

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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Inside: TORNESS; THE FINAL SOLUTION; RADIOS LIBRES IN SPAIN; LETTERS.

While western governments flap around stirring up apocalyptic scares about the final outcome of events in Iran, the Tehran government continues its attempts to consolidate its power. Like the establishment of any Glorious Revolution it is taking full advantage of its control of the media, but the people at the sharp end aren't that gullible. There's little point in detailed analysis of international "diplomacy", the various interests are obvious enough. The internal situation is more interesting.

The mood in Tehran, if such a generalisation has any meaning, is of tiredness and increasing irritation. The people made a revolution, by strikes, sabotage and massed protest in the face of one of the greatest concentrations of military power in the world. They had no clear idea of what they wanted, beyond vague ideas of freedom and equality. Because of their cultural traditions, for many these aspirations were expressed in Islamic terms. And they made the same tragic mistake that so many other people have made so many times before. They channelled their hopes through leaders. The symbol of it all became the severe, unbending image of Khomeini. Now they have the full benefit of that severity and rigidity.

The economy is generally in a mess. There are widespread shortages of even essentials like bread. The government keeps saying that they are going to do something about it and regulate the price but it seems to make little difference. Consumer goods are in increasingly short supply and prices are rising fast. Unemployment is already high, and rising. People are afraid to take their holidays, in case the job has disappeared when they get back. Many supplement their income by small scale trading, cigarettes, newspapers, posters, gadgets, anything small, and saleable, hawked from car to car at traffic lights or from makeshift stalls at the roadside. (The government is moving to ban these in response to pressure from 'legitimate' shopkeepers). The basis of economic activity is still oil, but production of this is down. Much of the extraction mach-



MAYDAY POSTER from TEHRAN LIBERATION GROUP
"THE FREEING OF THE WORKERS IS THE TASK....."

inery is virtually unusable after its long idleness and the rest is only kept going by cannibalism.

The social atmosphere is also depressing. Music is banned from the radio, the TV is full of boring propaganda and speeches. Cabaret performances are banned ('corrupt on earth' is the blanket phrase). Alcohol is prohibited, but fairly easy to find. Some

of the home-brewed vodka is pretty fearsome, but there's even smuggled whisky, at a price. There is even 'Islamic Beer'. (without alcohol, of course, awful stuff) Opium addiction is becoming a major problem. All the self-appointed moralists are having a field day.

The position of women is deteriorating. Apologists for the new sys-

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tem make great play with a couple of supposed statements by the Prophet giving them equal or superior status to men. These are contrasted with dreadful comments by sexist christians, hindus or whatever, to demonstrate the superiority of Islam. It is true that many of the worst social customs were added later, veils and so on. But it is precisely this later version of Islam that these people are pushing. Many women are convinced that the revolution is giving them freedom. Members of the Mojahedin scuttle about in their chadoors like vengeful Daleks, waving their machine guns and chanting anti-imperialist slogans. Meanwhile, the Imam draws up lists of rules about when they are unclean. And the laws are steadily altered to discriminate against them in divorce, in property etc. It is widely accepted that they will soon not be allowed to hold jobs.

The official presentation is all about the Glorious Islamic Revolution and how so many countries support it, somewhat enviously, apparently. Meanwhile the nasty imperialists get on with their plotting. Most of the reported speeches are from members of the government, the Imam (never so trivial as 'ayatollah') mostly maintains a gnomic silence, but there's always the Collected Wisdom to make long quotations from. Every now and again Bani Sadr or whoever is summoned to the Presence and a Pronouncement is made. All this is reported at length. The rest of the TV seems to be long programmes about conditions in the villages with interviews with dedicated Islamic relief workers. Oddly enough, on the night of the anniversary of the revolution (April 2) they showed "Fahrenheit 451". I've still not worked out what they intended by that. More conventionally, the next day had "The Ten Commandments". Everybody knew the plot, after all we've all read the book, and were rooting for good, ole Moses. Then, half an hour later, moaning about Khomeini...

In the actual power stakes, there are a number of groups manouvering. At the moment its shared between the mosque and secular politicians. They don't really get on but aren't prepared to openly split at the moment. Official policy is an Islamicised mixed economy. What will happen when Khomeini dies is uncertain. There are a number of other ayatollahs hovering around, ready to receive the mantle. Montesori is official successor but Beheshti, secretary of the Revolutionary Council, is very powerful. He has control of the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards). Actually, a lot of eighteen year olds with mach-

ine guns). A vicious bastard, he is one of the main candidates as CIA plant, according to accepted rumour. Another is Yazdi, who has recently resurfaced and taken to making statements. Habbibi, who came third in the presidential election, was named as such a couple of years ago. Bani Sadr is out in front of all this. He is probably the craftiest of the lot. He cultivates a man of the people image, never wears a tie.

The opposition, except for the ethnic minorities, has grown out of the old underground groups. The most influential is the Mojahedin, the "Islamic Marxists". Their actual signed up membership is uncertain, but they are estimated to have about half a million supporters overall. (All these opposition groups are stronger in Tehran and in the north, by the Caspian. The south is phalangist, particularly in Esfahan.) Their leader, Rajavi, stood in the presidential election and did as well as any other loser (after all there weren't many votes to go round with Bani Sadr's convincing win!). They are semi respectable, playing up the 'islamic' and are therefore reluctant to cross the establishment on any thing big. They certainly will not criticize Khomeini. A bit more vocal are the Fedayin, who are definitely not respectable. One of the governments priorities is to get them disarmed. They are prepared to set up street exhibitions, showing repression in Kurdistan. However, they are also wary of a showdown. They are playing down the militant stance in order not to provoke a clamp down and not to frighten people.

In contrast, Tudeh, the 'straight' communist party is playing it up, to try to get some attention at all. At the moment, they are still supporting the Imam, and receive utter contempt in return. They are about to ditch their General Secretary, so that they can blame him for all the hypocrisy, 'U' turns and inaction of the last forty years. There are rumours of some sort of alliance between these groups, or at least some sections of them. I can't see it myself. There is also a ragbag of assorted marxist, leninist and maoist (pro-Albania) grouplets. (oh, that familiar range of Lenin's pamphlets, now street displayed in yet another language). Left groups a strong presence in the universities. There are periodic outbreaks of fighting with religionists. This is currently being used as an excuse to close the universities.

And, of course, there are a few anarchists. Operating quietly.

However, the strongest, and most hopeful, opposition to the regime comes from the regions, and the most

determined of these is Kurdistan. The fighting isn't on the scale that it was last year. There's steady skirmishing and sniping. Its not reported much in the media. That is obsessed with jingoism about America. And Iraq. According to the official build up there's about to be a full scale war. Large numbers of people of Irani descent have been dumped near the border and told to get out. There's been a bit more than usual sniping. Hardly enough to rate the hysteria. However it does mean a large build up of troops and Pasdaran in the east. Conveniently close to Kurdistan.

There are two main areas in Iranian Kurdistan. The north, around Mahabad, is dominated by the Kurdish Democratic Party and religious leaders like Hosseini. But the south, around Sanandaj, is another thing. This is a large town, population about 250,000. The people have been organising around collectives. Each district has a council. This is in contrast to, say, Tehran, where local organisation, even of the imposed 'local government' type is conspicuously missing, the roads are falling apart. In Sanandaj much of the emphasis is, necessarily, military. There are armed collective militias, known as 'benkehs'. The people don't know anything of the Grand Theory of Collectives, they recognise the similarities immediately when they are introduced to it. The system isn't total, the fighting takes so much attention. It doesn't extend much into the surrounding countryside. Food supplies are obtained on the open market and are subject to government harrassment.

The Tehran government recognises that local autonomy of this type must be crushed, if they are to hold their power. They are prepared to use outright repression to do it. They have their own Judge Jeffries figure, in Khalkhal, a name now used to frighten children. But, it is probably in Kurdistan that the future for freedom in Iran lies. If it is crushed, and the preparations are being made, then there is little chance for the weaker progressives. The government seems to have completely ruled out the possibility of a Federation. But, while the Kurds (and the Baluchi and all the rest) keep fighting, then the Iranian Revolution is not over.

