

WHO WINS IN VIETNAM?

AS WE GO to press the issue in Vietnam is not yet resolved, the NLF Army is said to be re-grouping for the offensive upon Hue, ARVN has replaced several unsuccessful generals and the world awaits tricky Dicky's new moves to stop the advance. Nixon has promised to do all short of atomic weapons—we fear the worst.

Seven Days re-surfaced for May Day with an issue devoted to Vietnam. It features an interview with Ly Van Sau, the official spokesman for the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam in (in Paris). Ly Van Sau said, 'You wonder why we are now using conventional armaments like tanks and

cannon instead of sticking to guerilla warfare. Well, we are now using all available forces, guerilla, regional and regular—and doing this is what constitutes a popular war.' (Surely, the translator meant 'a war of the people'.) He goes on, 'We consider it natural that the Vietnamese people should defend themselves with every available weapon against an enemy who has the most up-to-date arms and has unleashed the whole American arsenal in Vietnam.'

Ly Van Sau went on, 'The price we have to pay for this is very high. There is no easy way for us; we must suffer, we must overcome many difficulties, make many sacrifices and undergo many privations to fight such a very powerful enemy. But our struggle is developing—we've been fighting for more than a quarter of a century. As we have moved from the purely guerilla stage to the use of superior weapons, we are winning some very important victories, in spite of the fierce reaction of the Americans and their attempt to stop our offensive. There is talk of one front, two fronts, three fronts, four fronts in South Vietnam—but in fact there are hundreds of fronts. There's no place where people are not attacking the enemy.'

The logic of Ly Van Sau's remarks is that the North Vietnamese could use atomic weapons. The *Sunday Times* correspondent, William Shawcross, claims that the NLF are using a Russian 'Strella' missile which, like several Western missiles, works on the principle of 'homing' on the heat of an aircraft engine. It is fired from the shoulder and is the ideal missile for the NLF. As their weapons become more technically complex, the NLF will be more dependent upon the Russians and the Chinese for supplies. Obviously one of the sacrifices of the NLF will be the sacrifice of national independence.

It is true that the North Vietnamese are suffering from bombardments by the American Air Force,

as they suffered from the oppressions of the French and the Japanese—but this is the logic of total war. As a tactic it has failed up to now to break the spirit of the North Vietnamese—in fact such bombing (as it did in Britain and Germany) merely stiffens the will to resist. The need for complex supply lines tactics of guerilla warfare eliminated and therefore bombing was a failure as strategy. We do not know if the new form of warfare has made the NLF supply lines more vulnerable.

War has a dynamic of its own which goes forward despite any human hopes or fears. It is possible, if Ly Van Sau is a reliable spokesman, that the North Vietnamese have become conditioned to a war economy and a war psychology. Twenty-five years of fighting must have produced a new type of citizen. The North Vietnamese Government must be (internally) the safest government on earth. No one will question their actions, nobody examine their motives—and for twenty-five years!

Much tribute has been paid (in *Seven Days*, too) to General Vo

Nguyen Giap whose 'military genius' has defeated ARVN but *Seven Days* is indiscreet enough to mention that in 1945 when Giap was in the first Vietminh Government he was Minister of the Interior (and we quote Jean Lacouture), 'a position which enabled him to effectively suppress nationalist and Trotskyite opposition'. It is unlikely that General Giap has changed his stripes. In fact his taste of military success may have hardened his anti-nationalist and anti-Trotskyite attitudes.

This makes nonsense of Trotskyite support of the NLF, it is impossible to assess what is meant by 'nationalist' opposition. Surely, the whole NLF outlook is based on an appeal to Vietnamese nationalism? Such political programmes as they have advanced are far removed from communism, the support of the middle-class farmer landowner and small businessman has long been cultivated by the NLF.

We do not know at this point who will win in Vietnam. The odds are at the moment that the NLF will win but given the fortunes of war and the ability of masses of war material to decide issues it is still

uncertain. The one thing that is certain is that the people of Vietnam, both North and South, will lose and for twenty-five years have been on the losing side whilst French, Japanese, Americans and assorted native political leaders battled over their homes and bodies as to who should rule them. In the process homes and bodies were shattered but from the fragments life was reconstructed and incredibly went on to raise more food for soldiers, more children for war.

