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The British Working Class

THE SLEEPING GIANT

IT IS NOT SO LONG AGO that the newspapers, industrialists and members of parliament were blaming the country's strike record for its economic problems. Organised labour was also blamed for inflation because of the wage gains they had won as well as for low productivity in comparison with foreign rivals. However, these days such accusations cannot be levelled against the British working class. From an anarchist point of view they have become docile and seem quite content to suffer under the leadership of their trade unions who have, with their parliamentary friends, managed the biggest con-trick under the misnomer, social contract.

Figures for strikes, according to a government survey, show that 98 per cent of factories do not have strikes. The survey shows that in the docks, although 260,000 man days were lost in 1975 through stoppages, this year there have been only 3,000.

Mr Booth, Secretary of Employment, said: 'Equally, in Liverpool, another port which has had a bad name in the past, the new spirit of cooperation between Mersey Docks and Harbour Company and the dockers is absolutely first class.'

As far as organised labour is concerned, the period since the Labour Party came to power has been one of cooperation. But it must also be said that this cooperation has mainly stemmed from the leadership of the trade unions. Mr Jones and Mr Scanlon, the leaders of two of the biggest unions, have trod the narrow path through the corridors of power for their political masters in parliament. They have delivered up the working class tied and gagged. The well tried method of direct action has been forsaken for that of legislation in the House of Commons. But as we saw last week, this can backfire. Mr Jones' cherished Bill for dockers just didn't make it, thanks to his own party members.

One can understand the feelings of dockers. They like so many workers feel the insecurity of the present crisis. But to extend the dockers' area of work only threatens the jobs of others. Just because the dockers with their militant record have made most of the running does not give them the right to ride roughshod over their fellow workers.

In a way this type of attitude has hamstrung the working class of this country. The approach is a sectarian one confined to narrow craft and industrial interests. The horizons are limited to the factory

gates and the family circle. There is very little vision of the wider world, little conception of solidarity or internationalism.

In the past workers have used what organised strength they have built to gain increased wages and better conditions. That's fair enough as far as it goes, but as we are now seeing in the present crisis of capitalism, those gains are soon lost. Far from the workers holding the country to ransom, it is the producers of wealth who are up for sacrifice.

Although at the moment the working class are losing all the battles the war has yet to be won. Workers by the very nature of their position in the class structure of our society have a unique opportunity to change the system and abolish exploitation. This is no historical mission, it's not just going to happen, but has to be worked for. But because workers are in a position as producers to control what is made, then they have a unique opportunity to bring about a revolutionary change in the relationships of production.

Today there are complaints that the trade unions are too strong and powerful. But what they are doing is really exercising restraint and control over their rank and file members. It is the rank and file who are not strong enough. They are forever looking for leaders and leadership. Seeking solutions elsewhere and giving power to others in parliament and at Congress House.

The working class is like a sleeping giant which, if awoken with the desire for change, could win the war to end exploitation. In fact, this is the only answer to the present crisis. It is obvious that those in power and those who control the financial and industrial wealth have only one answer, that of sacrifice. That means depressed living standards and unemployment. This is the only way out for capitalism.

In the old days national capitalist states could go to war to settle differences over markets. Nowadays that answer has been made obsolete by the very destructive forces at the disposal of the world powers. But as the state gains more control over our economic lives it will be that more powerful in controlling any resistance from the population.

In this country we hardly contemplate the situation described by Solzhenitsyn in the third part of his Gulag Archipel ago (just published in the Federal Republic) of Soviet troops shooting down

a workers' uprising. But that situation could happen here. We have increasingly high inflation and before long, who knows, some will be demanding cuts in wages. If workers do decide that they have had too much sacrifice and exploitation then we could see the cities of England resembling Belfast. But make no mistake, the system has no real answer to its current problems. They are of their own making, but they can become an opportunity to use the present divisions in the ruling class and create a movement of the working class that seeks the destruction of the capitalist system once and for all.

P.T.

To live in peace

IT WAS a moving occasion, the first Women's Peace March, which was a spontaneous reaction to a particularly revolting "incident" in the Ulster murders when three children were killed. One would be a cold fish not to have felt that fellowship with the people walking into "the enemy's" territory, there to be met with handclapping, handshaking, embraces.

Is this movement different from the C.N.D. movement in which even more thousands came onto the streets with a mind to remove the nuclear threat we have since learned to live with? What happened to the People's Democracy movement which, with similar marches and rallies, brought into the open the bitterness and injustice of the N. Ireland situation which has continued in seven years of horror?

Maybe the movement didn't get off to the best possible start with the founders' first demands that any woman who knows that her husband or son is involved in a terrorist organisation should hand him over to the security forces. It was no doubt an immediate expression of anger and does not appear to have been persisted in. It was an impracticable suggestion, since human beings do not act in this way, except in police states where the young have been brainwashed, and it indicated that there was not at that time an alternative in sight to simple reversion to the status quo that existed before the terror.

The fact that the movement is condemned by Paisley's lieutenant, by Bernadette Devlin and the Provisional

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MURRAYS

THE IRISH Supreme Court has not yet announced its decision on the lives of Marie and Noel Murray. There is little other news, since they are allowed letters only to and from immediate family. Since Marie Murray's family do not keep up contact, however, Marie has been permitted to write a letter to a friend, and said that considering the circumstances she is in a fairly good state. Ronan Stenson is said to be unlikely to stand trial, as he is completely withdrawn, refusing to communicate with anyone and refusing to take any exercise, his weight consequently having increased to 14 stone from 9 stone. Noel Murray does receive letters and the permitted visit from his parents. His 71-year old uncle, who works hard for the campaign, wished to visit, wrote to inform the prison authorities and received a consenting reply, but having travelled from Coventry to Dublin was turned away at the prison gates.