Ali

SUBSCRIBE

not so brief

The Kelly family, well organised and living in the constituency of one of our honourable ex-PM's, managed to push the level of inquiry one step further, but ended up with the usual unsatisfactory result. The question of why Jimmy Kelly died in police custody is still unanswered. Another case just ended is that of James McGeown who died in custody in November 1978. Even two police constables giving evidence against other policemen didn't convince anyone, he apparently died after his liver had been ruptured by a fall on a plastic bucket. (Well, some jump out of windows).

Let's be curious and ask what happened to the other 250 people who have died in police custody over the past ten years, why such happenings do not usually find their way into our media service, why certain documents and testimonies are often withheld ('In the public interest'), and why there aren't public inquiries as a matter of course. Maybe they fear such verdicts as 'Justifiable Homicide' (in the Liddle Towers case) will be taken to their logical conclusion, but apparently they believe the whole thing is a left-wing plot to discredit the force.

This is not to say that police-people consciously go out onto the streets with the intention of beating someone to death, but that if you organise a gang of uniformed thugs to defend your State, and send them marauding the streets with orders to pick up those deemed anti-social by the State, and then use the legal and bureaucratic machinery of that State to defend their every over-reaction, we'll have more policepeople than ever getting away with murder (literally).

Not content however with the windowdressing limitations on their power, our 'force' wants

more laws introduced to legalise their actions at demonstrations, and the same powers to deal with 'international terrorists' in Britain as they have to deal with the IRA under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Though Labour MP's believe that this will not be granted this government remains capable of anything.

Meanwhile 5,000 of these brave men and women managed to spend £500,000 shepherding the NF through the streets of London.

If and when it becomes necessary to fight the fascists on the streets I would like to think I'd be there. But when will people realise that counter-marches of the sort organised today will do no harm to them but rather give them an obvious enemy to latch onto and rally against, free publicity, and lead to increased powers for the police. All this just so that trendy lefties can play at being glorious revolutionary martyrs. How about fly-posting and leafleting the areas they plan to march through, exposing the NF's ignorant, ill-argued, and racist views (not very difficult) and organising a counter-event where anti-fascists can meet talk and enjoy something other than shouting slogans over the heads of massed police and trying to spot themselves on the telly?

A short note on mercenaries, which may be officially frowned upon but are in fact condoned, even paid for. KMS are a 'bodyguards for hire' company, (operating from Jersey, whose laws provide a good smokescreen) all of whom are recruited from the 22nd regiment SAS. They 'protect' the British High Commission in Kampala, and many of their 'executive protectors' served in Oman helping the Sultan put down a left-wing rebellion. They reject the mercenary label (do they do it for free?) but are

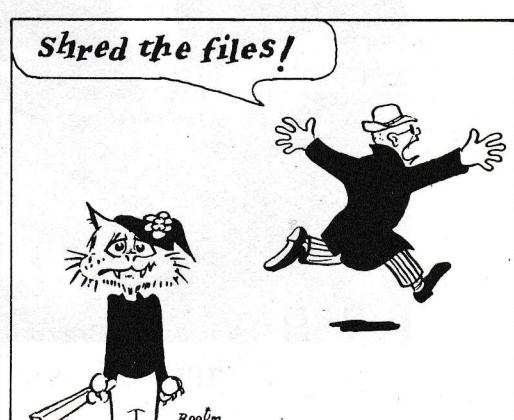
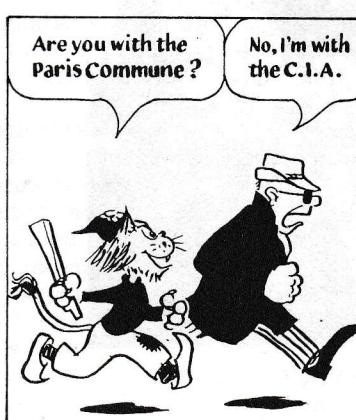
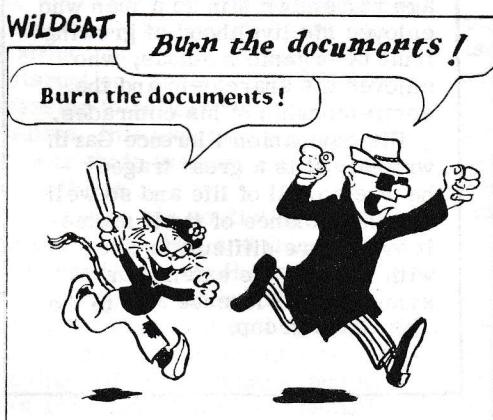
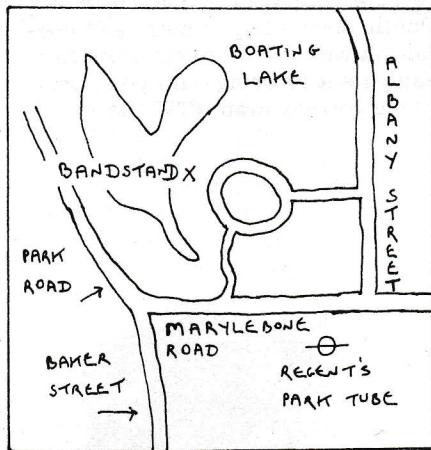
proud of their anti-putsch capability.

America's hypocrisy over 'boat-people' has come back to media attention with 1,000 refugees landing in Florida after fleeing the repressive autocratic regime of Duvalier in Haiti. There have been 12,000 in the past eight years. Unlike the 190,000 Indo-Chinese, 20,000 Russian Jews and 11,000 Cubans they are to be sent back. Washington is trying to block a report on these peoples conditions and grievances, must be something to do with the fact that the USA backs the regime fully for reasons of 'geopolitical strategy'.

Finally, it has been now been shown that not only does feminism give you a deep voice, a hairy chest, and homosexual tendencies, but also turns you into an alcoholic. Mr Bill Saunders director of the Alcoholics studies centre in Paisley said "The spiralling rate of alcoholism among women would appear to be the ransom or backlash of emancipation".

Picnic

ANARCHIST PICNIC
2 PM MAY 1ST REGENTS PARK
AT THE BANDSTAND;



TORNESS OCCUPATION

KEEPING IT GREEN FROM MAY
3rd ONWARDS

Following the Government's go-ahead to build an advanced gas-cooled reactor (AGR) at Torness in South East Scotland, the 'Torness Public Parks Department' is urging all those opposing the construction of the nuclear reactor to converge on Torness and occupy the site from May 3rd onwards.

Unlike the tradition of the past two years, this occupation will not be a festival, and has but one aim; that of hindering construction by whatever non-violent means possible. Neither will it be a picnic - there is a field for camping just south of the reactor site, but everyone is expected to bring their own shelter, warm clothing, food and water. The emphasis is on self-sufficiency and autonomy for organized groups or individuals alike. An information package has been prepared containing maps of the reactor site, timetables for the Dunbar district (for trains, buses and tides, should anyone be arriving by boat!), information on Scottish law from SCCL, press release prepared by the Torness Public Parks Department and useful information on basic survival equipment to bring with you (Ordnance Survey map NT77, stout

gloves, camping knives, spanners, boltcutters etcetera). The information pack is available from Fred Smith, 13 Brailsford Road, London SW2 for the price of a 12p stamp (to cover printing costs) and a SAE. If you would like a larger A3 map send a large SAE and a 15p stamp.

At their last meeting in March, the Torness Alliance of anti-nuclear groups failed to reach a consensus about the proposed direct action. In particular, SCRAM and the local anti-nuclear group are doubtful about the appropriateness of direct action at this time. One member said that SCRAM did not want to limit the activities of other groups, but felt strongly that sabotage would have an insignificant effect towards stopping construction and that other actions that the general public could identify with would be better - such as that carried out by a group from Severnside last October. (They are due to appear in Haddington Sheriff Court on May 14th charged with breach of the peace, following the erection of a scaffolding tower chained to the main gate which delayed work on the site for 24 hours. Their defence will be based on the argument that nuclear power stations are likely to cause a breach of the peace.) Another member of SCRAM suggested that the May occupation was merely an excuse for a punch-up with the police! Torness Public

Parks Department has strongly denied this, stressing that the occupation is to be non-violent (machines excluded, to those who think machines are animate objects), and that all due care must be given to avoid trampling the local farmers' barley fields or disturbing the local sheep.

Remember, keep Torness green!

