

FREEDOM

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FREEDOM FOR WHAT?

WE HAVE GONE through a week in which three disparate events have fused in the fuzzy mind of public and press into one theme - that of freedom.

The first event was the impassioned interview on BBC television by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the exiled Russian writer, in which he criticised 'The West' for the policy of detente and failure to protect freedom by 'standing up to the Russians'.

The second event was the sanctioning by Parliament of laws, yet to be enforced, making it compulsory to wear seat-belts in the front seats of cars in order to cut down the accident rate (or rather, the death and injury rate). This was attacked on the grounds of an invasion of individual freedom.

The third event was the abrupt resignation from the Labour Party of Lord George-Brown, former Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State, Department of Economic Affairs, on the grounds that the Party in sponsoring a bill sanctioning a 'union shop' particularly in the newspaper industry had inhibited press freedom. In his maudlin resignation interviews George-Brown claimed he was inspired by Solzhenitsyn.

The anti-Sovietism of Alexander Solzhenitsyn is understandable because of his imprisonments, his compulsory exile, and his knowledge, shared by us, that the USSR is blatantly a tyrannic State. But he shares with many intellectuals a treasonable concept, that because of his supremacy and knowledge in some fields he is to be regarded as knowledgeable in all spheres. At the same time, living as such professional intellectuals do upon the marketing of ideas, he is prey to flattery and sponsorship from dubious quarters. Solzhenitsyn was backed in the United States by George Meany, the AFL-CIO Union leader. On the surf-

ace the leader of an independent democratic trade union movement is a good sponsor for a political exile and fighter for freedom; however, any politically alert 'Westerner' knows that George Meany is as reactionary a union leader as any Soviet nominee. Strangely enough, Solzhenitsyn was drawn by his interviewer at the BBC into a falsely-based attack on Bertrand Russell with whom he shares the same intellectual treason. Russell, in the late forties, believed in the necessity of bombing Russia; this was akin to his switch from pacifism to support of the 1939-45 war.

Solzhenitsyn struck an old-fashioned note in his description of a betrayal by the West. This echoes the old controversy between Turgenev and Dostoevsky and other pre-revolutionary writers. It was held by the 'progressive' pre-Bolsheviks that it was precisely this lack of westernization that would lead to the downfall of Russia. The Russian revolution, which went so catastrophically wrong, arose when Russia was involved with the West in a disastrous war.

If Solzhenitsyn's criticism of Russia were on the usual Christian lines he could be satisfied that the moral tone of puritanism in the Soviet Union was sufficient to reassure even the most fundamentalist of sects - including even the proprietors of *Plain Truth*. Solzhenitsyn seems to have blundered into the 'Cold-War' trap of insisting that the West should be as militaristic as the USSR in order to overcome it. The achievement of military superiority and the build-up of the military-economic caste would (as in America) lead to the lessening of democracy and erosion of freedom in the name of 'freedom'. Truly as Blake says 'We become that which we behold'.

Solzhenitsyn has been deceived into thinking that anti-Sovietism is anti-totalitarianism; in any case, how about China? He also believes that the West is sincere in its devotion to detente. It is as sincere as the Soviet Union since both only resort to disarmament or promises of disarmament when it suits them. The ready discarding by President Ford for electoral purposes of the expression detente is evidence of this. Solzhenitsyn is a good man fallen among politicians. Freedom cannot be defended by states.

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From the sublimity of Solzhenitsyn to the ridiculousness of seat-belts. If we are to have the excrescences of

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If Only We ...

THE FALL in exchange rates for the Pound was a deliberate move on the part of the government to give this country's exports a competitive edge on the world's markets. With Britain's inflation rate running ahead of other countries' this is another way of devaluing the Pound. The only trouble is that this sort of thing causes panic on the exchange markets and countries start selling sterling which causes further panic. To prevent further selling the Bank of England has given support from its gold reserves. While exporters might gain advantage the increases on imported food and goods means further increases in the cost of living for the British public.

The TUC is so tied up with the Labour government that no protest has come from them. We are all playing our part in the continuing battle for economic survival. But as usual it is those at the bottom of the pile who will suffer most. Those on low and fixed incomes, such as the old age pensioners and the unemployed. Although we are no longer talking of the starving masses. But exploitation is much more than economic. The State manipulates the money markets in order to maintain the profits of the manufacturers. In all this the people have no say. No one asks the housewife, the pensioner, the worker or those drawing the dole what they think. People are expected to accept the acts of government who take decisions that affect the lives of so many. The system continues along its path of economic and technical 'progress'. But that 'progress' has nothing to do with the needs of people. In fact people are just so many producers and consumers. We have no say in what is produced and a lot of the demand for what is consumed is created by advertising. In fact on some goods their promotion costs as much as their entire production.

In this crazy situation speculation can make more money than a working class family can earn in a lifetime. And yet these same families perform useful tasks to earn their livelihood. Speculators, members of governments and all those forecasters and economists who tell us what is needed to get our economy right, produce nothing, or give no useful service to the community. They are the supporters of an economic system that gives power and privilege to a minority. They excuse, make allowances, and while they say all is not well at the moment, things will be better in the future, 'if only we---'

But money is only a means of exchange. Money itself produces and grows nothing. It is the labour of men and women that does this. It is not a question of 'if only we' did this or that but of changing the whole system, by removing and abolishing the power and privilege of the State and the corporations who now run and control our lives.

P. T.

Pensioners get up and fight the state.

"When you're 79 and haven't got enough to live on, the problems of the Cabinet are peanuts", a speaker pointed out to, to much applause, at a rally in Central Hall, Westminster.

The attempts of Mr. Michael Meacher (Under-Secretary at the Department of Health and Social Security) to explain the government's economic disorder did not cut any ice among those who had been on the road since 5.30 that morning. His speech was drowned in catcalls, handclapping and abuse. Right on--pensioners!

Freedom?

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the internal combustion engine (and who says we have to?) the modern state feels it has to enforce laws for what should be common sense to prevent the citizen harming himself and others. There is no freedom to circumvent physical laws and if one has chosen to hurtle about the country at speed and without responsibility it is only common sense to take precautions to minimize the harmful effects of the inevitable collisions. That such enforced precautions are debatable and that adaptations of the motor car for safety would be more significant are outside the apparent scope of ministerial thinking. The significant danger to freedom in such welfare legislation (the enforcement of crash helmets is another example) lies not only in the compulsion but in the fact that it is yet another grain of salt in the once pure water of the democratic doctrine. The change of and by quantity to quality will not take long. Continual salination by legislation will produce Dead Sea brine. Freedom will be lost not by the external actions of bad totalitarians seeking to corrupt but by good men enforcing laws against their own citizens for the greatest good of the greatest number.

Such has been the vista opened up by seat-belt welfarism that fervid opponents of smoking, acting, one will acknowledge from the best of evidence and intentions, are seeking to have smoking outlawed by legislation. Fortunately for human freedom if not for cancer statistics, the government's revenues are too well underpinned by tobacco taxes to make such legislation likely.

The loss of political and social freedom is a price which many Socialists - and most Communists and Marxists - feel is worth paying for the achievement of economic freedom. Lord George-Brown represents his disillusionment with the Labour Party as stemming from its invasion of freedom particularly in regard to unionization of newspaper offices. When George Brown, as he then was, was Minister at the Department of Economic Affairs, he launched a National Plan (1964) which, like so much else, ran into the sand, but, as ever, the citizens were more planned against than planning. The goal was a 25% growth in national output (of what?) over the next five years. To fulfil this plan (it was even of the same duration as the USSR plans) mobility of labour would be needed. "Encouraging workers to move from contracting to expanding industries will be a major task of the government". To achieve industrial efficiency "much more investment in plant and machinery and improvements in operating efficiency are needed if higher productivity is to be achieved." Back in 1964 George Brown's Plan even said that "public spending has not been adequately related to national output with the result that in some

STRUGGLING FOR A HOME

IT IS ESTIMATED that the Greater London Council has at least 7,000 homes lying empty and deteriorating in London. Such a claim can be substantiated by walking around the estates which are a feature of many parts of London. Boarded up windows and padlocked doors are commonplace. Whole estates can be seen in such a condition, either left high and dry by the government expenditure cuts before modernisation could be carried out or by the long bureaucratic processes that have to be completed before any work can begin. But where people are incensed enough to take direct action and take over these empty homes for themselves the GLC seeks the aid of the Courts to evict them into the streets.

This is happening at the Hornsey Rise Estate, where the GLC are trying to 'legally' turn out 200 residents. So far they haven't succeeded but once they manage to tie up all the legal loopholes the Courts will give the GLC the evict-

years it has caused a serious strain on our resources. Relating government spending to national output is the fifth task, which must be tackled".

Judging by the economic policies of the present government and by Mr. Healey's recent measures there is very little change in the intent of the government since 1964 (or in our plight) despite the interlude of a Conservative government committed, of course, to quite other policies --with the same results. So what has changed to make this conversion in George Brown? He, although now a Lord, is still his authoritarian and Right-ist self. He, like fellow Socialists Gunter and Robens, has carved himself a niche in the capitalist edifice which they intended some day to bring down. He was Economic Adviser to Courtaulds.

The logic of Labour Party policy towards the unions as a friendly power-bloc seems to have escaped Lord George-Brown, but much of his spleen may be attributed less to the prophet of Gulag than to George's failure to succeed in politics and to an unfortunate propensity to resign at the wrong time. Whether we should prefer George Brown drunk to Harold Wilson sober, as posited by The Times, is no choice at all. Freedom is not to be gained at the dispensation of power-hungry politicians and the freedom of the press has always been the freedom of the press lords and is unchanged by the substitution of the freedom of press union bosses.

Freedom does not consist in choosing one particular form of slavery as against another, or one politician against another or in defiance of physical laws but in awareness, responsibility and co-operation with one's fellows in a cohesive because voluntary society.

Jack Robinson.

ion order they seek. The squatters' press release informs us that the estate was built in 1927 by the then London County Council. "In 1972 the GLC began to rehouse tenants from the estate. As flats became empty many were vandalized by the GLC so that they became unusable; lavatory pans were smashed, floorboards ripped up, concrete poured down sewers. In October 1974 the first homeless people occupied some of the flats. About half the flats in the 3 blocks [out of the total of 186] are occupied by squatters. Two are still occupied by tenants."

The squatters include a mixture of couples with children and several one-parent families. The thirty children are mostly under five years old. Some are suffering not only the threat of eviction but bronchitis, arthritis of the spine, bronchial pneumonia, and one woman has a hole in her heart.

The squatters have organised a community cafe, a food co-op, a children's play group, a weekly encounter group, a community newspaper. Housing in the area is so bad that local college students have asked the squatters for flats on the estates.

During the squat there have been considerable difficulties with the electricity board. Electricity was refused during the first seven weeks. Then a year later the board, on the instruction of the GLC, tried to turn off the electricity in all three blocks on the estate. Squatters prevented this but police stood by and it was only when the Chairman of the GLC housing department intervened that the electricity board finally gave up. Various meetings with the GLC have met with little success. Promised meetings have not materialised and a lot of buck-passing has taken place. In November last year at a meeting with Mr. Balfe, the chairman of the Housing Committee, Mr. Balfe said that he was "not responsible for dealing with the Hornsey Rise Estate" and that a Mr. Judge, who is the chairman of yet another committee, the Housing Management Committee, was the man to see.

Mr. Balfe it seems did not want another Elgin Avenue on his hands. He told squatters the GLC wanted "revenge" after the squatters' victory. Mr. Judge however, on legal advice, would not attend meetings. There is Part 3 Short Life housing available but the GLC refuses to meet and negotiate with the squatters. They seem determined to carry on court proceedings and get their application for evictions granted.

The squatters say that a faction in the GLC has decided that Hornsey Rise should be "made an example of" and the squatters will be evicted without rehousing. The GLC have accused them of being "politically motivated and middle class". The squatters reply that: "Living in Hornsey Rise Estate is not comfortable and very few of us

KEELE CONFERENCE

KEELE ANARCHIST Group's conference on "The Anarchist Society -- an ecological and practical economic perspective" was held at Keele University students' union during the weekend of 12-14 March. The Saturday morning was dedicated to a confederation session. Unfortunately, owing perhaps in part to the Keele conference following so closely upon the last Warwick meeting, few of those who had been at Warwick turned up to take part in the arguments that arose from it, especially from the C.B.A. founding statement. Because of general dissatisfaction with this - which the previous conference had anticipated - it was suggested that an annual conference be held specifically to deal with such matters as revision of principles. This would hopefully go some way towards solving the situation whereby the work of one conference could negate the work of the previous one in the absence of a large number of comrades.

One question which will almost certainly arise is that of associate membership, first broached at Keele by a member of the Socialist Research Association who said that groups like Solidarity, Social Revolution, the Radical Statistics group, etc., which are partially or completely non-anarchist, might wish to be linked to the confederation. The association of libertarian

groups like Solidarity could certainly be valuable, but if there is to be a solid and workable organisational structure for British anarchists in this country, one must at all costs avoid the pitfall of modifying one's views to suit the libertarian left in general.

A full report of the conference is to be included in the next national bulletin. Suffice it to say here that the conference itself was well planned and organised.

During the Saturday afternoon participants were divided in alphabetical order into workshops for general discussion so that they had the chance to mix, as well as to clarify areas of interest and decide upon the more detailed Sunday workshops. These were designed to draw up draft reports, and suggest ideas for papers, for eventual incorporation in a pamphlet on ecology and alternative technology which the Keele group will publish later this year and which, it is hoped, will provide more solid answers than hitherto to questions like "What do we say to the Lucas shopstewards?" The workshops were divided into communications and information, the family, agriculture, industry and cities.

The considerable degree of consensus among those present was remarked upon

on and ascribed, at least in part, to the growing general awareness of problems concerning resources and ecological pressures. There was, for instance, a general, though not unanimous, tendency to see the need for decentralisation and small-scale industrial, agricultural, and urban units as more easily manageable and sympathetic to human needs; and a feeling that the role of anarchists in the ecological movement could be at least twofold -- to provide a foil to "middle class conservationist" sentimentalism about rural life while stressing the vital importance of organic agriculture, and to encourage the subversive elements in alternative technology, thus preventing it from being completely "recuperated" by the capitalist system.

