

THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM?

SOMEWHERE IN THE vast recesses of the works of Karl Marx lies a piece of deathless prose (almost poetry) which has stuck in my memory. "The integument bursts asunder. The death knell of the ruling classes will be sounded. The expropriators will be expropriated." Somebody will (doubtless) correct me.

Last Thursday midst all the Abbey wedding bells some heard once again that phantom-death-knell. The Stock Exchange staggered, our balance of foreign payments was heavily in debit, the miners had refused to do any more overtime and consequently coal production was down by 25%. Power engineers were working to rule so our electricity was menaced and, in spite of Britain's pro-Arab leanings, there were threats to our supplies of oil. Somebody on the Stock Exchange rumoured an Autumn Budget and down went the shares (already weak from Wall Street's chill).

This is easily recognizable as a 'crisis of capitalism' and no doubt the pleasure in this

series of misfortunes led many a Marxist to recognize the tocsin call to the barricades. Even Mr. Wilson mounted a verbal rampart. However, up to today (Monday) nothing much has happened. Our emergency is still with us. The London-centered Railways have gone on a limited unofficial strike, the food-price increases are the greatest, bread has gone up, and the Stock Exchange has recovered its nerve.

Such comparatively minor shocks as these, even the cumulative effect of a series of misfor-



"AS I SEE IT, PRIME MINISTER ...if we could get Prince Charles married off this winter, give good coverage for the Cup Final and do a Lampton on the Liberals we could last into the summer..."

tunes, are unlikely to dislodge capitalism from its hold upon our finances and our lives.

The crisis of capitalism is not that it is incapable of solving the elementary problem of production; if that were its cue for departure it would have gone long ago. It was not instituted nor is it perpetuated for the sake of production, this is incidental; it is instituted for the purpose of making profits and in this there is no crisis. Profit-taking is doing very nicely.

* * *

THE TEXT-BOOK crises of capitalism were described in The Communist Manifesto: "In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that in earlier epochs would have seemed an absurdity - the epi-

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WILL THEY USE THE TROOPS?

THE GOVERNMENT have said that they are not looking for a confrontation with the miners. But what they are trying to do is to blame them, and other sections of the working class who are at present in struggle, for the current economic problems. The Tories have also said that their present problems stem from success, so as always with politicians they want their cake as well as eating it.

The truth however is that even without the miners' ban on overtime and the power engineers' ban on standby duties, power stations would have had some difficulty in supplying enough energy to meet increasing demands. This is a problem of increasing consumption, which we are all encouraged towards by the advertisements with which we are bombarded.

As a government for the capitalist system - and all governments are that - the Tories have been a success. Under them, profits have reached record levels at the expense of the living standards of the work-

ing class. This attack has been on all fronts: housing (rents and mortgages), prices and wages. Under the capitalist system such attacks are part and parcel of the lot of the working class who must be kept in their place when the profit motive system runs into trouble.

We should not be surprised at the general attack that the Tories and the press are mounting against those who are at present in struggle. Nothing hurts and frightens the ruling class more than seeing workers taking direct action on the mounting scale we are now witnessing. Already the press and politicians are recalling the "ugly scenes" of last year's miners' and building workers' strikes.

The State of Emergency is just another weapon the ruling class has to deter fainthearted union leaders and to give parliament wide-ranging powers to defeat those in struggle. The laws on picketing are many and if applied can make a picket's job very difficult. The violence on the picket lines is usually

started by those who want to work. The determined lorry driver is not likely to be stopped by a handful of pickets but a mass picket has a different effect. What the Tories and management don't like is the success that mass- and flying-pickets have brought to those employing these methods. In other words, workers haven't played it by the rules. But these rules are made by the ruling class to keep us in place. This class will use every means at its disposal to safeguard its power. This includes the use of troops. The ideas of Brigadier Kitson are well known. But now in a letter to the Guardian Peter Fry, M.P. has written, "...can the police forces alone cope? Might there not be a need for enlisting the aid of the armed forces as an adjunct of the civil power, not only to perform the essential tasks otherwise done by those taking industrial action, but even perhaps to see that the law on picketing and the free passage

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the Martin Sostre case

SECONDBOOKS



SECONDBOOKS

The Courts of New York State continued their persecution of Martin Sostre today as the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court ruled to affirm his 1968 conviction on an admittedly phony sale of narcotics and assault of a police officer. The judges wrote no opinion to attempt to justify their ruling.

Out of nine points in a 200-page legal brief, the judges responded only to the 41 year 30 day sentence Sostre was serving, and ordered it reduced to 25-30 years "in the interest of justice." They also ordered the sentences served concurrently rather than consecutively. But since they let stand the 30 day contempt sentence -- Sostre was held in contempt for stating that he had "the Constitutional right to an unbiased judge" -- he will actually have to serve 30 years and 30 days, as contempt precludes parole. Sostre is 50 years old and has already served 6½ years in prison, and will be 75 years old when finally released -- if he lives that long. So to these callous and bigoted men 41 years for a 50 year old prisoner was excessive, while 30 years is "in the interest of justice!" Nelson Rockefeller must be very proud of his judges.

