method, is reform - the amelioration of suffering. But even Maclehoze admits that social security in the colony is "on a piecemeal sort of basis."

The other method is repression. There is the overt oppression of a police force, with troops in the background, openly discouraging rebellion. And with this is a more insidious, less open form which diverts people's energy and despair into gambling, prostitution and drugs.

It is the second method that Hong Kong and, therefore, the British Foreign Secretary have chosen to use.

The police force is 17,000 strong. It is predominantly Chinese and the senior officers are mainly British. In the early 1970s it became clear that the force was as bent as a paperclip.

Like their counterparts at Scotland Yard the Hong Kong police were operating a grand protection racket in which gambling, prostitution and drug dealing were encouraged to flourish. Many British officers became very wealthy men and the lower ranks lived comfortably on their bribes.

It all hangs together so neatly. The police control the workers. The workers lose themselves in drugs and gambling. The police control the drug dealers and gambling racketeers. The State is happy. The police are happy. Business is happy.

But to attract business investment a State must inspire confidence. Investors are not only interested in short term yields but also demand long term political stability. As the stories of corruption began to seep out, undermining the corporate image of the State, this confidence was in danger of waning.

So in 1974 an Independent Commission Against Corruption was set up to assuage alarm and encourage businessmen that something was being done to preserve the security of their investments.

A commission of this kind is in a difficult position. Nominally independent, it is inevitably appointed as a public relations exercise. It cannot afford to be too successful. But once investigations begin it is impossible to stop at rooting out a few corrupt individuals and giving them exemplary punishment.

Corruption in the police - as we saw at Scotland Yard - must be institutionalised. It must necessarily be part of the day to day running of the force. Investigation will lead to the exposure of syndicates reaching to the very top.

It was this dilemma that the Commission found itself in. There was no way out. Set up to inspire confidence, it could only wring its hands in alarm as it became obvious that at least 80 per cent of the Hong Kong police were corrupt. More and more suspensions, arrests and prosecutions could leave the colony with no police force at all.

It was at this point that the self-preservation instinct of the police intervened decisively. A mob of them marched on the Commission offices complaining that the investigations were being conducted "unfairly". They were not interested in the political problems of bolstering the confidence of foreign investors but in their own survival. They beat up five investigators.

The Government's policy was now in ruins. If he refused to make concessions Hong Kong was faced with a civil war in which British troops would be shooting it out with the police. What this could lead to was unthinkable. The stability he set out to achieve would be a joke.

Maclehoze announced an amnesty. Any corrupt activities engaged in prior to 1st January 1977 would be forgotten. Only those officers already suspended or charged would face trial. The gamble is whether the majority of the force is willing to accept the sacrifice of a min-

ority. This is still not clear.

The declaration of the amnesty was greeted with amazement. It was already clearly a surrender to brute force. The Governor had been held to ransom and the state's authority had caved in. What had Dr. David Owen, the Minister ultimately responsible for the colony, to say?

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "The Secretary of State's attitude is one of full support for the Governor's decision."

A few days after the police riot Dr. Owen made a speech to the Fabian Society in London. He spoke of his vision of what the Labour Party should be. "A party," he said, "which fosters individuality and decentralised control."

He declared: "Community co-operation, participation, workers' democracy, decentralised decision-making and the virtue of the small unit have always been high among the values of British socialism."

Hypocrisy is an overworked word in political debate. But Dr. Owen, who presumably took the Hippocratic oath when he became a doctor, must have followed this with the hypocrite's oath when he entered politics.

Hong Kong is a colony. Imperialism is capitalist exploitation writ large. The people of Hong Kong are ruthlessly driven by businessmen whose interests the State exists to protect. A police force is essential to keep the people



in subjection, no matter how rotten and corrupt it may be.

Owen tells us his dream of socialism, a dream that few anarchists would contradict. And yet - in real life - his only concern is to "preserve the kind of exploitation and misery that is a direct antithesis to his vision.

Harry Harmer.

SQUATTERS and the CRIMINAL TRESPASS LAW

THE REVIVAL, spread, evolution and successes of squatting in the past ten years in the face of the failure of successive governments to cope with 'the housing problem' have pushed the present government to do something about it. About squatting, that is, and in the way of governments the thing was to pass a law against it. So it is under a Labour government that people can be punished for not having been able to acquire capital or a mortgage or a large enough family or poor enough health or long enough years in one place by two years' imprisonment. This placates the outraged believers in the sanctity of the ownership of property, whether privately or publicly owned. They then have to accommodate their own conscience as semi-socialists, nominal christians or civilised people - all of which they are, and they could not behave like the South African government and raze 30,000 people's miserable shacks, leaving them nowhere to go. And the prisons are already overcrowded. So, while the legal departments have been working to make a few thousand people criminals, the housing departments have been devising ways of keeping them good citizens.

For some years now some blocks of squatted properties have been occupied with subsequent arrangements with councils by which the property is leased for a period of years to a housing association representing the squatters and through which rent and rates are paid. The association undertakes to ensure the vacation of the property at the end of that time (when, theoretically, the council would be ready to start on a redevelopment scheme). The council would have no obligation to rehouse the occupants unless they qualified in some other way. Now London boroughs have presented a scheme to squatters (or is it to known squatters?) whereby they register with the council - and they have only until 29 November to do it - and become 'licensed' squatters who will not be evicted under the Criminal Trespass Law and will eventually become tenants of the council. Failure to register leaves the squatters fair game for summary eviction and/or prosecution under the Criminal Trespass Law. The dilemma, to register or not to register, has caused heartburning within some squatting groups. This occurred in a large group of over a hundred people, who occupied a whole street in Shepherd's Bush in West London, and who declared themselves a 'free state' - "Frestonia." They circulated to the press their constitution and issued passports, and were a merry community, whose gaiety dissolved into bitterness and dissension when faced with this dilemma, the two horns of which are represented by those whose purpose in squatting is fulfilled if they get a roof over their heads and who would obviously prefer the secure one of a council tenancy, and the other by those who either begin with or develop a view of squatting as a means of revolutionary change.

The dilemma faces squatters in the borough in which Freedom Press is situated, Tower Hamlets. Here there are still some streets of houses which were occupied by the sweat shop workers whom Rudolf Rocker organised at the beginning of the century and which escaped wartime bombing and subsequent council development; there are blocks of early tenements built by the council or charitable trusts for the improvement of the working poor which are no longer considered to be of a standard which even poorly paid workers should be satisfied with, or are in the way of some future redevelopment scheme.

On 13 November their occupants packed the Half Moon Theatre - itself a relic which is fighting to remain a living community theatre and not be devoured by property speculators (see FREEDOM, 1 October 1977) - for a meeting called by Tower Hamlets Squatters' Union to discuss their course of action.

They considered information obtained by the London Squatters' Union in their meeting with the Greater London Council's person in charge of the 'squatting exercise' Mr Snowskill. The GLC proposes dividing its property into 18 districts. They say they will try to rehouse people in the district in which they are living. (This is thought unlikely in areas like Tower Hamlets). There would be a problem where premises are overcrowded; the GLC would not grant a licence to such occupiers, but Mr Snowskill said that no criminal proceedings would take place. The licence fee (surely a euphemism for 'rent', which absolves the GLC from liability for repairs?) charged would depend on the state of the property; rents would probably range from £ 5-£ 12.50 per week. Ex-tenants who had rent arrears with the council would have to pay off all the arrears before they are given a tenancy, and tenancies would not be given to people who have failed to pay their licence fees.

The biggest snag in these proposals appears to be that the GLC proposes that normally they would make only one 'take it or leave it' offer of premises for rehousing and tenancy. While further offers might be made in exceptional circumstances Mr. Snowskill did not explain what these might be, and refusing the

one offer makes the licensee 'voluntarily homeless' in which case the only tenancy you would be likely to get is 'hard to let', i.e. not good enough for anyone.

Tower Hamlets Squatters' Union recommends its members to register so that they can present collective demands for rehousing. The principle demands are that there be (1) No evictions (2) Equal rights for people licensed under the scheme, as for those being rehoused from slum clearance areas, (3) That in fixing of licensing fees work done by occupying squatters should be taken into consideration, and that there should be no claims for so-called damages caused during takeover, (4) The GLC's normal practice should be followed when offering alternative accommodation (i.e. more than one refusal), (5) Tenancies should be given for the property people are living in, if they request this, (6) The licensee should have choice of place for interview, and a squatters' union representative present, (7) Reasonable licence fees for all.

To register or not to register? Many squatters are having second thoughts. They believe that they may be given property on the outskirts of London instead of where they are living. And that they will be scattered, whereas the 'squat' is a community. But, as one squatter put it, "If you don't register you will be eventually evicted. If you then try to squat they will have the Criminal Trespass Law on their side. Very difficult position."

Most situations contain a difficult position for the anarchist. Some feel that it is necessary to refrain from registering (licensed squatters do not have the legal protection afforded to tenants) and resist squats being broken up. This probably will result in a few individuals suffering eviction or prosecution, since experience teaches that only a minority in such cases takes the heroic or principled stand. The alternative is to go along with the majority and bring such weight as the squatting unions have to bear on trying to get collective rehousing. It may seem that the Criminal Trespass Law puts an end to squatting - but the idea and the experience of 'tenants take over' has spread and can and will be pushed further in municipal housing.

G.M.

**BRIGHTON
SQUATTER
APPEAL
REJECTED**

**BIT OF ANARCHY
MADE A BREAK,
SAID SQUATTER**

A SQUATTER who said he was not interested in politics agreed at Sussex Assizes at Lewes that he attended a week's camp last August organised by the Anarchist Federation of Great Britain. But the only reason.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE OF CONVENIENCE

THE VISIT OF President Sadat to Israel has been heralded as an historic step towards the peaceful reconciliation of Arabs and Jews in the Middle East. Now that the guns are temporarily silent the warmongers dare to speak of peace. Such political hypocrisy does not convince us anarchists of the validity of such intentions. Too many putrefying corpses litter both sides of the Israeli-Arab conflict as evidence of the fallacy of past and present political and military proposals, put forward by murderers, gangsters and religious bigots in that part of the world.

Let it be clearly stated. In our opinion the State of Israel is no better or worse than any Arab State. The proposed Palestinian State will have the same function as any other state in the world - to repress its people, exploit and politically and socially control them, and when necessary send its youth to wage war against the enemy.