ACTIVITIES — LONDON

Sixteen people on Wednesday 10 October occupied the Aer Lingus office in Regent Street, London. There were six staff and about the same number of customers in the office when the campaigners entered, handed leaflets to all present and said they were occupying. All customers and staff left, except the manager, who locked the door with the demonstrators inside. They remained three hours, telephoned the press from inside the office, while others were phoning from outside. The gentlemen of the press asked it it were a peaceful occupation, then as it was, weren't interested. The Trotskyist *Newsline* carried a report, and a brief mention appeared in Wednesday's *Evening Standard*. But a large crowd gathered outside, and they and many tourists received leaflets during the three hours.

Peace March

IRA alike should give some cause for hope that the paramilitary forces may realise that they are isolated in a private war without the support of those for whom they think they are fighting. What will be important will be the plans the movement has for the community activities which they intend to follow the rallies, and whether these can and will provide opportunities for people to take some action against poverty, inequality, bigotry. It will not be the social revolution. No doubt on the platform at Trafalgar Square next weekend there will be ineffectual well-meaning people and establishment figures who could not institute a major change without ceasing to be what they are. But any expression of a desire shared by a large number of people in a community is a step on the way to its achievement. To live in peace is a good state in which to start creating social justice, if they can persuade the terrorists of this. As the proverb says: Peace is the well from which the spring of joy runs.

MC

The demonstrators left unmolested, the manager having confirmed that no damage had been done, and although the police asked for names and addresses, they did not press the matter when the demonstrators declined to make them known.

The Defence Committees are campaigning, first and foremost against the death sentence, and for a retrial with a jury. The London based committee meets each Friday evening at "Rising Free", 142 Drummond St., NW1. They would welcome participation by more people, and also hope for more people to come along any Saturday morning to the picket which has been faithfully held since the trial, from 10 am to mid-day outside the Allied Irish Bank, 103 Kilburn High Road (Kilburn tube station, or buses 8, 16, 28, 32, 176, 616). From 2 until 4 pm each Saturday the picket is outside the Irish Embassy, 17 Grosvenor Place, S.W. 1.

BIRMINGHAM

ABOUT 30 people from the Midlands Murray Defence Group, which includes people from Coventry, Warwick University, Leicester and Birmingham, occupied the Irish Tourist Office in the centre of Birmingham on the afternoon of Wednesday, November 3rd, to try and get some publicity for the Murray's case.

The staff in the offices were very friendly—too friendly, in fact, as they refused to call the police to throw us out which would probably have got us a lot more publicity than we managed. We contacted the B.B.C., the local press and radio stations and the Press Association. All of them seemed interested and we made the B.B.C. radio six o'clock news as well as the local papers. We attracted quite a lot of interest from passers-by. After we had given out all the leaflets we had, several people stopped to read the information about the Murrays' case that we had stuck all over the front windows, or to chat about the trial.

People involved in the Midlands Murray campaign and in this occupation included a few from the Young Liberals and Warwick University Labour Club, as well as anarchists and libertarians.

Midlands Murray
Defence Group,
c/o Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street,
Birmingham,
Warwick University Students Union.

Noel and Marie Murray have now lived in a cell with the shadow of the noose on the wall for four months. It is no use writing letters which they will not receive. But December ushers in the season of goodwill, and surely the Christian Irish government cannot be averse to greetings cards. Their addresses are: Marie Murray, Mountjoy Prison, Dublin Noel Murray, Military Detention Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, Eire.

Correspondent.

FAF & CNT DEMO

The French Anarchist Federation and Spanish CNT organised a demonstration outside the Polish Embassy in Paris on 4 November in protest against the imprisonment of the Polish workers following the June riots, and to demand their immediate release. The demo was organised in conjunction with the international committee for the immediate release of political prisoners in the USSR and other East European countries and the Ligue ouvrière révolutionnaire de France et de Pologne.

PRISONERS' PROGRESS

ONE OF THE DISTRESSING manifestations of our society is the prison system. By means of this deviants, fringe elements and general undesirables can be safely removed from view. The liberal mind interests itself in the phenomenon, produces reforms, tidies up the edges and of course never gets round to examining the reason for its existence. Liberal opinion is becoming upset, as all its efforts seem to be ineffective in keeping the problem within "enlightened" proportions. The prison population is growing. Sixteen months ago Roy Jenkins, then Home Secretary, said that if this population reached 42,000 "conditions in this system would approach the intolerable and drastic action to relieve the position will be inescapable." However, this figure has now been exceeded and the system appears to have escaped such drastic action after all. Five thousand prisoners are sleeping three to a cell, designed for one in Victorian times. Such is progress.

Prisoners have other problems as well. Such as warders. These are bound to be authoritarian, narrow individuals so it is no surprise to learn that the National Front is making great progress among them. A senior officer at Strangeways Prison, Manchester, Brian Baldwin, who is an active member of the Front, reports that "They almost recruit themselves," and that more than 70 out of 300 officers at the prison have formed a cell (!) Home Office officials deny it.

So if you have a society which creates "criminals" and then deprives them of dignity, overcrowds them and puts them in the power of hard line bigots, you can then expend a lot of energy and column inches discussing why you get a riot at Hull. However, nowadays it is not all mailbag stitching. The ready supply of cheap labour in prisons now produces a wide variety of merchandise. At Bedford Prison they manufacture garden gnomes. An officer has recently noticed that the gnomes coming off the production line have been fitted with striking male appendages. After suitable amputation action the ubiquitous Home Office spokesman reassures us "Fortunately they didn't reach the shops!"

Contributed

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

AN INTERESTING relationship applies between the news media and its customers. Mistrust is widespread, yet they are often our only source of information. There is a tendency for anything that is written down to assume the proportions of truth, and this affects even those of us who consciously acknowledge the effect. The trend is, perhaps, most marked amongst members of the more dogmatic political parties, for whom the truth, for that day, comes through the letter box at regular intervals. This piece will concentrate on newspapers; similar considerations apply to television, radio, magazines or almost anything you care to name.