Sostre plans to seek Leave to Appeal to the Court of Appeals in Albany on legal points which include prejudicial pre-trial publicity, excessive bail of \$50,000., denial of a preliminary hearing, exclusion of blacks from the juries, unfairness of the trial judge and District Attorney, denial of his witnesses and illegal sentence of contempt. This appeal will take many months and may not be successful.

Federal Judge John T. Curtin now holds the key to Sostre's freedom as he has not yet ruled on a writ of habeas corpus stemming from the recantation of witness Arto Williams, who testified in May that he framed Sostre by planting drugs in his Afro-Asian Bookstore. We are asking that letters go to Judge Curtin, U. S. Courthouse, Buffalo 14202, urging that he drop all charges and set Sostre free. Time is important as Sostre is slowly being beaten to death by guards at Clinton Prison, where he has been in solitary for one year. The latest beating occurred October 1st and his health has been getting worse with every assault.

We are issuing an emergency appeal for funds to help appeal this outrageous denial of Martin Sostre's appeal and to continue our struggle for his freedom. Please send donations to the Martin Sostre Defense Committee, Box 839 Ellicott Station, Buffalo, New York 14205. Thank you.

In brief

Ford of Dagenham is offering £5 to employees who can recruit new members of staff.

In Chile twenty guerillas attacked installations in Temuco, 375 miles from the capital and once stronghold of M.I.R.

Alexandra Jodorowsky, director of El Topo, said in an interview with Derek Malcolm in The Guardian, "I am an anarchist who believes that all revolutions fail because they simply change one corrupt power for another. The poor and the deprived die with or without revolutions. The way is not through politics but through art and science. We have simply to change our consciousness."

Police raided a Bath wholesale newsagents and took away (among others) The Lady, Exchange and Mart, Nova, Tit-Bits, Woman and Amateur Photographer. Mr. Pearce, the owner, had previously asked the police for guidance as to which magazines were safe to stock but the Bath police superintendent could not tell him. Mr. Pearce is a member of Bath's Crime Prevention Panel.

Documents seized in Italian police raid upon neo-Fascist underground group allegedly prove links with two right-wingers charged with the Milan Bank bombing (with which Valpreda was charged) and with a "self-styled" (Guardian) anarchist charged with bombing at Milan police headquarters.

Detectives charged at the Old Bailey with conspiring to pervert the course of justice were acquitted. But three were found guilty of perjury. Mr. Justice Melford Stevenson told them, "You have betrayed your comrades in the Metropolitan police force, which enjoys the respect of the civilized world - what remains of it."

The charge of 'incitement to disaffection' against Hugh Clark of the Omega Centre, Glasgow has been dropped on a technicality. He was told he would be charged respecting distribution of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign's information leaflets to British Soldiers

Sancho Panza

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the parasitic artist

THE ARTIST who attempts to live by selling his work is by nature a parasite and he can never claim to be a free man, for his very existence is determined by those with money to idle away on the fashionable foibles of the day. Not only will they employ him as part of their paid entertainment but they will control how and what he creates. The artist, in his innocence, may explore new facets of his talent but the right to continue with that particular style will as always lie within the mercy of the buyer.

Salvator Rosa's paintings now are on public display within the Hayward Gallery and the voices of the audience at the Private View were almost uniform in their spoken rejection of Rosa as an artist. Good, solid, uninspired hack work from the brush of an artist who was born fifty years too late. Leonardo da Vinci died in 1519, and over a hundred years too late Salvator Rosa was churning out his mish-mash of religious and historical paintings for a market that no longer had the spiritual or historical need for them. It was the English 18th century that for a brief moment took Rosa to its romantic and rationalist bosom, for his landscapes have a false sense of brooding emptiness that appealed to a wealthy and secure society dabbling in science and philosophy. Rosa created his own image as the rebel artist, the man of genius who would not be dictated to and of his vanity he offered the world a figure of a man who believed himself to be poet, and actor, but always the rebel. He took his cue from the Dutch painters and refused to be commissioned but simply painted as the mood and the brush dictated, but in the end he stood in the market place to offer his minor genius to whoever would choose to buy it. It is the pathetic fallacy of all those whose services are in demand that they have a choice, yet it is no more than a bigger cell or a longer dog chain. The only man who is truly free is the criminal or the hermit, for each in his own fashion contracts out of his society and too many of us demand, in changing phrases, freedom for ourselves within the law. Shakespear was no more than a creature of his society yet produced a body of work of inspired genius that illuminates the tragic beast that is man into a creature of infinite sorrows and majestic glories and Rosa as the posing rebel merely churned out worthwhile hack work for the market place.