Obituary; Lino Molin

We recently learned of the sudden death of an old and valued comrade. Lino Molin of Los Gatos was struck by a car while crossing the street near his home on 14th February, and died almost instantly. Lino was one of the many Italian immigrants who formed a significant part of anarchism in the USA in the twenties and thirties, when there was a great deal of political activity. For many years the Italian comrades maintained their own excellent Italian language propaganda paper 'L'Adunata dei Refrattari', New York, and they have always given generous support to the anarchist press in other countries. Lino was one of the group in California whose efforts in fund raising for that purpose figure recurrently in our own Deficit Fund, as well as showing his personal concern for Freedom Press.

As far as we know he had not been politically active for some years. Those of us who met him on a visit to London some years ago remember him as a man who enjoyed his livelihood of growing fruit by organic methods, who enjoyed his anarchism and the companionship of his comrades.

His companion Florence Garth writes: 'It is a great tragedy - he was so full of life and so well and the violence of it all makes it even more difficult to live with' We extend our sympathy to Florence and to the Los Gatos group.



THE FARCE IS WITH YOU!

K Ronstadt

1:

Dear Comrades,

There seems to be an emerging political style, which aggressively identifies itself as 'anarchist', and which bases itself on disrupting events organised by the Labour Party or trade unions. Some time ago there were scuffles at a big march against the cuts, and in the latest issue of FREEDOM (29/3/80) we had a report from 'K. Ronstadt' on the disruption of the so-called 'Debate of the Decade'.

I don't want to question the sincerity or commitment of the people who are adopting this approach. I do want to question their assumed political objectives. What do they hope to gain by it? There is no hint in K. Ronstadt's article of any strategy underlying these tactics; just a crude resentment of anyone who is perceived as a 'leader', and a delight in disruption for its own sake. Nor is there any hint of realisation that, by adopting this approach, K. Ronstadt and friends are simply becoming part of a new spectacle. The scuffles on the cuts march made the national press, and the disruption of the Debate was discussed in the left-wing press. This whole approach is a real gift to the bourgeois media; it can be used to demonstrate, in general, that lefties are always squabbling among themselves; and in particular that anarchists are (as God-fearing citizens always suspected) a bunch of trouble-making loonies.

As to the Debate itself, I wasn't there, but I had encouraged Hilary Wainwright to attend when she was invited (Hilary is a friend of mine). I think that any exchange of ideas on the left is potentially useful, and I would defend the right of socialists to attend debates of this kind without being interrupted and harassed. From the reports I have heard, there was just about unanimous opposition to the disruption, and I find it depressing to reflect that, for many socialists, this experience must have been their formative impression of 'anarchists'.

I would also like to distinguish between K. Ronstadt and friends on the one hand, and the H block protestors on the other. They at least were drawing attention to a real struggle, a war in which people are dying and in which basic human rights are being flouted and denied.

What lies behind all this is a whole political vision. The final part of K. Ronstadt's article makes it clear that s/he views 'the left' as part of the enemy, and s/he calls for an 'Independent anarchist movement in industry, in each locality, etc., etc.' S/he goes on to admit that the anarchist movement is characterised by 'confusion and inability to develop a revolutionary strategy'. Exactly. And this, the latest in a long line of calls for a new 'independent anarchist movement' is a classic symptom of that confusion.

The year is 1980, the country is Britain. There is not, nor has ever been, a strong anarchist movement in this country. There is a strong labour movement, with all sorts of creative and libertarian currents in it despite its bureaucratic leadership; there is a strong autonomous women's movement; there is growing militancy among blacks; in many areas there are campaigns developing to oppose the cuts and defend basic services; and there is a growing anti-nuclear movement. Many more areas of struggle could be identified.

We don't want, and in any case won't get, a new 'independent anarchist movement in industry, in each locality, etc., etc.' We do want a consistent libertarian input into all these struggles, a creative libertarian contribution which demonstrates its validity through practice. But of course this means (horror of horrors!) working alongside people who aren't anarchists or even libertarians, people who may belong to left-wing parties or reformist pressure-groups. For K. Ronstadt and friends, this of course is out of the question: far better to retreat into sectarian purism, attacking other socialists as if they were the main enemy and dreaming of a new 'independent anarchist movement'.

Maybe some people will see these arguments as an over-reaction, and will say that I simply ought to let K. Ronstadt and friends follow their inclinations as I follow mine. But it isn't as easy as that, because their aggressive insistence upon their own anarchist identity immediately implicates anyone else who adopts the label 'anarchist'. I have been approached by non-anarchist friends and comrades, who have witnessed these 'anarchist disruptions' and who come to me for explanations and justification which I cannot provide. So I am pushed into a situation where, in order to distance myself from political practices which I think

LETTERS

absurd and destructive, I am ceasing to identify myself as an anarchist. I imagine a lot of other people, also with strong libertarian commitments, must be finding themselves in the same situation.

Martin Spence.

2:

Kronstadt Debate

I completely agree with Philip Sansom.....

If London 'anarchists' are going to crawl out of their pads and squats, and attend opponent's meetings, then they should, at least, use a little common sense, prepare their "tactics" and demonstrate in practice that they are more "democratic" than the Trotskyists and social democrats on the platform.....

Some time ago now, a meeting was announced at the University of Essex, at which one Tariq Ali was to speak. Comrades at the University, plus myself, made our plans. A leaflet, based upon an article I had written in a local newspaper, was distributed by the comrades to every person (including Ali) who entered the lecture hall - about 600 people. The anarchists and libertarians sat in a group (about 20) in the gallery to the side of the speaker. A large black flag, with 'N. E. Anarchists' written on it, was hung over the side - near Ali's head! Except for a very occasional, and sometimes amusing, interjection, the libertarians allowed the Trotskyist gentleman to ramble on. However, on this occasion, Ali quipped: "Maybe our anarchist friends would care to contribute a few words."

Everyone in the hall knew that the anarchists and libertarian communists were there! It had been agreed beforehand that, after Ali had finished, I would speak - invited or not.

I spoke. I may say that I knew

my stuff. This was important. I criticised the Bolsheviks in general, and Trotsky in particular, for butchering the Kronstadt sailors. I'd even had the good fortune of having seen the Kronstadt naval base.

Tariq Ali had no defence. He attempted to refute me by quoting Victor Serge.

And that, comrades, is how you deal with Ali, Foot, et al. Let 'em speak; don't break the meeting up - but insist on at least a few minutes to put a genuine revolutionary, libertarian, viewpoint. If you are refused, then start trouble - but not before. And, at least, distribute a leaflet to everyone in the hall first.

P. E. Newell

Dungeness Demo

Dear Friends,

I read that on May 24th, hardy cyclists from London and other good people from commuter towns of the South East will be converging on Dungeness for a carnival-demonstration complete with balloons, music, etc. Well that is fine, but I hope the organisers of this happening will do sufficient preparation to ensure that this is a protest by the local people of Romney Marsh, Folkestone, etc., backed up by supporters from elsewhere, rather than being just another bunch of trippers down for the day. As an ex-resident of New Romney (1968/73), I can well imagine the absolutely total non-impact of the latter on the local communities. The villages of New Romney and Lydd have doubled in size as a direct result of the Power stations - I hope you try to establish a constructive dialogue with these workers, almost the only people on the Marsh who are not either solidaries or forelock-tuggers.

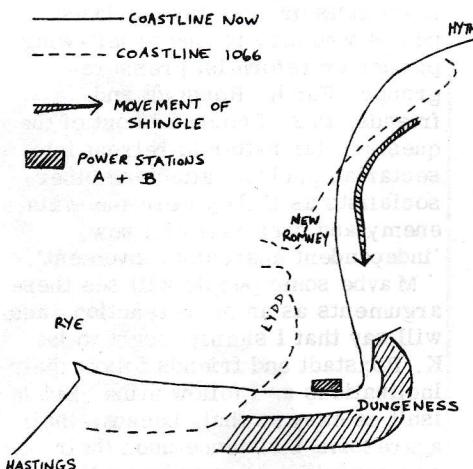
The other point I want to make concerns the reason for opposing Dungeness in particular, and I am surprised that Nick Jagger didn't mention it. Dungeness is a headland of shingle (pebbles). The shape of the headland has changed enormously during recent centuries. The main movement of shingle along the

beaches of the south coast is towards the east. This means that the southern shore of Dungeness is being constantly eroded, and the eastern shore built up with shingle being washed around the point.