The Vietnamese (North and South) are a peasant people and as such, have an inborn distrust of government which to them means the landlord, the tax-gatherer and the soldier. It is probable that whatever shoddy compromise is arrived at in Vietnam—or in Paris or Moscow—and whatever new form of political set-up is made for the Vietnamese, they will still have to harness the oxen, plough the paddy-field and tend the rice crop. They will still have to pay the landlord, the tax-gatherer and render military service in preparedness for the next war which will correct the injustices of the present one. Unless the Vietnamese realise the great confidence trick worked on them by governments who continually ask them to 'suffer, overcome many difficulties, make many sacrifices and undergo many privations', whether under the flag of North or South Vietnam.

JACK ROBINSON.

More on UKAPE

FOLLOWING THE NEWS that the 'United Kingdom Association of Professional Engineers' has links with the right-wing Monday Club, *Public Service*, the official paper of NALGO, reports that UKAPE—the professional engineers' trade union—is, in fact, a very dubious contender for such a title.

UKAPE, like the Post Office Telecommunications Staff Association and the National Union of Seamen, has of course registered with the Government's Industrial Relations Court. Furthermore, some of its members have made wild claims, particularly in such journals as *The Surveyor*, of a membership of between 6,000 and 10,000. But its actual membership on December 31, 1971, was 3,617 men—and one woman. UKAPE was actually formed by a limited company, the Engineers Guild Ltd., with a loan of £3,290, and another loan 'from an unspecified source' (the Monday Club?) of £1,000. It has one permanent official, its general secretary, who by coincidence is also the secretary of the limited company. And of its 36-member executive, five are not even employees at all: they are company directors!

So much for UKAPE, a trade union for engineers. Another Tory 'front' organisation?

P.N.

ALL GAS & GHOSTIES

WHAT CAN ONE SAY about the poor old Church of England? It has been called, with some justice, 'The Tory Party at Prayers', but it is perhaps one of the least intolerant of the Christian churches. A few years ago vicars attempted to attract worshippers by playing guitars, holding special services for motor cyclists and running discussion groups. It is an amiable picture, if a trifle pathetic. Running around trying to be 'with it' seems so hopeless. A friend pointed out to me that when a comic clergyman appears on TV, or the cinema, the radio, the stage, he is always C of E. Never an RC. Let anyone make a joke about the Roman Catholics and a yell of protest goes up from them.

But guitar-playing vicars are infinitely to be preferred to inquisitors and witchfinders generally. Yet this is what we may be getting back to. According to the *Guardian* (20.4.72), 'Bishops of the Church of England are officially recommended today each to appoint his own trained exorcist to be ready when needed to expel evil forces from people and places. This comes at a time when there is growing concern in the Church at the increasing interest in the country in witchcraft, magic and the occult.'

This is an attempt to keep up with the hippy-Joneses, who are turning to occult-

ism, much as their grandparents or great-grandparents did at the turn of the century. Guitars are exchanged for the paraphernalia of the magician, and so the Church of England must hurry to catch up with the new craze. So highly educated, intelligent, modern men, in a society that can send astronauts to the moon, dabble in magic and exorcism. (And then people talk about African tribes, with their witch-doctors, as 'backward'!)

'A commission', says the *Guardian*, 'set up by the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Robert C. Mortimer, which has inquired into the history and practice of exorcism as part of the Christian ministry, also proposes that centres should be set up to train exorcists. This should be done, if possible, in collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church.'

The old enemies are going to unite against the demons!

However, the report goes on to tell us that to begin with at least the assumption must be that the person thought to be possessed by evil spirits is physically or mentally ill. Resort must first be made to the doctor or the psychiatrist, and only when all else fails must the exorcist be called in. Animals and children must be removed from the house when a service

Continued on page 4

STILL DEFYING THE LAW

SHOP STEWARDS representing dockers from all the major ports have decided to defy their union's instructions to lift the blacking of selected companies' containers. The decision was taken at a meeting of the unofficial National Port Shop Stewards' Committee, as part of their continuing campaign over who should load and unload containers.

This decision is also in defiance of the National Industrial Relations Court who have instructed the Transport and General Workers' Union leaders to get their members to lift the blacking. But the importance of this open disregard for the law is that it shows that the rank and file members are, at the moment, in control.

Ironically, if the Industrial Relations Act had not been passed, this dispute probably would have been smoothed out round the negotiating table. As it is, the union has had to pay £55,000 in fines for contempt and has given the NIRC assurances that it is trying to get its members to end the blacking.

With the TUC beating a hasty retreat from a confrontation with the State, Mr. Jack Jones, the general secretary of the T&GWU, sent his legal advisers along to the court to put the union's case. The union, now following the TUC's new line of obeying the law, said this: 'It will be my case that it has always been union policy that the court orders, however distasteful they may be, should be obeyed, and through its full time officials the union has sought to have that carried into effect.' Mr. Pain, for the union, went on to say that the union 'can't control everybody in the docks', but would try and prevent the dispute from spreading.