Royal Academy Schools

As one walks away from the Hayward one has a small and guilty feeling that one has judged the man too harshly but one climbs the stairway within the Royal Academy to an invited inspection of the 1973 work of the students of the Royal Academy Schools and having examined the walls of good but unimagina-

tive paintings and the excellent draftsmanship on display descends the stairs asking oneself why a society should bother to train these young people for a trade that the world has little use for. I find these exhibitions very sad for the majority of the work on display lacks talent and I know and the schools know that most of these young people are only killing time and living with the illusion that these short years are the beginning of their lives as working artists, when for most of them it is a brief butterfly existence and as in all these things only those with a vested interest in the bureaucratic running of the establishments, from the cleaner to the principle, will ever benefit from its function. I do not question the honesty, the goodness or the sincerity of all those involved, only the sacrifice of the young and talentless who fill space that the institutions may exist. But there is always the town for the Town and his monied frau, and what better way of wasting it than on the works of Jim Dine at Gimpel Fils at 30 Davis Street, W.1.

Jim Dine fluttered to fame within the Fraser Gallery before the clammy hand and arm of the Law shifted the owner's interest to a reviewing of a judge at the Old Bailey and in those days Jim lad offered the world of art the startling excitement of hanging an old suit on the gallery wall with a pair of old shoes placed on the gallery floor, and we in the fashion of the hour tip-toed around them seeking inner truths in an old suit hanging on a wall of a fashionable gallery. That was many years ago but Jim lad is back in the smoke with some very bad abstract paintings and a collection of used house-painter's brushes and mechanic's tools dangling from his canvases by lengths of slack thick wires. A joke was a joke, a gag was a gag and a gimmick was a gimmick, but the dealers and the art mob and Jim Dine must realise that this very minor gesture long ago exhausted itself. So back to the drawing board and the numbered squares, Jim.

Art Nouveau

Yet there is delight for the Town if not in the subject then

at least the setting. The Editions Graphiques Gallery lounges at a corner of Clifford Street, W.1 No. 3, and it specialises in Art Nouveau, Art Deco and its attendant horrors. It is a gallery grossly and fantastically overcrowded and it has the interior air of Berlin decadence of the nineteen twenties. To enter this gallery is to leave the Bond Street of high rise flats and high cost jewellery for a world in which the reproduction of the female nude was a matter of guilty pleasure wherein nothing was functional or utilitarian, but merely existed as a dead thing to carry crowns of coloured scabs of glass and coloured stones and everywhere the carved and twisting figures of nude women with their long unwound hair frozen into whiplashes and an absence of pubic hair to heighten the eroticism. It is a gallery that one always finds a pleasure in visiting and always in the hope that Victor Arwas the gallery owner will be there for here is the true sophisticate, worldly wise in the shadowed by-ways of his craft. A man of quiet humour, a cynic who loves the manikins upon his shelves and the drawings upon his walls. In the collapse of empires he will be there and we shall talk of the sick tastes of the society of the day and view the funeral furnishing that they called their living art. And at the Private Biew for the work of Alphonse Mucha we drank deep of the champagne that was offered and made our private reservations about Mucha as an artist.

This exhibition is no more than an offshoot of the major Art Nouveau held in London in 1963 and as Mucha was an illustrator it must follow that there will always be a wall to exhibit his work. It was a sickly continental art form given to flat surfaces over which a writing framework of vegetable forms filled every inch of the canvas. Mucha exists by virtue of a handful of brilliant poste posters but the awful vulgarity of the entrance to the Metropolitan Station, Place de l'Etoile in Paris and the ghastly interiors of the period have long ago been mercifully destroyed, and all we are left with is a good photographic record, those iron lilies on decaying slum railings and the worthwhile but ill-used talent of Alphonse Mucha. But there will always be another exhibition, and the champagne and the cynical wit and the mysterious knowledge of Victor Arwas in the odd pleasures and cultural tastes of the Town and his frau.

And for those who love a work of art as a thing of beauty in its own right there is Brooker's beautiful muted still life at

BAKUNIN AND NECHAEV

PART III
CONTINUED

What then is the role of a revolutionary organization? Nechaev's conception is false, preparing new "exploiters of the people," killing "all feeling of personal fairness," and "educating them in lying, suspicion, spying, and denunciation." The true revolutionary organization, says Bakunin, "does not foist upon the people any new regulations, orders, styles of life, but merely unleashes their will and gives wide scope to their self-determination and their economic and social organization, which must be created by themselves from below and not from above." The revolutionary organization must "make impossible after the popular victory the establishment of any state power over the people - even the most revolutionary, even your power - because any power, whatever it calls itself, would inevitably subject the people to old slavery in new form." "I loved you deeply and still love you," Bakunin writes, but you must repudiate your "false Jesuit system," your "system of deceit, which is increasingly becoming your sole system, your main weapon and means, and is fatal to the cause itself."