When the power stations were first planned, local fishermen told the experts not to build them on the southern shore but on the eastern, i.e. north of the point. But "experts" like graduate engineers don't have to listen to uneducated fisherman now, do they.

So after the A station was built, and the fishermen were found to be right, the movement of shingle problem has had to be solved by periodically operating a dragline on the beach north of the point, loading shingle into lorries and dumping it back into the sea at several points west of the power stations! And this will have to be done for 250, 000 years till those radioactive tombs can be dismantled - and all for 15 years electricity from A station (1965/80), and for at most 25 years from B - unless you stop them fuelling it! And how will that shingle be moved after your oil dries up. Shovels and wheelbarrows perhaps. After all, it has been done before, at places like Giza or Stonehenge. Good luck on May 24th!

Tony Telford



FREEDOM is hoping to run fuller listings of events taking place throughout the country - so if you are organising something - let us know as far in advance as possible so that we can publicize it for you.

Solidarity with NSF

Dear Comrades,

We have received an urgent request for money from the Norwegian Syndicalists, the NSF. They are requesting money on behalf of Chilean workers who are attempting to rebuild the Chilean anarcho-syndicalist Anarchist and Libertarian Socialist movement. Our Chilean Comrades, unlike the Social-democrats, Moscow Communists and Stalinists who receive millions, receive nothing in the way of outside financial support (except from the NSF). They are active but are held back because, as workers, they suffer from high unemployment, low wages and government oppression.

Today the Chilean workers movement is being reconstructed; if we want a significant Anarchist presence within the Chilean Labour Movement we must put our money where our mouths are.

Any donations should be sent to the Manchester Branch of the Direct Action Movement (address below) who will forward the money to the NSF. The contact address for the Chileans is, for obvious reasons, secret.

Salud

Dave Thomson.

Manchester Branch
Direct Action Movement
Box 20
164/166 Corn Exchange Bldgs.
Hanging Ditch
Manchester
M4 3BN

PACIFISM OR NOT

Dear FREEDOM,

The debate on the role of violence in relationship to the creation of a libertarian society carried on in the pages of "FREEDOM" 4, 6, and 7 seems to have focused on a moralistic interpretation of the conclusions drawn by the "general public" (or masses) from these acts of violence and their results. Can I suggest that

unless the general public engages in acts of violence then we shall never have the opportunity to create a libertarian society!

We are told that "as in Iran and South Vietnam before their respective revolutions, it was not violence (which, when used later, actually betrayed their revolutions), but the refusal of the masses to believe in and cooperate with the lying fascist rulers which caused the mightily armed regimes to melt away" (John A. Rapp in "Anarchy and Violence"). This really is criminal bullshit. I suppose the war in Vietnam had nothing to do with it and that the fact that there was a lack of cooperation and disbelief in the benefits of Uncle Sam's saturation bombing were the salient factors. Similarly the reactions of the 'general public' of Iran towards their own violence was a moralistic rejection of it and so they returned to their Mosques and refused to cooperate with the savak. The Shah realising, after years of murder and torture, that he was not popular, decided to go to sunnier climes - didn't he (I wish he would melt away as he's about to be the cause of World War 3!). Of course it was the fact that these U.S. stooges faced more violence than they could take that led to their "melting-away" - and it was not the use of violence which determined the betrayal of these revolutions but the fact that they were not anarchist but statist revolutions (one being communist the other Islamic).

Jim Hugon (in "Violence and non-violence") does not have "the arrogance to advocate nonviolence to the Irish or the Afghans "because they are engaged in "life and death" struggles. Can I suggest to him that in a world which spends more than twenty times as much on the potential to kill as it does on the potential to prevent deaths; that everyone - whether they realise it or not - is engaged in a life and death struggle. The question is no longer one of 'statism or anarchism' or 'authority vs. liberty' but one of 'W.W.3 (the Big Bang included) or anarchist revolution' (Russia and China being the perfect example of how when states go communist it becomes unthinkable, due to 'proletarian internationalism', to contemplate war against each other).

Much use is made by the pacifists of the media's wonderful "cloak and dagger" anarchist "bomb up his sleeve" stereotype. If this stereotype is to be used by the pacifists against us

then I suggest that it is not only the Fleet Street hacks who we must look out for, but some of our "comrades". As for the fact that "Those who advocate violence in order to provoke authority to show its "real face", normally advocate violence from a distance * , and lack the imagination (which many others have) to see the real force of authority ... " this turns things on their head. Those who advocate violence in order to expose the coercive state do so because they do have the "imagination" and others unfortunately don't !

I think that P. Murtagh's "Why pacifism is morally wrong" is watertight. I certainly would not thank anybody who stood around and watched me being assaulted by the police (as once happened to me, long before, I might add, I became politically/socially - active/aware). Might I suggest that our pacifist fellow travellers, if they do not believe that it is a fact proven by history, (Russia, Spain) that violence when successful can be liberating, go and consult the Black youth of Bristol. I think I'll end by echoing the headlines of FREEDOM 7: "Black and White - unite and fight! (against) 'Slavery old and new'".

James Patterson
Liverpool.

* Perhaps they should oblige the state by giving themselves up at the nearest Police Station .

SORRY !

FREEDOM,

I don't know whether it was due to an editorial policy which favours anything 'libertarian' or the recently mentioned lack of time for efficient proof-reading and editing (FREEDOM Vol. 41 No. 7), but the appearance in FREEDOM Vol 41 No. 6 of an ad. for a discussion by the 'Libertarian Alliance' proved to be both annoying and worrying.

Out of ignorance I attended said discussion and discovered that the 'Libertarian Alliance' are a group of free market 'anarchists' having more in common with the extreme right-wing of the Tories à la National Association for Freedom than the generally anarcho-communist/socialist views expressed in FREEDOM.

Is it the present collective's policy to support anything labeled 'libertarian' or was the inclusion of the ad. an oversight? I would be

very surprised, not to mention disgusted, if it was included in full knowledge of what this group represents. A closer scrutiny of the ad. after the discussion revealed the legend, "Life, Liberty, Property" tagged onto the end. Say no more!

A. Plier
Brixton.

Eds. We don't check any notices which are sent into Freedom - a practice which has not let us down in the past and which, because of the time involved, is not likely to change in the future.

GROUSE

A top newspaper reported last week that Prince Charles has recently become converted to the cause of intermediate technology - having decided to become patron of the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG). The same newspaper commented that 'It would be too crude to suggest that he will be "selling" the virtues of appropriate technology when he visits developing countries. But he will at least be in a position to allude to the benefits of creating cheap, small-scale, employment-generating activities.'

In the present writer's opinion, it's about time that the carping criticism in these islands of His Royal Highness, of which the above is an excellent example, should stop. Specifically, the comment that 'It would be too crude to suggest that he will be "selling" the virtues of intermediate technology' is nothing short of an insult to our heir-apparent for, given his vast experience of agriculture and industry - not counting his one-day visit to the ITDG's unit at Reading University, he is eminently qualified to "sell" the virtues of intermediate technology' - indeed, there can be few people in this country who are better qualified. O.K. It is true that Prince Charles does not have experience in agriculture or industry - but - he does have an advantage which few of us can claim which enables him to advise, with authority, on any subject known to humanity - yes - good breeding. Which reminds me, that's another subject which I'm sure developing countries are just waiting to have explained to them. I must go - got a letter to write ...

FREEDOM CONTACTS

INLAND

ABERDEEN Libertarian Group
c/o 163 King Street, Aberdeen
ABERYSTWYTH. David Fletcher,
59 Cambrian St., Aberystwyth.

BELFAST Anarchist Collective,
Just Books, 7 Winetavern St.,
Belfast 1.

BIRMINGHAM anarchists/anarcha-feminists meet Sundays. Contact Alison at Peace Centre, 18 Moore St., Ringway, Birmingham 4 (tel. 021 643 0996).

BRIGHTON Libertarian Socialist group, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, Univ. of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.

BRISTOL. City: 4 British Road, Bristol BS3 3BW.

Students: Libertarian Society, Students Union, Queen's Road, Bristol.

CAMBRIDGE anarchists, Box A, 41 Fitzroy St., Cambridge.

CANTERBURY Alternative Research group, Wally Barnes, Eliot College, University of Kent, Canterbury.

CARDIFF write c/o One-O-Eight Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Road.