In an area of the world ridden with religious, nationalist and racist bigotry, it is unlikely that our anarchist message will be heard, but let us state it again and again for, as revolutionaries without frontiers to respect, it is our responsibility to speak out until we are unmistakably heard! We say that only the abolition of all states will bring about the freedom for conflicting peoples of different races and creeds to choose how to live together in peace and harmony, in equality and mutual respect, be it in the Middle East or in any other part of the world.

Commenting on British television about the visit of President Sadat to Israel, the London representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation stated his fear that the Palestinian people are once again being betrayed by Arab leaders. This is probably true. But the objection of the PLO representative that the Israelis have not given him the same opportunity as President Sadat to set foot on Palestinian soil after 30 years in exile seems also to be based on the grounds that he, like Sadat, should be able to ... PRAY at the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem!

Presuming that this is what the leadership of the PLO has fundamentally to offer to the dispossessed Palestinian people - a chance to freely pray at their mosque in Jerusalem - no wonder the Palestinian refugees (like the Jews in the past) have continued to suffer in sordid and vulnerable camps, emotionally, nationalistically and religiously brainwashed by the PLO "freedom fighters" into wanting to return to their own promised land - an Islamic State of Palestine!

This internationally fanned conflict is another clear indication of the way in which poor, ignorant and dispossessed people are exploited by modern (Israeli) and feudal (Arab) states combined, by capitalism and by nationalist and religious leaders - Arabs and Jews alike. If it is true that war is the health of the State, then the "peaceful" initiatives of Carter, Sadat and Begin in the Middle East are just another international plot to force a political solution in that area at the expense of the Palestinian, Arab and Israeli peoples.

As anarchists we do not believe that the Israeli,

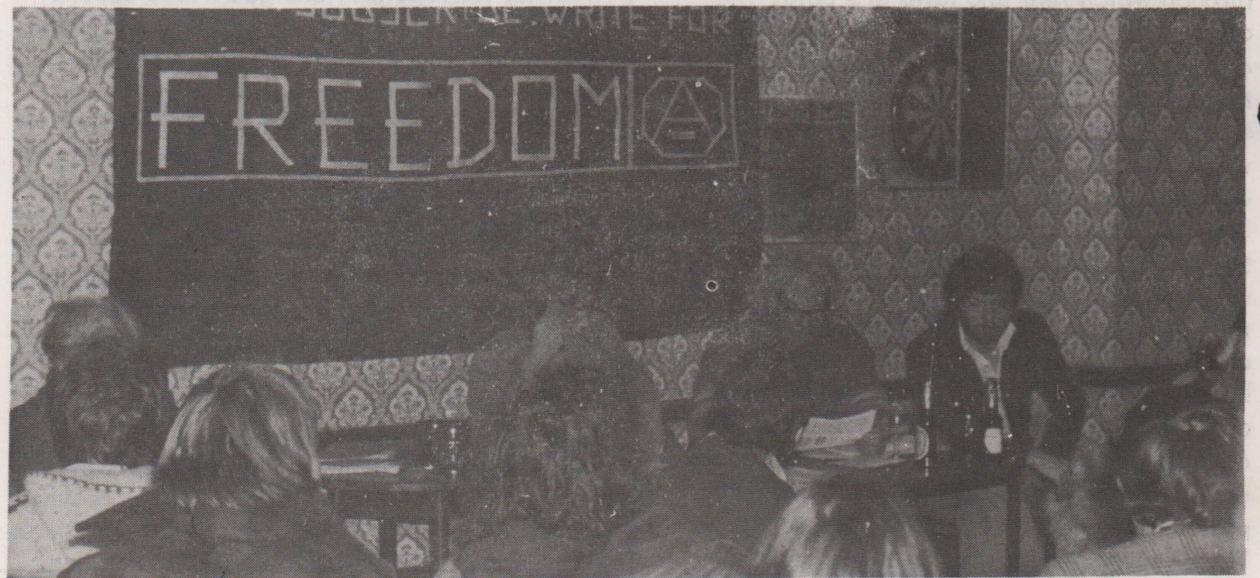


the Egyptian and any future Palestinian, state represent the wishes and peaceful aspirations of Jews and Arabs. State leaders have acted murderously too often and have killed too

many people they ought on the contrary to have liberated or defended from extermination to be taken seriously now when they speak of peace. Sadat, Begin and Co. can woo or threaten as they like; the peoples they claim to represent know in their hearts that peace and freedom will only result from the initiative of the peoples themselves, over the heads of their exploiters. The only real obstacle to a libertarian solution of the conflict are the Israeli and Arab leaders themselves, including the Palestinian leaders. If the gun has any use at all in this Middle East conflict let it be turned once and for all against those leaders who speak of peace and freedom in public but who, behind the curtain of power politics, are planning another round of killings of innocent women and children, hungry protesters, strikers, students or by-standing Arabs, Jews and Palestinians. After the "historic" visit of Tricky Dicky to China nothing more can surprise us in the field of State politics. By now Sadat is back in Egypt conferring with his cohorts as to how to kill more protesters, and Begin is still free in Israel to plan more air raids against Palestinian refugee camps in the Lebanon.

After the world-wide publicity given to the encounter of Sadat and Begin in Jerusalem last weekend, I am sorry to conclude that, in this field of State politics it pays to be a STATE TERRORIST. Instead of inciting against you (as they did in the case of the "Baader-Meinhoff" people) Fleet Street, TV and radio will unquestionably lick your arse! If such infamy does not turn you into an anarchist, comrades, then what else will?

CLAUDE



FREEDOM's readers' meeting was singularly unproductive. After a hopeful start, with several constructive letters having been received, the meeting, attended by about 40, dissolved into ideological bickering. We were partly to blame for not structuring it more. However, I can only repeat, comrades, that if you don't like what we do (and I have my doubts about some of it myself, though I insist that much of it is good), then write something yourselves. If you can, come and help in production. There appears to be a general agreement (shared by comrades from other anarchist publications) that we need a regular newspaper. However, everybody seems to feel that we have the responsibility to produce this. Why cannot anarchists who

expect to see particular news items appear not write them themselves? Is your anarchism restricted to moaning and blaming the "establishment"? I agree that our ears are not as close to the ground as they might be. If some more people actually contributed then we would have more time to do something about it. If this sounds petulant then that's the way I feel at the moment.

In the meantime the consensus about format (about all we settled) is that some change is needed to make the appearance more striking. I would like to thank all those who made some constructive effort (which includes some who were most "anti" in general).

D.

INGRID SCHUBERT

"I AM SURE that the brutal vexations and humiliations of the kind for which Stammheim has become internationally known will cease - or they will carry us out of here one after the other, dead." Ingrid Schubert wrote these words in a report of 9 August this year, a day after eight out of the nine RAF prisoners held at Stammheim at the time (Verena Becker was being kept apart) were beaten up by no less than 40-50 guards, brought in from outside for the occasion. Andreas Baader had been seen in Gudrun Ensslin's cell (surely not for the first time?) "with two ice-cold, calculating, strictly-drilled women murderers", to quote a comment from the ever-imaginative German press; the possibility of sex on Stammheim's seventh floor had thrown the country into an apparent frenzy, even though, as Ingrid wrote afterwards, in such circumstances "it must be clear that intimate relations among the members of the group (and quite certainly in prison) run on a level at which sexuality - other than tenderness, or if you like, sensuality - can play practically no role."

After this tragi-comic performance in rather poor taste Stammheim was restored to its geometric perfection and the prisoners to their single cells, where they embarked on a hunger and thirst strike against social isolation. A little later, on the implausible pretext that there were insufficient medical facilities in the prison to cope with the hunger strikers the group were broken up altogether. Ingrid Schubert was transferred to Stadelheim prison, Munich where she was the only woman prisoner.

She was placed in solitary confinement in a cell of the hospital wing and kept there until her body was found hanging from a rope made of twisted sheets on 12 November.

Truly, any immediate causes that may be ascribed to her death (given the expressed belief of her own family and defence lawyers that she committed suicide) are irrelevant when compared to what she wrote in August. Ingrid Schubert, a doctor, had been imprisoned since 1970; she was serving a 14-year sentence after conviction of "attempted murder" in the rescue from a Berlin library of Andreas Baader, and participation in a bank robbery with the subsequent Maoist convert Horst Mahler. For most of seven years she had, like all similar prisoners, been subjected to varying degrees of isolation, kept - in the words of a court-appointed doctor opposed to the treatment of the RAF captives - in a kind of "extra-territoriality", an "inverted bell jar" outside the normal functioning of prison life.

After the deaths in Stammheim (the RAF have since said they were the work of seven West German secret service agents working in the prison service) Ingrid Schubert is reported to have told her lawyer that she would not commit suicide. Here again, whether or not she changed her mind, what is certain is the systematic mental cruelty and humiliation of her confinement, and the fact that she was deprived of any regular human contact that could have helped distract her mind or relieve her thoughts after the events in Stammheim. (The authorit-



ies are, of course, perfectly aware of the murderous potential of solitary confinement; it has been widely enough demonstrated in the past).

It was with anger that we heard the news of Ingrid's death, which has followed quickly upon the others. Her report had ended with a quotation. "We can only be suppressed if we cease to think and cease to fight. People who refuse to end the fight cannot be suppressed - they win and die rather than lose and die", says Ulrike."

We also must believe that this is true, that their deaths will not have been in vain, however differently we may see the nature of the fight. But it is the responsibility of those who live to break this criminal system into small pieces, and these pieces in their turn to burn to ashes.

G.F.

GAS THE SHAH! PROPERLY THIS TIME

OPPOSITION to the regime in Iran is becoming more blatant. Since the present Shah, backed by the CIA, regained his throne after the 1953 Nationalist coup, he has steadily clamped down on all dissent. This repression has involved detention without trial, widespread torture and the steady build-up of one of the strongest and most modern military machines in the world. Revenues from oil have disappeared in massive arms buying, bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption. Throughout this the Shah, claiming 2500 years of imperial heritage, despite the fact that his father was a donkey driver, has insisted on his "Shah and People's White Revolution" to modernise the country. The average Persian, still living as a peasant in arid deserts or crammed into the poor half of Teheran, is not so convinced. Meanwhile, in the northern suburbs, set on pleasant, cooler mountain slopes, palaces are defended by armed troops.