Such was Bakunin's plea to his wayward disciple. Yet his own rejection of "Nechaevism" was far from complete. For all his disillusionment, his attitude towards Nechaev remained ambivalent. Nechaev, in his eyes, remained a devoted revolutionary who acted while others merely talked, and whose energy, perseverance, audacity, and will-power still exerted an enormous appeal. "You are a passionate and dedicated man," writes Bakunin to Nechaev. "This is your strength, your valour, and your justification." If you alter your methods, he adds, "I would wish not only to remain allied with you, but to make this union even closer and firmer." Bakunin sent a similar message to Ogarev and his associates: "The main thing for the moment is to save our erring and confused friend. In spite of all, he remains a valuable man, and there are few valuable men in the world . . . We love him, we believe in him, we foresee that his future activity will be of immense benefit to the people. That is why we must divert him from his false and disastrous path."

Thus, for all his wounded pride, for all his disapproval of Nechaev's principles and tactics, so strong was Bakunin's affection for his "tiger cub" that he was unable to break decisively with him -- notwithstanding the lies and humiliations, the unbridled immorality of the Catechism, and even the murder of Ivanov. Then too, there remained much common ground between them. Their programmes, admitted Bakunin, had been "truly identical". It was only after Nechaev had begun to employ his devious methods against Bakunin himself that he expressed his revulsion against them.

Bakunin no less than Nechaev had a passion for conspiracies and secret organizations. For all his assaults on revolutionary dictatorship, he was himself a tireless advocate of a close-knit revolutionary association bound together by implicit obedience to a revolutionary leader. Bakunin's uncritical admirers are unconvincing when they maintain that his references to "iron discipline" or to an "invisible dictatorship" are isolated and uncharacteristic, either antedating the period when his anarchist theories were fully developed or being expressed while he was under Nechaev's pernicious influence. On the contrary, conspiracy was a central thread in his entire revolutionary career. Not for nothing did he praise Buonarroti as "the greatest conspirator of his age". Throughout his adult life, from the 1840s until the 1870s, Bakunin sought to create clandestine societies modelled on those in the West.

In 1845 he became a Freemason. And in 1848 he called for a secret organization of three to five

man groups which were "subject to a strict hierarchy and unconditional obedience to a central control". Nor did he abandon this goal in subsequent years. During the 1860s he founded a whole series of secret societies - the Florentine Brotherhood (1864), the International Brotherhood (1866), the International Alliance of Social Democracy (1868) - and elaborated rules governing their membership's behaviour. The organization was to act as "a sort of general staff, working invisibly on the masses" and remaining intact even after the revolution had been accomplished, in order to forestall the establishment of any "official dictatorship". It would itself exercise a "collective dictatorship", a dictatorship "without any badge, without title, without official right, and the more powerful because it lacks the appearance of power". Its members, declared Bakunin in language reminiscent of the Catechism, must submit to "strict discipline", breaches of which were to be considered a "crime" punishable by "expulsion combined with delivery to the vengeance of all the members". As late as 1872 he could still write: "Our goal is the creation of a powerful but always invisible organization, which must prepare the revolution and lead it."

The same position is taken in his letter to Nechaev. The popular revolution, he repeats, must be "invisibly led, not by an official dictatorship, but by a nameless and collective one, composed of those in favour of total people's liberation from all oppression, firmly united in a secret society and always and everywhere acting in support of a common aim and in accordance with a common programme." He calls the revolutionary organization "the staff of the people's army" and adds, again in the language of the Catechism, that it must be composed of persons "who are passionately and undeviatingly devoted, who have, as far as possible, renounced all personal interests and have renounced once and for all, for life or for death itself, all that attracts people, all material comforts and delights, all satisfaction of ambition, status, and fame . . . They must be totally and wholly absorbed by one passion, the people's liberation."

The organization, moreover, must have an executive committee and require strict discipline of its members. Paradoxically, it must be a morally pure vanguard yet in certain cases - here again we have the language of the Catechism - engage in lying and deception, particularly against rival revolutionary groups: "Societies whose aims are near to ours must be forced to merge with our Society or, at least, must be subordinated to it without their knowledge. . . . All this cannot be achieved only by propagating the truth; cunning, diplomacy, deceit are necessary. Jesuit methods or even entanglements can be used for this. . . . Thus this simple law must be the basis of our activity: truth, honesty, mutual trust between all Brothers and towards any man who is capable of becoming a Brother--lies, cunning, entanglement, and, if necessary, violence towards enemies." Bakunin's methods, then, are not so far removed from Nechaev's. The chief difference, perhaps, is that Nechaev actually put them into practice - including blackmail and murder, directed against friends and enemies alike - while Bakunin limited himself to mere words or to such relatively harmless mystifications as the worldwide revolutionary alliance in whose name he pretended to speak.