The union argued that the withdrawal of stewards' credentials would make the situation worse, although it had been considered. If they were withdrawn, Mr. Pain argued, the dockers would either refuse to have replacements or would elect 'men of like mind or possibly more radical'.

SEEKING A WAY OUT

The leadership of the T&GWU have really been put on the spot. It has now been given until Tuesday, May 9, to prepare a full answer to the court's decision

that the union must discipline its stewards.

Mr. Jack Jones has been searching for a way out. Directly the court proceedings were over he met Mr. Macmillan, Secretary for Employment, to discuss the container dispute. The outcome was a suggested meeting with the employers and the National Dock Labour Board.

In contrast to his members, Mr. Jack Jones is seeking a lawful way out to avoid further fines being imposed. At this stage I don't think he can discipline his stewards because his whole reputation as a 'lefty' would be in ruins. He is now the victim of his own speeches and policy statements in which he has emphasised his support for grass root decision making and union democracy. Mr. Jones now faces the dilemma of disciplining his members or paying further fines.

His case will be that the union cannot be held responsible by the NIRC for the action of his stewards. If the court rules that the union is accountable for the action of its stewards, then the T&GWU could have its assets sequestered until the contempt is 'purged'. Or the court could fine the stewards in contempt.

NATIONAL STOPPAGE

A national delegate conference of dockers has given the employers 28 days' notice of a national dock strike over claims for the right to 'stuff and strip' containers, for average earnings when on full back pay and a fourth week's annual holiday. This conference decision was taken before the meeting of the National Shop Stewards' Committee. This recall of the docks delegate conference and their decision could be used to siphon off support from the blacking campaign and the initiative will be wrested away from the rank and file.

The contrast between the rank and file's continual defiance of the law and the retreat by union leaders should not surprise anyone. The history of the trade union movement is marked out with such retreats and surrenders by the leadership when faced with a head-on clash with the state. Leaders are more concerned about the assets of their unions than they are in making a prin-

ciple stand. Rather than mobilise the membership against the law and the state they bargain away hard won gains. They are the compromisers, the go-betweens, the agencies for keeping workers in line. It is these leaders who make the productivity deals, sign the no-strike agreements, agree to speed-up and compulsory overtime, which increases the employers' exploitation of the working class.

CONTAINER LEVY

The T&GWU is no exception. Instead of making a fight to keep jobs both in the docks and at the terminals at the union rate, they are talking of a settlement like that negotiated by longshoremen in America. This agreement levies money on containers which are packed and unpacked outside specified areas. The money raised is then used to pay higher severance payment. Such schemes do not prevent the loss of jobs, they only cushion effects of redundancy.

It is natural that leaders should act in this manner. We do not believe in 'saviours', either of the 'left' or the 'right'. Leaders will always try to keep control. They hold positions of power which would be threatened if control was won by the membership. The present retreat by the trade union leaders is not a defeat for the working class. It was something that just had to happen.

The Industrial Relations Act was made law to combat unofficial disputes. The leadership of the trade unions have on numerous occasions shown how valuable they are to the employers and the government by preventing these stoppages. They maintain discipline and channel off discontent along the safe paths of procedure. It is in the interests of these leaders to maintain the illusion that they represent the working class. But when workers realise that they can do without leaders then they will kick them out of power.

Workers by their very position in society have the power and strength to defeat any anti-strike laws. If the law hits one section of workers then it can be defeated by others giving their active support. Solidarity and direct action can beat any employer, any law, and any government.

P.T.

Kropotkin brought up to date

MESSAGE OF A WISE KABOUTER, by Roel van Duyn (Duckworth, cloth £2.95, paperback 75p).

ROEL VAN DUYN was in the old Provo movement of some years ago, and has now moved on to the Kabouters (Gnomes), the Dutch radical movement which has taken its place. He believes that the Provo philosophy was not sufficiently constructive, as it aimed to provoke authority to show its real brutal face behind the liberal mask. That aim has now been achieved beyond the wildest dreams of all, not only in Holland but in every country in the world, including dear, peaceful England. Now is the time, van Duyn believes, to be more constructive, to create an Alternative Society, and this is what the Kabouters aim to do.