Perhaps one of the most sensible points to emerge was that no activity could be called "anarchist" per se, that direct revolutionary action was not necessarily anarchist, nor were reformist acts necessarily unworthy of anarchist involvement (e.g. squatting where rehabilitation of housing stock was undertaken by the squatters, painting of zebra crossings!). The practical ways in which anarchists could contribute towards the transfer of society to an ecological technology, but, given the evident time limitation, not as yet entered into in any depth or detail.

Those who are interested in contributing towards the writing or production of the pamphlet should write to the Keele Anarchist Group, to whom many thanks for all the very hard work they put into this valuable and constructive meeting.

STRUGGLING FOR A HOME *cont. from P. 2*

would be doing so if we had somewhere else to go. These slanders are a cover up for the criminal failure of local authorities and central government to provide any solutions for the problems of homelessness, a failure which the squatters movement dramatically highlights."

The squatters demand: "That the GLC withdraw its threat of evictions and start negotiations. Housing for all as council tenants for families with the usual three offers of housing and decent short life accommodation for single people with a guarantee of rehousing."

Mr. Balfe and his Labour group took a considerable knocking for 'giving in' to the Elgin Avenue squatters. The resulting reaction to this reasonable response by the GLC has attacked squatters as 'housing list jumpers', 'layabouts', 'work shy', 'hippies', and a letter in The Times from Michael Havers, Tory MP, calls squatting 'a form of vandalism'. He like many others calls on the government to introduce legislation as recommended by the Law Commission. If these recommendations become law then squatting, the right of a roof over one's head, would become a 'criminal offence' with those found 'guilty' liable to prison sentences. However, even today, the State has enough laws in its armoury to send squatters to prison if the authorities want to proceed to such lengths. Several peo-

ple went to prison following the 144 Piccadilly and Endell Street squats of 1969. Eighteen months' imprisonment was also given after eviction of families from the Wykeham Terrace, Brighton occupation.

In so far as the current laws on property have to be defied, then the only weapon open to the homeless is further defiance of future legislation. If such legislation isn't 'politically motivated' it's hard to imagine what is.

The Hornsey Rise quatters are once again seeking negotiation with the GLC, the fifth occasion since November 1974. They repeat their demands for rehousing and say they have "no desire for a confrontation as our repeated approaches to you show". But it looks as though the GLC do want a confrontation with the Hornsey squatters rather than face the attacks they received after the Elgin Avenue deal.

By the time this is printed the GLC might have obtained their court orders. Indeed a confrontation could then take place and for the 'politically motivated' Labour politicians of County Hall this could suit their interests when the new trespass laws come before Parliament.

The Hornsey Rise squatters need support. Contact at 24 Welby House, Hornsey Rise Estate, Hazelville Road, N.19 or phone 272-9568 (11 am. until evening). Readers can also phone their protests to Mr. Judge (633-3036).

P. T.

NU(T)S

Mr. CHARLES Clarke, the president of the National Union of Students, called for "capitalism to be challenged by the nationalisation of all leading sectors of the economy" and he said, addressing the Birmingham Bow Group, "It is the anarchy of capital which is the root of the problem."

What anarchy, Mr. Clarke? Are you misled or just a puppet of the reactionary forces which hinder the working classes' liberation towards self-determination.

An anarchy of capital-- Where have we got that? Show us this, Mr. Clarke!

"Cheaper and more congenial"

UNDER A banner heading "The anarchists at the wheel!" the Evening Standard printed on 11 March a letter from Sylvester Stein of Regents Park:

"As I motor to work I wonder if there's any point in having traffic laws. No one bothers to keep them up. Anarchy would be cheaper and rather more congenial."

After mentioning some discourtesies by drivers, the cost of traffic wardens and back-up force, and the squad cars to be seen all day parked on double yellow lines near the police station, he concludes:

"If we could manage no worse under a system of anarchy we might be able to dispense with the police altogether, which would be far nicer in general as well as being a great saving."

UNION POWER

RECENT WEEKS HAVE SEEN the industrial action taken "illegitimately" by train drivers on British Rail's Eastern Region being countered by the ASLEF leadership. ASLEF agreed to a formula for how the cuts were to be implemented, and then ordered their members back to work. This occurred about a fortnight after Ray Buckton was widely quoted in the media concerning resistance to the rail transport cuts. Why this sudden somersault? Is ASLEF (as an institution) seriously against the cuts? Whose interests, in fact, do the union "leaders" represent?

The mass-media scream at us that the unions are too powerful. These rags make a habit of supplementing their cries of "sabotage" and "holding the nation to ransom" when reporting labour disputes with "objective" opinion-polls asking totally impartial questions like, "Don't you think the unions are too powerful, then?" The remainder of these objective studies go on to suggest that the majority (i.e. people buttonholed by the interviewers whilst they are shopping down Bond Street, or going back to their merchant bank offices after lunch) prefer to be held to ransom by the Confederation of British Industry, and have their standard of living sabotaged by the City of London's institutions.

Then again, the opinions expressed in the "blind" (the revolution is just around the corner, comrade) type of left-wing newspaper, is equally idiotic. They will enthusiastically report all and any action of the TUC-controlled unions, only stopping to criticise Len Murray for not having already led the storming of the Winter Palace. They suggest that the TUC and the Labour Party are basically good elements because they have "roots in the working class" and the only thing wrong with these monoliths is that they have the wrong leadership.

For some reason, however, union bureaucrats all over Europe are adopting a more "mature" approach, and abandoning their so-called "infantile extremism". Agreement to the "social contract" in this country is the most outstanding example of this change in attitude in recent years. A very similar policy is being pursued by the Italian Communist Party-led confederation of trade unions, the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (C.G.I.L.), whose supreme head, Luciano Lama was recently quoted as saying, "A policy which demands sacrifices from the workers necessitates a political direction which gives guarantees to these workers; in other words, a political direction which is representative of the forces called upon to sustain the full brunt of the policy of austerity and able to secure positive advances in the future in return for sacrifices made today."

In Germany, Scandinavia, Great Britain and Holland, the unions have become a component of the decision-making process both at firm level and at the governmental level. In Sweden this relationship has gone so far that the social democratic government have proposed legislation that makes approval of managerial decisions by the trade unions obligatory, and which, in cases of conflict, gives priority to the union view of the case. In Holland the independent union, N.V.V. has proposed another plan intended to give unions the power to veto managerial appointments, and at the same time making workers' participation obligatory in the determination of company policy.

The "strategies" of trade unions throughout Europe can now be seen to be parallel. National differences furthermore are due almost exclusively to different traditions and the degree of workers' militancy. However, there is no doubt that the unions have abandoned their traditional position of opposition to the "bosses" in favour of a "reasonable and responsible" attitude.

Here in Britain, there has for along time existed a difference between "official" and "unofficial" action. This factor provides the rationale behind the actions of the union bureaucrats. It is part of the reason for the quick intervention last week by ASLEF in ordering their members back to work. The reason why only "official" action can be tolerated is that the unions are engaged in an attempt to limit the power of the "bosses" not with the aim of eliminating the latter, but with that of establishing their power alongside the bosses, and thus co-operating with their traditional adversaries ("enemy" would be too strong a term in this case). "Unofficial strikes" and other action not authorized by the bureaucracy threaten to disrupt the trust which the unions have inspired in both capitalists and Government alike, and hence threaten to ruin the power strategy.

In August 1975 in Italy, there was a railway workers' strike by workers belonging to autonomous unions. Autonomous unions are a left-over from

the heady days of 1968-70 when the confederated unions (C.G.I.L., C.I.S.L. and U.I.L.) almost lost control of the workers' movement. These railway strikers in 1975 were, not surprisingly, strongly and viciously attacked by the confederated unions as being provocateurs and even fascists (because the fascist union C.I.S.N.L. had also supported the strike). The main reason for the militancy of the autonomous unions in this case was the appallingly bad negotiating record of the "official" representatives.

In Britain, whilst autonomous unions have never arisen, and would seem almost impossible to organise in the present climate, the wrath of the unions is directed towards the dramatically entitled "wildcat" strikers. It is the "wildcat" striker, however, who is actually aware of his/her actual situation, and who is often told by his/her bureaucratic overlords that his/her action is against the interests of the other union members, and hence, against the working class. The rank and file membership of a union has no come-back, however, against the activities of the union "leaders".

British unions control huge funds which are invested in the City (insurance schemes, unit trusts, etc.). The Swedish Landsorganisationen i Sverige commands funds of sixty thousand million kroner, or the equivalent of 30% of national savings, and it seems likely that within five years the L.O.'s funds will amount to 50% of national savings. The German union Deutscher Gewerkschafts Bund is the owner of numerous enterprises. Amongst the prizes of the social-democrat controlled D.G.B. are the Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft, the fourth biggest credit institution in Germany, the Neue Heimat, the most important construction firm in Germany, an insurance company, and an extensive chain of consumer co-operatives.

The massive bureaucracies called trade unions are, in reality, huge enterprises directed at controlling workers' struggles. The functionaries and managers of these huge enterprises have already taken on similar social roles to those of the managers of huge corporations, the difference being that whilst the latter control the means of production, the union "managers" control the workers. These two techno-bureaucratic classes are constantly becoming less opposed to each other, and consequently building stronger alliances against the people that they have always exploited.

Francesco.

The following is a statement produced by an Italian autonomous union organisation:-

"Workers are necessary - Bosses and bureaucrats are not!

The assembly held in 1974 by the union organisations of C.G.I.L.-C.I.S.L.-U.I.L.-S.N.A.T.E.R. imposed two absurd and false positions on the workers.

1) Either you trust us or there will be a power vacuum in these difficult times.

2) Either we defend monopolies or we lose our jobs.

The absurdity of the first point has been demonstrated by the experience of the workers movement in the last few years, by the re-appearance of workers autonomy expressing itself through the formation of Comitati di Base (rank and file committees), etc., and by our specific experience in May 1969; in all these instances the bureaucrats merely followed the workers' original example so as to prevent the formation of an alternative autonomous organisation. This is possible if the workers take as their own the right to struggle without delegating this right to the bureaucrats to lead them. The formation of autonomous organisations would strengthen the struggle against the bosses, which today has been slowed down and used for other purposes through the compromises by political parties who control the union federations and the firms.

The Sindacato Autonomo di Base has met with the enthusiastic support of many workers: this is the alternative!

The unions take the side of and defend the monopolists: the same is true of all government parties and other aspirants to the cake. Further, the reforms which they propose will merely serve to make the bureaucratic monster bigger. Thus for the unions it is a matter of defending the bureaucratic structures and not the jobs of workers.

The falsity of this threat of losing jobs if the monopolists are not supported is shown by the huge number of overtime hours which the workers are forced to submit to: thus, either these extra hours show the shortage of manpower, or they are an instrument of corruption which reduces the personality of the worker to the same low moral level of the bureaucracy! In any case it is also a manoeuvre by the bureaucrats to gain the workers support and acquiescence.

The Sindacato Autonomo di Base does not associate the defence of jobs with defence of the bosses, whether they are a private firm or a State Monopoly, and rejects the atrocious attempt to impose a contradictory leadership on the workers movement.

It is not monopoly which guarantees the right to work but the direct autonomous action of the workers.

Gruppo Iniziativa
Sindacato Autonomo di Base

MEXICO

Dear Comrades,

The purpose of this letter is to seek your solidarity.

The Mexican government has shown a liberal, progressive, at times anti-imperialist, face to the world: the reality is totally different. We are living through one of the most bloody, dictatorial and repressive régimes in existence.

During the last three presidential terms, the discontent of large sections of the people of our country has increased, leading to important struggles, which have been destroyed for the most part by resort to populist devices, or by very violent repression of a fascist type.

After the students/people's movement of 1968 which was violently suppressed by the military apparatus of the Mexican state (thousands of Mexicans were massacred or imprisoned), we are again experiencing the revitalization of a people's movement; the principal popular demands are, above all, the people's reply to a régime based on privilege which keeps millions of Mexicans in the most horrible poverty, and in a state of brutal oppression.

The only means that the Mexican government has used against organizations and popular struggles out of its control, has been, and is: REPRESSION. The nearness of the elections and the dangers that these struggles embody for the capitalist status quo have made the Mexican government opt for violent tactics, and they have carried out systematic repressive campaigns on a national scale.

At this moment, popular movements are suffering some of the most violent repressive actions ever mounted by the Mexican state. In 1975, faced with the government's inability to provide any solutions to the serious problems of the countryside, the poor peasants developed a broad movement of illegal occupations of land, a movement which the government tried to stop by means of genocidal actions, like the massacres in Veracruz, Guerrero, Tlaxcala, Hidalgo, Sinaloa, Michoacán, Sonora, etc.; hundreds of peasants were violently thrown off the land, dozens of them died, assassinated in cold blood; these crimes were committed by paramilitary groups and by regular units of the army placed at the disposal of the landowners. The latest act of official bestiality was carried out in Michoacán (January 1976) where 45 peasant families were violently attacked, resulting in the death of five starving, desperate peasants.

The problems of housing and the urban settlement of the country have been intensified by the migration of thousands of dispossessed peasant families to the cities, which has resulted in great mobilizations of marginalized sections of the population struggling for the possession of tiny areas of land on which to live. The Mexican government has unleashed a campaign of violence and repression against these so-called peoples' settlements. On the 30th January 1976 the inhabitants of Ixtacalco (one of the expropriated zones) were brutally attacked by anti-insurgency forces; days before, the humble dwellings had been set alight, and poison had been laid by official hands, resulting in the death of three children. As a result of what happened on 30th January, dozens of settlers were savagely assaulted, and/or imprisoned, and two of the humble inhabitants died.

The peoples' settlements in Monterrey, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero and Mexico City have been the object of systematic and brutal aggression by the Mexican state. In February 1976 the inhabitants of the people's settlement,

"Tierra y Libertad", in the city of Monterrey, were massacred.

On the 20th November, 1975 a demonstration of settlers, peasants and students was violently broken up, and eleven demonstrators died. This took place in Juchitan, Oaxaca province, and its aim, ironically, was to protest against repression.