SERGEI GENNADIEVICH NECHAEV

(1847 - 1882)

suffering. At that time his external behaviour was unsavoury enough, but his inner self had not been soiled. It was his authoritarianism and his unbridled wilfulness which, very regrettably and through his ignorance together with his Machiavellianism and Jesuitical methods, finally plunged him irretrievably into the mire . . . However, an inner voice tells me that Nechaev, who is lost forever and certainly knows that he is lost, will now call forth from the depths of his being, warped and soiled but far from being base or common, all his primitive energy and courage. He will perish like a hero and this time he will betray nothing and no one. Such is my belief. We shall see if I am right."

The rest of Nechaev's story can be briefly told. When tried in Moscow in January 1873, he bore himself with unbending defiance. "I refuse to be a slave of your tyrannical government," he declared. "I do not recognize the Emperor and the laws of this country." He would not answer any questions and was finally dragged from the dock shouting "Down with despotism!" After being sentenced to twenty years at hard labour, he declared himself "a son of the people" and invoked Razin and Pugachev "who strung up the nobles as in France they sent them to the guillotine". At the ceremony of "civil execution" following his trial he shouted "Down with the tsar! Long live freedom! Long live the Russian people!"

The last ten years of Nechaev's life were spent in solitary confinement in the Peter and Paul fortress, from which he had falsely claimed to have escaped in 1869. His behaviour in prison, as Max Nomad has said, was "one of the great episodes of revolutionary history". When General Potapov of the secret police visited his cell and offered him leniency if he would serve as a spy, Nechaev struck him across the face, drawing blood. For the next two years his hands and feet remained in chains until the flesh began to rot.

Yet Nechaev's spirit was unbroken. Indeed, even in prison he was able to exert his charismatic fascination over others, winning over his own guards, who began to call him their "eagle". He got them to read the illegal journal of the People's Will and even taught them how to write letters in code. With their help, in fact, he was able to communicate with his fellow prisoners and eventually with the outside world, sending letters to the central committee of The People's Will on the eve of their assassination of Alexander II. Vera Figner tells in her memoirs of their excitement when they learned that Nechaev was still alive and in the nearby Peter and Paul fortress rather than in Siberia to which he had been condemned. Their plans to free him were deferred, however, in order to concentrate their energies against the tsar. After the assassination, The People's Will was suppressed and Nechaev's relationship with his guards was discovered owing to the treachery of a fellow inmate. As a result, more than sixty prison employees were arrested and tried, while Nechaev himself was subjected to a murderous regimen which before long broke down his health. He died of consumption and scurvy on November 21, 1882, at the age of 35, perishing "like a hero" as Bakunin predicted.

Paul Avrich

Next week Paul Avrich draws his conclusions.

PART IV

AFTER THEIR falling out in the summer of 1870, Bakunin and Nechaev never saw each other again. Nechaev went to London, where he published a new journal called *Obschchina* (The Commune), in which he demanded from Bakunin and Ogarev the remainder of the Bakhmetiev fund. After visiting Paris on the eve of the Commune, he returned to London, then went again to Switzerland, where he eked out a precarious existence by his old trade of sign painting, and where he was sheltered for a time by Italian disciples of Mazzini. The tsarist government, however, was determined to get him, spending more money and effort on his pursuit than on that of any other nineteenth-century revolutionary. Bakunin sent Nechaev a warning that the authorities were on his trail, but Nechaev ignored it, convinced that his old mentor was merely "trying to draw me away from Zürich". Finally, on August 14, 1872, Nechaev was betrayed to the Swiss police by Adolf Stempkowski, a former Polish revolutionary who had become a Russian spy. Soon afterwards he was extradited to Russia as a common murderer, in spite of vigorous protests by his fellow expatriates (Bakunin among them) that he was in fact a political refugee.

On November 2, 1872, Bakunin expressed his sympathy for Nechaev in a remarkable letter to Ogarev, which deserves to be quoted at length:

"I pity him deeply. No one ever did me, and intentionally, as much harm as he did, but I pity him all the same. He was a man of rare energy, and when we met there burned in him a very ardent and a very pure flame for our poor, oppressed people; our historical and current national misery caused him real

THE LUMP

CONTROVERSY

Dear Comrades,

An indication of the declining standards of anarchist criticism was observed (FREEDOM 3.10.73) when the editors endorsed the criticism of an article before having read the offending publication. I am referring to the criticised Solidarity-Swansea article on 'The Lump' (which I have enclosed).

I wrote the original article in order to initiate discussion amongst libertarians, about the phenomena of 'the Lump'. Willie Allin's reply is a contribution to this discussion. Unlike the editors of FREEDOM he took the trouble to obtain, and read, the article before stating his position.

I believe that libertarians should examine the emergence of the Lump for several reasons. One reason being that out of approximately 1 million operatives, some 80% of the 'wet trades' are now working the Lump, and that in October 1972 alone, no less than 353,000 tax exemption certificates were handed out to operatives in the trade. That is quite a significant "bloody-minded fly by nights". Incidentally, the above phrase, quoted by W. Allin, was first coined, to my knowledge, by the Tory MP Elaine Kellet-Bowman, when she recently warned the Commons against "those fly by nights who owe no loyalty to anyone and descend on a site like a horde of locusts, begin a job, and if more money is offered elsewhere, they flit overnight, leaving the main contractor with a half finished job and the prospect of heavy penalties for late completion." If nothing else is clear one should be suspicious when anarchists and Tories have something in common!