COVENTRY. John England, Students Union, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry.

DERBY. New address awaited.

DUBLIN. A.B.C. Collective, 7 Ballsbridge Ave., Dublin, Eire

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

EDINBURGH anarchists meet 8pm Mondays at First of May Bookshop, 45 Niddry St., Edinburgh

EXETER anarchist collective c/o Community Assn., Devonshire House, Stocker Rd., Exeter.

GLASGOW Anarchist Group: John Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45.

HASTINGS Anarchist Group c/o Solstice, 127 Bohemia Rd., St. Leonards on Sea, Sussex (tel. 0424 429537).

HULL Libertarian Collective, 23 Auckland Ave., Hull, West Humberside.

KEELE, anarchist group. C/o Students Union, The University Keele, Staffs. Weekly discussions, every Tuesday at 8pm in the Students Union. NON-STUDENTS MOST WELCOME.

LAMPETER Anarchist Group c/o Adrian James, S.D.U.C., Lampeter, Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.

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

LEEDS. Dave Brown, 30 Park Row, Knaresborough (near Harrogate) N. Yorkshire.

LEICESTER, Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross St. (tel. Leic. 21896) and Libertarian Education, 6 Beaconsfield Rd. (tel. Leic. 552085).

London
Anarchist Feminists, Box 33, Rising Free, 182 Upper St., Islington, N.1.

Freedom Press

IN ANGEL ALLEY
84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.
LONDON E1

Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Ave., N.5. (tel. 359 4794 before 7 pm).

Freedom Collective, 84b Whitechapel High St. (Angel Alley) E.1. (tel. 247 9249).

Hackney anarchists: Contact Dave on 249 7042.

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

London Workers' Group, Box W, 182 Upper St., n.1 (249 7042). mtgs. Tuesdays 8pm at Metropolitan pub, 75 Farringdon Rd.

Love V. Power, Box 779, Peace News London Office, 5 Caledonian Road, N.1.

West London anarchists, 7 Penward Road, W.12.

MALVERN & WORCESTER area, Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrige, Malvern, Worcs.

MID-SUSSEX & South Coast anarchists, c/o Resources Centre, North Rd., Brighton, E. Sussex.

NORWICH anarchists, c/o Free-wheel Community Books, 56 St. Benedicts St., Norwich.

NOTTINGHAM, c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St. (tel. 582506) or 15 Scotholme Av., Hyson Green (tel. 708302).

OLDHAM. Nigel Broadbent, 14 Westminster Rd., Failsworth, Manchester

OXFORD anarchist group c/o Danny Simpson, Exeter College. Anarchist Workers group ditto.

Anarcho-Feminists c/o Teresa Thornhill, 34 Divinity Rd. Solidarity c/o 34 Cowley Rd.

PAISLEY (College) anarchist group, c/o Students Union, Hunter St., Paisley, Renfrewshire

READING anarchists c/o Ms. Shevek, Clubs Office, Student Union, Whiteknights, Reading.

RHONDDA & Midglamorgan. Henning Andersen, 'Smiths Arms', Treherbert, Midglamorgan, Wales.

SHEFFIELD anarchists c/o 4 Havelock Square, Sheffield S10 2FQ.

Libertarian Society: PO Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE.

SWANSEA: Don Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Dunvant, Swansea.

SWINDON area: Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon.

WESTON-super-Mare, Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Road.

NATIONAL

MIDLANDS Federation: groups include Birmingham, Coventry, Derby, Leamington/Warwick, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield.

NORTH EAST Anarchist Federation. Secretariat: HLC 23 Auckland Avenue, Hull.

THAMES VALLEY anarchist federation - contact Oxford or Reading group.

DIRECT ACTION Movement. Sec. 28 Lucknow Drive, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts. Manchester

D.A.M. Group, Box 2, 164/166 Corn Exchange Bldgs, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BN. Groups in Leeds and London also.

SOLIDARITY libertarian communist organisation (publ. 'Solidarity for Social Revolution') c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E6. Groups & mems in many towns.

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST Association of class struggle anarchists (publ. 'Bread and Roses'), Box 2, 136 Kingsland High St., London E8.

POSTAL WORKERS Network write Box PW, 182 Upper St., Islington, London N.1.

MEETINGS

LIVERPOOL Liberty Hall meetings in the Everyman Bistro, Hope St. every Sunday 8 pm.

OXFORD: Anarchist/libertarian conference late June. Oxford anarchist group would like conference to be structured according to the priorities of the groups and organisations attending. So please send suggestions, ideas for workshops, commitment to write discussion papers to Mark Leopol or Tony 77c St. Clements, Oxford. Time-table and further details will follow response.

LEEDS. Alternative Education Conference at Beechwood Hall, Leeds, weekend beginning Fri. 29 August for three days. Information from the co-ordinating group at: Friends World College, Studio 441, O & N Warehouse, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, Wapping, London E1.

DAM PUBLIC MEETING
Thurs. 1st. May, 8pm. Star & Garter Fairfield st. Manchester.
"Workers control"

DESIRSES

Anyone who has a copy of Albert Camus' Resistance, rebellion and death, they are willing to part with please contact Pam 674-9844 ext. 273 (office hours)

"SOLIDARITY MEETING"
"The class struggle in Russia and eastern europe" 2.30pm Sat. May 10 At Aquarius community centre Hulme Manchester M13.

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Freedom

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Free Radios
in Spain

RADIOS LIBRES

One of the more obvious forms of repression that has remained intact in this 'democratic' Spain since Franco's time is a pervasive and often not-so-subtle control of the freedom of speech. A veneer of liberty exists: a walk down any major city street will provide twenty or more foreign newspapers; several radical magazines, including anarchist, publish regularly; demonstrations of various types, usually loudly critical of the government, occur in most cities and are not always broken up by the inevitable cluster of national police.

But it only takes a little digging to realize how thin and brittle this veneer is. For example, it is strictly illegal to criticize the national police or military in any way, (conscientious objectors and anyone advocating an end to the compulsory military service here are regularly punished under this law). Left-wing magazines and newspapers are watched, and often closed down on a technicality; fascist attacks on such journals regularly go unpunished. But the most striking limitation on freedom of speech is that all television and radio broadcasting is owned and run by the government. It is this last aspect of control that has given birth over the past year to a resistance known as the 'radios libres' movement.

The movement for free radio stations began in earnest less than a year ago, in June 1979. Although interest had been

growing for some years before that — sparked off by the similar movements in Italy and France — there was only one very tentative station beginning to broadcast, and no coordination or communication among interested groups around the country. On June 13 of last year the first conference to begin building 'radios libres' was held in Barcelona.

The conference drew between 400-500 people from all over Spain, and created enough enthusiasm and momentum to spark the opening of seven free stations by the end of the year. All of these were in and around Barcelona, despite the interest shown in other parts of the country. Given Barcelona's radical history, which still lingers, this wasn't surprising, but it emphasized a problem that plagues all of the Spanish Left, which is a serious lack of coordination/communication between regions.

Nevertheless, the stations in Barcelona were a clear challenge to at least one aspect of state control. Although there were some variations among the government stations, these had been predictably limited; the appearance of free radios provided the first hint of a real alternative in the world of broadcasting.

The government's initial response was typical: a new law was passed immediately following the June 'radios libres' conference, which stated that all radio broadcasts were strictly illegal unless the broadcasters had a license from the government. To date no licenses of any kind have been granted, even to purely commercial stations; the government austerely refuses to acknowledge its Catch-22.

The law per se made no difference. Before it was passed the free stations were equally illegal; the law simply gave the police a more specific excuse for closures. From the time of its passage, police repression of the stations has gradually increased. At first there were sudden raids, one station here another there; the stations generally reopened after a short time, although each subsequent bust meant higher penalties. The oldest station, Ona Lliure (Catalan for 'free wave'), has been raided and closed four times. But, as was inevitable, the government finally began taking the movement seriously enough to use stronger measures, and in the last two weeks of January this year, all of the stations were raided and closed

This blanket closure came at a time when the 'radios libres' movement was just beginning to find its strength and creativity. Having conquered the initial problems of money, technique, creativity, collectivity -- 'conquered' at least enough to feel the progress toward a real movement -- the free radios were growing and diversifying. Each one had a distinct personality (as well as individual problems of course, but let's look at the bright side first). They ranged from the veteran Ona Lliure, consistently challenging and radical, to La Campana, with a strength and diversity based on neighbourhood involvement and support that the station grew out of, to Contrarradio which stumbled along with little neighbourhood support and many internal conflicts, but learning and growing.