Roel van Duyn has found his inspiration in Kropotkin's books, particularly in his *Mutual Aid*. I do not think that he would claim to be a 100% anarchist. He comes close to it, but from time to time he expresses views with which an anarchist would not altogether agree. He also, and here I must say I am very much with him, criticises Kropotkin's over-optimism, and his tendency to dismiss the institution of government as something brought about by 'sorcerers, rainmakers, miracle-workers, priests, people with special knowledge of ancient customs and the leaders of warlike hordes'. If this was all it was, why, van Duyn asks, were they so often successful? 'One of man's characteristics', van Duyn goes on, 'is his almost universal fear of finding himself in the dark. This irrational fear, with which we are all familiar, sets up a need for some fixed authority, for laws that will "protect" us. The fear within us, and the need for hierarchy which it reinforces, are the father and mother, so to speak, of the credulity which the

mass of people show towards authority. How are we to come to terms with this "father and mother" without becoming their victims? Only by being rational enough to gratify the equally irrational and powerful need within us for freedom; by creating an anti-authoritarian society, in which fear will not be further stimulated by what are at present the very real dangers of war and famine, and in which the need for hierarchy will be satisfied. . . .'

For Kropotkin the irrational, the morbid and the cruel hardly existed, except as something that was part of authoritarian society, to be swept away eventually. He seems to make everything a bit too easy. Van Duyn is aware of this, and, after giving an exposition of Kropotkin's teachings, he goes on to suggest that the impulse toward mutual aid has as its opposite an impulse towards aggression. The tension between the two has a creative effect, so long as the aggression does not swamp the mutual aid. If it does society disintegrates. If, on the other hand, the mutual aid impulse dominates, a pleasant, if static, society is the result. The Bushmen and the Pygmies live in such societies. They do not progress but life is quite satisfactory. He believes that modern society is deliberately (so far as one can talk anthropomorphically of a society) stimulating aggression more and more, that the pace is quickening and becoming ever more feverish, and that in the end there will be a catastrophe, unless some way of slowing it down is found in time. I am sure that he is right, and that the explosion is less than a decade away now, though exactly how it will come, or what form it will take when it does, is still not possible to say. (This last sentence represents my view not the author's.)

Our author relates Kropotkin to the

modern ethologists (students of animal behaviour), like Konrad Lorenz and the author of *The Naked Ape*. I am not sure that I always quite follow him in some of this. I am afraid that I am coming to believe that the book of Nature is like *The Bible*, 'a nose of wax, which you can bend into any shape you please'. There are so many facts about animal behaviour available that you can use them to prove almost any theory from anarchism to fascism. You see what you want to see. If the thought of conflict and violence pleases you, you can see plenty of evidence for 'nature red in tooth and claw'. If on the other hand you want mutual aid, there is plenty of evidence for that too.

Kropotkin observed mutual aid. Others have observed it too, while yet others have observed conflict, though I think that on balance Kropotkin's views may be said to win the day. It's not just a question of observable facts, but also of interpretation. Lorenz actually believes that all personal ties arise out of aggressiveness. He illustrates this with another example from the animal kingdom. A female has young, and so is aggressive towards everything that moves in the vicinity of the nest. However, in order to look after her young she needs the help of a male; so that towards *him* she must not be aggressive. How does nature solve this problem? The female of the pair learns to distinguish the male in question from his performance of a particular ceremonial. This engenders a positive "affection".

ORA

Dear Comrades,

One hesitates to interrupt with the sad note of reality a fine polemic by Jack Robinson. However, in his recent article 'Between the Worlds' Jack attacks ORA for a 'probably unfortunate and hastily-phrased' statement about women's lib that was part of a leaflet read to a conference called by FREEDOM. As the writer of this leaflet I would fully confirm that it was hastily put together and in fact much of it was printed in note form. But Jack appears to have been rather hasty in quoting it. In its original form the phrase read, 'One large field that FREEDOM seldom reports is the women's liberation fight. This is a situation that all the political groups are cashing in on. As anarchists have always argued for the need for women to liberate themselves this is a struggle we should be supporting and putting our view on.'

I would agree that this is possibly not very well expressed and could have been expanded for more clarity. I would have thought though that it did convey the qualitative difference between the opportunism of the authoritarian left with their cashing-in on 'Issues' to lead and use them and an anarchist position which through consistent theories of mutual aid and self-reliance supports a struggle and offers help if needed. Furthermore there was the intention in that phrase to contrast the fact that the liberation of women has been a theme in anarchist writings for many years whereas it has only suddenly been 'discovered' by the fake left due to the upsurge in women's activity for freedom.