We have, in this country, three main types of newspaper. The first, appearing less frequently, as the overt mouthpiece of a particular tendency, veers more towards a magazine approach. FREEDOM would be an example. The more immediate daily examples fall broadly into two camps. The "popular" papers make little pretence of objectivity; some, like the *Mirror* and the *Mail* openly display a bias towards one or other major political party. The *Sun* takes this to its logical extreme and doesn't bother printing any actual news at all. The other pole belongs to the "quality" newspapers, the *Times*, the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian* and their Sunday equivalents. The *Telegraph* is openly partisan, whilst the others maintain a veneer of objectivity. More of this later.

Part of the responsibility for this respect for writing, presumably as a facet of respect for the authority producing it, lies with the education system. People who have been through this system at its more advanced levels acquire a dependence on print approaching addiction. One symptom of this is the accumulation of large numbers of books, usually collected in batches from second hand shops. This does mean that I read many obscure works of dubious literary value. One of these ("How I Fooled the World" by John Banning) is the stimulus for this piece. I must say now that the book is poorly written in a curious hybrid style, deriving from journalism and cheap thrillers: "She was a trim brunette with large, dark eyes and the kind of figure that makes my head swim." But this is little deterrent after years of science fiction and the book does have its fascination.

The basic plot is that the hero, called again, John Banning, is the Eastern European correspondent for Worldwide News Agency, based in Vienna. He has steadily become disillusioned with politicians, journalists and in fact the whole establishment. He realises that public figures and events only exist so far as they are represented in the media. After a while he begins to feed his London office with his own inventions and these are taken up without question. At first many of these are farcical. His distrust of television leads him to plant a story that it emits dangerous

"T" rays. However, later his intentions become more serious and he uses his journalistic experience to play hunches, developing an uncanny accuracy in predicting the events of 1974. Soon he doesn't know how much is inspired guesswork and how much is self-fulfilling prophecy. He reports a co-ordinating organisation for Black September, IRA and German and Italian anarchists. Soon afterwards there is the raid on the Munich Olympic village and he gets a letter bomb through the post. Eventually he decides to go in style and makes ill and later "kills" President Ceausescu of Romania, while he is out of the country. The denials appear almost immediately but in the confusion more liberal elements take over the government. Then the Russian tanks move in. Appalled Banning confesses and goes off to write his book "How I Fooled the World"

The book's strength lies in the author's personal knowledge. He has obviously been a journalist and backs up his narrative with technical, professional details and a file of newspapers from the year in question. He mentions many of the techniques of writing news stories, the safety phrases "It may be", "It is thought", "Observers here believe", "An expert said". Of course these are glossed over by the readers of the newspapers and the report is taken as fact, a process known as "overselling" or "making the piece more 'hard'" than the reporters information justifies. The book is worth reading if only for the exposition of these tricks of the trade.

So, have we any examples in our own press, if not of blatant fabrications then at least of rumours presented as fact? Of course we have. Read any piece more closely and the let out phrases shine through. We are all aware of the way we are presented in the media. West Germany is particularly bad, with a deliberate policy to confuse "anarchist", "Marxist", "terrorist" etc., but the trend is universal.

British Leyland is always good for a shock story and amongst revelations about bribes being paid for jobs there and corruption in their Middle East orders the *Mail* printed that 50 Range Rovers were missing. There was instant consternation, soon to die off. However, the impression of a seething mass of wreckers and anarchists (remember that story?) remains. This is a common practice. A dramatic story gets massive coverage, the withdrawal is tucked away on an inside page. We also had an example of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The *Sunday Times* reported that foreign financiers believed that the pound ought to fall to \$1.50 before it stabilised. Within a few hours five cents was chopped off its value and then the entire thing turned out to be wrong.

Journalism has always had a slightly disreputable image. So, to finish let's look at a model of propriety, scientific research. Here the solid, objective truth is uncovered by dispassionate

individuals in white coats. One method involved in this is the IQ test. This has been used to "prove" that blacks, Irish and the working class are less intelligent than the white, middle-class psychologists who set the tests, reflecting their own assumptions. Some years ago the work of one of the developers of the tests, Cyril Burt, the then dominant name in British psychology, became the basis of the 1944 Education Act, which neatly divided children into Grammar, Secondary Modern and Technical streams, these divisions then to apply throughout their life. Strong, circumstantial evidence now suggests ("observers here believe...") that Burt faked his work. He mixed results from different studies and invented co-authors, no trace of whom now exists.

So, comrades, accept everything and believe nothing. Just reflect that an expert is often called an "authority."

D.P.

In Brief

G.I. Union

We have just received two recent copies of *Forward*, a magazine produced by American soldiers in Germany. It contains news, comments, reviews etc. on a variety of subjects, ranging from a sergeant drunk on duty to analysis of Carter in the election. They back the current campaign to set up a "GI Union" and collected 600 petition signatures to add to those at home. They are encouraged by the progress of the Dutch soldiers' union, which has succeeded in doing away with hair regulations and saluting of officers. Trivialities, perhaps, but important to the men involved. At present there are a number of bills in Congress trying to outlaw any kind of military union.

We disapprove of armies, even long-haired, non-saluting ones. Attempts to produce superficial reforms in such an intrinsically appalling institution are a complete waste of time. Armies are, by their very nature, hierarchical, authoritarian and inhuman. The quickest way to be allowed long hair and not to have to salute is to have absolutely nothing to do with them, or better still, to actively oppose them. Similar arguments apply, of course, to other hierarchical, authoritarian and inhuman institutions, such as governments.

Trikont-Verlag

Following the article on German political trials in the last issue of FREEDOM, we have now heard that the Trikont-Verlag defendants, Gisela Erler and Herbert Röttgen have been acquitted. The prosecution had asked for 9 months' imprisonment. Another recent acquittal was that of the lawyer of Gudrun Enslin, RA Otto Schily, brought to trial in Berlin for accusations made against court doctors in the case of Katharina Hammerschmidt.

The Bellicose Price of UK-USSR Friendship!

A FORTNIGHT AGO the port of London was honoured for the first time by the visit of a Soviet liner, the MS "Litva", carrying over 300 Russian tourists, and, according to the *Morning Star* (organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain), the "Litva" 'appropriately moored alongside the veteran cruiser HMS "Belfast", which saw wartime service on the Murmansk convoys' (my emphasis—C.).