All of the free stations shared some very basic problems. Obviously police repression was the foremost, causing spin-off problems because of the necessity of moving stations frequently, locating apartments or stores from which to broadcast, keeping the locations as hidden as possible. Lack of money ranked highly too: money for equipment, for rent, for records, turntables, information (the work was, of course, always a labour of love, unpaid, usually undertaken by people already working 40-60 hours/week). As with most projects of the Left, the people involved seldom had personal money to spare, and the consequence was that many hours had to be consistently spent scheming, plotting, cajoling, and begging for money.

Internal problems with the collective tended to vary as to type and degree, but one that all of them shared was the puzzle of how to disperse knowledge. To keep a radio station going, a certain level of technical know-how was vital; because very few people went into the projects with this knowledge, it had to be spread to allow the collectives to function healthily, without too many concentrations of knowledge or responsibility.

The major problem with dispersal turned out to be a lack of desire on the part of many of those without the technical knowledge. That is, a radio was great, it was novel, it was fun to be able to go to the secret location, maybe operate some dials, and talk, hear yourself on the air. But too few were willing to learn the nitty-gritty of how the equipment actually worked, of why the broadcast was possible if a particular dial were turned, of how a tube could be replaced when it blew. There consequently grew up a limiting dependence on the few people with technical knowledge; and if something went wrong when they weren't around, there was no broadcast. At one point two of these overburdened people proposed a two-week course, to be taught for two hours every night, absolutely free, in an effort to share their skills. No one showed up.

Finally, there was a problem with networking. Although the June conference had given rise to a coordinating group, very little had come of it by the time of the January closures. There was some contact between the Barcelona stations, but never enough, and there was almost no attempt to stay in contact with the struggling and not yet broadcasting collectives in other parts of Spain. Some exchange of information contin-

ued between Spanish stations and those in Italy and France, but it was scanty, tending to be between friends, occasionally between stations, never enough to benefit the whole movement. More contact with Italy, in particular, could have been useful, because the problems are similar and the movement there has had several years in which to work on them (although police raids are less common and fascist ones more so in Italy).

All of these problems, while major, were being worked on, worked out; and at the moment they all pale before the universal of government repression. Some fines have been levied against the stations since January, and members of nearly all the collectives spent one to four days in jail after the busts (in Spain people can be held by the police for up to four days without being charged). But the most effective tool the government is using is intimidation. "Los Marrones", the national police, are the ones who conduct the busts; they are the most common and forceful arm used by the government for internal control, and when they come bursting into a radio station with their ubiquitous sub-machine guns at the ready, it's enough to give the most rebellious some pause for thought. Just as effective is the threat to those who use 'censored' equipment. When a radio station is busted, tape and a seal are placed on all the equipment; if the seals are broken, allowing the equipment to be used again, the penalty is three months in prison. So the January closures have been a success for the government, and there's been little indication of a strong rebirth of resistance.

It is also a matter of timing. It wasn't an accident that the government chose January to crack down on the free radio movement, and it is likewise improbable that the near future will see a lessening of government antagonism. There were three major reasons for the timing. The first was that the movement had simply reached the point of strength that it was viewed by the government as a threat; it had become clear that free radios would keep growing in numbers and effectiveness if the government didn't act. The second reason was that elections were being held, primarily in February and March, and for obvious reasons the government preferred that its voice be the only one heard while electioneering was under way ('free elections in 'democratic' Spain'). In the Barcelona area the government efforts against the radios made little difference: Barcelona's abstention rate was 42%, and in some neighbourhoods over 50%.

But the third reason was the clincher. The government finally decided that it really did want to sell licenses to commercial broadcasters, and it clearly wouldn't do to have competitors broadcasting free of charge. So the field had to be cleaned up, and presumably the sale of licenses will begin shortly. Lest anyone confuse this move with a liberalisation of the censorship in Spain, it is important to note that the cost of a license will be prohibitive (which could have been guessed) ensuring a universality of interests; and should the cost not be sufficient to prevent dissenting views reaching the air, each license will be of short duration -- perhaps two years -- and renewable only at the government's discretion.

So where will the 'radios libres' movement go from here? At this point it's impossible to say. The recent repression has taken a toll in terms of morale, which is perhaps still easier to do in Spain than in other places, as the scars of forty years of fascism are lingering ones. There are signs of life here and there: a small but spirited demonstration protesting the closures (broken up by the police); broadcasts once a week and very carefully, by La Campana, which of all the stations has the strongest neighbourhood support and therefore the best chance of a clandestine life. Nothing has been heard yet from the other stations, not even tentative peeps, and it's still too early to tell if enough spirit, determination and desire remain to carry the movement back into its active resistance.

But at the very least, there is a base now, a base of experience, knowledge, shared success and failure. Whether the free radios appear again soon or only after a long lapse, they can't help but benefit from what they've already accomplished. And that, after all, is something.

The final solution

Imagine Britain with a population of about three million or one twentieth of today's number, America with ten million, China and Russia with about ten million each, and the other industrial countries with a like proportion. Imagine that the productive capacity of each nation was as high as that of Japan, that the natural resources of minerals, oil and plant life were no less, and that the techniques of population and genetic engineering were what are being proposed in the Western world of today.

Imagine, further, that factories, farms and mines were run by mechanical robots controlled from a distance by a handful of technicians; that the abundance of wealth had rendered money meaningless, that poverty and unemployment had vanished and that the working day had dwindled to an hour; that shops or 'free stores' were automatically re-stocked as goods were withdrawn while the computerised wishes of the consumers constantly modified not only the amounts but the functions and design of the goods.

The techniques to make such wonders possible are already in use in the West and in Japan. Diseases like tuberculosis, malaria and leprosy are retreating before modern medicine. The fertility of every acre of land has been quadrupled within the last hundred years and in the industrial nations the poor rarely die of famine while the dark continents of illiteracy recede.

Yet famine, homelessness and disease afflict millions as the explosion of populations outstrips advances in agriculture and medical care. Badgered by the media to believe that we simply must have more and bigger cars, more and bigger hospitals, central heating, jet travel, exotic holidays, second houses and the daily flow and ebb of tens of millions to and from work, we in the West use more steel, wood, food and energy than the rest of the world together. And because the rest of the world lacks the technology to produce all we crave for, we live in constant fear and suspicion of one another and wrestle by fair means and foul to control the Third World and its products.

Unemployment rises, both because raw materials become more expensive

and because automation reduces the volume of manual labour required to produce a given quantity of goods. Public spending on keeping the unemployed and their families alive, healthy and educated, is seen as a debilitating drain on what should be ever-increasing profits. Like a person with a leaking roof, ill-fitting doors and windows and rising damp, we spend more and more to keep ourselves warm and dry when we should be building a new house.

Yes, if only our populations were smaller the world could live very well. Without the need to feed starving nations or to keep millions in unemployed idleness; with the silicon chip to replace the working classes and therefore to obviate the need to transport them to work and back, the wealth of our productive systems could be put to raising the standard of life to a hitherto unimagined level.

How could this be brought about? Quite simply and very quickly. Take a few dozen atom bombs; prepare enough deep shelters for the 'top' tenth of the population; fill them with the scientists, technicians, administrators necessary to carry out your wishes, policemen to enforce them on the unwilling, doctors to keep you well and, of course, your precious selves, our beloved rulers to shape the future. Take food, water and light entertainments enough to pass the five or six months necessary to dissipate the poisonous radiation and lessen the stench of death. Then emerge and build your Utopia.

It would, of course, seem inhuman actually to conspire with other world leaders to arrange such a state of affairs: such conspiracy is unnecessary. Continue to do exactly what you are doing now. Avoid serious attempts to limit armaments. Refrain from supplying tractors and fertilisers to those who have traditionally insured against old age by high fertility. Keep the discussion of birth control a taboo activity.

Protect the 'freedom' of the media to foster frenetic suspicion of other races and cultures. Keep the education of the masses to the barest minimum, and keep them short of work and houses so that the constant nagging anxiety of how to provide for their families prevents them from enquiring too closely into your competence in leading them.