This 'discovery' is obviously political opportunism of the worst kind, the latest example of which is IS warning off other left groups from the occupation at Sextons in Norfolk as it was 'theirs' and then doing fuck-all for the women actually occupying. And in fact it was a member of the Libertarian Women's Network who, finding this out, duplicated for them a price list of the garments they are now making, which IS apparently never thought of doing. This, I would suggest, illustrates the difference between 'cashing-in' and 'supporting'.

ORA is organisation-minded—mostly in order to ensure it remains anarchist and revolutionary and coherent enough to last beyond one 'Issue'. How far it is politically-obsessed I am unsure as I'm not quite clear to which of the varying meanings of this phrase reference is being made. All anarchists are inevitably concerned with politics but in order to create a social revolution. There is not space enough to fully detail the great differences between ORA and the left political parties, but I would have thought it obvious that anarchists (FREEDOM as well as ORA) could be concerned with varying issues in society and act and comment upon them without 'blundering' into the sort of 'issue-politics' indulged in by the IS, IMG, Young Liberals, etc., games-players.

As a final point may I add that ORA is at present working on the fifth issue of its *Newsletter*, but is going forward with its plans to produce its own monthly newspaper (which is presumably what Jack meant).

Yours fraternally,
STEVE KIBBLE.
(W. London & Middx. ORA)

Lorenz's thesis that all love is a product of aggressiveness goes too far. It suffers from the same one-sidedness as the thesis that everything is the result of co-operation (an error Kropotkin did not commit). Lorenz's thesis resembles all too closely the Fascist notion that war is the mother of all things. Understandably enough, therefore, Lorenz is on the Right, politically speaking. His attempt to show that aggression is often constructive may be regarded as highly successful; but his conclusion is unconvincing and illogical. Co-operation and cohesion, as Kropotkin and other like-minded people have pointed out, are indispensable to the emergence of life. I cannot see why spontaneous affection should have to emerge in a roundabout way via aggression, as Lorenz insists, rather than from the power of attraction which positive and negative particles, unicellular creatures, plants, insects, animals and men all exercise on one another. You can interpret the same set of facts in two diametrically opposed ways.

I am inclined to side with Kropotkin, and with van Duyn's theory of mutual aid and aggression as two almost equal forces, pulling against each other. It fits in with my observations of life. It also appeals to my anarchist prejudices. One cannot really be more definite than that.

This is a good little book. It is only 98 pages. The ideas are clearly expressed, in the main, and it is a good introduction to Kropotkin, a good criticism of his rather over-optimistic attitude to life, and a good introduction also to the ethologists, and their theories. There are one or

two irritating minor slips scattered about, 'West Iran' for 'West Irian' for example. Get the paperback. Nearly £3, even by modern inflationary standards, is too much for a book this size. A.W.U.

PRESS FUND

Contributions

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Hull: A.F. 50p; New York, USA: G.T. £7; British Columbia, Canada: R.P. 10p; Newcastle: M.B. 50p; Bridgewater, USA: R.P.H. £1; Wolverhampton: J.L. 80p; J.K.W. 20p; In Shop: Anon. 31p; P.G. 26p.

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The Tobin Case

THE AUTHORITIES have now shifted Michael Tobin, the Kingsnorth Power Station worker jailed for 'seditious' pamphlets (see FREEDOM, May 6), from Canterbury Prison to Chelmsford, a maximum-security jail. Michael is inside for two years, which was the maximum Judge Thesiger, who is well known on the Kent Circuit for his vindictive sentences, could have given him under the charges. He has now asked for leave to appeal.

A Michael Tobin Defence Committee has now been founded in the Medway Towns to get support for him and to

publicise his case—especially the harshness of the sentence and the political implications for other libertarians. The whole affair was ignored by the Press, but it fits into a pattern of political sentences up and down the country. The Anti-Internment League has also become interested in Tobin's case.

The Defence Committee appeals for financial donations from Comrades to help Michael's wife, Molly, who has been left on her own with five young children to support. The Committee can be contacted at: 265 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent. P.I.

The New Banner: Flag or Rag?

THE NEW BANNER is a journal of libertarianism published in the USA. The editorial policy is anti-state, free-market, laissez faire economics leading to an eventual harmonious existence. Murray Rothbard of 'Libertarian Forum' fame looms large on a 4-page interview in which many memorable quotes not merely spill but gush (or is it vomit?) forth. He claims: 'True anarchism will be capitalism, true capitalism will be anarchism.' But more ominous still are the glib references to parliamentary action: 'Maybe eventually we will have a libertarian party. So if you have a really dedicated group in Congress or the Senate you can start voting measures down or whatever,' and again, 'I've only met the Senator (Mark Hatfield) once. At that time he was very friendly towards libertarianism.' Finally Rothbard admits, 'You certainly don't have to convince the majority of the public, because the majority of the public will follow anything that happens.'