The workers' movement has been developing from wage demands to political demands; at present the struggle is being carried on through trade unions independent of the state's corporative union apparatus. The strike, as a right and a weapon of the proletariat, has been totally crushed by the repressive forces. At the end of 1975, strikes at Morganite del Caribe, Pan Estrella, Spicer, Dixon, Duramil, Lido T., and in 1976 at Pan Aviación and TASA were violently attacked, and in some cases, broken; hundreds of workers were injured and detained, and the active militant worker, Bernardo Lazaro Gutierrez died from the blows he received.

The strike at Pan Aviación continues, after one year of struggle. This movement has often been attacked. For example, an attempt was made to break it on 29th January 1976, when hundreds of repressive elements descended on the strike, and abducted thirty workers and students. Despite this the strike is still on a struggle footing, and the strikers are demonstrating indomitable combativity. This strike must succeed, at all costs, because of the libertarian aspects present in it. The impossibility of mounting a national or local campaign of economic support for the strikers, moves us to exhort you to send as much as you can to support this movement.

We denounce the existence of paramilitary groups in town and country; the existence of secret prisons and concentration camps; the brutal means used by the government to destroy popular movements (kidnapping, torture, assassination); we denounce the state of siege which prevails in various regions of our country. We denounce Mexican Fascism.

Comrades, we appeal to you, as a matter of urgency, to expose the present state of affairs prevailing in Mexico, by means of your publications; to demonstrate your solidarity with us by sending this information to libertarian, socialist, and commercial publications in your country; to organize protests at the Mexican embassies and consulates in your area, handing over the list of demands* outlined below. We are trying to promote an international campaign of denunciation of Mexican Fascism. At present we do not have sufficient resources to undertake a task of such a scope. Any additional help in this area would strengthen our action. Fraternal greetings.

F.P. Correspondent,
Mexico City, 20/2/76.

*LIST OF DEMANDS

1. Resolution of the strike at Pan Aviación.
2. Freedom for the detained workers of Morganite del Caribe
3. Stop the attacks on the settlers of Ixtacalco,

STATE-TERRORISM, the only way ?

The State, cause of violence is to be accused and not the seven young South Moluccans on trial for the seizure of a crowded country train last December of whom one told the Dutch court in Assen that "violence was still the only way to get what you wanted".

Monterrey, and other settlements.

4. Stop the massacres of peasants.
5. Scrap the secret prisons and concentration camps.
6. An end to the state of siege prevailing in Guerrero.
7. Stop the strike-breaking. Respect for the right to strike and to demonstrate.
8. An end to attacks on peoples' schools.

Money, letters, and other forms of aid and solidarity can be forwarded to Mexico via "Freedom".

ITALY

An appeal court in Italy confirmed the life sentence for the individualist anarchist Gianfranco Bertoli. On the 17th. of May 1973 Bertoli threw a hand-grenade into a crowd attending the opening of a memorial for the mysteriously-murdered police chief Calabresi. Calabresi was the man who together with other police thugs murdered comrade Pinelli and then threw the body out of the window to make his death look like suicide. This memorial service for the State's loyal executioner was attended by many generals from both the army and the various police organisations, and also by the Minister for the Interior (at the time), Gui.

Bertoli's intention was to assassinate Gui, but Gui had already left the scene by the time that Bertoli arrived. However, seeing a mass of generals gathered together Bertoli tried to throw a bomb at them which, unfortunately, was deflected and claimed several innocent bystanders' lives.

It obviously suited the purposes of several powerful groups in Italy, at the time, to confuse the whole issue. The story put about by all the media at the time was that Bertoli was paid by the fascists to kill innocent bystanders so as to create further political tension which would have been advantageous for the planners of military coups.

Bertoli has always insisted that he is an anarchist individualist and the appeal hearing did, at least, help him to state his position yet again. The un-thinking section of the left will, however, always insist that Bertoli is indeed a fascist. Anti-fascism is so popular in Italy that even the Christian Democrats claim to have an anti-fascist tradition (a myth supported also by the Communist Party through its rag Unita').

Bertoli's lawyer summed up the situation very well at the end of the appeal hearing. "...the truth in this instance has been distorted in order to create a non-existent 'political truth'. Your job (i.e. the court) is to pass judgement based on real facts. Bertoli was on his own when he formulated the idea of the assassination attempt and was still on his own when he carried out this idea. His was an individualist act - the act of an anarchist who saw his action as a gesture against the authority of the State. He presented himself alone and in the moment in which he hurled his bomb he was fully aware that he was putting himself in the hands of the forces of law and order. He is thus the individualist anarchist who allows himself to be arrested in order to sign his gesture. In this, Bertoli is of the same mould as the anarchists of the 19th. century".

N.S.

CATEGORIES...

THE PROPOSED PLAN by a government agency to put unemployed men and women into four categories, reflecting such components as their "job stability" and their "amount of employment" has the TUC's approval.

This suggested plan, which still needs to be approved by Mr Michael Foot and the Manpower Service Commission (MSC) is going to be tested in 14 employment offices in North-East London. The official version is "to get people more speedily fitted into jobs, and to try to fit the person to the right job." The above scheme, if approved, would apply to the unemployed as well as to women or men looking for jobs.

If the North-East London experimental test case receives approval, "job applicants will be placed into one of the four categories A, B, C, and D by an interviewer who applies 3 factors." These factors are: "job stability," "realism," and "amount of employment." This necessitates the storage of the applicant's record of the number of jobs held, the reasons for, and frequency of, job changes and the grade of selectivity and enthusiasm shown by the applicant. Then the applicant is given a rating which will be fed into a computer for matching with job vacancies when they arise.

The computer system, so the MSC argues, "means extensive pre-selection of suitable people for submission to an employer." Already now, job hunting is a humiliating event. We all know very well that to get a job, especially as anarchists, we make compromises and prostitute ourselves to take the offered slave labour on the market as a matter of mere survival.

Now the job hunting is going to be depersonalized by the above proposed plan. However, every computer program, no matter how efficient it might be, still depends on the men who set it up and give the job-seeking people a rating. And, as we all know, that is done by the ruling class and its representatives.

Once again a few are forcing their ideology on the majority, and the modern labour slave either humbly submits or rebels. As anarchists we oppose this further example of rational irrational ruling by the ruling classes. Let us fight this plan wherever and whenever we can. If you are a union member, get your union to go against this plan of depersonalized personalization and categorising of the unemployed and of job-seeking workers. This is yet another attempt to label us, to pre-determine us and to hinder us in our struggle for self-realisation and self-determination.

Abraham.

AS OTHERS SAY IT

Equality before the law
"IF COHABITATION deprives a woman of her claim to supplementary benefit, ought it not equally entitle the man supporting her to the tax relief accorded to a married man?"

If it is unfair to treat the supported unmarried woman better than a wife, is it not equally unfair to treat her supporter worse than a husband?"

(Julian Peach)

--letter in *The Times* 11.3.76

LETTERS

TALKING TO POLICE

Dear Friends,

I'm sorry that I stumbled, truly stumbled, in into something called, by Arthur Moyse, 'the Battle for the Soul of Nicolas Walter'. Whatever that is, real or chimerical, it's nothing that interests me.

I liked N.W.'s response of 27 January. It is important to know what one can and cannot do, what one can and cannot do well, he is frank about that and I appreciate it. His correspondence with the police official, that FREEDOM published, had seemed to make being used and acceptance of a fee the central issues, and this had spurred me to work up a scenario that would take care of such reser-

vations.

But my letter was written for the sake of a general point, which I should not like to see lost. "Perhaps my point is obvious," I concluded; mayhap it wasn't. Arthur was able to read my letter as proposing that N.W. "expound" the philosophy of anarchism to the policemen--which is precisely what I was not proposing. (Not knowing me, I suppose he also thought that in saying that I wasn't writing in criticism of N.W., I was writing in criticism of N.W., with ironic courtesy, as is commonly done; it is not my habit to be ironically courteous to friends or comrades, I try to be direct, sometimes too bluntly, but Arthur could not know that.) I wanted to make the general point that we, and I would not except myself, are not always as imaginative as we could be and that we often react by adopting a political stance when there might be imaginative alternatives; we take a principled position and do not try to invent something. The trick, very often, is to change the rules of the game, even to break them--maybe especially to break them--and I wanted to illustrate the possibility even for this perhaps most unlikely of all cases.

In my example, one is asked to "expound" the philosophy of anarchism, obviously in order that the police will be able to deal more efficiently with anarchists, both in these comparatively tranquil times and in the event that England should become a Uruguay. But one could instead, I suggested, talk to one's audience about itself, about who they are and what they are doing, not as a ploy (as the word 'trick' might imply) but because it is people's lives and actions that we want to talk about and want to try to press them to think about. In suggesting that one might, then, write up one's talk as a pamphlet, I wasn't merely trying to solve N.W.'s fee-problem by finding an honourable use for the money. I had it especially in mind that a text of what an anarchist told (or, for that matter, might have told) policemen about their work and lives would be far more interesting, provocative, and useful, for general dissemination, than a treatise on how the free society will get along without policemen and laws. FREEDOM is in good part a chronicle of police-work but I thought how nice it would be to bring it all together, in one anarchist's experience and view of it. I think that about all this N.W. understood me well enough, but my elliptical manner of expression seems to have bemused Arthur, and perhaps others. Getting the anarchist idea out in the world, so that it will cease to be our wonderful beautiful secret, is what we are presumably concerned about, and there is one hell of a distance to be travelled: that is what I was trying to discuss and promote discussion about, what I hoped to stimulate reflection upon.

With best wishes, Fraternally,
N.Y. USA. David Wieck.

From Obi Holloway:

Staff of Life?

ABOUT A week ago an enormous poster appeared about 14 feet high and spread all over Stockholm apparently to improve our 'health'. It read "The Social committee says we should eat six to eight slices of bread daily." I translated it into English for a Greek immigrant who asked me what it was all about. "Oh hell," he said, "If I eat eight slices of Swedish bread daily I'll get some kind of stomach trouble or perhaps even sugar diabetes."

Uruguay

Thanks to the work of Amnesty International far more is publicly known about the repression being perpetrated by the state in another part of Latin America - Uruguay. Amnesty International have documented evidence of vicious tortures inflicted on the bodies of twenty two opponents of the Bordaberry régime, and they are circulating a petition, demanding from the President of the Uruguayan Republic permission for an independent international body to investigate the allegations of torture.

We have recently received a letter from a Uruguayan anarchist, now living in Sweden, which contains the following lines:

"These last years, I struggled for freedom in my country, suffered prison and exile. Now I am living as a refugee in Sweden. At this moment Amnesty International is making a campaign denouncing the violation of human rights in Uruguay. Among the thousands of prisoners, there are many anarchists. Currently they are being tortured in a horrible way in order to obtain information about anarchist clandestine organization. Please join the campaign: get in touch with Amnesty International in London*."

Uruguay actually has a higher inflation rate than either of the other two most repressive dictatorships in Latin America - Argentina and Chile - combined. Uruguayan (and Chilean) leftists seem to prefer to take their chances in Argentina, where the death-squads are private enterprise - the Argentinian Anti-Communist Alliance - rather than corporate state-run. The Latin American military in power seem to be efficient at only one thing - physical extermination of opposition (there is active opposition in Argentina, in the shape of clandestine trade unions, and the Montoneros guerrillas). We are rather glib in the use of the word "Fascism", in Europe, but it seems to be alive and well, and thriving in Latin America.

Regular readers of "Freedom" will recall the 'Comunidad del Sur' anarchist community in Southern Uruguay. That has now been broken up and dispersed. All our efforts must be to revive that experience in Latin America.

D.L.M.

*53 Theobald's Road, London WC1.

Dear Freedom,

Enough is enough. Arthur Moyses may well be a very nice man, but I've never met him, which leaves me free to launch into a personal attack. Why do you insist on filling space with his ramblings round the galleries? I've never met anyone who admitted to being much enraptured with them. It's not just the fact that they're always London-based, which is annoyingly irrelevant in this part of the world [Sheffield], nor the infuriatingly tortuous prose style - my main grumble is the overpowering stench or organised marketed Culture - the one capitalist commodity that helps to sell all the others. The Art World is as much of a disgusting racket as any other bit of the consumer society, and Mr Moyses knows this. To be sure, he is critical - he couldn't really be otherwise, being an anarchist, but he still manages to keep one foot inside the gallery door - there's always a "but"...

"Upon this Brick" sums it up - André's 120 bricks may be beneath contempt, But Mr Moyses would have us believe that such minimal, empty, less than human gestures still have some kind of objective value because they "are the ferment of ideas within a culture", because they they force society "to examine and challenge its own moribund values". Do they hell! The debate about the Death of Art has been going on and off for decades, ever since the Dadaists, and by now has become a highly marketable commodity. No self-respecting artist or art-critic (except Arthur Moyses) these days fails to limp around in sackcloth and ashes, modishly bewailing their own uselessness. How sincere! How searching! How saleable... The emptiness of today's Art is the mouthings of a dying culture that hasn't even anything left to say; but offer chunks of nothingness for sale and cultured idiots will still buy them. This moribund culture is going to be on the market for a long time, too, and no doubt Arthur Moyses will still be around to chronicle it, secure in his unique role as the nation's one and only anarchist Art critic.

"If in this moment in time there is no talent, then the vacuum must be filled", he says, "or we all go home". For Christ's sake let's go home then, and consider doing something worthwhile for a change. After all, the Situationist International, which contributed much useful theory to the current revolutionary movement, was initially composed entirely of artists and men of "culture", who as long ago as the mid-Fifties realised the pointlessness of paying any attention to Art, preferring to work towards the total annihilation of all our social institutions, to pave the way for a new onrush of creativity which will transform the whole of life, in ways previously unimaginable.

"Freedom" seems to be addicted to comment. If anything hits the headlines, then an anarchist "line" must be concocted to provide comment on it, and specialist anarchist commentators cultivated to do the job. What a tiny life a specialist must lead. Doesn't Arthur Moyses have anything to say on anything else but culture? If so, why don't we hear it?