Prate constantly about 'democracy' and equate it with a constant querulous disagreement among your various political factions about unimportant differences in their dogmas. Keep the people bemused with economic technicalities and convince them by incessant propaganda that the most important thing in their lives are Match of the Day and the antics of royalty.

Sooner or later -just be a little patient - a bungling fool or a panic-stricken leader will press the button, the four minute warning will sound, you will descend into your shelters and, hey presto! -Utopia is on the way.

Michael Duane

Premature Burial



Alternatives

Dear Friends,

I would like to add my voice to that of Jeff Robinson (FREEDOM Anarchist Review, 15 March, Vol. 41, No. 5). His contribution seems to me to be one of the most refreshing I have read in FREEDOM for some time, and one that I would endorse but for its disappointing, though plausible, conclusion.

In the fifteen years or so that I have followed FREEDOM and Anarchy I have often turned away in embarrassment when the journal uncritically endorsed first the ideology of material accumulation and, later, the issue oriented consumption ridden 'alternatives'.

This is not to say that the existence of FREEDOM as a platform for ideas contributing to action has been useless. Far from it. The magazine itself continues to act as a beacon.

But what has been disappointing has been the inability to move from primary principles and experiences to second, third and fourth stages of analysis and innovation. This failure seems to have left individuals and groups alone to re-experience approaches - a needless use of energy which contributes to exasperation, isolation, and defeat.

Frustrated calls for new journals, new movements, and new organisations have echoed through the last two decades while, as Mr Robinson suggests, capitalist and socialist powers have far outstripped the abilities of an independent Anarchist movement to monitor the internationalisation of capital and technological formation, consumer indoctrination, and the integration of consuming classes based on neo-colonial production arrangements in 'underdeveloped' regions.

While individuals and groups have set out in search of personal salvation, the 'living out' of alternatives, or adopted single issues the structures of power have consolidated themselves to unprecedented degrees.

I share with him his disgust with the many failures which abound. Having been through a number of 'communal' situations, worked on a series of 'grass roots' projects and watched as the 'alternatives' devolved into crass commercialism I have

arrived at a conclusion close to his. Yet I have found the simplicity he yearns for in work throughout the 'Third World' and in the industrialised regions remain hopefull for the future of workers' co-operatives.

In fact 'simplicity' is the key concept in Mr Robinson's statement. And it is here that I would like to pose a parallel conclusion to his.

It is one thing to, rightly I suggest, conclude with Bakunin that, 'the vast majority of people, whether rulers or ruled, reactionaries or rebels, male or female, black or white, young or old, who grow up in or are in considerable contact with modern industrial, bureaucratic, consumerist, sophisticated society become so warped and corrupted by it as to be past redemption', but it is quite another to dismiss the new 'revolutionary' class - the peoples of the 'Third World' - as doomed to silent extermination under a hail of napalm ignorantly sanctioned by the industrialised masses.

Whether it is in the rice paddies of South East Asia, the coal mines of South Africa, the 'protected' villages of Zimbabwe, the jungles of West Africa or the burnt out plains of northern Mexico I have found that the people of the 'Third World' in their very simplicity have an acute grasp of the nature of the current world hegemony and are willing to take the necessary steps to make their basic position, survival, felt.

The defeat of the current hell-bent malaise operating in the 'industrialised' world will come, inexorably, through the various revolutions in the 'Third World'. It has, in fact, been happening for more than twenty years and the current 'doom' prophesised by Mr. Robinson is to be caused as a direct result of the pressures built up in the 'industrialised' world by these revolutions.

I am convinced that truly internationalist Anarchist analysis of our present condition must begin with an alliance with these revolutionary elements inside the 'Third World'. This cannot be uncritical. I am not advocating yet another head-long rush towards

flag-waving fantasies. The revolutionary struggle is itself fraught with internal contradictions bred from years of colonial and neo-colonial indoctrination. But after all is said and done it is a working alternative to the inference in Mr. Robinson's conclusion that we have no alternative but to sit back and wait to see who survives the 'next war'.

Indeed, people will NOT face what is before them. The 'good times' ARE over. The question now is where serious Anarchists may forge realistic alliances.

"The representatives of the status-quo are sickened and divided, and dread looking into the eyes of their young; while the excluded begin to realize, having endured everything, that they CAN endure everything. They do not know the precise shape of the future, but they know that the future belongs to them. They realize this - paradoxically - by the failure of the moral energy of their oppressors and begin, almost instinctively, to forge a new morality, to create the principles on which a new world will be built". — James Baldwin.

"The Third World does not mean to organize a great crusade of hunger against the whole of Europe. What it expects of those who for centuries have kept it in slavery is that they will help to rehabilitate mankind, and make man victorious everywhere, once and for all. But it is clear that we are not so naive as to think that this will come about with the co-operation and the good will of the European governments. This huge task which consists of reintroducing mankind into the world, the whole of mankind, will be carried out with the indispensable help of the European peoples, who themselves must realize that in the past they have often joined the ranks of our common masters where colonial questions were concerned. To achieve this, the European peoples must first decide to wake up and shake themselves, use their brains, and stop playing the stupid game of the Sleeping Beauty". — Franz Fanon

Brian Murphy

ANARCHISM AND THE PROLETARIAN MYTH

Some Notes

"The question of anarchism is not the concern of a single class, consequently also not of the labouring class, but it is the concern of every individual who values his personal liberty."

John Henry Mackay

"The Masters have never lacked for a kind, sweaty force to bring back the Fugitives. They do not lack today. Call them what you will, common men, masses, proletariat, they are always the first in the sights of other conforming guns."

Paul Herr - Journey Not to End

I

The assumption is that because the worker is exploited, because he is subject to the will of his bosses, he must by reason of his condition want to be "free" and is therefore more responsive to anarchist ideas than members of other classes.

In support of this assumption proletarian mythicists assiduously collate scraps of information about the "direct action of the workers". They enthuse about the Paris Commune and the revolutions in Mexico, Russia and Spain. They tell us about the black flag waving over factories during the Korean War. They go into raptures over the Berlin Uprising of 1953, the Hungarian Revolt of 1956, the first days of Castro's regime in Cuba, the May Days in Paris in 1968. What they do not detail are the far more numerous and persistent examples of those proletarians who support the rulers who milk them, who provide the bulk of the personnel of the prisons, the police and the military services, who are "always the first in the sights of other conforming guns", who persecute the outsider and clamour for conformity.

The proletarian mythicists can go as far back into the past as they wish to find cases of "the creativity of the masses". What they cannot do is show how this "creativity" has ever supplanted anarchist systems, or has not carried within it the seeds of new forms of authority. Indeed, the overwhelming historical evidence supports the sombre conclusions of Eric Hoffer in The True Believer that what the "masses" wanted from "successful" revolutions was a stronger master, and that only the idealists were disappointed - when they were not shot.

II

I do not deny the existence of a class struggle. But there is a fundamental difference between the fact of the class struggle and the theory of the class struggle.

The fact is the undeniable existence of a conflict of interests between employers and employees - whether State or "private". The awareness and extent of this conflict are not so widespread as the preachers of "class war" would like to believe, but it is there and has at times produced better conditions for the employees. It is as natural for the wage-earner to defend his interests as it is for the wage-payer to defend his - and only a fool would deny it.

The theory, on the other hand, is based on the unverifiable belief that this conflict of interests will or can lead to the abolition of exploitation and the establishment of a classless society. Whether the rationale is

the Marxist concept of a historical dialectic impelling the class struggle to a final resolution of all conflict in communism, or the Bakuninist/Kropotkinist faith in the "spontaneous" revolutionary creativity of the masses, makes little difference to the basic notion that the class struggle is the royal route to utopia. However expressed the theory is a secularized version of the messianic belief in a "kingdom of heaven" - and has about as much evidence in its favour.

No revolt of the proletariat, or their historical predecessors, has ever ended their servility. Their alleged "creativity" and "desire for freedom", as a class, is so much populist moonshine and is mostly the product of guilt-ridden upper and middle class intellectuals who

want to expiate their social sins. Kropotkin, who is a typical example of such, repeats over and over again that anarchism is the "creation" of "the people", but he never explains the causal relation between the two. All he does is give some selected historical incidents which he interprets in this manner, and these are usually democratic, not anarchist, in character.