The *Morning Star*, which was one of the few daily papers to give any relevance to what the British Communists consider a visit of historic importance in the relations between London and Moscow, proudly reported that the 38-year-old captain of the Russian boat, Yuri Milknevich, had declared during an official welcoming reception given on board in honour of the Russian visitors by Mr. P. J. Francis, Mayor of Southwark (himself a veteran of the Murmansk saga) that 'it was a great pleasure and honour for his crew and passengers to moor their ship alongside a vessel which had such a heroic history'.

Captain Milknevich was of course referring, in a very selective manner, to the "Belfast's" 'heroic history' during the war against Hitler, conveniently forgetting to refer during that ceremony to the 'historic' anti-communist slaughterings inflicted by that British vessel when it was an operational unit of the British Navy after World War II, namely:

1949 CHINA: "Belfast's" participation in the Yangtse incident, off the Shanghai coast, in which this vessel was used to contain Mao's threatening Red Army and to help evacuate British military and civilian personnel and take them back to Britain.

1950-52 KOREA: "Belfast's" use of its long-range artillery to shell systematically the shores of Korea in order to clear the way for the landing of anti-communist troops.

1955-64 FAR EAST: "Belfast" posted to this maritime area of the world within the context of the air, sea and land anti-communist strat-



The "Litva" "Is it true, Dear Belfy, that you fired your lovely guns against our comrades in Korea?"

The "Belfast" "Rubbish, Comrade Litvy! You should not listen to anarchist propaganda!"

egic forces so many times denounced by Moscow as reactionary and imperialist forces plotting to annihilate the Soviet Union

1964-67 BRITAIN: After lengthy and exorbitant refittings (paid for by the taxed sweat of the British working class), "Belfast's" posting to Portsmouth as a NATO administrative and personnel base.

1970 onwards LONDON (Tower Bridge) "Belfast's" use as a permanent floating war Museum and base for militarist indoctrination of British youth and the public in general and as a warmongering riverside show, recommended to parents and teachers as a place to take the kids to learn the history of unashamed imperialist and capitalist oppression, as told by the reactionary British Military Establishment.

§

On the second day of the "Litva's" visit to London, the *Morning Star*, the C.P. and assorted groups of fellow-travellers did organise a protest march against youth unemployment, which started at Tower Hill — a stone's throw from where the Russian liner was moored. I suspect this reformist show of militancy was indeed intended more for the Russian tourists' consumption than to intimid-

What could have been a genuine goodwill and peace-loving visit by 300 or so Russian tourists was transformed yet again into another occasion for Bolshevik and militaristic propaganda. Awaiting the promised next load of Russian pawns to be used in the complex chess game of UK-USSR political relationship, orchestrated in London by the official British-Soviet Friendship Society, we anarchists can only confess that this turbulent route of State-sponsored friendship and its uncritical and servile coverage by the Communist press in Britain just makes us sick for its constant glorification of wars and sheer contempt for the lives of those who were fool enough in the past to serve and die on behalf of Nationalism.

Wars are the health of the State and the glorification of past wars seems to reflect the State's poor economic condition. By depriving the State of its military might, by way of refusal to serve in any army, air force or navy, we will effectively contribute to its destruction. This antimilitarist stance is the only known way that anarchists and pacifists have to express their friendship with the people of all lands.

Claude

Crime Without Victims

IT IS UNUSUAL to find policemen with a developed sense of humour but this week at the Old Bailey trial of six former officers of the Obscene Publications Squad on charges of conspiracy and corruption it was stated that the code word for an impending raid was "W. H. Smith". On receipt of this blessed name Soho proprietors would quickly remove all but a token presence of their 'hard porn' stock.

The ensuing routine raid would then take place: stocks would be seized and 'the chairman' would be fined (an occupational qualification) with no great loss to anybody and a comfort to Mary Whitehouse and the Festival of Light.

Later, the proprietor of a chain of such porn shops would be invited to view such seized stocks (one always wondered what happened to them) with a view to purchase at half valuation price. He would be escorted to the police-office basement (disguised as a policeman) and

the deal would be made. A great comfort to everyone, and the police would be relieved of the polluting presence of pornography.

What happens to the allegedly financially corrupted six is not the purpose of this piece. Pornography is big business and it is alleged that £100 a month was paid over in bribes—one dealer alleged he paid £9,500 in six years.

*

With such glittering prizes, it is little wonder that the detectives allegedly fell into temptation. Where there is a demand, such as in London's Soho, the supply must be kept up. If the commodity is illegal or allegedly immoral the price will be higher. But no law (or policeman) can or will completely prohibit access to something which the public knows to be illegal but does not accept as immoral.

This applies and has applied to alcohol, street-bookmaking, prostitution and drugs. All law can do is to make access difficult (and consequently encourage a mass of vested interests in protection and corruption) but no law can completely prohibit that which a substantial section of the public feels it should have. It can merely punish or not punish or decide that the law is unworkable—e.g. prohibition of alcohol in America and street bookmaking in Britain.

In many examples, such as the obscenity laws, the law itself encourages by prohibition and punishment that which it allegedly seeks to suppress. The French government realistically and cynically charges a higher rate of tax on 'pornographic' cinema performances. And it is well known in Soho (and elsewhere) that one pays for one's 'pleasures in the hot stuff' dearly—and one often feels that prosecutions under the Trades Descriptions Act would be more apt than those for 'Obscenity'.

We are in danger of being swamped by laws against victimless crime—laws to

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Independence Rhodesia and Elsewhere

CHANGES in the future of two peoples are being decided. One, a people of five million, about to be thrust out of a state of feudal despotism into the 20th century, with its political sophistication, its technological conveniences—and weaponry. The other, a community of 50,000, long accustomed to the average prosperity and freedom of present day western social-democratic capitalism. The factor common to both drives towards independence is a looking back over the shoulder to advantages of ties with the central government of Britain.