But let us consider Allin's reply: he says that lump-workers "undercut their fellow workers" and then get a "huge wage by rushing and skimping simple operations". This, he says, can't be done by "stable workers" who "complete harder tasks at lower prices". (One wonders how lump workers can undercut them). And should these "stable workers" ask for more money, says Allin, "the management points to the higher wages paid to the lumpers". So lumpers presumably undercut to get higher wages! But on a more serious note, if what he is saying is that "stable workers" are shit upon because they are stable, then why should libertarians--in a capitalist society--be telling workers to be stable?

If lump workers grab the money and clear off before finishing

the job I can understand Tory MPs complaining: but why should anarchists complain? Getting the work completed on time, avoiding the penalty clauses, is not the operatives' responsibility in a capitalist society; it is the contractor's responsibility. That is how he 'justifies' his profits.

The same argument applies against Allin's criticism of the shoddy work standards of 'lump' craftsmen. If we were living in an anarchist society I could understand his concern over standards, but we are not living in such a society. In this society workers must sell their labour power; that is all. They have no further jurisdiction over the product. Responsibility for quality lies with the bosses and the clerks of the works. If a finished house is shoddy it cannot be the tradesman's fault, but the contractor's. When shoddy houses are given certificates it is because someone with the power to refuse them has been bribed. Bribery and graft have been around a lot longer than the Lump, yet we don't see any reference to that in W. Allin's reply. Why is it that time and time again the left aspire to running capitalism better than the capitalists themselves?

Allin says that "management have taken advantage of the Lump to break down job organisation". By "job-organisation" he means trade union organisation. He might remember that the rabid increase in labour-only subcontracting took place after the Barbican struggle, where the Trade Union bureaucrats did everything possible to break down site organisation. It is clear to every worker in the building trade that a distinction exists between site organisation and trade union organisation. Nowhere in my article did I endorse anything detrimental to site organisation. In fact the article was about the need for rank and file organisation in order to replace the shoddy and corrupt forms of organisation offered by trade union officialdom.

Why is it so important to W. Allin that rank and file activity must be within the unions? His own answer is because "in the 1972 strike the rank and file forced UCATT to take a much harder line than the executive wished". But why does a rank & file movement have to be concerned with pushing the executive this way or that? Why can't a rank and file movement dispense with the executive and formulate

its own demands? This is what I was arguing for in my original article.

This touches on the essence of W. Allin's article: the lump has clobbered the unions. But it is up to him to prove that there is something intrinsically better in allowing one's exploitation to be conducted as a union member than in any other way, especially when circumstances are favourable to getting a better deal without the unions (remember lump workers are not subject to phase 1, 2, 3 or 4). Given that in a capitalist society a worker must sell his labour power, why is it that the trade union way is more respectable to anarchists, Trotskyists and Stalinists alike? Can it be that they all see the unions as a means through which they can exert their own dominance over the working class?

Allin says that "there is an obvious tendency for UCATT to become an industrial union", and for this reason it is better equipped to defend its members. The truth is that UCATT is dying. But again the point of my argument has been missed. It's not a matter of this union or that; but whether we are capable of organising without them. The success of lump workers in pushing up rates during the squeeze, suggests that we can. But we are really up against a mental block common to many anarchists and Stalinists alike; namely the inability to conceive of workers deciding for themselves exactly how they will sell their labour. In any case what's so special about industrial unions? If he can explain how the US Teamsters union constitutes the Libertarian ideal I might be convinced. Nowhere in recent history are there signs that the germ of a free society is contained in the Industrial Unions: their record is as shabby as the rest.

It is a fact that workers are getting a better deal by cutting out the union middlemen. Very few workers are willing to work for TU rates and conditions. But even if the Lump is intrinsically evil - which has yet to be proved - how are you going to persuade half a million operatives to accept a lower standard of living merely to allow their labour time to be sold by trade union brokers?

Yours fraternally,
David Lamb
(Solidarity)

editorial reply by Peter Turner

Dave Lamb has sent us a copy of his article "The Lump" published in Solidarity - Swansea. We print above a letter expressing his criticism because we reprinted an article from the Industrial Network Bulletin by Willie Allin which criticised this article.

While we would mainly agree with the points put forward by Willie Allin the editors do not necessarily endorse all views which other writers express in FREEDOM. The very fact that reprinting the article has started up a correspondence which could clear up some misunderstandings about the use of the Lump has made the reprint worthwhile. While we would agree with the member of UCATT whose letter appeared in No. 45 FREEDOM that his union is becoming a nightmare, it does not seem to be irresponsible of us to reprint Willie Allin's article without telling readers where to get it.