The investment of the exploited mass with anarchist virtues, the haranguing of them in minute - circulation papers that they never read, is often merely an elaborate disguise for a moralism which lays down how they ought to behave, and throws a multi-coloured cloak over how they have behaved, do behave, and will behave - save, of course, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Karl Marx or Michael Bakunin, separately or together

III

Whatever hopes I have, however repugnant to me are the miseries and hierarchies I encounter, I know that rulers cannot exist without the collaboration of the ruled and that it is ridiculous to suppose that archies are the products of governments alone. Without the servility of the many, the power elite would lose its authority. Since I do not depend upon the future realization of some ideal society for my anarchism, I have no need to look to any class to validate my ideas. Anarchism is not a class concern, but an individual effort - the creation of a conscious egoism.

Those who consider that anarchism is organically linked with the class struggle are captives of the socialist myth, of which the proletarian myth is an offspring. Until they can cut the umbilical cord that binds them to socialism they will never be able to come into their full power as self-owning individuals. Self-sovereignty is the essence of anarchism, collectivism is its enemy. There just isn't any path to the lemonade springs and cigarette trees of the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

S. E. Parker.



DEADLINES

Contributors may like to note FREEDOM's publication deadlines:

1. news section - i.e. short articles, letters, notices etc. Monday immediately preceding publication date
- 2 review section - i.e. long articles, Monday preceding news section deadline.

INTRODUCTIONS TO ANARCHY

FREEDOM PRESS have just reprinted Malatesta's ANARCHY, Berkman's ABC of Anarchism, and Nicholas Walter's What is Anarchism? Here are a couple of quotes to whet your appetites.

MEANING OF THE WORD

The word Anarchy comes from the Greek and its literal meaning is without government: the condition of people who live without a constituted authority, without government.

Before such an organisation had begun to be considered both possible and desirable by a whole school of thinkers and accepted as the objective of a party, which has now become one of the most important factors in the social struggles of our time, the word anarchy was universally used in the sense of disorder and confusion; and it is to this day used in that sense by the uninformed as well as by political opponents with an interest in distorting the truth.

We will not enter into a philological discussion, since the question is philosophical and not philological. The common interpretation of the word recognises its true and etymological meaning; but it is a derivative of that meaning due to the prejudiced view that government was a necessary organ of social life, and that consequently a society without government would be at the mercy of disorder, and fluctuate between the unbridled arrogance of some, and the blind vengeance of others.

The existence of this prejudice and its influence on the public's definition of the word 'anarchy', is easily explained. Man, like all living beings, adapts and accustoms himself to the conditions under which he lives, and passes on acquired habits. Thus, having been born and bred in bondage, when the descendants of a long line of slaves started to think, they believed that slavery was an essential condition of life, and freedom seemed impossible to them. Similarly, workers who for centuries were obliged, and therefore accustomed, to depend for work, that is bread, on the goodwill of the master, and to see their lives always at the mercy of the owners of the land and of capital, ended by believing that it is the master who feeds them, and ingenuously ask one how it would be possible to live if there were no masters,

In the same way, someone whose legs had been bound from birth but had managed nevertheless to walk as best he could, might attribute his ability to move to those very bonds which in fact serve only to weaken and paralyse the muscular energy of his legs.

If to the normal effects of habit is then added the kind of education offered by the master, the priest, the teacher, etc., who have a vested interest in preaching that masters and the government are necessary; if one were to add the judge and the policeman who are at pains to silence those who might think differently and be tempted to propagate their ideas, then it will not be difficult to understand how the prejudiced view of the usefulness of, and the necessity for, the master and the government took root in the unsophisticated minds of the labouring masses.

Just imagine if the doctor were to expound to our fictional man with the bound legs a theory, cleverly illustrated with a thousand invented cases to prove that if his legs were freed he would be unable to walk and would not live, then that man would ferociously defend his bonds and consider as his enemy anyone who tried to remove them.

So, since it was thought that government was necessary and that without government there could only be disorder and confusion, it was natural and logical that anarchy, which means absence of government, should sound like absence of order.

Nor is the phenomenon without parallel in the history of words. In times and in countries where the people believed in

the need for government by one man (monarchy), the word republic, which is government by many, was in fact used in the sense of disorder and confusion - and this meaning is still to be found in the popular language of almost all countries.

Change opinion, convince the public that government is not only unnecessary, but extremely harmful, and then the word anarchy, just because it means absence of government, will come to mean for everybody: natural order, unity of human needs and the interests of all, complete freedom within complete solidarity. — MALATESTA

ON ORGANISATION

... This does not mean that anarchists reject organisation, though here is one of the strongest prejudices about anarchism. People can accept that anarchy may not mean just chaos or confusion, and that anarchists want not disorder but order without government, but they are sure that anarchy means order which arises spontaneously and that anarchists do not want organisation. This is the reverse of the truth. Anarchists actually want much more organisation, though organisation without authority. The prejudice about anarchism derives from a prejudice about organisation; people cannot see that organisation does not depend on authority, that it actually works best without authority.

A moment's thought will show that when compulsion is replaced by consent there will have to be more discussion and planning, not less. Everyone who is involved in a decision will be able to take part in making it, and no one will be able to leave the work to paid officials or elected representatives. Without rules to observe or precedents to follow, every decision will have to be made afresh. Without rulers to obey or leaders to follow, everyone will be able to make up his own mind. To keep all this going, the multiplicity and complexity of links between individuals will be increased, not reduced. Such organisation may be untidy and inefficient, but it will be much closer to the needs and feelings of the people concerned. If something cannot be done without the old kind of organisation, without authority and compulsion, it probably isn't worth doing and would be better left undone.

— NICHOLAS WALTER

THERE'S
NO GOVERNMENT
LIKE
NO GOVERNMENT

INSIDE THE FRAGMENTS

Institutionalised sexism manifests itself in the personal lives of everyone, and even in the left groups with worked out 'lines' on women's oppression, despite, in many cases, genuine attempts by members to come to terms with their own personal sexism, women have often felt alienated and intimidated. For many women, participation in left politics has thrown them into a competitive arena which has forced them either to acquire the skills to succeed in making their opinions heard, or to resign themselves to playing a secondary role. Not surprisingly, many eventually leave left-wing politics, disillusioned and disgusted.

Even in Libertarian groups, with the emphasis on non-hierarchical organisational structures, individuals who feel more confident in articulating their politics in large meetings can dominate, and invariably informal elites evolve which hinder genuine democratic running of the group. Men's sexual conditioning encourages the development of the ability to assert themselves and confidence to express their opinions, even in a hostile atmosphere. Women are conditioned to be quiet and passive, to be "seen and not heard", and are taught by experience that their opinions are not valued as highly as men's. Inevitably the dominating element in mixed groups tends to be predominantly male, and for many women, the confidence to express our criticisms of the lack of democracy in the group is continually undermined by that domination we are attempting to change, especially when our criticisms are met with eloquent speeches of self-justification in the most rousing feminist rhetoric.

Part of the difficulty facing women in combatting this inhibiting factor in political action is our isolation: when women come together to discuss our individual feelings of intimidation and oppression we discover that our problems are not personal, but political, problems shared by many other women.

Further, in articulating the frustrations we share with other women in all aspects of our lives, our confidence in our own politics grows.

However, discussion amongst women about our oppression can often lead to a pessimistic nihilism, where the only possible options seem to be either to accommodate ourselves to the way things are, or to separate ourselves from men completely. Both reactions are negative, neither capable of achieving what we should be aiming for - the abolition of sexual oppression. If we are to achieve this aim, then we



have to accept the fact that it is up to us to do something about it, and that involves collective action. It is vital that we campaign over issues like abortions and nurseries, and in initiating and playing fully participatory roles in such campaigns, we can increase our own confidence in our ability to conduct effective action without men telling us what to do and providing the correct analysis.

However, as Libertarian Socialists, we are committed to the fight against all oppression and we must ensure that we are not relegated to an auxiliary wing of this struggle, leaving the 'serious business' to be conducted by men. It is up to us to also work collectively, as women, within groups, to combat the male domination which threatens the democracy of the group. We have an important role to play in all aspects of politics and we must ensure that the fight against sexism is an integral part of the fight against capitalism and all forms of domination, even if that necessitates raising the consciousness of our male comrades.

From Libertarian Student. Spring 1980 issue available (price 10p) from FREEDOM bookshop.

BOOKSHOP NOTES

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