Intellectual protest has grown and last week 56 prominent Iranians issued a letter calling for a general protest against arbitrary rule. The chief justice of Zanjan, in the north-east, has recently resigned under heavy pressure, due to his "liberal" tendencies (this is entirely relative of course). Student protests have also become commoner and the standard response is to send in troops. The various universities in Teheran are closed as much as open. Last week scores of students were injured in clashes with riot police. A meeting on Tuesday (15/

11), called to hear the works of a leading leftish poet, Said Soltanpour, attracted 2,000 and was attacked by police. A march to protest about this on Wednesday was also attacked and 50 arrests were made. This was followed by a rampage, banks were stoned and anti-Shah slogans shouted.

This coincided with the Shah's visit to America to attempt to buy yet more arms. His army is already the most modern in the Middle East, with the help of Britain, France and the US. In fact British army chiefs were recently (last autumn) dismayed when Iran obtained the latest tank armour from Britain years before they could afford it themselves. To improve the image of the regime, hundreds of people were paid to go to Washington and demonstrate in favour of the Shah. However, this was overwhelmed by the anti-Shah demonstrations. "Welcome Shah" barriers were destroyed and several effigies were burned. Massive numbers of police were deployed and enough tear gas used for it to drift across the White House lawn and affect the Shah, his wife and Carter. Now it only needs him to try out one of his own torture chambers. There were also demonstrations in London, (Oxford Circus is still scrawled with slogans), and in Paris, as the party passed through on their way home.

The entire episode has highlighted the hypocrisy of Carter's "human rights" policy. He gave a speech reaffirming the military alliance between Iran and the USA and praising

the Shah's "enlightened leadership." This is a level of enlightenment which holds an estimated 40,000-100,000 political prisoners. Amid flurries of publicity some 1,500 have recently been released. However, many of these have completed their sentences and many were immediately rearrested anyway. The Shah recently said that torture had not been used in Iran during the last year.

D.P.

ANARCHIST FILM COLLECTIVE

Since we launched the idea in FREEDOM - No 22 - 29/10/77 - page 4 - of setting up an Anarchist Film Collective in Britain, we have received a number of letters and verbal offers showing interest in this idea. We are pleased to inform that at this stage there are enough people interested in A.F.C. to form an initial group with the responsibility of further developing this initiative. Could those who contacted Claude by letter or by word (or anybody else interested in this project for that matter..) please attend our first meeting on THURSDAY, FIRST OF DECEMBER, at 7. PM, at Freedom Bookshop, 84B Whitechapel High St LONDON E1. If you are unable to attend, please phone us during the meeting (249.9249) or write a card stating the best date and time for a 2nd meeting of the A.F.C.

Claude.

CLOSED SHOP

Dear FREEDOM,

I would like to reply to a number of points made by Francis Ellingham in the last issue of FREEDOM, on my article on the closed shop which appeared in a previous issue.

Although my analogy between the state and the union closed shop was satisfactory up to a point, it was, however, invalid for the following reasons.

As anarchists, we are all agreed that the state is never really necessary and the existence of it prevents the realisation of a free and equitable society. But while it exists and furthermore, while it maintains a privileged and propertied class system, some sort of workers' organisation is essential to defend the workers from the ravages of capitalism.

To be sure, the unions as constituted at present are in a pretty bad way from our point of view; but do we then just sit back and pour scorn on them? And have nothing at all to do with them? No! I believe that until the creation of an alternative workers' organisation—based on anarchist principles—becomes a viable proposition, we must seek to put anarchist ideas across from inside the union, and attempt to give it a libertarian direction.

Francis Ellingham's 'I shall look after myself...' attitude, if adopted by the workers, is quite unrealistic. It fails to take into account the massive imbalance in bargaining power between employer and solitary worker.

Thus, the so-called 'moral bullying' which he condemns—'potent' only in so far as it acts upon guilty conscience—can be seen for what it really is: self defence by workers who see themselves in danger from a disintegrating union. For it is not so much the fact that those non-unionists are parasitical that is the problem, but that they are invariably anti-union and as such pose a real threat.

Francis Ellingham would have me conclude from my argument that anarchists (presumably non-tax paying ones?) are parasites, because they indirectly benefit from state activity without doing anything to support it. Quite true! It seems to me that being a parasite on the state—our mutual enemy—is highly desirable, and should everywhere be applauded!

It is quite a different matter altogether when being such a thing threatens the livelihood of your workfellows and plays into the very hands of those reactionary elements such as George Ward; where the word 'exploitation' is no longer an abstract metaphor, but a word fully restored to its harsh 19th century meaning.

D.G.H.

Have no illusions. A new German fascism is on the march and it aspires to be the leader of a new European fascism. The ventriloquist SPD is the new NPD and Schmidtler is its dummy. Or is this ex-Nazi soldier the real son of Hitler? Paint on the moustache. See the resemblance.

Fraternal greetings,
Anthony.

LETTERS

2

IN THE wake of an announcement by the West Germans that the deaths of the three RAF prisoners were suicides, new historical finds relating to World War Two and the Holocaust have been made public. Documents dated before and during the War were recently discovered in a beer hall in Munich. According to a spokesman for the Federal Republic, these papers prove categorically that the deaths of 6 million Jews during those years were self-inflicted.

The government spokesman told a news conference that an elaborate and secret plot assisted by the lawyers for the arrested clients and involving a massive network of communications and gun smuggling was responsible for what we know as the Holocaust. These documents reveal that the interned Jews, in an attempt to discredit German policies of that day, stuffed themselves into ovens after removing the gold fillings of their teeth while others shot themselves with machine guns and rifles obtained from their lawyers.

Noted psychologist and ballistics expert Hans von Krupp, drawing on the similarities between the suicides of the Stammheim Three and the Reich Six Millions, offered a theory to explain the incidents. "Both groups were attempting to give substance to their allegations that the German regime was repressive. To do so they engineered their own deaths to make themselves martyrs," said von Krupp in a copyrighted interview.

"Everyone is aware of the persecution complex common to all Jews and anarchists, and no doubt this paranoia was a factor in their decisions to commit suicide", added the psychologist. "These are no isolated incidents," he went on. "A classical clinical example, one of the earliest, is the case of Gustav Landauer. Landauer, who was both Jewish and an anarchist, beat himself to death with rifle butts after learning of the failure of a terrorist group in Bavaria."

T. Simmons

"YOU CAN'T teach children in school what life's really like because if you did you are going to have a ready-made Baader-Meinhof gang in two or three years here."

—Singer Richard Newman, quoted in
South London Press (4.11.77)

oops!

WE GREATLY REGRET that Harry Harmer's excellent article "When the Money Runs Out" in our previous issue was marred by omissions in the typesetting. The complete first paragraph should have been:

'Power is to do with manipulation—the manipulation of people and of resources. The rewards of being a successful manipulator are wealth—and increased power. The unsuccessful manipulator's losses are, more often than not, borne by the people he exploits.'

In the continuation on p.3 the words 'A job isn't such a wonderful thing to' were omitted from the sentence that continued 'have and the loss of that alone is not necessarily a personal disaster'.

BERNERI An omission was also inadvertently made in the typesetting of Michele Corsentino's article on "Camillo Berneri and The Liberal Revolution" in this issue's review. Following the reference to Proudhon's anti-communism at the end of the fourth full paragraph on page 10, the text should read: "Berneri's first hand knowledge of the theoretical texts of nineteenth century anarchism enabled him to make a fundamental enquiry into the theoretical questions of anarchism that relate to matters of the past, even if in a 'revisionist' manner. In his analysis of that same letter he draws close to another well-known anarchist thinker and 'enthusiast' of Proudhon, Bakunin, and points out certain aspects in the Russian's thoughts that support free trade. "He praises North American liberalism (the trusts had not yet arisen) and says 'Freedom of industry and commerce is a great thing, and an essential foundation, among others, of the future international alliance between all peoples of the world.' But he adds "His enthusiasm for liberalism does not prevent him from recognising that as long as centralised governments exist and labour is the slave of capital 'economic freedom will be of direct benefit only to the bourgeoisie.'" And again, "The historical proof of Bakunin's anti-communism lies in the fact that the communist tendencies within the International will triumph in 1867, when Bakunin's activity was almost entirely suspended." (6) We apologise to authors and to readers, and reassure them that the typist has now acquired a new pair of glasses!

IN BRIEF

THE LONDON Borough of Lambeth has condemned as 'mischievous' a booklet issued by the local Community Law Centre advising tenants on how to force the council to pay for essential repairs to flats.

The booklet, produced at the Union Place Resource Centre, outlines repairs which are council responsibility and describes what to do to force action on dilatory authorities.

If the council are unwilling to move quickly enough the book suggests getting repairs done privately and sending them the bill.

What angers the council is the quotation of legal precedents for deducting the cost of repairs from rent if the bill is not paid within seven days.

Council officials are studying the document to see if it can be challenged legally.

GERMANY

Comrades,

1

Your coverage of West German repression is welcome. Under Herr Schmidtler the regal successor of the Nazi regime occupies its time with the legal niceties of reclaiming £ 30,000 worth of postage stamps found in a Philadelphia attic whilst allowing Hitler's storm-troopers to re-emerge to full respectability in SS-Stadt Nassau. In the meantime, another Baader-Meinhof idealist 'commits suicide' in the psychiatric prisons.

Fireman

embarrass or actually prejudice the great insurance moguls. It has even been known for the law in its majestic concern for capital equity to assess the nubile charms of a widow so that her compensation for loss of a spouse may be adjusted by a reduction for re-marriageability prospects.

Only this week we have had the lofty dispensation of largesse for the deaths (by plutonium poisoning) of atomic workers at Windscale. When questionable materials, unsafe processes, and dangerous techniques are the daily lot of many workers in industry - and agriculture - it is fitting that the judicial process shall be the sole slow arbiter in deciding whether a man died a death which should be paid for at a bargainer's rate or whether it was his own fault!

§

This week has also seen a strike by journalists - remember those people who give such unbiased accounts of strikes who get to be editors who usually advise us not to strike and go on to castigate and denigrate strikers?)