Capitalism thrives on debate within its own terms. It is specially fond of those who make a show of despising some aspect of mystification, such as Art, while still clinging on dependently. Not only do they pose no threat, but they provide a handy safety-valve to ease off discontent. It's easy enough to be derisive about the "fashionable small talk" in the Angela Flowers Gallery, but Arthur is still stuck in there with the best of them. Who in their right minds

LETTERS

gives a toss for the Angela Flowers Gallery anyway? Why must we always trail along in the wake of the capitalist circus? Let's pick our own battleground for a change...

Yours Philistinely,
Richard Warren.

Franco Lombardi replies to Dolgoff

Dear Comrades,

I have carefully followed the debate between Vernon Richards and Sam Dolgoff in the pages of "Freedom". Now I would like to say something about the last "Dolgoff replies" (to which you very suitably added "Malatesta sighs").

I'm not a historian nor a controversialist, so I won't dwell on noting all the contradictions, the forgeries, and the misinterpretations which Dolgoff falls into, as he glues together various separated sentences, puts into Richards' mouth things he never said, etc...

I'm an anarchist and what I'm interested in is the crucial pointing underlying the debate - I don't believe the question is whether the leaders of the CNT-FAI ever posed themselves "Dolgoff's dilemma": governmental collaboration or anarchist dictatorship. I think there is no doubt that they, unfortunately, did pose themselves such a "dilemma"; Vernon Richards himself shows this in his book, "Lessons of the Spanish Revolution". But the point is that, as Vernon Richards points out, this was a false dilemma for anarchists.

To speak of "anarchist dictatorship" is sheer nonsense, and a contradiction in terms: either there is dictatorship, or there is anarchism.

Therefore the choice was between governmental collaboration; which means dictatorship over the working class (in whatever form it is exerted) on the one hand, and social revolution on the other.

To fight against fascism does not mean to support bourgeois democracy or a Popular Front, it means exactly the contrary because bourgeois democracy breeds the very historical conditions which facilitate the rise of fascism.

What Spain's historical circumstances demanded that the CNT-FAI leaders do (what historical circumstances always demand that anarchists do) was to carry on anarchist practice, to carry on social revolution. (The example of the Makhnovschina can be enlightening on this subject). It could be that our Spanish comrades would have lost the war against Franco, against world fascism, all the same, in a shorter or a longer time, we have no evidence either way.

But we are anarchist precisely because we believe that the question is not to choose the "lesser evil", but to pursue the welfare of the whole human race by the only possible way: the way of freedom.

Just as our comrade Armando Borghi wrote: "The least among all the lesser evils is always to be coherent with our ideas." This is exactly

what the CNT-FAI's leaders were required to do.

If Dolgoff thinks that anarchism isn't "realistic" enough to fight with against fascism and bourgeois dictatorship; if he thinks that collaboration in government could really be a possible alternative, nothing is stopping him from joining one of the innumerable parties preaching "realistic" and "scientific" socialism. But he must remember that anarchists will never become "less anarchist because the masses are not ready for anarchy" or, least of all, because we are "in a mixed and most complicated situation".

Fraternally yours,
Franco Lombardi, Forlì.

BOUQUET

Dear Freedom,

I wish to thank you all for producing such an interesting and enlightening magazine. Since buying a copy last week I have begun to cultivate a new awareness. I was especially impressed by the content of the articles, which appear to be without the constraints of the usual strict party politics.

I have felt that politics has been becoming more and more abstract and divorced from the real needs of the individual. Political parties, recently credited with being "new" or "radical", have all become an integral part of the establishment and the state. Many of the "leftist" groups now actually play an indispensable part in the British political system.

I refer especially to the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) because I have recently left. This party is dominated by a small group of theorists of the Stalin-type who determine all policy and censor all publications. The party claims to be run on the principles of Democratic Centralism. There is no dispute over the party's centralism; the democracy is nowhere to be seen. Incidentally, this party is one of the "Heinz 57 Varieties", all of which claim to be the party of the working class.

I was deluded into believing that this party was somehow different but soon realised that it was no different to the rest and only wishes to replace the present repressive state with one of even greater suppression.

I soon came to realise that I was a libertarian. I was called an "Ultra-leftist" or a "counter-revolutionary" for expressing views which were only a natural desire for freedom. Nevertheless, I was not purged but left of my own accord.

Since reading "Freedom" I have become interested in Anarchism. I intend to follow this up by getting in contact with someone nearby.

Yours,
Yorkshire.

S. Barnett

PRESS FUND

26 February - 10 March

BELFAST: P.S. £ 1; LONDON NW3: T. Mc 40p; TEDDINGTON: H.W.C. 34p; BIRMINGHAM: B. & M.D. 50p; LONDON SW8: J.H. £ 1; LANGSIDE, Aberdeensh. G.W. £ 5; DAGENHAM: A.J. 70p; WAKEFIELD: R.H. 85; IN SHOP February: P.W. £ 1.80; Anons 28p; R.J.J. £ 5; LONDON NW2: D. S. £ 5; LISBON: V.C. 24p; DURHAM: M.S. £ 1; SYDNEY: C. & R.P. £ 5.70; GLASGOW: A.J. 8p; WINDSOR, Ont.: F.A. £ 1.50; SHEFFIELD: R.A.D. £ 1.70; LEEDS: G.H.L. 26p; LONDON N3: A.C. 70p; SUTTON: B.R. £ 1.70; WHITWORTH: D.C. 20p; LONDON E4: S. & A.G. 50p; SALISBURY: D.F. £ 1; HARROW: C.R. 35p; WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £ 2; J.K.W. 20p; DANBURY: P.W.C.: £ 1.70; ACCRINGTON: G.M. 70p; BRIGHTON: N.J. 84p; LONDON NW3: D.R. £ 5.70; BATH: M.P.H. £ 1.62.

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NEXT DESPATCHING DATE of FREEDOM is Thursday 1 April. Come and help from 2 pm onwards. You are welcome each Thursday afternoon to early evening for informal get-together and folding session.

WE WELCOME news, reviews, letters, articles. Latest date for receipt of copy for inclusion in next Review section is Monday 22 March; for news/features/letters/announcements is Monday 29 March.

CONTACT

MEETINGS

HARROW March 23rd. Harrow anarchists / LPYS. Nicolas Walter speaking on Anarchism 8 pm at Friends Meeting House, Rayners Lane (nr. the tube).

EAST LONDON Libertarians Group next meeting on Wednesday March 24 at 123 Lathom Road, East Ham. Starts 7.30. pm.

SOUTH-EAST LONDON Libertarians Group meets Wednesdays. Contact Georgina - phone 852 6323

MANCHESTER Industrial Network Conference 10 & 11 April. For details contact Manchester SWF c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester M.1.

WEST GERMANY. 9-11 April. Film review on Spanish Civil War at SCHWABISH HALL. The communal cinema "Kine im Schafstall" will show documentary films, Augustin Souchy will speak on "The Social Revolution in Spain". More details from Paul Zimmermann, 717 Schwabisch Hall, Johanniterstrasse 17.

NEW YORK CITY. Discussion-socials "It's my life, or don't tread on me". March 26: United Farm Workers film "Why We Boycott". April 2: "S-1, the New McCarthyism". April 9: Edna Zimmermann "The Struggle for Human & Civil Rights in N.Ireland". April 16: Ralph Fucetola et al "Libertarian Practices in Tax Resistance". April 23: "Forced Labor Camps in the People's Republic of China". April 30: Jim Peck "FBI Witch Hunts from the Freedom Rides to Today". At Freespace Alternate U, 339 Lafayette St., N.Y.C. (tel. 228 0322).

LONDON Hyde Park Speakers Corner, Anarchist Forum alternate Sundays 1 pm. Speakers, listeners & hecklers welcomed.

PEOPLE/PUBLICATIONS &c.

IS ANYBODY interested in commemorating the 100th anniversary of Bakunin's death? Any ideas? contact Karl Cordell, 40 Elm Rd. Chessington, Surrey KT9 1AW

SCHOOLING. Does it really matter where our kids learn to read and write? We're torn between hatred of the existing set up and not wanting to isolate them. We're interested in hearing from people with big kids who've already made the 'big decisions' and anyone else who is thinking about it now. Our kids are 2 years and 14 months. Joan Harmer, 6 Melbury House, Fentiman Rd. London SW8 FULHAM area. Are you interested in trying to get off the ground an Arts Centre or in forming a group of dissidents amongst the people who feel oppressed artistically? Contact John St. Claire, 43 Tynemouth Avenue, London, S.W.6.

WANTED: Books on Utopias past, present and future. Also Rickards "Posters of Protest and Revolution" and "The Fringe of British Politics" author unknown (George Thayer?). Bob James, Hemingford Farmhouse, Telham, Battle, E. Sussex.

GROUPS

BATH anarchists & non-violent activists contact Banana, c/o Students Union, The University, Claverton Down, Bath.

BIRMINGHAM anarchists contact Bob Prew, 40C Trafalgar Rd., Moseley, Birmingham 13.

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

Anyone interested in the Syndicalist Workers Federation contact or write SWF same address CORBY anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants NN1 2II.

COVENTRY. Peter Come, c/o Students union, University of Warwick, Coventry.

DUNDEE. Alistair Dempster, c/o Students Union, Airlie Place, Dundee.

DURHAM. Martin Spence, 17 Avenue Road, High Shincliffe, Durham.

E. LONDON Libertarians write c/o Ken Weller, 123 Lathom Rd. East Ham, E.6.

EDINBURGH. Bob Gibson, 7 Union Road, Edinburgh.

GLASGOW group c/o A. Ross, 17 Bute Gdns. Hillhead. Libertarian Circle last Tuesday of every month.

HARROW, write Chris Rosner, 20 Trescoe Gdns., Rayners Lane, Harrow, HA2 9TB.

IRELAND. Libertarian Communists contact Alan MacSimoin, 4 Ard Lui Park, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

LEEDS anarchists contact Cahal McLaughlin, 15 Brudenell Grove, Leeds.

LEICESTER anarchist group contact Peter & Jean Miller, 41 Norman St. Tel. 549 652.

LEICESTER Libertarian Circle Thursdays at Black Flag Bookshop, 1 Wilne Street.

OXFORD anarchist group c/o Jude, 38 Hurst Street.

PORTSMOUTH. Rob Atkinson, 21 Haverstock Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants.

OVERSEAS

AUSTRALIA - Canberra anarchist group 32/4 Condomine Court, Turner Camil 2801.

Melbourne. Martin Jones Peters, c/o Dept. of Philosophy, Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria.

NEW ZEALAND Steve Hey, 35 Buchanans Road, Christchurch 4 (tel. 496 793).

CONCERT in aid of the disabled and war-wounded of the Spanish Civil War in exile who will not be getting a pension from Juan Carlos. Artists giving their services will include:

John Williams, internationally famous guitarist; Carlos Bonell, Spanish guitarist extraordinaire; Viram Jasani, Sitar player with Tabla accompaniment; Cokaygne, Birmingham-based folk group. Saturday 3rd April, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Buffet and bookstall open 7pm, concert begins 7.30. Admission: £ 1. Further details from Centro Iberico, 83a Haverstock Hill, London NW3.

LONDON MEETING on: Political Opposition inside the U.S.S.R. Speaker: Terry Liddle. At: Roebuck pub, 108 Tottenham Court Road. On: Sunday 28th March, starting 7.30 pm. Organized by Central London Anarchist Group.

CORRECTION

BOOKSHOP OPENING hours on Sundays are incorrectly stated in the Bookshop Notes (Review section page 15.)

On Sundays we are open between 1.30 and 5 p.m.

MAY '68: ANY LESSONS?

THE CRITIQUE of the separation between daily life and political activity had certainly been formulated before May 1968, in some magazines with a low circulation (and as different as *Socialisme et Barbarie* and *Internationale Situationniste*, in France, for example), but this was the first time that that separation was challenged in real life, and on so massive a scale.

This separation constitutes the specific schizophrenia of the revolutionary militant, the monk-soldier of modern times. The militant is a disciplined being, who has sacrificed his life, his desires and his passions to the Organization. He is an essentially moral being — judged by the canons of middle class morality —, he is not a pederast, he is a good family man, (or mother, or child), he is an exemplary worker whether he is a mechanic, an engineer, a University professor or a cop. And once a week, or everyday after work, he is "militant". That is, he does what the Organization orders him to do.

The militant is asked to accept all social constraints and to invest his inclinations to revolt in the Organization — and only in it —, which will manage them, to his advantage. Organizations which reproduce internally the hierarchy of executives/operatives that dominates Society, of which they are one of the mechanisms for integrating militants by a subtle reversal which transforms their primary desires — to struggle against capitalist power — into their contrary: dialectical reinforcement of Power; or, at the worst, the alternative of a different, "revolutionary" power, that is, an even more authoritarian version. The militant thus undergoes a double enslavement: he is enslaved by society through political power, through work and through morality, etc., and in endeavouring to struggle against this he joins an organization which enslaves him in its turn, by assigning him tasks, a discipline, and duties. Do not imagine, however, that he suffers because of this: encountering, within the organization, an replica of the rules and taboos which dominate society gives him a sense of security, lets him feel at home. Moreover, within the Organization as much as outside it, he is subjected to the fantasy of efficiency.

All this was shattered in May. To the sacrifice and the discipline demanded by all the hierarchical powers in society as well as by revolutionary organizations — which make up part of it — the May movement replied: neither sacrifice, nor discipline, nor investments of toil for your future, whose hideous features can be made out through experiences of revolutions that died; it is here and now that we have to act, and for ourselves.

To the lure of a political solution to the problems raised — whether it were to take the form of a change of government, so as to produce better and more, or a change of State, so as to produce more and better —, the May movement replied, neither "a left-wing government", nor "a Workers' State", but an immediate, radical fight for freedom. The struggle for freedom forms a unity, and the separation between daily life and political activity is only a specific form of enslavement. For what freedom would a woman have, who, after her weekly (or daily, it's unimportant) hour of "militantism", went back to her hearth and home and her domestic tasks? The examples could be multiplied to infinity.

All this was said in May, very clearly and much better and more strongly than it can be said now by me, the paltry transcriber of a revolt, one of whose more attractive features was the beauty and creativity of a liberated language.