This interview could almost be with a

British Communist, with all the elitism of 'the public will follow us', the subversion of Senators and the tactical but non-political manoeuvring around the house when their delegates are elected. The Rothbard interview apart, there are 8 more pages to contend with. About a page is filled with expensive display ads from Libertarian Enterprises and about a certain book which 'puts the revolution within reach'. Another side of the story is expensive advertising rates at 8p a word but then no press statement, so probably a profit-making journal. Finally you can buy very small 'laissez faire' posters for 85p a time—'anarcho-capitalism in action'.

A final word from Murray Rothbard: 'You know if the Commune runs everything and decides for anything . . . somebody's got to make the communal decision. . . . In other words it's going to be a coercive decision. You can't tell me that you'll have a participatory democracy.' Oh yes we can!

DAVID BROWN.

Ready this month!

LESSONS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION by Vernon Richards

This is not a reprint of the work with the same title published by FREEDOM PRESS in 1953. It is a new and considerably expanded version which the author prepared for an Italian edition published in 1957, and recently published in Paris in a Spanish translation.

Additional chapters deal with such important topics as the Militarization of the Militias, the Cult of the Organisation and of Personalities, the Rank and File's Responsibility.

As well as a Select Bibliography, the author has contributed a 20-page Bibliographical Postscript in which he discusses the most important works that have appeared on the subject in the past twelve years.

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AFBIB—To all Groups.

The next AFBIB will be produced in Sheffield at 4 Havelock Square, Sheffield, 10. Send material to Secretary, Peter Le Mare. Also needs offers of help from Groups to bring out further issues.

The Contact Column in 'Freedom' is also available for urgent information. Groups should send latest addresses to Birmingham. New inquirers should write direct to them or to the AFB information office in Birmingham.

AFB REGIONAL GROUPS

There are now anarchist groups in almost every part of the country. To find your nearest group write to:

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Surrey: G. Wright, 47 College Road, Epsom.
Yorkshire: Trevor Savage, Flat 3, 35 Richmond Road, Leeds, 6.
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Scotland: Secretary, Mike Malet, 1 Lynwood Place, Maryfield, Dundee.
Wales: c/o P. L. Mare (address above).
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The American Federation of Anarchists: P.O. Box 9885, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440, USA.
S. Ireland: 20 College Lane, Dublin, 2.
University and Student Groups: c/o P. L. Mare.

Injustice the World Over

IF INJUSTICE OCCURS in America, Rhodesia or South West Africa we can be sure the liberal conscience will stir, refreshed from the rest it experienced when the Mangrove Nine, the 'Angry Brigade' and those who fight racialism in Britain were bullied and mistreated recently.

The *Guardian* passed all records for liberal hypocrisy when in an editorial (8.3.72), 'Justice again on trial', it looked at the trial of Angela Davis in America. 'Miss Davis does not have to worry about justice,' they say, 'the whole world is watching the trial of this American revolutionary.' 'Many of her (Angela's) revolutionary friends believe she does not stand a chance of receiving a fair trial in what they regard as a Fascist political system.'

The *Guardian* should know that many of Stuart Christie's revolutionary friends don't believe he has a chance of getting a fair trial in Britain—under the

Guardian's nose—whose eyes (long-sighted for injustice but short-sighted for D notices) are averted *anywhere* but here in Britain! Those terrible Turks imprisoning Timothy Davey (whilst a 14-year-old girl is in Holloway prison awaiting trial—maybe you hadn't heard). One wonders just how honest these liberals are, how much sense of justice they really have, how much they feel the pain of the empathy that knows the sufferings of those who are mistreated so cruelly in our world today.

Of course, our world is a village today. To some of us it always was and suffering and injustice always move us wherever they may occur, the struggles of the oppressed and the courage of those who resist oppression with defiance always gain our support—even when they are on our doorstep!

As Dr. Waldheim, the new Secretary General of the UN visits Namibia (South-West Africa) and Lord Pearce returns

from Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), we need to remember that the strike in Namibia against contract labour and the miners' strike are part of the same struggle. The trial of strikers in Namibia and the handcuffing of pickets after arrest in Scotland, the torture of detainees in Northern Ireland, Southern Africa, Russia, the holding without trial and the mockery of justice in the destruction of George Jackson and the mistrial of Jake Prescott are all part of the same,

J.W.