The talks in Geneva on the transformation of Rhodesia into Zimbabwe are crashing into silence after a cacophony of solo voices. The rulers of the surrounding African states who graduated to independence under the aegis of the imperial power—and all honour to the post-war Labour administration which initiated the procedures—plainly do not want a Götterdämmerung spreading its flames into their territories. The stubborn white Rhodesian regime sees the writing on the wall, but the call for Britain to "assume its full responsibilities" in the transfer of power came from Black Africa. Not surprisingly. Not only are there two Zimbabwe nationalist parties at the conference contending for power, but each of the two has two spokesmen fighting out their individual struggles for the power of leadership of the party.

But by the time this appears in print Callaghan may not have the excruciating dilemma of whether or not to take on another Ulster, since the arguments about precisely how long it takes to form an administration and draw up electoral lists have been suspended and the guerilla armies are on the march. Bloody it cannot but be: the small mercy may fall that, Smith having no friends (who thinks South Africa will risk its own breathing space?) it will be short.

Also before we appear in print, the Manx people, the latest to join the Celtic communities' resurgence but with a head start on the road to independence, will have voted not only their representatives in the already established parliament, but also indicated whether direct links with the British administration will be broken in some near future and all taxes, indirect (customs & excise) as well as direct (income tax), levied and retained in the Island and all services, including the social and welfare services, administered independently of UK laws. This is the outstanding issue in the election of November 18th. But the election itself is outstanding in that within living memory the Keys has been composed mainly of "independent" members, Tories to all but a few token Labour seats in no sense comprising an opposition. This time, all seats are being hotly contested, by 71 candidates for 24 seats. The nationalist party, Mec Vannin, is contesting 10 seats, which with the Labour candidates could make the outcome a great deal less of a foregone conclusion than in all previous elections.

In any case, if Independence wins the day, the struggle for self-determination will only then begin.

The Isle of Man since shortly after the First World War has earned its living from tourism. Although farming prospers, mainly I believe in still small family farms, fishing long ago declined and even the herring fleet for the kipper industry came from Glasgow; now Scandinavian boats can be seen bringing in and salting and barrelling fish on the quayside. But the affluent working class of the North of England from the 'fifties and 'sixties taking its holidays on the Costa Brava, tourism in its turn declined. So the Manx government launched into a policy of inviting wealthy and retired people to settle in the Island to take advantage of low income tax. With the inevitable consequence of land being swallowed up for building, rocketing prices for property, and, much worse, the influx of finance companies and banks, British and foreign, making finance replace tourism as the income earner. It is from this quarter that the current demand for abrogating the Common Purse Agreement with the U.K. emanates, and its supporters hold the overwhelming majority in parliament and government.

A member of Mec Vannin writes: "Like independence, breaking the Common Purse arrangement was originally put forward by the nationalists some ten years ago. At that time there was no financial sector and the New Residents Policy (i.e. attracting wealthy tax-dodgers) had hardly got off the ground. The intention then, so I am told, was to use this freedom for the benefit of everyone—indeed the whole point of nationalism was to put the responsibility for good government firmly in the hands of the people of the island. This, at the time, was a very daring proposal, a positive act of faith by the nationalists. They looked at the government of the time, saw that it was corrupt, incompetent and self-seeking. Yet in spite of this, they were still willing to demand that no matter how bad our government might be, we still had the right to govern ourselves and we must insist on that right.

Many people regarded the nationalists as crazy because of this. They pointed out that it was only because of our close links with the U.K. that much social legislation—welfare state, etc.—had ever come into being on the island. That if we were completely at the mercy of our own government, the island would be in a far worse state than it is today. What progress there has been towards social emancipation has rarely been won in the island, rather it has been won in the U.K. and we have then benefited from it.

In short, many people on the island have come to look on our links with

the U.K. as our lifeline, which secures us from the reaction of our own government. The Manx Labour Party still holds this view today. There is much in this line of argument, but the nationalist answer was that it was only because of the safety net provided by the U.K. that we were willing to even tolerate the present set-up (and interestingly enough, almost everyone seemed to agree that our own government was pretty bad)...

Initially, it was very much an anti-establishment movement, supported by people who wanted social change and were idealistic enough to believe that a small community such as the Isle of Man was capable of governing itself with far greater success than it did now.

Over the years, things have changed, particularly with the rise of the financial sector, now contributing some 25-30% to the Manx National Income. The establishment have come to see some advantages in independence and cutting links. Recently we saw the rise of "Athol Street Nationalism" and now we have the present movement for abrogating the Common Purse arrangement arising from the same sources—the business community (particularly the financial sector) and the government.

Their aims are very different from those of the nationalists and radical critics generally. They want to strengthen our present economic and social structure rather than to weaken it."

So the nationalist party finds itself recoiling from abhorrent bedfellows, and the Labour Party, with whose social programme Mec Vannin's has much in common, fears the results of independence in the present circumstances. Paradoxically, it may be that by not gaining "independence" this small community could get a better start in moving towards control of its means of livelihood."

There is a great deal to be said on the dangers of nationalism—it has been said by anarchists from Proudhon to Kropotkin to Rocker and will continue to need to be said—but at least in this instance there seems to be not merely resentment of intrusion by "foreigners" but a questioning of the values represented by the wealth accruing therefrom. Perhaps in the next election there might even be somebody standing on a platform to abolish the birch (and capital punishment, which is still on the statue book). Mec Vannin's is the only manifesto I've seen which mentions it, and as far as they will go (no. 1 on the list of "cultural and social" aims) is to ask for a thorough and comprehensive investigation into its effects; in the meantime it is a matter for individual conscience. Which only means that people with a conscience about birching won't apply for the job of bircher, or if they are J.P.s won't sentence it.

MC

*Athol Street, long the home of lawyers and accountants, now houses many of the banks and finance companies.

Without Victims

save us from ourselves and drive us into the arms of interfering bureaucrats, corrupt policemen and profiteering crooks.

As for obscenity, with which we are currently concerned, it is unique among crimes since it has no agreed definition, no readily discernible effects and appears mainly to corrupt the already corrupted.