These Grub Street hacks have learned (some of them can read) that other workers in their industry (including cleaners, mark you!) have succeeded in wringing out an increase in their wages due to technological change - meaning redundancy for some. Now the journalists claim that proportionately they should get the same rise to maintain the differential which fixes the class-barrier between these quasi-intellectuals and the proletariat.

This dog eat dog struggle for differentials is another aspect of the appalling wage system, this one perpetuated and maintained by the unions despite its divisive and class-ridden structure. To a commonsense way of thinking, it is obvious that in an ideal society the most dirty, boring, arduous and dangerous work should be the best paid and that the most interesting, skilful and intellectually challenging work should be paid the least - in fact people should queue up to do it.

If the drudgery were better paid, it would soon be seen that society must eliminate such work (even the bosses might) and the irreducible minimum such as the dangerous jobs (like fire-fighting, nursing etc) would, in a free society, only be open to volunteers and not subject, as all is today, to the profit and cash motive.

Under the profit system today the value of any work is what it will pay. The worker has become corrupted with the profit ethos of the system, for which who can blame him? But this, as the history of the unions and the course of inflation show, is no solution.

In monetary terms it is impossible to assess the value of a life, value of a skill or the value of a service to society. At one level all services to society (which are services) are of the same value and should be entitled to draw upon reciprocal services rendered by all other members of society. In a free society it will be so.

§

It is ironical that during the fire-service crisis the armed services, that most parasitic, useless and expensive profession, is making itself useful for once. One hesitates to condone what appears to be strike-breaking, but it may be a solution for the dangers that beset

us - if we are to believe the papers - flood, fire, famine etc., that the armed forces be organised full time to cope with these problems and they may lose their taste for aggression in constructive work. After all, they are volunteers for danger.

It needs also to be considered whether there is a need for full-time firemen, policemen, or even armies come to that. Such institutions, as Illich has pointed out regarding medicine, have a vested interest and cultivate an unwanted dependency. The smaller communities have volunteer part-time firemen now and a decentralised society would use nothing else.

The centralised urban sprawls with their huge dangerous tower and office blocks and the tinder-box chemical manufactories have brought into necessary being this technologically prepared fire-service for technological problems. Science, as ever, is useful for getting us out of the troubles which science got us into.

A useful analogy is the old Kropotkin example of the lifeboat - the service and provision of which at innumerable stations all around the coast - are entirely voluntarily manned and supported by voluntary contributions. In a so-called welfare state it is to the state's shame that this institution, since it must necessarily extend its services to foreign seamen, must remain voluntary. However it is to the honour of society and a corroboration of the principle of mutual aid that such institutions flourish.

Even war, that most abhorrent of events, brings out this aspect of co-operation. Street fire-fighting parties, shelter parties and fire-watching were completely voluntary - and well maintained - in the early days of the war, before officialdom made them compulsory.

The firemen's strike is not, as many believe, a simple issue of cash. It throws a lurid glow on the problems of work, life, death and responsibility in this and a free society.

JACK ROBINSON

NOTE. Individual firepersons at Tooting Bec (see photo) in conversation with your FREEDOM correspondent, report high morale and determination to carry the strike through. About one in three passing vehicles hoot in solidarity and many passers-by stop to chat, sign the petition and donate money. The pickets are putting in 9 or 15 hour shifts.



ARTHUR MOYSE
"JIM LAD THATS NO WAY FOR A SOCIALIST TO SHOUT UP THE WORKER'S".

FREEDOM CONTACT: extras

Meetings

LEFT WITHOUT MARX next mtg. Friday 2 December at The Roebuck pub, 108 Tottenham Court Rd. W.1. 7.30 pm. At the last mtg. we decided to begin by looking at Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto.

Tuesday 6 December Br. Withdrawal from N. Ireland Campaign. Monthly mtgs for London area supporters. At 6 Endsleigh St. WC1, 7 pm for new supporters, 7.30 pm business.

NEW YORK. Libertarian Book Club Thursday 8 December. Samuel H. Friedman's "Reflections of Sixty Years". 7.30 pm at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Avenue, 29 Street, New York City. Adm. free, refreshments.

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NEXT DESPATCHING DATE is THURSDAY DECEMBER 8. Come and help from 2 pm onwards. You are welcome each Thursday afternoon to early evening for informal get together while despatching (or folding) FREEDOM

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BELFAST. For a Belfast anarchist contact B.A.C., c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast 12 (correspondence only).

BRISTOL. Anyone interested in forming group contact Bob, Flat 4, 14 Westfield Park, Redland, Bristol

BOLTON, contact 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516).

CAMBRIDGE, Raphael Salkie, Queens' College, Cambridge.

CORBYP anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

COVENTRY write John England, 48 Earlsdon, Coventry.

DORKING Libertarian group, Howard Fuller, 6 Oak Ridge, Goodways, Dorking Surrey (tel. 87814).

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

EXETER Anarchist Society, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, University of Essex.

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

LEEDS, Tony Kearney, 4 Ingle Rpw, Leeds 7.

LEICESTER, c/o Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross Street, Leicester.

OXFORD, Martin Harper, Keble College

PORTSMOUTH, Carolyne Cahm, 2 Chadderton Gardens, Pembroke Park, Old Portsmouth.

READING University Anarchists c/o Students Union, University of Reading

SHEFFIELD. Change of address. Sheffield Anarchists (& Libertarians), Box 1A, 341 Glossop Road, Sheffield 10 (tel. 667029 or 731780). Regular mtgs. Tuesday night at 10 Hanover Square, Sheffield 3 (tel. 731780). Students contact Box 159, 341 Glossop Rd.

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 Milton 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., N5 (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, E.1. (tel. 247 9249).

Hackney Anarchists—contact Dave 249 7042

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

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

Love V Power (write only) Desmond Hunter, 4 Swinton Street, WC1.

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MIDLANDS ANARCHIST FEDERATION, Sec Louise Crane, 13 Arden Terrace, Braunstone, Leicester (tel. c/o Sid & Pat Leicester 864511)

NORTH WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. Bolton 387516). Mthly mtg., newsletter.

ANARCHIST STUDENTS Network: Secretariat moved to Reading University Anarchists, c/o Students Union, University of Reading

SCOTTISH LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION:

Aberdeen: Mike, c/o A.P.P., 167 King St. (tel. 29669). Also for Dundee, Fife, Edinburgh Glasgow: C. Baird, 122 Benneray St., Glasgow G22 (tel. 336-7895), also for Port Glasgow and Stirling.

WE WELCOME news, reviews, articles, letters. Latest date for receipt of copy for next issue (No 24) is **MONDAY 5th DEC.**

No charge is made for use of the Contact Column. All items for insertion must however arrive by the above date—and if possible earlier. Frequently valuable publicity for events is lost by comrades not taking into account our fortnightly schedule.

Meetings

BIRMINGHAM Libertarian Socialist group meets every Sunday 8 pm in The Fox & Grapes, Freeman St. (near Moor St. station). Information from Pete Le Mare, 2 Florence Place, Ombersley Rd. Birmingham 12

London

CENTRO IBERICO now meeting at 421 Harrow Road, London W.9. Saturdays & Sundays 3-11 pm. (Postal address: Miguel Garcia, 123 Upper Tollington Park, London N.4. (Internat. Libertarian Centre mtgs soon.

LONDON WORKERS' Group for working anarchists & other independent militants. Next mtgs. Tuesday 6 and 20 December at Rising Free, 182 Upper St. N.1. at 8 pm

Desires

POLISH-speaking anarchists & other interested in creating some form of information exchange concerning the past, present & future situation in Poland please contact Jan at Freedom.

PRISONERS AID. New group within Cambridge group is collecting books (anarchist and non-anarchist) and publications to send to prisoners. Send lit. to RAF SALKIE, W 14 QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, and inform him if you know of a prisoner who wants literature.

CHILDREN. The A.S. Neill Trust is compiling a list of Free Schools, Communes, Home Education projects or any activities designed to secure more freedom and more respect for children. Please send information to Michael Duane, 10 Wavertree Road,

London SW2 or phone 01-674 4368 (CORRECTION of wrong number listed last issue)

I would like to rent/buy/squat in a room in a shared house. Julia Rosenak, Tel. 348 9595 Spanish comrade, man, aged 25, still needs a room, preferably in a shared house. Please contact Freedom (Box M.)

Rights in the Armed Forces. 'At Ease' gives free and confidential advice to servicemen who can't find their way through Queen's Regulations to the rights they have to shorten engagement, seek discharge on conscientio or other grounds. Write to At Ease, c/o 1 Elgin Avenue, London W9 or call any Thursday between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m.

Literature

NEWS LETTER for Libertarian Library Worker No.5 now available. Send SAE to Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1AW.

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, PO Box 26, Warrawaong, N.S.W.

Sydney Federation of Aust. Anarchists, Box 92, Broadway, 2007 Australia

Sydney Libertarians, PO Box 54, Darlinghurst 2010

NEW ZEALAND

The anarchist movement can be contacted via:

PO Box 2052 Auckland

PO Box 22-607 Christchurch

International Books, 123 Willis St., Wellington

Daybreak Bookshop, PO Box 5424, Dunedin

U.S.A.

New York: Libertarian Book Club, Box 842 GPO, New York 10012

SRAF Freespace Alternate U, 339 Lafayette St. New York City, NY 10012

Missouri: Columbia Anarchist League, PO Box 370, Columbia, MO 65201

San Francisco: Free Socialist, PO Box 1751, San Francisco, CA. 94101

EUROPE

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

Germany: Anarchist Federation of Baden: ABF Info-BU'ro, Postfach 161, 717 Schwabisch Hall, Germany.

'Gewaltfreie Aktion' (non-violent action) groups assoc. with WRI, libertarians. For further information write Karl-Heinz Sang, Methfesselstr. 69, 20000 Hamburg 19.

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CAMILLO BERNERI AND "THE LIBERAL REVOLUTION"



Camillo Berneri

The Italian anarchist theorist and militant, Camillo Berneri, was assassinated during the Spanish Civil War, on 5 May 1937. In his booklet *Berneri in Spain* (see footnotes) Max Sartin described his intellectual contribution to anarchism as essentially one of anti-dogmatism: 'He saw anarchism as an ideal and movement still in formation; he felt the need to escape from the general and abstract formulæ of the faith to confront with audacity all the problems and complexities of life and to resolve them through a practical and concrete approach. His impatience with the "sacred tablets", which at times gave him the appearance of a dangerous iconoclast, derived from his anxiety... to protect independence of thought not only from the authority of the established institutions but also from that, no less pernicious, of dogma and all apparent dogmatism.'