Thus it was, for example that the demand for sexual freedom came to the forefront of the demands made by the May movement, to the great scandal of all the priests of the workers' movement. There can be no doubt that the working class organizations are so attached to the dominant ideology that they have become its last — or almost its last — temple guards, at the very moment that we are experiencing the major crisis of traditional values. If you believe in sin, Gentlemen, you ought to say so. The May movement was atheist.

And it's not an accident that the May movement contributed strongly to the blossoming of a whole series of actions and groups, such as Womens' Liberation, Homosexual Revolutionary Action Front, etc...which have taken politics away from the usual well-beaten paths, and brought into the open problems and demands which up to now had been suppressed in political groupings of Left and Right, under the iron rule of a repressive morality. I have neither the space, nor the desire to go, here, into a critique of these sexual liberation groups — and others — but it cannot be

denied that they have contributed to the bringing to light of the discriminations which afflict women and homosexuals in our so-called permissive society. Other different and equally important problems, such as those of abortion, of "marginal" people, be they "cowboys" or not, of immigrants, of prison, etc. have been faced, not without some success, thanks largely to the new spirit unleashed by the May movement.

Through the critiques of everyday life, the right to pleasure, the freedom of each individual to the "good" or "bad" use of his body, etc. have been unveiled with fresh force, as well as the retrogressive, puritan, bourgeois, exploitative aspect of "revolutionary" organizations, and their real role in the society which they claim to attack, the better to defend it.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT, to my way of thinking, aspect of the May movement, linked to everything which has just been said, is its anonymity. No vanguard, no "representative" bureaucracy, and thus no historic leaders. Of course the old world tried, notably by means of the mass-media, to designate leaders, to give an name, a face, a label to that anonymous, joyous crowd. That's why they tried to make Jacques Sauvageot, because he was president of the UNEF (French NUS) and Alain Geismar, because he was secretary of the SNE-sup (union of teachers in higher education), the leaders of the student revolt. But they never were, and they were never recognised as such, except by a few clueless hack journalists.

The case of Dany Cohn-Bendit, who was also designated a "leader", is more ambiguous. It has to be observed that he represented no organization of any kind whatsoever, but the "enrages of Nanterre", that is, in a way, anti-organization. On the other hand, his attitude during the events was sometimes contradictory on this topic. For, if he forcefully asserted everywhere the profoundly libertarian meaning of the movement, if he expressed its content more pertinently than all the insignificant leaders of all the "groupuscules"; if he constantly declared that he spoke in nobody's name but his own, he did not succeed in freeing himself completely from the "brand image" created for him by the mass media. This was not simply because he took increasing use of opportunities to speak "in the heat of the fight", that he consented to give numerous interviews, etc., but also because he negotiated with the bureaucrats over the position he and his friends would have on the 13th May march: the front. Which is one way as good as another of entering into the hierarchical game of the bureaucracy, and into the kind of power relations and compromise whose harmfulness he did not otherwise (including the evening of the 13th May, on the Camps de Mars) cease to denounce. He tried many times to break the brand image of "leader of a new type" (including going abroad, as if he were trying to gain a breathing space), whilst sometimes lending himself to undertakings which reinforced this spectacular image.

But, in any case, he was recognised. I need no further proof than that gigantic demonstration, which formed up spontaneously when it was announced that he had been banned, by the French authorities, from returning to France. It was a demonstration that deployed slogans extremely provocative to a whole "well-heeled" tradition: "We are all German Jews!" How provocative it was can be judged by the poster the "maoists" brought out, which, censuring the slogan, proclaimed: "We are all foreigners". Which takes away most of the bite, for "foreigner" could mean "Swiss" or "English", somewhat more decorous than Jew and German. And in this case, the possible alibi of "the struggle against Zionism" for this censorship of the slogan, only revealed the racism more clearly.

However, we must not exaggerate the negative importance of this recognition of Cohn-Bendit as a "leader", which is, in itself ambiguous, as it was the "anti-leader" which was recognised in him. Of course, in a distorted way, this comes to the same thing. But the "leader" has voluntarily returned to anonymity, whilst others have sunk in the ridiculousness of the "new resistance", or of successive and diminutive candidatures for the Presidency of the Republic. So, despite a few accidents along the way and the desperate and clumsy attempt of the mini-bureaucracies to put forward their leaders, and to present themselves as the "vanguard", the "disorder" of May was, and remains, essentially anonymous. And it is best like that.

TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, no serious analysis has been done on the exemplariness of May as far as one of the unresolved problems, the veritable squaring of the circle of the revolutionary movement, everywhere

in the world, is concerned, that is, the problem of organization.

In May-June 1968, the traditional organizations of the working class and their satellites - those hypnotized rivals - the trotskysts and the maoists, were once again unmasked as retrogressive and repressive forces of order, but besides this, they also demonstrated their total ineffectuality when faced with a radically new movement. I have said that if the trade union and political bureaucracy succeeded in maintaining a large section of the working class within the limits imposed by itself, that was because that section did not wish to go further. But when people wanted to go further, whether it was in student circles or not, the leninist groups, in search of customers, and thus obliged to try to tag onto the masses, to control and organise, to put themselves at the head of the demonstrators, etc., ran around like mad things in the most complete shambles, only capable of applying here and there brakes which rode over one after the other, of sending out instructions, which were partially followed or not at all, of running out of steam in attempts at organising stewards who were overwhelmed everywhere.

It has to be stated, however, that if spontaneity became a living and creative reality, which continually overwhelmed the organizational practices of the aspiring executives, some things were organised in May-June 1968. A study of this question, and of the multiplicity of initiatives in this direction, would merit a good many pages, but I will limit myself to summarising the essential.

As the movement of May demonstrates, it is perfectly possible to organise and co-ordinate a multiplicity of activities in the midst of a profusion of initiatives, and of the great joyous disorder of that time, like in other periods and in other countries, without having recourse to traditional organizations, leninist or not, centralised or democratic.

The answer to the problem unresolved anywhere - anywhere - of revolutionary, but non-hierarchical, non-repressive, efficient, but not substituting for the masses, organization, lies precisely in the direction of organization and co-ordination of freely-chosen activities, and not in the organization of men.

Whatever you do, whatever we do, the very principle of what I call, for simplicity's sake, "the organization of men", presupposes absolutely a settled doctrine, a flag, ancestors, imaginary roots in a tradition - even when you lay claim to an anti-doctrine, an anti-flag, and so on. When men gather together in an organisation around a system of theoretical commonplaces, they create specific relationships between themselves, an unhealthy tissue of references to "coherence", "truth", "knowledge", recreate a specific form of hierarchy, even if it has been theoretically contested and denied in weeks of discussion. Gathered snugly together in the reassuring cocoon of this family (or chapel or sect) the members of group X or Y have an inevitable tendency to reject others, to consider them less coherent, less revolutionary, further from the truth, and so on. It is possible that collective work within groups or organizations puts people on their mettle, to begin with, and encourages initiatives. But, besides the fact that collective work can be done outside groups and organizations, experience shows that the first burst of enthusiasm hardly ever lasts, and that the relationships between members of one group become fixed, stratification sets in, individual expression gets less and the spokesmen of the group, speaking more and more on everybody's behalf - and especially on behalf of those who do not speak - invent a we near to that of bureaucratic language, which progressively liquidates the I, that is, individual expression, individual initiative. The problem of tasks and duties also comes up, because for a group to exist it must have an activity which is not simply the editing of a bulletin or a magazine. (In any case, I do not see why people could not come together to produce a magazine, and separate to do other things). The primary activity of these groups, even the most interesting of them, even those which have left a lasting impression, is the group itself, the "life of the group", which takes up a lot of time and is often boring, when the personal problems that are inevitable when one lives at close quarters isolated from the rest of society, and which often turn into delirium pure and simple, do not intervene. As for the militant tasks (even if one rejects the jargon), experience shows that rotation of them, even though it is a seductive idea, is not sufficient, in the long run, to liquidate boredom, paralysis, and a certain amount of "specialisation". It is exactly the same with relations to reality which, when filtered through theory, very often gets distanced, and the further the group gets from it, the louder the demand within the group for "rigour", for "theoretical purity". In brief, sectarianism.

I am not caricaturing here, on the contrary. Concrete experience of revolutionary groups, including the most anti-hierarchical, proves that my reservations are feeble when related to the real situation.

"The organization of activities" is not a panacea. There is no panacea, no more for this problem than for others, and everything has always to be brought into question. I simply claim that between the group (or organization, which, whatever we say or do, is always constraining, and solitude, there is another way; that one can, as was done in May '68 - and at other times - organize activities of all kinds, from the "battle of ideas" (magazines, publishing co-operatives, etc.) to wildcat strikes, to struggle against dictatorship - in Spain and elsewhere - and to the struggle against

bureaucracy everywhere, etc., without having to go through the process of getting agreements between revolutionary groups, made all the more difficult by each group's determination to define itself as different.

In reality, this is already happening in many countries and in connection with different activities, and if it hasn't attained the level we could desire, that is because of the myth of the group, of the organisation, which is often taken as a necessary preliminary to any activity.

The organization and co-ordination of activities on a national, or even international scale, begins with the choice, freely made, of such and such activity which is in itself significant, and allows individual participation and initiatives, thus breaking with isolation. Groups and committees of all kinds could equally well participate in this, or even better, create and dissolve themselves for such and such a specific revolutionary activity.

I know very well that I will be accused of "practicism", of extolling an "activism" unsupported by a theory setting out objectives and the means of attaining them, but besides the fact that I am suspicious about this type of theory, one can go back again to the example of May, when the activities in themselves were the copious source of a radical critique much more fruitful than a good number of learned books, when ideas were produced in great profusion, when theoretical discussion was permanent and free, and when all this and much more besides, was organized without the organizations, traditional or not, by individuals freely grouped for particular actions, and when in the great disorder of that time - which was a great obstacle to co-ordination - it was this way of doing things which revealed itself as being more efficient than those of the traditional organizations. This is food for thought.

I AM NOT GOING to conclude by drawing up a balance sheet. The May movement is not a business undertaking in liquidation whose losses we have to calculate. Of course, the old world is still there, and very solid. The workers' bureaucracies have picked up again. If they have taken anything over from the language of May (self-management, changing life) it is only for the sake of improving their role-playing.

On the other hand the example of May caused hundreds of thousands of people throughout Europe to revise their ideas. In Spain, for example, hundreds and hundreds of young people broke with bureaucratic organizations overnight to try to invent something else. All over the place, relations to authority, to politics, to work, etc. were completely transformed.

As for the problem which most people bring up and which is the ritual conclusion of this kind of article, viz., did the May movement "advance the revolution", did it constitute, or not, a step towards revolution, was it profitable from this point of view, etc.; I am not going, in my turn, to slide into this kind of triumphalism. I just don't know.

What I do know, on the other hand, is that we have to re-examine the very problem of revolution, rejecting the utopian simplism inherited from the nineteenth century, based on the idea of a D-Day of the revolution, and on the "conquest of power" that magic key which will open the gates to happiness... What I do know is that revolutionary faith is a substitute for religious faith and I am an atheist. I also know that the struggle for power reinforces Power. And that to live differently from the way one wants to live - in the full sense of the word - according as one believes or not in the Revolution, rests on a priestish mentality and practice.

Carlos Semprun-Maura.

(Translated from INTERROGATIONS no.2, by D.L.M. For details of the latest issue, no.6, of this excellent quarterly magazine, see the Bookshop Notes, elsewhere in the Review Section).

"The experience of all groups after May 1968 showed that it is impossible to avoid certain questions. For example, who are we? How shall we function? Who is part of the "we" and who is not? Is there a "we"? And what is the "we"? The last question is very important - this "we" can be mystifying and alienating. Moreover, most of the time people in organizations do not say "we" but "the party", "the group", etc. Whatever the case may be, this "party", this "group" - or this "we" - is defined, at least ideally, by implicit or explicit reference to a defined, completed theory. However, I think this conception of a theory is a mystifying fantasy. People must gather together because they share a project - a revolutionary project. One can say, then, that the difficulty is only misplaced. But I would say more, that it is made considerably worse. The reason is that a project carries a dimension of perpetual elaboration which is never completed. It is open, implying a subjective attitude which is entirely different in regard to theorizing. In sum, I categorically reject the possibility of a complete theory, or theoretical sovereignty. Nor will I accept just anything for the sake of talking about it. (Something that is practiced almost universally today by people who believe they have broken through traditional frameworks only to become a different kind of prisoner. The "dominant discourse" in a certain area today, that horrible red herring Freudian-Nietzschean-Marxism, is strictly a just anything.)

Cornelius Castoriadis, alias Pierre Chaulieu, alias Paul Cardan, alias Jean-Marc Coudray, (one of the authors of "Mai 68: La Breche" mentioned by Semprun-Maura, in the above article) in an interview in TELOS.

MY UNCLE WAS MAD

THERE IS NO more pleasant way of spending a quiet afternoon than watching a man drown. To have no personal involvement in the action, to know that one's moral attitude will not be questioned by one's fellow watchers means that if the unfortunate man drowns one can sup off high tragedy and if he is saved one can leave the scene with a sense of wellbeing, basking, as all spectators do, in some slight gleam of reflected glory.