Dear Comrade Social Worker . .

THE RADICAL social workers' group, Case Con, held a conference over the weekend of April 29-30, at Oxford Hall, Bethnal Green, London, open to social workers and interested parties. As a claimant I was one of those interested parties. If one wanted to be unkind, one could describe Case Con—or at least those who attended the conference—as a group of public and local authority servants with bad consciences at doing the State's dirty work, plus an articulate and dominating faction of Trotskyists. Personally I didn't feel too much sympathy with those who had troubled consciences, but the Trotskyists who were also, don't forget, social workers and social work students, put my back up straight away by describing claimants and those who came to social service departments for help as 'marginal'—that is, marginal in terms of 'revolutionary' potential. So, brothers and sisters, when you go down to your local social services department, in dire need, don't expect too much from one of these self-styled 'revolutionary social workers', because you see, you're only marginal.

One Trotskyist even went so far as to say that within their own work situation (i.e. local social services department) they couldn't do much (such as rocking the boat and jeopardizing their well-paid job) and that agitation should and could only take place outside the work situation, that is, evenings and weekends. One angry libertarian comrade asked if the speaker was saying we should join our nearest 'revolutionary workers' party. Yes, came the answer. With comrade social workers like these, who needs enemies? Claimants' Unions are pretty chary about 'revolutionary' social workers too. Happily the Claimants' Union—with its decentralised structure, the autonomy of each individual union, and, of course, its 'marginal' members—doesn't make it too appealing for those seeking the revolutionary vanguard.

Well us 'marginals' (with a potential membership of seven million) in the Claimants' Union have been tackling the

indivisible fight which does not care whether Jake was an anarchist or George Jackson was a Communist or internees in Long Kesh are members of the IRA—what matters is that they are human beings being unjustly treated by the forces of repression; what happens to them, if we feel and know the suffering, happens to us. If the State tortures the least of us it defiles all humanity. We think it wrong that a former Prime Minister was put in solitary confinement in Rhodesia without charge or trial but we also think it is wrong that a gutless British press can stand with eyes closed as the State prepares to persecute those awaiting trial in Britain.



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LARRY.

TALKING IN LONDON

LIBERTARIAN MEETINGS have been improving recently. Thus the Solidarity Group has held several series of regular seminars in London over the past year or so, in which members and supporters of the group, together with personal and political sympathisers, have been able to discuss libertarian ideas informally in an atmosphere which is friendly without being too confined.

There was a particularly fruitful session on April 15, when the subject under consideration was the latest Solidarity Pamphlet—*Workers' Councils and the Economics of a Self-Managed Society* (25p). This is an account of the economic and political aspects of a future libertarian socialist society, based on a text first published by *Socialisme ou Barbarie* in France in 1957, in the light of the experience of the Hungarian rising of 1956. The society described is pretty much that envisaged by such thinkers as Kropotkin and William Morris eighty years ago—despite a fashionable emphasis on such modern developments as automation, computerisation, cybernation, etc.—and the pamphlet is at the same time the most 'utopian' and the most 'anarchist' publication of the Solidarity Group over the twelve years of its existence.

The discussion was especially impressive because of its lack of sectarian prejudice, despite a range of opinion all the way from collectivism to extreme individualism, from the view that work could be transformed by the exercise of workers' control and wealth could be equalised by total self-management to

the view that work must be abolished and the whole concept of wealth must be transcended. The result was a genuine exchange rather than a mere repetition of views, and all the thirty or so people present seemed to have got something out of an afternoon's hard thinking and talking.

It was noticeable that anarchism in its various aspects has become an essential part of such discussions on the left (though there is still very little direct knowledge of anarchist writings and not all that much of anarchist history) and that several anarchists took an integral part in the seminar (though some so-called anarchists present appeared to be closer to syndicalism than what most of us would think of as true anarchism, while several Solidarity people present appeared to have come so close to anarchism as makes no difference).

Anyone interested in taking part in future seminars should write to the Solidarity Group, 27 Sandringham Gardens, London, N.W.11. An obvious reflection is that it would be valuable if such seminars could in the future be organised around more specifically anarchist themes; in many ways, well prepared discussions are more useful than completely unstructured meetings of the usual kind. In the meantime, public meetings are being held on Sunday evenings at the Peace Centre, 36 Romilly Street, London, W.1; the Individualist Forum and the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists are holding the floor on alternate Sundays, so there should be something for everyone. J.N.