An American commission was set up in 1967 to study and hear evidence to evaluate and recommend definitions of obscenity and pornography and to analyse the laws thereon and recommend 'advisable and appropriate action'. The Commission worked for two years and produced (with one dissident) a liberal report which was entirely rejected by the President in 'its morally bankrupt conclusions and major recommendations'.

The President with that magnificent ineptitude for which he was notable quoted De Tocqueville in his rejection: "America is great because she is good—and if America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." We

know how Richard Nixon fulfilled that responsibility.

The Commission, rejecting the enactment of broad legislation prohibiting the consensual distribution of sexual material to adults, declined therefore to define what was 'obscene'. The U.S. Supreme Court had previously defined in the Roth judgement that to be 'obscene' (1) the dominant theme of the material must appeal to a prurient interest in sex; (2) the material must be patently offensive because it affronts 'contemporary community standards'; (3) the material must lack 'redeeming social value'. All these three criteria must apply. The vagueness of much of this language leaves the definition as far off as ever and leaves loopholes open for the exploiter of the sex-trade but none for the artistic philosophic sexual revolutionary.

The old British definition under the eponymous Cockburn specifies for obscenity 'a tendency to deprave and corrupt any person into whose hands' such material may fall. This too presented its difficulties and it was supplanted by the more permissive Jenkins Act which took into account artistic

merit and the author's intention.

The Whitehouse-Longford brigade, symptomatic of a backlash against the non-existent 'permissive society', have seen in pornography the signs of a new decline and fall given a push by a 'left wing' plot to sow the moral decadence of Britain by means of pornography which will encourage every other kind of crime. Aided in their crusade by anti-leftists and by juvenile-defenders who urge that their downfall was due to absorption of pornographic literature—a very good legal defence but having little foundation in fact.

Since when did the youthful spirit of adventure, in legal and illegal fields, need the inspiration of the written word or 'the telly'?

In a commercial civilization the commercialization of what is pejoratively called vice has proceeded apace. The merest exploration of sexual mores and the roots of behaviour has always been looked on with disfavour by the puritanical. The commercial exploitation, and exploitation by commerce of those sexual instincts meet in the same obfuscation of what is after all only human, all too human.

JR

Keeping your Nose to the Grindstone

WHAT'S REALLY IN THE MINDS of people willing to wear down good shoe leather, wave banners and shout slogans in support of an objective as vague, misconstrued and reactionary as the 'right to work'?

A person's occupation defines their character, and their position within the social hierarchy. By defining their relation to the rest of society, it also defines their perception of themselves by controlling how far they are able to know and use their individual talents and resources. Within an economic system geared solely to maximum consumption, continuous expansion and waste, it is degrading to talk of an individuals' right to participate in that system. It is a right to have one's life-style, life-chances and autonomy determined entirely by one's position as a commodity in the labour market.

Economics views the individuals in a society as a means of production, as an accessory where the process cannot be fully automated. This may be the best way to maximise profit, but nonetheless a destructive waste of human potential.

The worker is alienated in the Marxian sense, as the value of the finished product is taken away from him, to be turned into surplus value, accruing to the capitalist. He is left with his role as a consumer, which can inhibit his private life, and even his identity. Accommodation, a child's education, freedom to travel, how much free time one has, style of leisure pursuits; all these depend on the buying power incumbent to one's occupation. The economic structure also alienates the worker spiritually, as very few people are linked to the forces of production in a way which allows them to express their individuality in the finished product.

The idea that man needs to reify himself in his work, to externalise his own potential in effort directed to a particular end, does not enter into a rationale of the western style of living. In "Small is Beautiful" E.F. Schumacher points out the way the buddhists reverse these values. The primary goal of work for them is the fulfilment of the individual's needs, and the secondary goal is production to meet the material needs of society. He maintains that the goal of limitless consumption blinds western thinking to the concept of "enough." It consequently helps to maintain the fallacy that finite resources such as oil, coal etc. are short-life replaceable commodities to be used and thrown away like other material goods.

The capitalist ethic, intent on maintaining profit margins, has inspired various ways of increasing the rate of consumption, creating artificial needs through advertising, planned obsolescence, etc. It employs vast quantities of the labour force in creating these artificial needs, diversifying them, and designating specialists to perpetuate their existence. All of which doesn't exactly contribute to a sense of involvement or fulfillment, on the part of the worker.

Spiritual alienation is also expressed in the kind of mentality which will accept money as sufficient justification for time spoilt in fruitless and meaningless tasks. It gives inertia a positive value. To take three hours' tea break or spin out a short task over several days may be a way of denying the employer his pound of flesh, but who's really being short sold? Whatever the wage, anyone who is reduced to the status of an automaton is still poor while denied the ability to know and use their creative ability. An economic system where work is synonymous

with the selling of labour fails to acknowledge work as a vital facet of human nature.