The following article by Michele Corsentini gives an example of this regarding one particular period of his life, his collaboration on Piero Gobetti's magazine the *Liberal Revolution*, during the tragic twenties, when fascism rose to power. —Translator.

THE FIRST TIME I came across the name of Piero Gobetti was in the long distant October of 1943 (when I was still a callow youth)—in the pamphlet *La scuola* (The School), edited by the almost 80-year old Sicilian anarchist Paolo Schicchi. He had published it in Palermo as one of his occasional publications which had a wide distribution in Sicily, especially of course in areas with a socialist and anarchist tradition. Schicchi was in fact the most prestigious personality of militant antifascism; he was also the island's oldest anarchist, a veteran of many battles during the period that bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He launched this popular tract a few months after the disembarkation of the Anglo-Americans in Sicily and the subsequent official fall of fascism.

Having made a few penetrating observations on the school system as it was before and during the fascist period, Schicchi took the opportunity to pay tribute to the Italian intelligentsia as represented in some of its best men—Benedetto Croce, Roberto Bracco, Filippo Turati, Toscanini, Luigi Galleani, Permi, Giacomo Matteotti, etc., etc., who had refused to kowtow to Mussolini's regime and who paid for this refusal with persecution, prison, confinement and death.

Schicchi's tribute to these men was disinterested and chivalrous; it did not have the aim of substituting new idols for those who had perished in the turbulence of war. Thus it was that those of my generation who were born under fascism and had been kept ignorant of every display of free thought, began to know those who had devoted themselves to the task of making Italy a freer country. And among the antifascist writers and scientists Schicchi recalled, I was struck in particular by one name—perhaps because it was that of a youngster who had been the "guide and teacher of many mature men", as V. E. Orlando was to say on the 25th anniversary of his death.

To use Schicchi's few concise words: "Remember Piero Gobetti, his noble and precocious intelligence, the real hope he represented for Italian letters; remember him who died so young in exile; Benito Ganellone⁽¹⁾ had ordered the prefect of Turin to 'make his life impossible', and the honourable prefect followed his orders so conscientiously

that Gobetti, subjected to unprecedented persecution, went to die abroad."

It was the periodical *Energie Nuove* (New Energies) that first revealed the brilliant gifts of the seventeen-year-old Torinese writer; and within a few years Gobetti had reached the stage where he was able, on 12 February 1922, to found the weekly *Rivoluzione Liberale* (Liberal Revolution). This was the best political and cultural periodical of that tragic and tumultuous era that followed the first world war in Italy, the time when fascism rose to power through a piece of buffoonery otherwise known as the 'March on Rome'.

The *Liberal Revolution* had a twofold function: on one hand it was engaged in the struggle against the clientelist undergrowth of government and the political corruption (which were, and unfortunately remain, the endemic diseases of Italian life), while at the same time it fought fascism and its most reactionary supporting groups among the representatives of capitalism, the landowners and the decrepit ruling class of the pre-fascist period which, uncontested, had dominated the scene in the first fifty years of united Italy. On the other hand Gobetti's approach was a historicist one; he wished to create a new ruling class from among the intellectual elite in conjunction with the proletarian masses, through the conquest of the liberal institutions (liberal in the liberating sense of the Gobettian concept), thereby bringing Italy towards the adoption of democratic attitudes at a European level. It is obvious that in Gobetti the political task was inseparable from the cultural one; the magazine was therefore complemented after about a year by a publishing house which played an invigorating and illuminist role in Italian culture.

In his varied intellectual activity as a publicist Gobetti "showed himself to be a cultural organiser of extraordinary value", as Gramsci noted in 1926. Gobetti's peculiar characteristics — apart from his indisputable brilliance as a writer — were his moral intransigence regarding any form of opportunist and tactical compromise, and an aversion to rhetoric. This he had learned from the school of political realism which originated with Salvemini⁽²⁾ and was of particular significance in a country like Italy where rhetoricians, conformists and opportunists abound. He provided an honest and reliable focal point for those intellectuals of diverse and opposed political views who managed to gather around his magazine⁽³⁾. But among all the intellectuals of Gobetti's circle the only anarchist was Camillo Berneri. Berneri had entered political life (that of the socialist movement in Reggio Emilia) at the equally precocious age of fifteen. He had been educated in the school of that renowned reformist socialist, Camillo Prampolini.

During his activities as a socialist Berneri came into contact with anarchist workers, and at about twenty years of age became an anarchist. For a further twenty years he played a primary role as scholar and theoretician in the Italian and international anarchist movement. (And at this stage it is also necessary to recall another of his teachers, Gaetano Salvemini of the University of Florence, for whom, together with the Rosselli brothers, Ernesto Rossi and the Catholic Giuseppe Donato, Berneri was a favourite pupil.)

What could Berneri contribute to so much learning in the heretical columns of *The Liberal Revolution*?



There was, of course, room for yet another heretic, and through the magazine Berneri was able to develop his ideas freely, in open discussion with other contributors.

Almost all Berneri's work as a publicist is still scattered among a variety of periodicals published both in Italy and abroad (with the exception of a few pamphlets and a couple of anthologies). But it is worth remembering the activity of the young anarchist through those writings which contributed much of value to the period of struggle and wide-ranging thought that marked The Liberal Revolution.

Chronologically the first of Berneri's writings is a letter to Gobetti which appeared in no. 11 of the magazine (24 April 1923) bearing the title "Economic Liberalism in the International." Berneri's notes on the critical position of the anarchists in the First International regarding the choice between diverse and decentralised economies on the one hand and the single, centralised economy of the Marxist State on the other, are still interesting and relevant.

Berneri remarked that many cultured people were either ignorant of the ideas and history of anarchism or had only a surface knowledge of them, and this notwithstanding the important if not primary place they had occupied in the history of socialist thought. He takes the opportunity to open a debate, or rather perhaps to clarify certain misunderstandings, with such eminent scholars as Gaetano Mosca, taking as starting point a false judgement that had been made by him. In an article on historical materialism, Mosca had placed Proudhon with the utopian socialists and thus arm in arm with Blanc, whom Berneri attacks as having put "Equality on the left, Liberty on the right and Fraternity in the middle, like Christ between the good and bad thieves." Further, Berneri stresses that the formula "from each according to his capacity to each according to his needs" had been criticised by Proudhon, who had called it lawyer's casuistry - for who can evaluate capacity and who will be judge of needs? (5)

"Mosca's error is interesting" Berneri observes "because it shows how many students of socialist history have failed to take account of the fact that the collectivism of the International had an essentially critical value, and this has been denied even by some anarchists like Luigi Fabbri, who argue that anarchism is 'traditionally and historically socialist.'" Not being in agreement with Fabbri's thesis, Berneri develops his own along the following lines:- "The International was born in France, from the ideological climate of Proudhon's mutualism and, as Marx says in one of his letters relating to the Congress of Geneva (1866) he had ... expressed no collectivist or communist idea. The influence of Proudhon thus runs parallel to anti-communism and anti-collectivism." (6)

Berneri's free trade thesis is also supported by the criticisms of other writers like Adhemer Schwitzguebel and Saverio Friscia. He concludes his interesting letter by suggesting to Gobetti a series of studies of economic liberalism in socialism. From such studies, he was convinced, the historical truth would emerge that to have been an anarchist within the International was to have been a liberal of socialism.

A second article, on "Monopoly and Secularism in 1890" (23 October 1923) is a brief historical study of the events and vicissitudes of the Italian school system through the centuries from 1335; it was towards the eighteenth century that a secular tendency had begun to prevail in Italian education as a result of bold reforms undertaken by enlightened princes against intrusion by the Church. In this article Berneri demonstrates his professional competence as the new teacher of history and philosophy who also has a fondness for pedagogic studies. He returns to the subject in a later essay "Spinoza the child and Gentile the philosopher" (26 February 1924), a lively polemic directed against the educational policy of the fascist philosopher who had brought about the return of religious instruction to the State schools in contradiction to the very same lay convictions Gentile had himself once professed.

§

I now come to the comment on a short article by his friend Umberto Morra (19 February 1924) which had passed somewhat hasty judgement on the anarchists and needed a reply. Here are the most interesting and significant points:-

"... even for you (Morra) anarchism's most salient characteristic as a political movement is that of violence. Now it seems to me that it is high time to dispense with the equation anarchist = bomb." Like so many others, Morra had fallen into errors of judgement on the anarchists' historical function as an organised movement, not to be confounded with that kind of "amorphous anarchism stretching from Ravacholism to the re-hashing of Stirnerite and Nietzschean ideas" that dwelt at its margins. The activity of the organised anarchists had always been directed at the emancipation of the masses from all forms of oppression - both

of organised violence and of violence codified within the State's laws. In this context Berneri stressed that the isolated act of violence, issuing at times from below and from a spirit of revenge, is not an end, but a means of challenging the violence that issues from above and a consequence, not a cause, of the latter. He concluded, "Your judgement raises many other points, but The Liberal Revolution is too historicist to give so much weight to a political force that now lies on the edge of history. And this is one of the primary causes of the problems which the anarchist movement has in attracting that wider support that would draw it out of the tight circle in which it languishes and from which springs the occasional act of desperation which most people call crime and madness ..."

An odd and notorious character was Massimo Rocca, a pseudo-anarchist individualist who was the subject of sharp argument both in and outside the anarchist movement. His amoral and asocial attitudes - a mixture of unbalanced and petit-bourgeois individualism, had led the adversaries of anarchism, including those of integrity, to see it in an unreal light. Quarrelsome and opportunist, this sad character was eventually tolerated by anarchists no longer, and ended his sleep-walking adventures in the sewers of fascism. It fell to Berneri to make the explanations and he drew his profile in The Liberal Revolution (18 March 1924):-

"Massimo Rocca has never been an anarchist. He was an individualist, which is not the same thing. There are an infinite number of species of individualist, but they can be reduced to two main categories. There are the ones who cry 'I couldn't give a fuck for humanity', 'The ego is all', etc., and who, with Nero-like poses and Nietzschean and Stirnerite parrot-talk... mask an exasperated idealism and a tender heart. These are basically decent people. Capable of paying your supper when you're penniless. Incapable of spying on you or robbing you of your overcoat when playing host to you. The other type comprises the social climber, the bourgeois in the worst sense of the word. Poor, suffocated by their mediocrity, desperate to live, they end as thieves, spies and hack journalists. Libero Tancredi (Massimo Rocca) belongs to this type ..."