In 1962 when Flower Power and LSD drug was the in thing for the greater glory, Ken Kesey's novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest was published. Its central character was an Indian Chief Bromden who played counterpoint to an R.P. McMurphy, the anti hero of contemporary literature who in the world of the insane ward gives a new life to the inmates. Opposed to him is Nurse Ratched, the woman one loves to hate. Kirk Douglas bought the film rights and it made the Town through the direction of Milos Forman of The Fireman's Ball filmbuff fame. The book has been chopped and changed to fit the front office with Chief Bromden no more than a minor character, as R.P. McMurphy being played by the expensive Jack Nicholson meant that the film now had to be built around him. Angela Lansbury and Anne Bancroft refused the role of the sadistic Nurse Ratched but they need not have feared for their liberal reputations for Louise Fletcher plays Nurse Ratched with sensitivity and understanding, whatever that means, and within the context of the film is just as much a victim as the voluntary inmates of Oregon State Hospital where in the film was shot. At midday I walked the crowded pavement of Piccadilly to attend the film and huddled on the Piccadilly pavement was a crouched and unconscious figure of a young man. His hair was long, his eyes were closed and his jeans were marked with old blood stains. I turned him over to see if he had slashed his wrists but he was simply stoned and I left him in a rolled human ball for the meat wagon to collect. At midnight a week or so before I stood and watched the police collect the dead body of a man who had given up his soul to God in the exit of a Metropolitan Underground station. Three policemen lifted the dead body into the back of a police wagon with a mute kindness and drove off with the van and it was no more than another tableau of the night and the Town and his eye dropping frau must of necessity pass by for as with the young man on the pavement of Piccadilly the sorrows and the tragedies are too much for the individual to accept them, therefore we pick and choose who we will salvage and pray that if we are in need we will be chosen. I saw One flew over the cuckoo's nest as no more than a remake of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs with Jack Nicholson as Snow White, Louise Fletcher as the Witch and the Seven Dwarfs, Sneezie, Dopey, Gropey and the rest of the magnificent seven being played by a group of actors with a back-up team, to accept the handout, of genuine lunatics. The play, the film or the book must by its very nature culminate in a logical conclusion good, bad or evasive and only the news flickering on the television screens offers no solution, therefore I have seen and read too many times this scenario of the cheerful extrovert outsider plopped into ship, hospital, army, office or prison who by his refusal to come to terms with authority solves our fantasy problems.

This is an immoral film because it makes a joke of human misery by sterilising it for entertainment. No mucus runs from the noses, no one stands and pisses, no one in that happy-time ward stands there with shit dribbling out of the bottom of his trousers leg. In the overcrowded mental hospitals of the world there would not and could not be room for these charming eccentrics. Walk through the streets of any major town, visit the bomb sites, observe the alcoholic groups and you will bear witness to men and women for whom there is literally no place in the crowded wards and yet we are presented within this film with a mental ward wherein there seem to be employed as many staff as patients. It's fun with one suicide, one murder, an adorable cast of fruitcakes and a final fade out of a patient galloping off into that sunset hallowed by

Ronald Reagan before he gave up films for acting. I do not believe that these entertainment films with a social message have ever made a single reform. I am a fugitive from a chain gang, Grapes of Wrath, Snakepit and all the other exposés simply conned an audience who wanted to be conned that by paying to view they have witnessed and aided a solution. Almost a year ago certain British scientists condemned radiation experiments on American civil/criminal prisoners that tested its effects on male fertility. These men were given 600 rads when it was known that 400 rads in irreversible, and to bring the matter up to date the American Army has tested war drugs on mental hospital patients. As a result of these tests one patient died and that comrades was at the New York Psychiatric Institute in 1953, for that institute had given the Army a contract to conduct experiments on its inmates "to determine the clinical effects of psycho-chemical agents on the psychiatric behaviour of human subjects". The man I mention died after a fifth 'test' which simply meant having an injection of a mescaline derivative pumped into him but one can assume that he died in good hands unlike Dr. Frank Olson, a civilian biochemist who leapt out of a 10th floor hotel window via New York after a scientifically minded American Central Intelligence Agency worker had slipped Olson a shot of LSD without the man knowing. It was all in the interest of pure science and now the CIA know what happens if you drop LSD into someone's drink. They will jump out of a 10th floor New York hotel window.

And after the film there was a spattering of applause and in the darkness I questioned what it was that these people were applauding. But I demand to be entertained without hurt and there is the Books of Exodus, Deuteronomy and Numbers as a script for Burt Lancaster's Moses. This

This started out as a six part TV spectacular and Moses has finally landed with his tablets of the laws in the Tottenham Court Road. With a script by Burgess, Bonicelli, God and Gianfranco de Bosio. It is all in all a pretty dreary affair for it lacks Cecil B. DeMille's panache and the old trader's honest to God filthy mind, for without female flagellation, group torture, off stage rape and the beautiful

Claudette Colbert bathing in nipple-covering asses' milk there never seems any point in spending New York money on a religious epic with a cast of thousands all singing, all dancing, all praying. It should be possible to make a film of the period trying to give a rational view of the overall political and historical situation but unless the Egyptian government are prepared to provide the money and have the film playing to exclusively empty audiences in a Cairo backstreet flea pit then I will take Cecil B. DeMille's holy rollers in preference to Pasolini's or de Bosio's psychos looking for Big Daddy.

As one who was raised on the American pulp magazine from Black Mask to True Detective I have waited many months for Farewell, My Lovely to hit town and it is a sad disappointment. We know we are old I think when we alone know that there will never be another Wodehouse novel or Chandler private eye story, for these masters were unique with style and plot. Chandler with Hammett were the poets of we the factory fodder for with their private eyes we carried our fantasy guns in our tatty raincoats and the dark and dirty streets of our living became the American jungles wherein Spade and Marlowe trod their existentialist paths, the good and the brave seeking to destroy evil simply for expense money and I hated my relations and the foreman. Bogart was good but too cynical and the best Marlowe was surely Dick Powell in Edward Dmytryk's version thirty years ago. "Hand your guns in before boarding the leave boat. It is a criminal offence to try to smuggle them into Britain." Dick Richards is false to Chandler's book and the whole film has been sadly miscast.

Arthur Moyse.

FILM REVIEWS

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST Director
Milos Forman * MOSES Director Gianfranco de
Bosio * FAREWELL MY LOVELY Director Dick

This Penguin book, disguised as a Peregrine book to excuse the price, is a 550-page annotated anthology or documentary history of the left in this country during the twelve years from the dual crisis of Hungary and Suez to the confused echoes of the French "events"; but it is not what most readers may expect, being not so much about the usual idea of "the left" as about the extreme left or Marxist left or various kinds of "New Left".

David Widgery is one of the bright young men who joined the newest New Left during the 1960s, working both for Trotskyist papers such as the Socialist Worker and for underground papers such as Oz. His view of the Left excludes anything politically or culturally orthodox, anything connected with the Labour Party or the Communist Party, with either rational reform or serious scholarship, and barely includes such groups as the Independent Labour Party, the Socialist Party of Great Britain, or the Workers' Revolutionary Party (né the Socialist Labour League). His version of civilized Marxism does allow some kind of opening towards the libertarian left — accepting Solidarity on almost equal terms, acknowledging the claims of syndicalism, and admitting the existence of anarchism. He is himself the incarnation of an unlikely object — a nice Trotskyist.

But his book shows strong bias right from the start: literally — from the cover, where the Communist Hammer-and-Sickle consuming a Union Jack is itself being consumed by a Trotskyist Fourth International brand of Hammer-and-Sickle; or from the dedication, to the memory of Victor Serge, who is described as "Syndicalist, Bolshevik, Trotskyist", conveniently omitting the first stage of his political career as a leading member of the individualist wing of the French anarchist movement, for which he spent five years in jail. There is also a curious bias in the choice of period — from a date which was marked by simultaneous crises in Conservative imperialism and Communist imperialism, rather than by any event in what Widgery or we would think of as the left, to a date which was marked by a peak in, rather than the end of, a process, and which Widgery actually ignores when he gets there. But there is a lot more to The Left in Britain than bias, and it is worth considering at some length.

Widgery begins the book with a very personal Foreword, which gives an unconvincing account of its origins and adds an unfortunate amount of confusion about its subject. The phrases "the Left", "the far Left", "the revolutionary Left", "the working-class movement", the post-war working class", "the modern revolutionary workers' movement", and "the modern socialist movement" are all used in a couple of pages with no attempt to explain how they are related to each other or to the various individuals and organisations who fill the rest of the book.

There follows a list of Acknowledgments, which is more interesting than usual, if only for the strange statements which Widgery has had to include: "E.P. Thompson wishes to state that his political position remains, in general, that of the May Day Manifesto (1968), and that he is in radical disagreement with the selection and interpretation of the recent history of the Left presented in this book." "Laurie Flynn, Colin Barker, and Bob Rowthorn have asked to register that they have developed their positions from those extracts republished here." Nothing from John Saville, Brian Behan, Bob Potter, Peter Fryer, Lawrence Daly, "Martin Grainger", Peggy Duff, Michael Kidron, Paul Foot, Alasdair MacIntyre, Tom Hillier, Sheila Rowbotham, and the other contributors who have also changed their views — indeed the whole book is based on people changing their views, a point which is illustrated again and again but which seems to have missed the editor.

Then there is a long Introduction by Peter Sedgwick which was first published in an abridged version in the New Statesman on 13th September, 1974. Sedgwick comes from an older generation than Widgery, but he is similarly a supple (rather than subtle) intellectual in the International Socialist movement. He is always highly stimulating, but he also is highly sectarian, and his essay is so unbalanced that it upsets the book before it has properly begun. When it first appeared, the New Statesman published a letter by Brian P. Boreham: "Peter Sedgwick has performed no mean feat in managing to avoid...all mention of the vital contributions made by either the Committee of 100 or the Anarchist movement. His weary catalogue of failings vindicates only too clearly the Anarchist argument against the well-intentioned authoritarians not only of the Labour Party but the whole range of sectarian power-seekers and thwarted Lenins who seem to have learnt nothing. As long as these utopians persist in looking to any sect, group, party or elite for their salvation, and refuse to recognise the contradictions inherent in their basic philosophy of freedom through power, the longer we can expect to be reading superficial post-mortems like Peter Sedgwick's." (20th September 1974). Sedgwick's essay is now twice as long as it was then, but it is no different in character. When he begins to approach either non-CND unilateralism or non-Marxist revolutionism he always draws back rather than endanger his Leninist position. His main preoccupation is to emphasise the IS contribution and to reinforce the IS position, and everything else is subordinated to that.

WHO'S LEFT

The same is true, though to a lesser degree, of Widgery's own work. He states in his Foreword that the "political ideas which underlie the socialist sub-scholarship are owed largely to Tony Cliff, Mike Kidron and Nigel Harris and their theoretical and editorial work in the IS journal, though I ought to add this book in no way represents official International Socialism policies". He adds that "I have made the best effort I am capable of to be non-sectarian", he makes friendly gestures to many tendencies both inside the Marxist tradition and outside it on the left, he is well known for his contacts with the "underground" and with several libertarian tendencies, and he includes several items from this area. Nevertheless he remains committed to a Marxist approach in general and to the IS line (or lines) in particular, and these pervade the whole book.

The main of the book consists of eight sections, each containing an essay by Widgery followed by a series of contributions by other writers, mostly reprinted from the left-wing press. "The Double Exposure: Suez and Hungary" covers two episodes which between them began the process covered by the whole book, and includes items by Edward Thompson, John Saville, Brian Behan, Bob Potter, Peter Fryer, Lawrence Daly, and Tony Cliff. The flavour is entirely ex-Communist and mainly Trotskyist, and quite unrepresentative of the left at that time.

"Don't You Hear the H-Bomb's Thunder?" covers the nuclear disarmament movement, and includes Alex Comfort's speech at the CND inaugural meeting in 1958, the description by "Martin Grainger" of the first Aldermaston March in 1958, the Solidarity-Committee of 100 statement, Against All Bombs which was distributed in Moscow in 1962 (and is wrongly attributed to Ken Weller), Edward Thompson and John Saville on the movement at its beginning, Peggy Duff on the movement at its end, and Michael Kidron giving the IS line in the middle.

"The Two New Lefts" consists entirely of an essay by Peter Sedgwick, first published in International Socialism in 1964, giving a sectarian account of the "Old New Left" which produced Universities and Left Review and the New Reasoner from 1956 to 1959 and then New Left from 1960 to 1962, and of the very different group which produced NLR from 1962 onwards. The subject is quite interesting, but either too unimportant to spend a whole chapter on or else too important to give a twelve-year-old treatment.

"That Was the Affluence That Was" covers the industrial struggle from 1956 to the fall of the Conservative Government in 1964, and includes some Trotskyist material on strikes and also one good Solidarity item (Ken Waller on Fords). "Let's Go With Labour" covers the Labour Government from 1964 to 1970, and includes some more Trotskyist material on Labour "betrayals" and another good Solidarity item (on the King Hill homeless hostel struggle). "Freeze, Squeeze, Then Prod" covers the industrial struggle under the Labour Government, and includes some good material from militants involved in strikes and yet more Trotskyist material.

"Make One, Two, Three Balls-Ups" covers the student movement, and includes much Marxist and some libertarian material. "1968" covers the culmination of the process covered by the whole book, and includes an extraordinary jumble of materials which is justified by the muddle of the subject. Widgery says: "1968 was a particularly unruly year to write about. It defies all attempts to be tidied away. I have instead tried to give a sense of its messiness by using memories, reminiscences, diaries, bits from capitalist and socialist papers, accounts of events and leaflets." The resulting confusion includes a few interesting minor items and also a few major documents — extracts from the Solidarity pamphlet Paris: May 1968 (variously attributed to both "Martin Grainger" and "Maurice Brinton", though it was in fact unsigned and Christopher Pallis hadn't used the former name for years, Geoff Richman's pamphlet on the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign End of a Tactic (1969), Sheila Rowbotham's Black Dwarf article on militant women (1969), and Tony Mahoney's Idiot International obituary of the Arbour Square squat (1970). (The dates show that this last section of the book goes well beyond its official period.) One curious item is an extract from Jim Huggon's report of the 1969 anarchist summer camp, which is a gratuitously irrelevant insult for the only explicitly anarchist contribution in the book.

The main body of the book ends with a tedious interview I did with Tony Cliff for Idiot International in 1970. It wasn't worth doing, it wasn't worth printing then, and it isn't worth reprinting now.

The general level of all this material is unashamedly uneven. There are well over 100 separate items, of which many are interesting or at least revealing, but too many are boring or even pointless. The selection of items is often perverse, and the editorial commentary is often peculiar. Widgery became involved in the events he describes only towards the

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close of the period, and his introductions begin by being clumsily derivative and end by being intensely personal. In either phrase, he is unreliable both about hard facts (where he has always been accident-prone) and about the more flexible business of interpretation. Every knowledgeable reader will find different things to challenge -- such as the description of the Trotskyist Newsletter in the late 1950s as "a fine piece of working class journalism with a fresh and honest voice", or the claim that "there was real evidence of the rebirth of Marxism in the events in Paris and Prague" -- but I shall concentrate on the section I know most about.