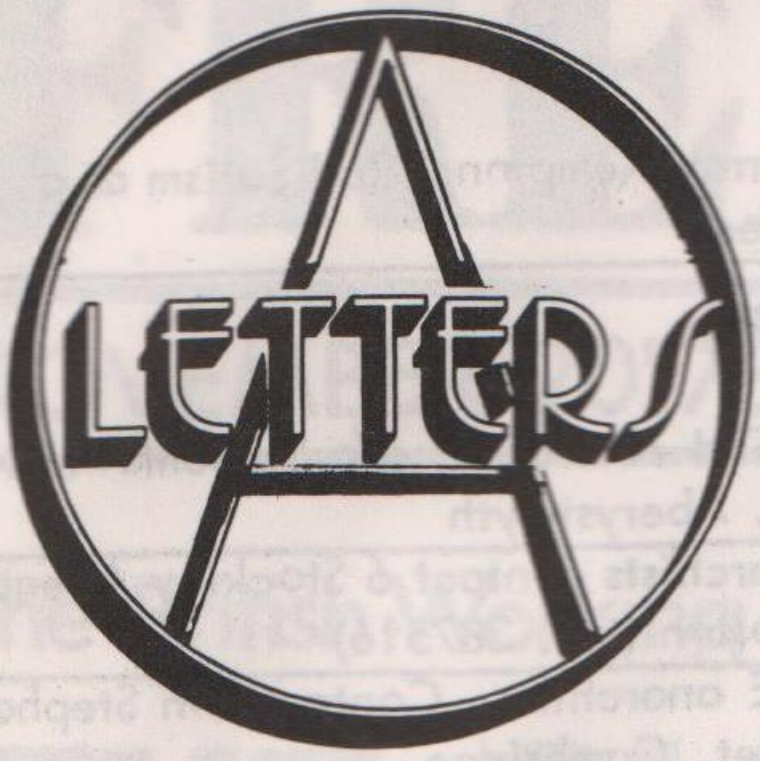
The fact that most people's subsistence is tied in to this goal of limitless consumption means that it is in nobody's interest to change it. Trade unions, acting to protect their members against redundancy, will insist that three be kept on to do the work of one, or defend a person's right to do the work a machine could do. One of the fiercest opponents to co-operative schemes being incorporated into council housing programmes was NALGO, primarily on the grounds that their administrative duties will be taken away, if tenants are allowed to have control of their own management. For anyone who has a financial stake in the maintenance of the status quo it is safer to maintain a reactionary attitude to change.

But it's in everybody's interests, as both worker or consumer, to re-examine the meaning within the work they do. The spirit with which a task is accomplished has a direct bearing on the quality of the finished product. The ethic which created planned obsolescence also destroyed the possibility of fulfillment or involvement for the workers concerned. What is missing is quality, a concept ignored by the logic of economics and the present economic structure.

Most people are caught in this syndrome from birth. The main function of schools is to provide people with enough basic cognitive skills to be useful fodder to industry. Ivan Illich in "Deschooling Society", summed it all up. He said, "man must choose whether to be free in things or in the freedom to use them." The right to work is an innate part of human nature—to institutionalise it within an exploitative social system is to destroy it

Gerrie Ellis

continued on page 6



Lions v. Christians

Dear Comrades,

It probably hasn't escaped your notice that the Danish film director Jens Thorsen recently made the rash proposal to make a film on that famous myth Jesus Christ, with particular reference to his sex life. The resultant furore from everybody, except strangely enough the moguls of the film industry, is still raising dust in the press and on T.V. However, why has nobody commented on a far more pernicious and degenerate film shortly to appear in the West End, "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" It deals explicitly with cannibalism, mutilation and other delights.

I want to raise a couple of points on this. The most interesting is of course the gross hypocrisy of all these guardians of public morality leaping up to condemn a harmless porno flick because it destroys, or even questions, one of the mysteries of their favourite myth, while ignoring something potentially quite harmful. The second is the utter rottenness of a society which can allow, and even approve of—judging from the lack of any public debate on the matter—such barbarism. It is, after all, just a sophisticated extension of the old "Lions v. Christians" game so popular in Roman times. However at least these were free to keep the populace happy, somebody's going to make a profit out of "Chainsaw" for chrissake!

I'm not trying to make too big a thing of this, after all if somebody wants to pay thirty devalued bob to see bodies being sliced up then that's his trip. However I don't think it should be completely ignored as it's a good example of just how far down the road they're going to take us.

Sincerely,
Andy John

Belfast Meetings

Dear comrades

I don't think the letter in your last issue (FREEDOM, 23 Oct. 1976) was very fair to the Socialist Workers Movement in Belfast. They are actually a very small branch but I'm sure they fully support the work of the Murrays Defence Committee. S.W.M. are represented on the main Defence Group in Dublin and give excellent coverage of the campaign in their paper, The Worker (see for example, the last two issues for September and October).

And I.S. as their sister organisation here in Britain, are also active in the campaign. The Murrays must not hang!

Fraternally
Frank Conway

Murrays Defence Committee
Manchester
(Member of I.S.)

* Note: A report by the Anarchist Workers' Solidarity Group in Belfast on meetings in Belfast to support the Murray campaign. According to this report neither the Socialist Workers Movement nor the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association supported the Belfast meetings.

EDS

Away from Big Industry

Dear Comrades

First of all I would like to thank S. Melia for the letter in FREEDOM Vol. 37 no. 22. The "economic situation" is certainly a problem anarchists must face up to, for it won't just go away. However, I feel it is important to realise exactly what the problem is: it is not the fact that the economic system in this country is going through a "crisis" but how to abolish that system and allow a new one to develop. Now I don't pretend to know much about economic theory but S. Melia's suggestion sounds a little too close to the Marxist labour value theory for comfort. The trouble in my view is that economic, as well as political, systems have developed not naturally in accordance with the needs and wishes of the people, but have been artificially imposed by the scum which always (sadly) seems to float to the top - the rich and powerful. Therefore present economic units have two major failings:

1. they are too large
2. they are not expressions of real needs but rather of the greed and latent megalomania of certain sections of society.

S. Melia's letter spoke of "the anarchist solution." Honestly, I don't think such a thing exists, the great advantage of anarchist theory is that it is fluid and adaptable; there is no one answer to any question.

What I think is a need for a move towards smaller more self-sufficient units has been expressed in tunes by the "Back to the Earth" movement. I really believe that a truly free and just society will only be made possible by a move away from mass industrial production with its terrible mutilation of the earth and of men's lives. I am not preaching a return to feudal society or a complete rejection of technology. What I am saying is that "modern industrial society" is a rejection of man's freedom and dignity and the father and mother of all its own ills. Economics, if it is anything more than varying systems of screwing the people, is about the way in which we obtain the various necessities of life, housing, food etc., etc. The only way that this can have any meaning is if you can know and exper-

ience the group you are working with and for. The UK as an economic unit is totally divorced from the life and experience of an individual who happens to live within the area where it holds sway - he works not because he is doing something of value but in order to get money to buy goods which have been made by other people who also work only for money, etc. etc. If money is losing its "value" now it is only because it never really had any.

This letter has been longer and more rambling than I intended; thanks once again to S. Melia for opening a debate which is of great importance.