§

(cont pg 7)



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Malatesta For Today

MALATESTA: His Life and Ideas. Edited by Vernon Richards. (Freedom Press, £ 2).

We have been able, at last, to put into circulation again this comprehensive (and, in English, only) collection of Malatesta's thought, bringing anarchist essentials to bear on problems as difficult for anarchists today as for Malatesta's contemporaries. Nor has Colin Ward's review become less relevant than the book in the twelve years since both were first published, and we are happy to reprint both for introduction to new readers and re-acquaintance by older ones.

ERRICO MALATESTA (1853-1932) was an Italian anarchist who, in the opinion of his editor, bridges the gap between the classical socialist and anarchist thinkers of the 19th century and the problems of the modern world. This book presents his thought in a series of extracts from his writings, mostly translated for the first time, together with biographical material and a commentary on his significance for modern anarchists.

Why do people call themselves anarchists? Anarchy means contrary to authority and does not necessarily connote activity, the propagation of alternatives, or a programme for the future. But for Malatesta, as for Bakunin and Kropotkin, anarchy means society organised without authority; it is a social aim. And if we have social aims we have problems and choices of strategy, organisation, propaganda, and so on. These are what the book is about.

People often say that it is possible to be an anarchist without having read a word about anarchism, that anarchism is a matter of the heart rather than the head, that it is something to be lived and not written about, that programmes and 'blueprints' are unnecessary and authoritarian. And then they wonder why the anarchists are a pathetic handful of people talking only to themselves. Others busy themselves with federations and secretariats which exist only in their heads. And for others, anarchism is a kind of cult; they enjoy belonging to a sect, they savour and pass on the more ridiculous trivialities of its history, and relish the gossip of its contemporary nutcases. From such people, and (if one dare hope) for them, this book is a valuable antidote.

Malatesta and his editor may not necessarily have the right answers, but they do raise the right questions. Malatesta says bluntly that 'were we to believe that organisation was not possible without authority we would be authoritarians, because we would still prefer authority, which fetters and impoverishes life, to disorganisation which makes life impossible'. Nor does he believe in the alibi of trusting in the spontaneous emergence of solutions to the problems of life or of postponing all solutions until some revolutionary apocalypse in the future?

Our solutions may be accepted by a sufficiently large section of the population and we shall have achieved anarchy; or they may not be understood or accepted and then our efforts will serve as propaganda and place before the public at large the programme for a not distant future. But in any case we must have our solutions; provisional, subject to correction and revision in the light of experience, but we must have our solutions if we do not wish to submit passively to those of others, and limit ourselves to the unprofitable role of useless and impatient grumblers.

One such programme, which was adopted by the Unione Anarchica Italiana, is included in the volume, as is his critical assessment of Kropotkin who, in Malatesta's view, was led to over-simplify problems through a kind of optimistic determinism and a belief in natural harmony. 'Would one not be closer to the truth', he asks, 'in saying that anarchy is the struggle, in human society, against the disharmonies of Nature?' And, polemicising with a French anarchist, he remarks:

'In every living being there exists an unconscious anarchist,' says Colomer. Would it not be more in keeping with the truth to say that every human being is by his actions or potentially, a tyrant? In every living being there is, to be sure, 'the desire to grow, to brush aside every obstacle', but is there also that desire to let others grow too, which should be characteristic of the anarchist?

'Only an authoritarian education teaches individuals to respect the law,' says Colomer; but from where have the laws arisen, I ask, as well as the desire in some to give an authoritarian education to others, if not from the desire in the stronger, in the successful ones, to oppress the defeated and to make sure of their subjection? The anarchist is at the culminating point of human evolution, not at its origin.



Malatesta and
Michele Angiolillo in
London, July 1896

There is a great deal in this book about revolutionary situations, and as this country is as far from a revolutionary situation as it has ever been in its history (and as in those parts of the world where revolutionary situations exist there is a notable absence of anarchism), these are bound to have a theoretical concern for readers in contemporary Britain, who will nevertheless find Malatesta's pragmatical common-sense refreshing. We are, he reminds us, 'only one of the forces acting in society, and history will advance as always, in the direction of the resultant of all the forces'. We have therefore to 'find ways of living among non-anarchists, as anarchistically as possible, and which will further our propaganda and offer possibilities of applying our ideas'.

For this reason the editor has given one section of the extracts the title "Anarchists and the limits of political co-existence", and has devoted a chapter to Malatesta's views on the value and limitations of participation in the trade union movement. 'For my part,' Malatesta declares, 'I do not believe there is "one solution" to the social problems, but a thousand different and changing solutions in the same way as social existence is different and varied in time and space.'

And as for those 'principles' which are always being waved at us, he remarks:

It is interesting to observe how both the terrorists and the Tolstoyans, just because both are mystics, arrive at practical results which are more or less similar. The former would not hesitate to destroy half mankind so long as the ideas triumphed; the latter would be prepared to let all mankind remain under the yoke of great suffering rather than violate a principle.

For myself, I would violate every principle in the world in order to save a man. . .

COLIN WARD

THE NATIONAL FRONT

— AND ITS USE OF THE MEDIA

WHEN THE LABOUR Party conference pledged itself to an anti-fascist crusade in October 1976, I doubt if the majority of the people of Britain knew anything about the National Front other than its name, and I'm fairly certain that a large number of them outside the industrial cities didn't even know that. The effect was rather like that of a man who tries to swat a bee with a coal shovel, misses, and breaks open the whole hive instead. For with the allure of being first on the bad men wanted list of an increasingly inept government, the Front has, as they say, arrived. The twilight little grouping of East End racists and Home Counties patriots has become an accredited party in English (though not British) politics and a force capable of challenging the long established Liberals in local elections and winning: hardly a day now passes without its name appearing in some context in at least one national newspaper, and even such sacred pastures of bourgeois inanity as the *Observer Colour Supplement* and *Punch* have produced their shocked little articles between the glossy cigarette ads exposing the fascist threat. And still the Front seems to grow, unhindered by all the verbal alarm, hatred and tears it has caused. Why?

With the worsening political and economic conditions of the last ten years it was, of course, inevitable that a group like the NF should appear, singing sweet songs of class reconciliation, orderly streets, and national pride to a petit-bourgeois afraid of recession. As a party it describes itself as right-wing, patriotic, nationalist (at least British nationalist) and racist—it accepts the word as a compliment—and puts forward as a programme a cocktail of unacknowledged gleanings from writers as diverse as Hitler, Marx and Churchill bolstered up with a bucket of petit-bourgeois paranoia, hatred of society's derelicts, and contempt for the 'do-gooders', the 'soft' judges, psychologists and social workers who try to help them.

Yet it would be foolish to deny that the Front's ideological tune, harsh as it sounds, contains its idealistic and even revolutionary notes. It is an eclectic ideology and, like all such can accommodate quite a spectrum of political shades, from the conservative patriot, the impatient Monday Clubber, through the disappointed liberal to the nationalist-minded socialist, all banded together in uneasy alliance, for the old country and against the enemies who are responsible for its decline. Racist maniacs and truncheon-wielding thugs there are in the Front, but most of its voters are neither. They are predominantly members of the small business and shop-keeping strata of society who have no natural party of their own—as the middle class proper has in the Conservatives and the trade union workers have in the Labour Party—who don't have the capitalists' relative security in the face of heavy taxation and an uncertain economic future, and who assuage their bitterness about life as it is by referring to the *Country or Nation*, their great, now declined, but will be great again *England*, not as so much earth or so many godless statistics, but as something almost mystical, amounting to a hope for life as it should be. In consequence its appeal is primarily emotional, and its treatment of specific topics is phrased in deliberate generalizations.

But this still doesn't explain why the Front is hitting the pages of Fleet Street: after all, it is no bigger than the small Communist Party whom no one has taken seriously for years, and totally without the CP's influence in the upper echelons of the TUC leadership. It has not a single MP or a single local government councillor as yet, and how often has a National Front candidate saved his deposit? Why then the Fleet Street tom-toms? Why the woeful posturing of Labour Party magnates and the defensive gestures of the Tories? The answer is simple: the Front has become part of the sensation fodder

of the British media.

On past occasions when the right hon. Anthony Wedgwood Benn escaped from his keeper he used to dribble paranoia down his bib to the effect that the so-called social democrats within the Labour Party were the 'creation' of some Dr. Frankenstein in Fleet Street or Shepherds Bush. He was wrong, of course; not because he was Tony Benn and as such is habitually wrong, but because his gimic was all too obviously an attempt to discredit certain of his rivals by suggesting that they were mere puppets in the hands of some secret power, whereas he—perish the thought!—was not. But yet

... but yet, not entirely wrong. Fleet Street did not 'create' Reg Prentice, nor Shepherds Bush Dick Taverne—I think their parents had more to do with that—nor did they 'create' their brand of social democracy. What they did do was to nourish the tender growth with disproportionate amounts of publicity, and as the British media is largely conservative, the publicity was just as largely favourable.

But favourable or not, publicity remains publicity if you know how to use it. As Adolf Hitler, the shrewdest of all this century's many political opportunists, put it, 'Whether they represent us as clowns or criminals, the main thing is that they mention us, that they concern themselves with us again and again.' Constant mention in the media, primarily the press, and to a lesser extent radio and television as well, lends a certain respectability in itself, no matter how hostile the editorial treatment may be, for the media is closed to 99.9 infinity percent of the population of this country. Neither I, you, nor Joe next door is ever going to be interviewed on television or get articles written about us in the *Observer Colour Supplement*—but to know someone who has! No matter if he is a child murderer or a rapist, it is the equivalent, a hundred years ago, of knowing someone who was received at court; for if the eye of the TV camera is less gracious than the hand of the Queen, the status it confers is not much less. Yesterday's motheaten bigot ranting outside the pub door, becomes today's 'serious political alternative' if in the meantime the wand of the media has been waved over him. And soon, here and there, breaks appear in the voice of universal condemnation. It's happening already. The *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*, those masterpieces of myopia, regularly catalogue the Front's activities (though they never refer to the doings of the Communist Party) with the same muscular 'eave 'alf a brick at 'im mentality of their Victorian grandfathers, but in Fleet Street's sedate publications the tone is increasingly one of 'Of course, I don't actually agree with these deplorable people in the National Front, but—', and if John Tyndall, Martin Webster and co. haven't yet appeared on late night chat shows, I'm sure the time when they will is fast approaching. Punk is chic already: how long will it be before the Front's authoritarian patriotism is chic as well?