Dave Lamb's equation of anarchists and Tories because they have happened to use the same expression of "fly by nights" is slanderous and is the sort of thing one expects more from the "traditional left" than from "libertarians".

As a building worker myself, a member of UCATT and a convenor steward I know this expression was not "first coined" by a Tory MP but has been used for years by workers in the industry to describe the "lump" merchants. Dave Lamb should really know this and not use this cheap jibe to attack anarchists.

Not all lump workers get above the union rates of pay. However in my experience most do take home more than many trade unionists. Even this high wage can at times be misleading since it can be made up by working all the hours going without overtime rates. It is also my experience that high wages the lump worker gets is accompanied by skimping and poor quality work.

We should also not fall for the shoddy work trap, since as a local authority worker I have had to put right the "lumper's" bad workmanship. This shoddy work results in a lower standard of housing for working class families. And I see one of my tasks as a steward to be that of ridding the Greater London Council of all "lump" firms they presently contract out to. Despite many bad aspects of the G.L.C. it would be better if all work was done directly by the Council. As it is, while workers employed direct struggle to earn a bonus "lump" firms reap high profits from a public authority when their own workers could enjoy

this profit in higher wages. Stronger union organisation, by which I mean rank and file at site level, could win us such a position.

"Bribery and graft" have certainly been around much longer than the "lump" but things are getting worse now. It is not a case of the "left", and certainly not anarchists, "running capitalism better than the capitalists themselves". We know that shoddy houses get certificates but that is no reason why we should accept it or become a part of it. As revolutionaries we should try and create something better rather than fall in line with the shoddy standards of capitalism.

The increase in labour-only sub-contractor work did not happen after the Barbican struggle of 1967. It was going long before this.

Lump workers' earnings might have risen during the squeeze but it was not the lumpers who did it. Simply that more and more employers have used lump firms as it cuts out most of their administration costs. With the boom competition has been keen and main contractors have given these firms a good price, a proportion of which has been given back to the men themselves. The reason for the lump is that it suits the big contractor. With such heavy overheads the Taylor Woodrows, Wimpys, etc. can afford to pay a lump firm a good price for a contract. But Dave Lamb romanticises the "lump" as roaming mavericks. Lump gangs just don't negotiate on their own behalf (if they have done so it is the exception to the rule) as Dave Lamb writes in his Solidarity-Swansea article. Despite what he says about safety they are more likely to cut corners and be involved in accidents than workers employed direct. I must admit that only by organising at site level can reasonable safety precautions be enforced.

I agree with Dave Lamb's remarks about UCATT on being an industrial union. This fact by itself does not make it any better. In fact my experience is that since the amalgamation things are worse than when I was just a member of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers.

I'm sure Dave Lamb knows site organisation is built up without and despite the union. Workers are capable of organising without the union, but the union does provide a framework which can be used to bring support and solidarity. Site organisation goes beyond providing TU rates and conditions. High rates of pay and good conditions can be

won by effective site organisation. "Lumpers" in my experience are not interested in any form of site organisation and look upon themselves as their own boss who are out for a fast buck. They will put up all sorts of arguments why they need not support other workers when it comes to strike action.

I don't blame the "lumper" as this is just another form of exploitation, but which might give certain pay advantages but little protection so far as job security and safety are concerned. Our struggle is not just to get the lumpers to join the union, this is in fact of minor importance, but to get them to play their part in site organisation employed directly. Site organisation has and can achieve this, giving the "lumper" both higher rates of pay and certainly better conditions and safeguards.

INDUSTRIAL NETWORK

Dear Comrades,

May I ask a little space for some clarification!

The 'Industrial Network Bulletin' is primarily aimed toward linking up Libertarian workers engaged in the common struggle.

In the 'Bulletin' as well as a contact list we present a forum -- letters or short articles geared to our work situation.

Yours in solidarity,

Willie Allin
(see Contact Column)

ART REVIEW...cont'd from Page 3

Tooth's gallery, Nicolas De Stael's magnificent "Poires sur fond bleu" with its heroic slabs of glorious flat colours on display at the Lefevre, Trevor Bell's charming abstracts and Gareth Jones' eye-holding 'Light Drawings' at the White-chapel gallery. Colnaghi's offers the English art of watercolours at its moments of supreme perfection. But for the Town, his frau and myself it is Howard Selina's abstracts in Situations in Horseshoe Yard W1, for any artist who literally adds handfuls of the earth on which he stands into his paint deserves the Town's attention if for no other reason than the quizzical raising of an eyebrow, but in the end it is the champagne and the dark conversation at the Editions Graphiques that must call.

Arthur Moyses.

of essential goods is enforced."

Peter Fry also adds that "When the time does come we must be quite clear that anarchy and extra-parliamentary rule must be defeated."

What really worries all of those who have a stake in maintaining the existing system is that workers should break the law on a mass scale and organise themselves independently to do this. It is the maintenance of authority that the ruling class and their supporters want, whether it is done by troops, the police, or the trade union leaders.