TO CONSERVE OR NOT TO CONSERVE

FOR THE LAST 100 years the political and social revolution has been the dream of the majority of those of Left Wing thought. Indeed, since the French Revolution burst upon an unsuspecting Europe in the late 18th century, the world has seen countless revolutions with Freedom, Equality and Fraternity the watchwords. Yet not one has been a success. The end results have always been the same; merely a shift of the power structure from one body politic to another and not the people where it belongs. Oppression, whether it exists under the flag of Capitalism or the red flag of Communism, is still oppression. There are no degrees of freedom, only freedom.

However, evidence exists to suggest that the revolution of tradition is slowly becoming a thing of the past. Gradually more people, particularly the young, are turning away from the repetitious solutions of the past which have so obviously failed. The rise of the 'Underground', 'Alternative Society', 'Counter Culture', call it what you will, or perhaps it is, after all, three separate entities become interdependent, reveal, on the whole, a distinct disregard for the outworn political theories and manoeuvres of the past. They believe that freedom can only be achieved by practising it and not imposing it on an unwilling populace by force of revolutionary arms. The nearest political movement to this constantly shifting nether world is, perhaps, that of the anarchists, but the vast majority of the 'underground' would not claim to be anarchists, nor wish to be. Perhaps one of the strongest

points about the 'underground' is that it is in a constant state of flux. It never becomes permanent or static. It has no laws or rules; everyone's opinions are valid. It reveals a complete denial of the State System of any sort. It detests violence. It looks to a future peaceful society based on human dignity. How successful this 'movement' will be remains to be seen, but it is an obvious fact that it is drawing into its circle more and more people of different backgrounds and cultural upbringing which in itself is no bad thing and can only enrich the 'movement'.

Probably the greatest move for change nowadays is the Conservationists, loosely grouped round the Conservation Society itself, many of whose members are also from the 'underground'. Never before has so much interest on an International scale in change been revealed. And, let's face it, the necessity exists. The life support system of this planet is gradually failing, a fact recently emphasised by 30 'top' scientists in the magazine, *Ecology*. Even governments are having to face the hard fact that some radical alterations to the system will have to be effected. Whether they will be prepared to make these changes is another thing. But as more and more influential people begin to join the Conservationists, the better the chance. In view of the increasing danger from pollution, etc., it would appear that the constant bickerings of the so-called Left Revolutionary Movements are now rendered that much more futile than previously. It matters very little which of the interminable Socialist (as opposed to Private Capitalist)

movement runs things if the planet is doomed anyway. What does matter is that the planet be saved before it is too late. And this requires a drastic change of the system. Many will claim that the political revolution is the only way the system can be changed, but as stated, no evidence exists that that is what happens. Political organisations are concerned with power as an end in itself. Conservationists may yet create what the political movements have failed to do, a mass movement which, because of its size, influence and the hard facts of its message, may bring about in itself the change of system that is required. A change that can be brought about in a peaceful way without authoritarian pressure and violent means which have never solved anything and which so many of us are thoroughly sickened with and are completely opposed to.

It is a sobering thought that the very changes aimed at by the obsolete political movements of the past could be brought about by the very system itself through necessity.

GEORGE CAIRNCROSS.

SEXISM LETTER Rears its Ugly Head

Dear Editors,
It was interesting to read A. Jenks' article on money (April 29) but sad to see that here too an unthinking sexism has crept in. Of deprived children with extravagant toys, he says: 'It would surely be better if the mothers were to stay at home.' Why? Why not the fathers?

(Why rear children in small nuclear families anyway?) And what evidence at all is there to suggest that children are more damaged psychologically by not having a mother at home all day while they're away at school than women are by being obliged to spend all day every day in the exclusive company of small children? The kind of revolution that free mums from the necessity of earning a large portion of the family income and 'allows' them to return to their 'natural' place in the home is the kind of revolution we can do without.

Edinburgh SALLY MITCHISON.

MIDDLE EAST

A SPLIT has occurred in the Israeli Socialist Organisation (ISO) which produces the paper *Matzpen*. Over the past few years there has been an increasing number of Trotskyites joining the organisation. Once in a majority the Trotskyites began to attempt to redirect the organisation towards their dictatorship of the proletariat ideas. This being contrary to the views of the Libertarians and the large group of Anarchists within ISO a split was inevitable. Unfortunately due to the previously federational structure of ISO this left the major part of the movement's resources, including the newspaper *Matzpen* in the hands of the Anarchists. The IGM in Britain have just stated that they will only recognise the Trotskyites as the 'true community of *Matzpen*'.

LARRY.