In the 1940s, when a whole army of American psychologists was employed to analyse Hitler away and produced enough bumf to smother the whole Waffen SS in one go, some lone shrink, somewhere, came up with a single good idea—the *fuhrer complex*, the desire of the anonymous little man, caught in the pincers of big business and organised labour, to satisfy his blistered ego by becoming a Leader, just like Hitler, the archtypical 'little man', with his own Party, blindly loyal to him personally, and a conspiracy theory to explain away his own failures and frustrations. It was precisely as such a party that the Front began. Its leaders were little men who had tried, and failed, to be everything else (Tories, Liberals, Socialists, market gardeners, booksellers, farmers), and its led were other little men like them who were too small to interest the big boys in the TUC or CBI, and who banded together for mutual comfort against a hostile world. For as

ONT MEDIA

long as the leaders were content to harangue a couple of hundred faithful followers in a hall once or twice a year and so feel important (vide the average leader of your local Maoist clique) the Front stayed put. When the leaders' ambitions began to mushroom, prodded by the militants within its ranks, the Front began to grow, and the little meeting-hall was no longer enough. What do you talk to when two or three hundred hand-clappers don't satisfy you? Answer: you talk to the media. And so the NF's leaders began to talk to the media.

Hitler had realised more than fifty years ago that the media does not express popular opinion, but represents its own idea of popular opinion, and fashions it as well. Consequently, if you live in a country whose population numbers dozens of millions spread over thousands of square miles and can only reach a tiny fraction of them, speak to the media instead and the media will do the reaching for you. Now everything the Front does is done with one eye to the media, and the media, protesting how much it hates the Front, responds heart and soul. The Front is news; the media exist to purvey news; the one needs the other, it's that simple. I daresay every time some hack squeaks out his bit about 'Of course I disagree with the odious National Front, but—' another twenty or thirty people write off to Croydon to join up.

But while the protesting media has publicised the Front to the hilt, the Labour Party (also protesting) has shown itself unable to deal with the jackbooted genie it conjured up to scare the children in October last year, and again we must ask—why? The answer, I think, is that, whatever the Daily Telegraph may say to the contrary, the Labour Party is no longer the party of Keir Hardie and hairy revolution. The double chins of Callaghan, Healey and Castle quiver the chords of the Red Flag with all the tear-jerking hypocrisy of an atheistic stockbroker groaning out his Onward Christian Soldiers on Sunday morning, and Jack Jones's much photographed cloth cap is about as ritualistic as a bishop's mitre. The socialism of the new post-Gaitskell generation of Labour intellectuals is that of a university educated class of apparatchiks, not that of pit workers in Durham, and in its professionalism it slides more and more towards the pragmatic approach of the business-like post-Butler Tories. This 'Butskellism', this meeting in the centre with a long hollow thud, this slide away from the red socialism of Hardie and the blue imperialism of Churchill towards a liberal social democracy of the middle tinged in various shades of violet, results in the simple managerial politics of business-suited bureaucrats dressed up in all purpose liberal phrases. The media has been caught in the trap of its own liberalism. The easy-going philosophy of the sixties which gave automatic right of platform to minorities, no matter how small or eccentric, cannot withdraw that right from the National Front without destroying itself—as the flurry of letters to the Times after every Front march indicates. To the extent that the post-Gaitskell Labour leadership has been 'liberalised', the same is true of it as well. This is why, in dealing with the Front, the Labour Party and the TUC have mingled the boisterous up and at 'em language of socialists with the practical scruples of liberal democrats. A more unsatisfactory combination it is difficult to imagine, but it is the essence of liberalism.

It is so long since the Labour movement in this country has had a real fight on its hands that it has forgotten how to fight. True, it issues condemnations: true, its conference delegates damn fascists and racists in language ranging from the New Statesman's public schoolboy accents to Militant's derailed ranting: but behind this sound and fury, what has it actually done? Here and there trades councils have refused the use of this or that hall; here and there activists have

picketed meetings, often in significant numbers; but the mighty national organization of the Labour Party and the TUC has not matched its words with deeds: it gave the Front a million pounds worth of free publicity, made it into a great danger when in fact it was only a small threat, and allowed it to jump into radical's clothing as Britain's only persecuted political party—and many people, neither fascists nor racists nor any other breed of bogeyman, but ordinary confused and repressed men and women, will respect it for that and, for the first time, listen to its message.

And the cure? The best cure for the Front is to cure the grievances of which the Front is merely a symptom, a list which could stretch to the end of this magazine but which include stagnant waiting lists for council housing, economic harassment through heavy taxation and rising prices, the seeping totalitarianism of government bureaucracies, and the steady subordination of Britain's free trade union movement to the state ambitions of a few worker aristocrats. The worst cure is government coercion. With the Prevention of Terrorism Act already on the statute book, an act allowing only selective political opinions to be expressed would reduce this country's old and sadly moribund democracy to the same level of glittering pompous uselessness as the Life Guards' swords.



The leaves seem to be falling at last on the long Indian summer of Butskellism, that soggy liberalism by default in which British politics has wallowed for the past twenty years. The National Front is a symptom of the growing reaction against that era and the permissiveness associated with it, but it is a cure for no evil. Rather it—and its jealous twin brother, the Trotskyist left—may one day provide the excuse for the rising new generation of managerial politicians to toss away all lingering liberal restraints and institute a regime of control for the sake of control, emancipated from all ethical pretensions, and consequently from any need to regard its subordinated citizens as anything other than statistics on a wall chart. That, and not the return of the Plantagenets, will be the net effect of Mr. Tyndall, the National Front, and all their malodorous ilk.

COLIN MACKAY.

Notes for non-English readers

TUC	Trades Union Congress
CBI	Confederation of British Industry(Employers)
Butler/Gaitskell	Successive Prime Ministers, (the former Conservative, the latter Labour)
Plantagenets	Kings of England, 12th-13th century

INCONVENIENT HISTORY

The Saga of Hog Island and Other Essays in Inconvenient History by James J. Martin, Ralph Myles Publisher, Inc. 1977 \$3.95

THE TRADITION of the court jester was complemented by that of the court historian. If the job of the first was to amuse the monarch, the job of the second was to glorify him and his ancestors. Nowadays, of course, historians are not so blatantly organs of the Establishment, but many of them still seek fame and an easy life by writing and re-writing the kind of history their masters desire. As James J. Martin points out in the introduction to his new book:-

"The preparation of convenient history has long been a lucrative undertaking. Besides making an Establishment feel comfortable and secure, as well as justifying its policies, it can result in the reflection upon its authors of official smiles and blessings which convert into things as secure and generously paid official and academic posts, and many related prebends and benefactions. Their patrons can also have harnessed to such functionaries a machinery of favourable publicity which unwearyingly promotes them and their works as paragons of veracity and literary brilliance, while showering them with prizes, awards and dazzling distinctions. Their suitability for unending reverence and respect is not considered necessary to be further emphasized. And their official accounts become the political scriptures of powerful interest groups, and are repeated unceasingly in the Establishment mass communication media, while being assiduously logrolled in the upper levels of the academic 'watchdogs of the intellect' leading to additional veneration."

Mr Martin is not a writer of "convenient history!" For the last quarter of a century he has been one of those few but necessary mavericks who refuse to go along with the academic herd. In his pursuit of what actually did happen in history he has produced such works as Men Against the State, American Liberals and World Politics 1931-1941 and Revisionist Viewpoints, as well as being the editorial inspiration of that estimable series of brochures, Libertarian Broadides. To these he has now added a new volume of essays, The Saga of Hog Island.

He does not expect to overthrow the current history establishment by its publication. Nonetheless, "if inconvenient history has any utility, it is up to those who wish to use it to take the initiative. It has no ostensible purpose other than the personal satisfaction of the writer, the enhancement of the record,

and such intangible consequences as flow from the application of intellectual curiosity."

In this application of his intellectual curiosity Mr Martin exhumes one of the biggest defence and war scandals of World War I in the USA, the shipbuilding yard known as Hog Island. He acidly delineates the decline of Britain as a world power following participation in World War 2. In a controversial piece on Mussolini's campaign against the Mafia, he claims that Mussolini's regime was not as repressive as it is actually depicted and lets his anger at the Mafia lead him close to a "law and order brigade" position. The attack on Pearl Harbour by the Japanese in 1941 is shown by him to have been deliberately allowed by the Roosevelt government in order to provide a cogent excuse to declare war. He deplores the legend of Colin Kelly, a now forgotten "hero" of the Japanese attack on the Philippine Islands. And in his final essay he gives a masterly account of the legal framing of "Tokyo Rose", a Japanese-American woman named Iva Toguri D'Aquino, who was accused of being a radio propagandist for Japan between 1941 and 1945, and who, after a long fight, was completely pardoned by President Ford just before he gave way to President Pepsodent.

Three appendices deal with the hypocrisy of the American State on blacklisting, the "Morgenthau Plan", made public in 1944, "for the partitioning, devastation, pillaging and pastorilization of Germany" and "Fifty Years of Political Assassinations", a beautifully ironic and succinct account of one of the expanding industries of our times. (1)

It is doubtful if many readers of FREEDOM will agree with all of Mr Martin's interpretations. I do not myself. But anyone who is interested in looking behind the verbal smokescreen put up by the proto-1984 historians of today will find the material he presents of great value in making their own assessments of who did what to whom - and why.