The introduction to the nuclear disarmament section is particularly bad and deserves detailed criticism. Widgery opens with the silly remark, "The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was born not with a bang but with a whimper", and he follows with a patronising dismissal of everything which happened before then: "People rejecting nuclear weapons on principle had been unsuccessfully pottering around for at least ten years before the campaign took off in 1958" -- the peace movement may have been unsuccessful before 1958, as the nuclear disarmament movement was after 1958 (after all, we still have nuclear weapons today), but it was not a matter of pottering around. Widgery should do some homework. He describes Peace News as "a vegetarian tabloid with a Quaker emphasis on active witness", which is funny but untrue. He refers to "the rather limp pacifist tradition of the thirties", which is just untrue. He quotes the PPU pledge wrongly, which is unimportant but unnecessary, and is typical of his whole treatment of pacifism.

Widgery improves when he gets on to the actual unilateralist movement, but he still doesn't know much about it. He mentions the interesting point that many of the audience at the CND inaugural meeting in 1958 demonstrated in Downing Street, but not the more significant point that they staged the first recorded spontaneous sit-down in Britain. He says that "within weeks of its foundation, CND had found the perfect vehicle" in the Aldermaston March; but the first Aldermaston March was organised not by CND but by an independent ad hoc direct action committee, and only after it proved successful did CND take it over and turn it back to front from 1959 onwards. He says that "the Direct Action Committee had soon parted company with CND"; but DAC was formed before CND, was never part of it, and eventually merged with the Committee of 100. Widgery is generally so much interested in the relationship of the nuclear disarmament movement with the labour movement that he overlooks the true nature of the divisions within the nuclear disarmament movement itself.

The account of the Committee of 100 is very poor. Widgery says that "the nearest it came to capturing mass opinion within CND was during Peter Cadogan's 'March Must Decide' campaign on the 1963 Aldermaston", and then adds that this ended with the Metropolitan Police and the CND marshals "boxing the most suspect marchers in a complete cordon and collectively frogmarching them through central London". The crucial factor at Easter 1963 was of course the Spies for Peace rather than the Committee of 100 or Peter Cadogan's campaign, and the march ended quite differently from Widgery's description (see Freedom, 20 April 1963 -- reprint in Forces of Law and Order).

As for the Spies for Peace, Widgery gives the following description of the RSG-6 demonstration during the march: "When the Spies for Peace march eventually arrived at the Littlewick Green secret bomb shelter, having broken through barbed wire and fences to get to it, it immediately, despite a fine speech by Bob Rowthorn and a lot of Glaswegian cursing about middle-class liberals, proceeded to sit down, like several hundred large soft mushrooms, in clumps around the entrance, and wait until a large force of police arrived." The demonstration was not at Littlewick Green, but at Warren Row; the demonstrators did not break through barbed wire and fences, because there was none of the former and gaps in the latter; they did not sit down immediately, but went as far as they could before doing so; they did not wait for the police, because there was already a large force with dogs around and inside the shelter; Rowthorn's speech may have been fine, but like most contributions to unilateralist debate from Marxist intellectuals it was ignorant and irrelevant. (See the same issue of Freedom, also reprinted.) In fact Widgery doesn't know what happened at Easter 1963, and if he couldn't bother to read contemporary accounts or consult reliable eye-witnesses he should have kept his mouth shut.

But Widgery is right in his view of the function of the Committee of 100 in the nuclear disarmament movement and of the militants in the Committee of 100, as pioneers in the theory and practice of confrontation, if only he had attempted to develop or illustrate it. Instead he dismisses the decline of the late 1960s with a series of epigrams, spoilt by yet more errors and omissions. He includes Anarchy among those who "had ethical

objections" to the Vietnam demonstrations in 1968, which is just stupid, since Anarchy had no editorial line about demonstrations. He says that "the Committee's independent initiatives... were over by 1964", which is just nonsense, since they continued until the end of 1967. He leaves out such freelance actions outside Committee control but still inside Committee tradition as the Red Square demonstration in 1962, Greek Week in 1963, the Brighton Church demonstration in 1966, and the Greek Embassy demonstration in 1967, and he fails to understand the painful transition from the Committee to the student movement in 1967 and 1968.

The last 100 pages of the book are taken up by a useful Chronology of events (compiled by Dave Phillips, and best on industrial troubles), a Glossary of organisations and publications, a rich Bibliography, and a poor Index.

The glossary is uneven in coverage, like the whole book, but rather more reliable in treatment (it has been checked by more outsiders). There are still several mistakes and misunderstandings, including the following in entries of libertarian interest. In the entry on Anarchy, it is called "the anarchist pocket review brilliantly edited by Colin Ward from 1961 to 1970 which pioneered many ideas on education, architecture and art which were to become Leftist commonplaces by the late 1960s"; apart from the curious put-downs of calling a standard octavo magazine a "pocket review", limiting its scope to only three of its dozens of topics, and suggesting that its arguments have become accepted -- if it was so good, why not include some of it in the body of the book?

In the entry on the Angry Brigade, the name is said to have been adopted "in late sixties", though it was invented at the end of 1970. In the entry on Black Flag, Albert Meltzer is described as "veteran anarchist, boxer and auto-destructive artist"; the last of the three points looks like the result of confusion with Gustav Metzger, who was with Ralph Schoenman the main founder of the Committee of 100 in 1960 -- though it might just be a very subtle joke. In the same entry, Widgery mentions that members of the Anarchist Black Cross "have been singled out particularly for police attention", and describes the fates of Pinelli in Italy and Rauch in Germany -- but what about the inclusion of Stuart Christie in the Angry Brigade affair?

The entry on Cuddon's Cosmopolitan Review is absurdly incomplete. In the entry on Freedom there is a reference to the "Socialist Worker's Federation" which is obviously meant to be the Syndicalist Workers Federation -- hence the cross-reference from the SWF to Freedom. The entry on Heatwave mentions only Chris Gray and not Charles Radcliffe. There is an entry on "Situationalism" rather than Situationism, and indeed Widgery seems to be very unsure about both the terminology and the ideology of this movement.

The entry on Solidarity calls its basic policy statement What We Stand For rather than As We See It (1967), and doesn't mention the interesting supplement to it, As We Don't See It (1972).

The bibliography is very detailed and worth careful study -- something which was evidently missing from its preparation, at least in the sections on the nuclear disarmament movement and the history of anarchism. In the former, for example, Frank Parkin's thesis Middle Class Radicalism (1968), which is a sociological analysis of CND, is described as follows: "Frank Parkin's retrospective study of constituency Labour Parties is a... canny reconstruction of the battles that ebbed and flowed in Labour wards" -- which bears no relation to the content of the book. L.J. McFarlane's Political Quarterly article "Disobedience and the Bomb" (1966) is called an "interesting academic survey" -- which misses its ignorance and inaccuracy. Peggy Duff's autobiography Left, Left, Left (1971) is described as "lively reading, although portraying herself as more revolutionary in intention than she was in reality" -- which misses the deadness and dishonesty of the book. For some reason Widgery still uses it as a reliable source -- as he also does with such fantasies as Brian Behan's With Breast Expanded (1964) and Jeff Nuttall's Bomb Culture (1968).

Bertrand Russell's memorandum of Ralph Schoenman is credited only to Black Dwarf, where it was indeed first published in 1970, rather than the New Statesman, where it reached far more readers, or Ronald Clark's book The Life of Bertrand Russell (1975), where it is most easily read now. The special report in Anarchy 29 called "The Spies for Peace Story" was published separately as a pamphlet called Resistance Shall Grow (1963) and did not include "an insider's account of the Spies of Peace Action"; that appeared three years later as a pamphlet called The Spies for Peace: Their Story Told At Last (1966). My NLR article "Damned Fools in Utopia" (1962) did not represent "the Committee of 100 at its most melodramatic" -- Widgery should read Peace News from 1960 to 1962. There is a ludicrous claim that "the mood of Aldermaston is best conveyed in David Mercer's TV trilogy The Generations... and Mike Horovitz's pioneering poetry magazine New Departures" -- Widgery should read Peace News and Sanity for Easter 1959-1967.

As for literature on anarchism, Widgery includes among "accounts by participants in the post-war anarchist movement" George Woodcock's study of Herbert Read, which is fair enough -- except that he calls it (cont. on p. 14)

VIEWPOINT ON SPAIN

"WHEN I SAY SPAIN TODAY, I mean the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement today. For many people it seems that it does not exist any more. That has been the constant theme of the regime. The Communists also say it in their propaganda. And a large section of Spanish youth believes it.

I can assure you that Spanish anarcho-syndicalism is not dead. There were two million members of the CNT, but those two million represented more than eight million people. As I have said many times, my father was a founder member of the CNT. At home there were eleven in our family, two parents and nine children. Though the only member of the CNT was my father, all of us had the CNT in our hearts. This was typical in many homes where the only member of the CNT was the so-called head of the household, but the rest of the family were with him. So, if you remember that in 1936 Spain had only 24 million people, and that of them eight million were associated with the anarcho-syndicalist movement, you will have some idea of its strength.

Now of course, the population is 34 million - ten million more. We cannot tell if the membership of the anarcho-syndicalist movement has increased in proportion to the population or even remained stable, because of the terrific repression, the killings and the lack of freedom in which to teach the younger generation.

At the end of the civil war Franco, recognising the strength of the anarchist movement and fearing their methods, proposed to destroy them

LEFT IN BRITAIN *cont. from P. 13.*

"The Source and the Stream" rather than Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source (1972). He then includes in the same category Ethel Mannin's novel *Comrade, O Comrade* (1947), which he calls "a fictional account of the 1945 split in the AFB" -- when it is in fact a satirical account of the British left nearly ten years earlier, at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. And he even includes in the same category Marie Louise Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia* (1950) -- when it has nothing to do with the anarchist movement but is a survey of literary utopias up to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932)!

Jeremy Westall's article "What's Wrong With Freedom?" (new *Anarchy* 12) is described as "a cheerful personal reminiscence of eminent anarchists" -- when it is one of the most miserable articles ever printed in the anarchist press. Marsha Rowe's article "Workin' for the (Underground) Man" is credited to *Open Secret* 2 (1970) when it actually appeared in *Inside Story* 2 (1972).

There are plenty of other peculiarities in the bibliography. The survey of the literature on the French "events" of 1968 gives as the only anarchist item the Cohn-Bendits' book *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative*. The only mention of literature on the housing movement is a reference to two issues of *Anarchy* (23 and 83 -- but not 97 or 102), so the several items on the struggle of tenants, homeless people and squatters during the 1960s which are scattered through the book are never put into a proper context; quite apart from coverage in *Anarchy* and *Freedom*, there has been significant material in *Solidarity* and other libertarian papers, and the libertarian contribution is essential to any understanding of the phenomenon. So, in one way and another, *The Left in Britain* is a mess. But the good things about the book are that it exists at all and that there is so much of it. In the absence of any other reasonably comprehensive account of modern leftism in this country, Widgery's huge collection of first-hand material must be welcome, even if it arouses argument as much as agreement. It is easy to say the job should have been done better; the important thing to say is that it has been done at all -- and that it managed to escape the severe cuts in Penguin's publishing programme, though only at the cost of a long delay which made the book out of date even before it appeared and of a high price which puts it out of reach of most normal readers.

Thus Widgery's commentaries may be eccentric and unreliable, but they are also interesting and entertaining. The items reprinted in the various sections may be oddly chosen and badly presented, but they are often worth re-reading and hard to get hold of. For example, it is good to have Alex Comfort's speech at the CND inaugural meeting (even if it is dated three years early), Christopher Pallis's account of the first Aldermaston March (even if he is still disguised under an old pseudonym), the Committee of 100 leaflet distributed inside Russia (even if there is nothing about what happened), the description of the King Hill demonstrations during the Erith by-election (even if the King Hill struggle is not explained), Tony Mahoney's account of the Arbour Square squat (even if the beginnings of the squatting movement are not described), and so on. The final judgement must be that the book should be read if you can get hold of it, but that it should be shaken well before use.

N.W.

root and branch. In order to do that, military repression was not enough, he wanted to wipe out their memory. The best method that appeared to him was to denounce all action taken by the anarchist movement and resistance as "communist". This "thickened the broth" for the Communists, as we say. They were not so dangerous for the Franco regime because they were easier to control. Their groups took no initiative without referring to the Party leadership, and it was easier for the regime to control them. At any moment they could know who the Party heads were. They could both watch the opposition and, providing it came under Communist Party leadership, in some measure keep it under bounds. This is not to say that the Communist Party collaborated with the regime, but their structure made it essential for them always to consult with above. Unlike the anarchist groups of the resistance - who held themselves responsible to nobody and acted purely on their own initiative - the Communist Party was a readily penetrable body.

Also, of course, the regime gained sympathy in America on the basis of "anti-communism", and during the period of the Cold War, this made them a bit more palatable to the Western countries than would otherwise have been the case. They could boast that they were carrying out an anti-Russian crusade when they were in fact carrying on repression against the libertarian movement.

This has made the Communist Party loom large in Spanish affairs but it is a lot of smoke with little fire. There were many young people in the Sixties who became Communists, especially as students. At the time they felt that the CP was the only force worth reckoning with. Where are these people, now in their late twenties and early thirties, today? No longer in the CP, for sure. They were a product of the universities. But remember almost immediately, at the same time, there was another force in the universities, a new wave - chiefly Marxist-Leninists, of whom the Maoists are the ones who are really active, and also the *acratas*, the anarchist student movement whose main inspiration in Madrid was Garcia Calvo.

Some of the Marxist-Leninists speak about "Workers' power", but this is really a very vague term. Power over whom? A lot of them deny they want to have the power of the party and, with the vision of the communist party in front of them, say that power must be retained in the assembly. But so far as the CNT is concerned this is certainly not a new idea, because never at any time did we agree that power should be in the hands of anyone.