It is authority which we as anarchists want to break down and destroy. Decisions on strike action and the running of those strikes have to be in the hands of the rank and file. Those who support the rule of law justify it by saying that these laws are enacted by a democratically elected parliament. But governments are often elected by minorities and in any case most of the laws they enact during their periods of office never appeared on their election manifestos. Laws however are enacted and enforced to ensure the continual rule of capital and all the exploitation and misery that accompanies the profit motive system. The laws that give support to that system are there to give those in authority an advantage over those confronting them. But mass action on the part of the working class can overthrow the rule of capital. If enough people consciously desire a free society without government, the police, armed forces and the state, then all the might which these coercive

demic of over production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence: industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce."

This is the classic argument of Marx, allied as it is to what is described as 'the theory of increasing misery' - this being the apocalyptic Marxian idea that when the crises of capitalism reach an unbearable pitch the workers will rise and "the integument bursts asunder" etc. This, like much of Marxism, is sheer wishful thinking. It cannot be denied that Marx did a good job in his analysis of the contradictions of capitalism despite an obscurity in language which makes Das Kapital one of the most discussed and least read books in the world.

Since his time much has happened. The whole field of psychology has opened up, giving more valid explanations of human conduct, which Marx never knew of. Technology has advanced

organisations have will be of no avail when confronted by the working class. That confrontation covers work, rents, prices, and takes place directly on the picket line and in the streets. This is the battleground where the confrontation will take place and not in parliament or around negotiation tables. Now is the time to prepare for it.

P. T.

apace, making quantitative changes which have altered the whole quality of life. The whole economic system has been given another dimension by credit-trading and mortgages - the worker's chains are now gilt-edged.

The Marxist concept of capitalism's inability to dispose of its goods has been kept at bay by such devices as the Keynesian theory of 'pump priming' (which inspired Roosevelt's 'New Deal'). Heath's touching faith in Concorde, road-building plans, Maplin and the Channel Tunnel are all pump-priming devices. American ventures into space technology have the same impulse; freed as they are from the odium of the Vietnam war which, like all wars, has the same economic effect. The capitalist system, whilst it has increased its productive capabilities has discovered the virtues of built-in obsolescence which will put off the evil day of non-consumption indefinitely.

The conventional methods of capitalism, it is true, will no longer work to extract profits, but the power it represents has increased its hold. The function of capitalism is the exercise of power over people by economic means, often, as in this country, by collusion with the State and, in totalitarian countries, by fusion with the State. Whatever the form the function is the same.

The crisis is what happens to the individual caught up in the inflationary spiral, or the rat-race, or the rent-rise, or the financial carve-up, or the police frame-up, or the industrial struggle, or the war or the revolutionary act. Capitalism has no crisis, it's doing very nicely thank you suckers!

Jack Robinson

Postgraduate history student, attempting research into anarchist activities in Catalonia 1936-1937 would appreciate information, especially on documents available for consultation, and contacts with eyewitnesses or veterans of leftwing parties/groups, particularly veterans of the CNT, FAI or FIJL. Paul Sharkey, c/o 'Moyle', Grange Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin.

Wanted to buy: ANARCHY (first series 1-15, 18, 20-28, 31-34, 36-40, 43, 47, 51, 56, 60-62, 66, 69-71, 80-82, 89, 90, 92, 94-99, 102, 105. David Barnett, 11 Claremont Road, London, N. 6.

Frank and Jean Roberts have pleasure in announcing the arrival of a baby boy, Dylan, on Monday 12th Nov.

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STOKE NEWINGTON FIVE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE is at 54 Harcombe Road, London, N. 16.

BELFAST TEN DEFENCE COMMITTEE 88 Roslyn Road, London, N. 15.

MARTIN SOSTRE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, P.O. Box 839, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, New York 14205

GIOVANNI MARINI Defence Committee write to Antonio Centurini, Casella Postale 163, Salerno, Italy.

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AFB CONFERENCE will be held at Leicester this Saturday (24th) and Sunday (25th) 10 a.m. start both days at the Percy Gee building Leicester University.

CORBY ANARCHISTS. Discussion meeting first Friday in every month at 7 Cresswell Walk at 7.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL ASA contact May Stone, C.32 Summerfield, Tower Hill, Kirkby, near Liverpool.

LONDON ASA for details of meetings phone 226-0817. Black & Red Outlook by post 5p + 4p from 3 Grange House, Highbury Grange, London, N. 5.

MANCHESTER SYNDICALIST GROUP (SWF) those interested please contact the secretary, 559 Didsbury Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire,

INDUSTRIAL NETWORK contact Willie Allin, c/o 9 Wood Road, Manchester 16.

IRISH LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST Federation - for information write New Earth, 112 Thomas Street, Dublin 8

SOME LONDON ANARCHISTS meet socially every Sunday 7.30 p.m. at Finch's, The One Tun, Goodge Street, W. 1. (Don't ask at bar.)