S. E. PARKER

(1) Pace recent controversies on the death of Carlo Tresca, Mr Martin considers it more likely that Tresca was murdered by agents of Stalin than by agents of Mussolini. The latter, he writes, "had far more pressing things on his mind in early 1943 than the writings of a little-read journalist in an Italian language anarchist newspaper published 4,000 miles away (Besides) Tresca wrote as heatedly, if not more so, against the Communists as he did against the Fascists ... (and) an anti-Communist line in 1943 was a dangerous position for anyone in the United States. The hostility towards Italian fascism in other Italian language papers here such as Aldo Feliciani's "Controcorrente" in Boston or the New York "L'Adunata dei Refrattori", went beyond that expressed by Tresca. Nothing happened to them."

NATIONALISM & anarchists

THE DIFFERENT nationalities in the Iberian peninsula are struggling to regain the liberties they lost during the creation of the Spanish empire. Inevitably, this will influence the revival of a free workers' movement, although the two have often gone different ways. In Catalonia, for example, where the CNT is particularly strong, it has traditionally rejected the bourgeois nationalism of the Lliga whose "nationalism" glossed over class conflict. Yet at the same time opposed tendencies are at work. It is well known that in the Basque country, in particular, the workers' movement has taken the lead from the bourgeoisie in calling for national self-determination, because of the collaboration between the government of Franco and the Basque ruling class.

Traditionally, anarchosindicalism is federalist rather than nationalist, stressing international solidarity and the free commune, and this has played a critical part in the debate, a debate not only between different currents within the workers' movement but within the CNT itself.

Although the question is being debated most fiercely, as it always is, in Catalonia and the Basque country, Euskadi, it is apparent throughout practically the whole peninsula. For example Informaciones of Madrid on the 25th of April reported the 10,000-strong gathering in Villalar de los Comuneros and referred to "... an almost wholly youthful audience

... dozens of flags, purple, red, black and even the BASQUE national flag, the Ikurrina ... There was also a huge national flag on the balcony of the town hall, in front of which the demonstrators demanded that the Pendon of Castille be brought out ... The most vociferous turned out to be from the CNT. And this in a region that still prides itself on its traditional description as the 'Centre.'" However, the question is not always raised with such unanimity. In the journal Euskadi Confederal (no. 1 May 1977) the following appeared under the heading The CNT of Euskadi:

"The Viscayan section of the CNT in Euskadi has decided to reaffirm, as in 1939, that the CNT of Euskadi holds a position equal to that of the other members of the Spanish CNT and is a member in its own right of the AIT. 'Spain' it declared, 'is what remains of the empire created through the force of arms by the Catholic Kings and is, today, a multinational 'State'. Its Spanish regions, and those of other nationalities such as the Basque, the Catalan and the Galician, are held together, it declared, by violence and repression.

"Those comrades who, because of the organic traditions of the CNT (or rather their own interpretation of them) do not accept here and now the establishment of 'Spain' as a multinational state, match the most react-
(cont next page)

ionary, imperialist and repressive forces of the state and create serious obstacles to the unity and development of the CNT, the AIT and the libertarian movement. We censure them and formally call upon them to change their position."

The debate has not ceased even in Euskadi itself as is suggested by the article with the same title The National Confederation of Labour in Euskadi, which was published by the local federation of San Salvador del Valle in Sestao Confederal, no. 1, June 1977 and which concluded with the words, "We see the solution to the social and national problem in two stages, one in the short term and the other in the long term. The former would involve recognition of Euskadi as a nation but in the long term we are struggling to create Libertarian Communism. This would mean the abolition of capital and the state and the establishment of self-management within the Basque community. In the short term, we consider Euskadi a community in which all the characteristics of a community are found, linguistic, ethnic etc. It is a community capable of determining its own future and we therefore demand its right to self-determination. We believe that a Statute of Autonomy, freely put together by the Basque people themselves, could be the beginning of the decolonisation of Euskadi. In the same way we advocate autonomy for the different provinces and regions that make up Euskadi. However, we are conscious of the need in this first period to ensure that the powerful forces of Basque capitalism should not continue their oppression of the working class by the same means of exploitation used in all capitalist countries. Autonomy in these circumstances would be merely the transfer of power into different hands."

The social federalism of the anarchosyndicalists in Catalonia traditionally has as its objective the control by workers and peasants of the means of production and the creation of self-managed collectives. The historical conflict between this and the political federalism of the Catalan bourgeoisie is well known in Catalonia and is the background to the article by Pere Sola in Mundo, Barcelona, 19th June 1976.

"During the Republic, the CNT passed a statute of autonomy which could be, and was, used against the proletariat ... as Peiro put it, 'What use is a statute to us that frees Catalonia, but leaves the Catalans as slaves?' ... From the 18-19th July onwards, the objective of the anarchosyndicalists was to direct the social revolution towards libertarian communism and,

to a degree, it succeeded, especially in Aragon, Valencia and Catalonia. Yet it was precisely then, especially towards the end of 37, that national Catalan autonomy reached its highest point. It was the CNT which appeared as the advocate of autonomous rights in the face of a central government increasingly dominated by the Stalinists."

Sola concludes by pointing out the contradictions in the CNT's distrust of bourgeois nationalism and its approbation of "Spanish national unity." He goes on to urge anarchosyndicalists to clarify and evaluate the national grievances in Spain and abroad on the basis of its revolutionary experiences in Catalonia, Pais Valencia and Aragon. Here it was evident that national or regional feeling are inseparable from the restructuring of society.

The press reporting of the magnificent meeting at Montjuich on the 2nd July 1977 shows how urgent such a clarification is. Before more than two hundred thousand people ("... the excited atmosphere and the continuous chanting of those present" at this "gigantic meeting" - El Pais, 3rd July) Jose Peirats criticised nationalists, among other reasons, because of their abuse of those who do not speak Catalan. This was reported in Diario 16, 4th July under the headline "CNT against nationality." The serious confusion between "nationality" and "nationalism" is still more evident in the report by Margarita Saenz-Diez in Informaciones, 4th July 1977.

"We have been promised much. Even a statute of autonomy. Well, we know what that is - a sham, a matter of government. True autonomy does not lie in half measures, where one set of masters takes power in place of another, while the worker remains as before ... Instead of regional statutes, we demand free communes."

Although the remarks of the former editor of Solidaritat Obrera were useful, the question is more complex, as was borne out by the communiqué from the Catalanian Committee of the CNT, issued on the 5th July. Peirats' remarks, it said, were made "in a personal capacity, and do not wholly reflect the views of the organisation," and went on to express its support for regional autonomy and a wish to see its benefits passed on to the working class. The debate continues.

- From Bicicletta, the anarchosyndicalist international bulletin.
Translated by the North London Group of the Anarchist Communist Association.

Bernerri

"The organisation of labour" was the last article of Berneri's to appear in Gobetti's magazine. This was on 10 March 1925. It was a balanced argument about the position of the labour movement vis-a-vis a now triumphant fascism. The political currents organised in the mass parties and organisations of opposition were those of the socialists, communists, populists (forerunners of the christian democrats) and the syndicalists - both reformist and revolutionary. It was evident that an organisation of labour could not be led or dominated by the Confederation of Labour which, in the main, provided a centralised reformist framework for the workers' movement. Berneri focused his attention on the revolutionary syndicalist current on which he made, among others, the following points:-

"This current is born out of the reaction to socialist politicism; its task is to support the sindacato (trade union) as the cell of reconstruction in opposition to the centralised State, to oppose legalistic action with direct action, etc. But, then, with the movement divided and in disarray revolutionary syndicalism has been determined by the Italian Syndicalist Union (7), in the hands of organisers who were more or less anarchist or anarchistic." And Berneri was critical of the failure of the Union to help establish or cooperate in a common front against fascism. He pointed out that, on the contrary, "the syndicalist policy of the anarcho-syndicalists and their syndicalist fellow-travellers contributed to the degeneration of the other revolutionary vanguards," that were necessary to defeat fascism.

At all events, Berneri's was a personal judgement that could more or less have been shared in that particular period in history by his comrades in struggle, when he wrote, "A labour movement composed of organisations coordinated to fight the battles of syndicalism, but at the same time autonomous as regards participation or not in political struggles, would be an experience rich in constructive results."

MICHELE CORSENTINO

Notes

- (1) Benito Ganellone. Paolo Schicchi's name for Benito Mussolini. Ganellone is the traitor Gano di Maganza, from the Chanson de Roland. In later chivalrous poetry the name Gano is synonymous with traitor.
- (2) "clientelist undergrowth", known in Italian as "sottogoverno" or "sub-government", a labyrinthine structure of shady dealings between government and its clients, underpinning official political life. (Trans.)
- (3) Gaetano Salvemini. An outstanding liberal historian who showed much sympathy for the anarchist and libertarian movement. (Trans.)
- (4) Collaborators of La Rivoluzione Liberale included people as diverse from one another as Giovanni Amendola and Vilfredo Pareto, Epicarno Corbino and Giustino Fortunato, Luigi Einaudi and Augusto Monti, Ernesto Rossi and Riccardo Bauer, Attilio Piccioni and Curzio Malaparte, Guido Dorso and Tommaso Fiore, Luigi Salvatorelli and Natalino Sapegno, Rodolfo Mondolfo and Luigi Sturzo, Giovanni Ansaldo and Mario Missiroli, Ascoli and Prezzolini, Umberto Morra di Lavriano and Camillo Berneri.
- (5) Cfr. L'idee generale de la Revolution au dix-neuvieme siecle - Garnier, Paris 1851, p. 108.
- (6) For references to Bakunin on economic liberalism see Oeuvres I, 13-26-29, Oeuvres I, pp. 30 onwards, Oeuvres I, 29. (English references not here given).
- (7) Unione Sindacale Italiana (USI). Formed as the revolutionary syndicalist organisation in opposition to the reformist Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro. Its first secretary was Alceste De Ambris who was succeeded by Armando Borghi when De Ambris became an interventionist and volunteered for the front in 1915. With the outbreak of war USI's antimilitarism became more accentuated, and Borghi issued a manifesto urging the workers to "prepare to transform the hateful war between the nations into liberating civil war."

Footnote Max Sartin's booklet, Bernerri in Spagna (Edizioni RL - Iglesias, Cagliari, Sardinia) is available with an introduction by Gianni Carrozza, in Italian only, from Freedom Bookshop, price 35p. The above article on Berneri has been slightly edited in course of translation.