Speaking realistically, there has always been in Spain a special branch of the police to fight anarchism. The Brigada Politico-Social was the political branch of the police, but in adding "social" they meant precisely industrial organization; within this branch there was a special anti-anarchist squad which had considerable power under Franco. Because of this special attention given by the police, the nearest approach to which is the special "jew squad" of the Nazis which concentrated on one subject only - it was naturally difficult to create a whole organization of the size that the CNT had been in so large a country as Spain. In Catalonia, however, there has been a continuity of the existence of the CNT. Make no mistake about that... The Regional Commission of the CNT in Catalonia has always been active; recently we had the present secretary in London.

SPAIN Information

THE PAST MONTH has seen several anarchist-organised meetings on Spain. On February 28th, there was a public meeting, in the Roebuck Public House, in Tottenham Court Road, on "Spain Today", organised by the Central London Anarchist Group. The speakers were Albert Meltzer, Miguel Garcia and Paco, all connected with the Centro Iberico in Haverstock Hill.

The first two named are veterans, respectively, of the British and Spanish anarchist/syndicalist movements, whilst Paco is of the new generation of Spanish anarchists, a young conscientious objector from Madrid.

Both Albert and Miguel were able to give background information on the historical role of the C.N.T. in the Spanish workers' movement, and in the revolutionary upheavals sparked off by the military uprising in July 1936, and on the

role of anarchist guerillas in the resistance to the post-civil war Francoist governments.

Both stressed the idea that there can be no peaceful solution to the political struggle in Spain, since there has never been even the slightest attempt to recompense the Spanish working people for the physical devastation and economic theft wreaked on them in defeat by the triumphant Franco; and that this has created a reservoir of bitterness, which has scarcely yet been tapped.

Some extracts from typed notes for Miguel's talk are reproduced on this page.

Coming on to the post-Franco situation, the major theme, broached by all three speakers, was the need to combat the journalistic fictions being perpetrated in the British and Continental press, about the strength of the Communist Party, and the role of Marcelino Camacho, who is being put forward as a "well-respected labour leader", with no mention of his strong links to the Spanish C.P.

Paco's contribution centred on how the anarchist movement in this country can best give aid to the struggles now breaking out in the whole of Spain. He denounced solidarity with reformist campaigns (such as that being mounted by I. M. G. in this country) as "treason", since they are usually mystified and ignorant of the revolutionary forces involved in the struggle, and are dominated by bureaucratic illusions.

In his view the Francoist system is in shreds since the death of the Caudillo, and Fraga Iribarne is bound to maintain the repressive regime, with police violence and militarisation of workers. The international solution for Spain is entry into the Common Market, and the money from the International Monetary Fund necessary for the ailing Spanish, is dependent on entry. Aid is being given to trade unions like the U.G.T. which are developing on Western Euro-

pean lines, with a strong central bureaucracy to negotiate economic deals with the bourgeoisie.

The impression is being given in the press that there are no other possible solutions - but there are. There is a strong new wave of anarchist influence. In the recent postal strike, Communist Party directives were overridden by the workers; in Sabadell (a town with a strong anarchist tradition), there was a general strike which involved all the different areas of activity in that one town, and gave rise to embryonic forms of organization alternative to the system being heavily propagandized at the moment.

In the lively discussion that followed the three introductory talks, one concrete proposal emerged from discussion between Paco and John Quail: the possibility of a one-day workshop giving basic detailed information on the current situation, to demystify the vague reports of demonstrations and strikes which appear in the British press, and to pinpoint the active forces at work now.

There was a follow-up meeting on this particular point at Centro Iberico on March 6th. What emerged from that discussion was the need for two lines of action: (1) the arranging of a one-or-two day teach-in on the Spanish situation, with contributions from as many well-informed sources as possible, particularly from inside Spain, but also from active exiled groups in close contact with events in the peninsula; and (2) the setting-up of a counter-information service to combat the distortions being fed to the European media by the Spanish Communist Party's heavily subsidised propaganda network.

A committee has already been set up to organise both these functions, and it is hoped that it will be possible to announce details of the teach-in (most probably to be held at the L. S. E.) at the concert being given on April 3rd by John Williams to raise funds for Spain.

D. L. M.

BOOKSHOP NOTES

The titles mentioned in this article are all currently available from Freedom Bookshop at the prices plus postage mentioned. Or pay us a visit. We are open Tuesday - Friday 2 - 6 pm (on Thursdays until 8 pm) Saturdays 10 am - 4 pm; and now SUNDAYS 10 am - 1.30 pm.

(Aldgate East underground station; Whitechapel Art Gallery exit and turn right; Angel Alley next to Wimpy Bar)

THE LATEST edition of Interrogations - the international review of anarchist research - is available (No. 6) at 95p plus 16p postage, and contains Giovanni Baldelli on "The Positivity of Anarchism" (in English; a completion of rather than a reply to David Wieck's article ("The Negativity of Anarchism") in the previous issue. As usual Interrogations No. 6 contains articles in French, Italian, Spanish and English. Although No. 1 of this series is now out of print all the other back issues are still available from Freedom Bookshop at the same price (95p + 16p).

It's something of a mixed bag this week, kicking off with the final volume of E. H. Carr's seven volume History of Soviet Russia: Socialism in One Country, Vol. 3 1924-1926 (£2.00 + 42p). Of the previous volumes in this series, volumes 2, 4 & 5 are currently out of print, but the remaining vol-

umes, including the one detailed above, are available at £4.45 (62p post) the set.

Two linked titles from the Penguin Education series: A Last Resort? Corporal Punishment in Schools, edited by Peter Newell*, contains articles on the legal and moral aspects, from the point of view of the local authority, the teacher and most importantly the student who in two chapters, "Children Talking" and "Children Writing", have, as one might imagine, some very pertinent things to say on the subject. (6p + 14p).

Richard H. Walters, J. Allen Chey Cheyne and Robin K. Banks have edited between them Punishment, (75p + 19p) containing contributions from R. M. Church, B. F. Skinner and others on the concept and social implications of punishment.

In the area of memoirs, three recently published examples of prison memoirs: From a Spanish Jail by Eva Forest who was imprisoned in Spain in September 1974 and as I understand it is still there. The book (60p + 11p) is mainly taken up with extracts from her diary and letters. Secondly, a classic - Elizabeth Gurney Flynn's My Life as a Political Prisoner (£1.25 + 21p) about her incarceration in the Alderson Federal Women's "Reformatory". Lastly, Pietro Valpreda's Prison Diaries, The Valpreda Papers (£6.00 + 42p), translated by Cormac O'Cuilleain.

I have always found it difficult, not

to say impossible, to write "critically" of prison literature, it is not possible in my experience to be sufficiently objective.

In the area of history, first of all William Weber Johnson's imposing study of 20th Century Mexico, Heroic Mexico: The Narrative History of a Revolution (£2.50 + 42p). Also Sidney Lens' The Labor Wars: From the Molly Maguires to the Sitdowners (£2.10 + 21p), taking in en route The Haymarket Affair, Home stead, Eugene Debs and The Wobblies.

From the Russian Revolution, we have in stock again Ida Mett's useful study The Kronstadt Uprising (75p + 16p). This edition contains an introduction by Murray Bookchin and incorporates the preface to the English (Solidarity) edition, and that to the French edition, as well as a bibliography.

Also now in stock is Root and Branch, the Rise of the Workers' Movements (£1.15 + 21p). Included are articles from a formidable array of contributors in five main sections, "On the Job", "The Society we face", "A look at the past", Workers Councils - including Anton Pannekoek's well-known statement on Workers Councils - and finally "Perspectives".

Lastly, new from Solidarity (UK) is "A Contribution to the Critique of Marx" by John Crump. (10p + 7p). This is an interesting, if brief, critique of Karl from a libertarian socialist viewpoint.

J. H.

THROUGH THE ANARCHIST PRESS

BY ONE OF those odd coincidences which happen frequently enough to make one believe in a Zeitgeist, two very dissimilar anarchist publications from very geographically separated areas, have arrived in the FREEDOM office in the past week, which give space to the same figure.

To take the newer one first, Equality is a "libertarian review" published by the Kropotkin Society (Post Office Box 2418, Evansville, Indiana, U.S.A.), and is self-described as "a very modest two-page newsletter". Nevertheless, we believe that some of the literature, ideas and figures reviewed here are those which are not readily covered elsewhere". And that turns out to be true, for me at least, with the very first number, because it deals with a figure I had never, ignorant as I am of anarchist history, come across before: Jan Wacław Machajski (1866-1926).

Since we have only one copy of Equality, I will transcribe here part of the article:

THE GIST of Machajski's theory is that 19th century socialism in general and Marxian socialism in particular represent the ideology not of the working class, which he thought of in terms of manual workers only, but of the "growing army of intellectual workers, the new middle class which with the progress of civilization absorbs within itself the middle strata of society." Higher education he considered the privileged property of the rising bourgeois class, a sort of invisible capital expressing itself either actually or potentially in the incomes paid to this class, which are higher than those wages paid to manual workers. According to Machajski, the malcontent section of the intellectual workers opposed private capitalism and seeks its replacement by government ownership and state capitalism which was euphemistically called socialism. Under this new system, the new ruling class - civil servants, technicians, managers and other intellectual workers who constitute the bureaucracy of the state - will enjoy a privileged position and to their children only will be transmitted the educational opportunities which result in higher incomes. The manual workers would remain at the bottom of the social ladder as under private capitalism. Machajski claimed that the intellectual workers try to enlist the support of manual workers, winning their confidence by helping them in some of their struggles for better wages and by holding out as a new religion the ideal of human brotherhood which, of course, would have to be postponed until some time in the vague future...

Machajski's ideas were anticipated by Michael Bakunin in his critique of Marx. Machajski, in turn, has anticipated the later "managerial revolution" concept of James Burnham and the "new class" concept of Milovan Djilas.

Machajski also figures in an article by Nico Berti in the latest issue of Interrogations (No. 6, March 1976). The author is a contributor to A--Rivista Anarchica (whose February number concentrates on anarcho-syndicalist struggles in Spain today), and the article "Anticipazioni anarchiche sui 'nuovi padroni'" (Anarchist anticipations of the 'new bosses'), concentrates on tracing anarchist analyses of the rise of the "technobureaucracy" from Bakunin onwards. This analysis underpins many of the articles which appear in A--Rivista Anarchica and is itself subtended by the works of more recent, not necessarily anarchist, socio-economic analysts such as J. K. Galbraith ("New Industrial State"), Milovan Djilas ("The New Class"), Boran and Sweezy ("Monopoly Capitalism"), Jane James Burnham ("The Managerial Revolution"), Paul Cardan ("Modern Capitalism and Revolution"), etc.

It is interesting to note the coincidences in key authors - and to see that one thing they have in common is experience and rejection of one kind or other of Marxism (Trotskyism in the case of Burnham and Cardan/Castro-Adams, Stalinism in the case of Djilas). Machajski too was a Marxist whilst young, and spent ten years in prison and exile for attempting to put those ideas into practice, years he spent elaborating a theory of the labour movement, published as Umstvenmii Rabochii ("The Intellectual Worker"), unfortunately not available in English, except as extracts in the writings of Max Nomad, a pupil of his.

Another writer who figures prominently in Berti's article as an anticipator of the 'technobureaucratic' development of the world economy is F. Saverio Merlino, a contemporary and friend of Malatesta, who flitted constantly between Marxism and anarchism. The main point that seems to emerge from Berti's article is that the anarchists were able to grasp what was happening within Marxism because of their firm hold on their analysis of the function of power in maintaining and, if possible, freezing economic inequality. The new points in the "techno-bureaucratic analysis are well put in the English summary of Berti's article: "The most advanced ideology of this 'new class' is considered by anarchists as a variety of authoritarian socialism which may be more or less tainted with Marxism; state control of the economy is defined in technical terms without reference to the roots of inequality. This inequality is no longer presented as having historical or social roots: it appears as appears as natural, based on meritocracy. The ideology of authoritarian socialism enables this 'new class' to attack the capitalistic bourgeoisie with the lower classes serving as shock-troops; ironically, by the very fact that the lower class consists of manual workers, it is excluded from

the new privilege."

Other articles in the new 136-page Interrogations cover the Peronist trade unions in Argentina (by Gabriel Madajulan in Spanish), peasant revolts in Bolivia (by Gaston Dauval in French) to combativity of the workers in the naval dockyards of St.-Nazaire (by Nicolas Faucier in French, an extract from a forthcoming book) centralising powers at work in the Japanese economy (by Kon Eguchi in French), a critique of Le Monde's coverage of events in the Iberian peninsula (by Andr  s Dorsi, in Spanish) and an extract in English from the book Israel and the Palestinians (edited by Uri Davis, Andrew Mack and Niva Yuval-Davis) on "Kibbutzim: the vanguard of Zionist-Socialism". (See also bookshop notes).

Issues 2 and 3 of Equality, both still single sheets, centre on Voltairine de Cleyre and Bakunin respectively. In addition, No. 2 gives the further information that an extract from Machajski's The Intellectual Worker is to be found on pp. 427-436 of The Making of Society edited by V. F. Calverton (New York, Modern Library, 1937), and that they have a copy of "Umstvenmii Rabochii" for which they are seeking a good Russian-English translator.

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Also from America we have received Vol. 1 No. 2 of Black Star An Anarchist Review, and The Anarchist Black Hammer No. 5. Black Star is produced by groups of the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, on a rotating basis, with pages being allocated to the groups by means of prior discussion in an internally circulated bulletin. Perhaps this explains the delay since No. 1, reviewed in these columns many months ago. The main articles in this issue are on rape, "The role of the intellectual in class society", report on the anarchist conference at the Hunter College, June 1975, Workers' Control, the prostitutes' revolt in France, book reviews, etc. Their address is P.O. Box 92246, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202, U.S.A., and the subscription is 3 dollars for 6 issues.

Anarchist Black Hammer is the magazine of the Woodstock Anarchist Party (you're joking, aren't you, comrades?) and it has articles on changing your life, not your lifestyle, dumping the management, ageism, Amnesty International, Martin Sostre, the I.W.O.W. etc. The address is Post Office Box 171, Stockton, California 95201, U.S.A., and the subscription is again three dollars (translate as you can).

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D. L. M.