Yours in friendship

Steve

Freedom

There has been criticism of anarchist papers for using "recycled journalism", pieces taken from bourgeois papers and revamped for anarchist consumption. A valid criticism. However, we must remember that bourgeois papers maintain expensive research departments. Their output has to be viewed with caution, but I see no reason why their expertise cannot be milked. I certainly don't have the time to duplicate their investigations. There are a wide range of publications, from the newspapers to specialist magazines with a frightening command of their limited fields. The newspapers, with their bias and faults, remain our chief source of information on the world outside our immediate surroundings. There is a lot to be said for the idea that only that which we know first hand is real to us. However I believe that anarchism implies a wider viewpoint, much of which must be obtained from newspapers. I would love to see FREEDOM filled with accounts of intense activity and penetrating thought. You write it and it will be printed.

David Peers

Counter-revolutionary Humour

(1st. Printer to 2nd.) "Hey, this batch of money all turned out crooked."
(2nd Printer) "...It's close enough for government work."

Does the above strike you as being counter revolutionary? I refer to a preposterous letter printed in your Sept. 11th issue by a certain Johanne Rotkeltchen who is of the opinion that "humour by its nature is counter revolutionary." After engaging in an intense study of the subject, and, being currently involved in a rather expensive correspondence course - HOW TO WRITE COMEDY AND HUMOUR - I couldn't disagree more. In my opinion, most quality comedy, and humor, defies analyzation. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that much of it clearly belittles "establishment" institutions, politicians, accepted ideas, customs, traditions, regimented thought processes, etc.

continued over page:

FREEDOM:

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

WE WELCOME News, reviews, letters, articles. Latest date for receipt of copy for next Review is Saturday 20 November and for news section is Saturday 27 November.

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name

address

.....

letter

"Ya know what a horses ass is?
That's a politician with a furr lined face."

"What do you get when you match a soldier with a moron?" - An intelligent soldier."

"How 'bout a raise boss, I'm not makin' enough to keep my termites healthy."

Counter revolutionary indeed! It appears the above has a loose spring somewhere. Why does FREEDOM waste its time, and space for such Communist drivel?

Faternally
Larry Shull
Tucson, Arizona

Reply: Oh Gawd! We humorists (leaving U out) are in trouble. As Artemus Wand says it was 'Rit sarkastic' - Johannes Rotkelchen alias Jack Spratt

CONTACT:

POST-GRADUATE student needs accommodation within one hour of Kensington. 10 years association with libertarian movements. Contact John Hinsley, c/o General Studies Dept., Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7 2EU

CHRISTIAN Anarchists in London? If so--- please contact Doug Truman, 166 Cleveland St. London, W.1. Flat 18.

220 CAMDEN HIGH ST—eviction has not yet taken place. The bailiff is a Mr. Harris—an ex-hangman

PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY Liberation Front Box 1976 c/o Rising Free, 142 Drummond St. London N.W.1.

NORTHANTS A.S. Neill Association group contact Sue and Terry Phillips, 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby.

MEETINGS

LONDON READERS note:

This FRIDAY 19 Nov. Minority Rights Group mtg. on Native Australians and Original Americans. Issues of a Modern Age. At the Chemistry Auditorium of University College, London Gordon St. entrance, W.C.1. 7 pm. Free

This SATURDAY 20 Nov. Int. Black Cross Jumble Sale to raise funds towards a new centre. 2 - 4 pm at the Moravian Hall, Priory Road, N.8 (near Crutch End).

Anarchist Forum. There will be a gathering of anarchists of all tendencies at the Enterprise Pub, Chalk Farm, on Friday 26 Nov. at 8 p.m. and on Dec. 10 and/or other dates to be decided on the 26th. These mtgs. are not under the aegis of FLAG or any existing group

EAST ANGLIA. Conference in Cambridge on Sat. 4 Dec. to discuss co-operation and activity among libertarians in East Anglia. All welcome. SAE for details to: Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex.

BWNIC Study Group mtgs. at 3.30 pm at 9 Monmouth House, Westhill Road, S.W.18. Nov. 20 and every fortnight thereafter.

HYDE PARK Speakers Corner (Marble Arch). Anarchist Forum alternate Sundays 1 pm Speakers, listeners and hecklers welcome.

EAST LONDON group holds regular fortnightly mtgs at 123 Latham Rd. E.6, Phone Ken on 552 3985 for details

KINGSTON Libertarian Group. Interested in persons contact Pauline tel. 549 2564

SOUTH-EAST London Libertarians Group meets Wednesdays. Contact Georgina 460 1823

BIRMINGHAM Black & Red group. Regular Sunday mtgs. soon. For info. contact Bob Prew, 40c Trafalgar Rd. Moseley, B'ham 13.

COLCHESTER area anarchists/libertarians interested local group contact Hilary Lester, 32 Wellesley Rd. Colchester for mtg. details

NORTH-WEST Anarchist Federation. For mtgs. activities & newsletter write 165 Rosehill Rd. Burnley, Lancs.

NEW YORK

FREESPACE Alternative U., 329 Lafayette St. New York NY 10012. Lectures Fridays 8.15 pm in W.R.L. Building (212). 228 0322.

Dec. 3: Benno Gremneveld, "The Story of the New Left in Holland"

Dec. 10: Sam Dolgoff "Spanish Anarchism Before & After Franco"

LIBERTARIAN BOOK CLUB Lectures Thursdays 7.30 pm at Workmen's Circle Center, 8th Ave and 29 St. (S.W. corner). Free admission, coffee & cookies.

Dec. 9: Murray Kempton: "Radicalism as a career"

GROUPS

ABERYSTWYTH Anarchists c/o Students' Union
Laura Place, Aberystwyth

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

CAMBRIDGE anarchists. Contact Ron Stephan 41 York Street, Cambridge

CORBY anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants NN1 21A

COVENTRY. Pete Come, c/o Students Union, University of Warwick, Coventry.

DURHAM. Martin Spence, 11 Front Street, Sherburn Village, Durham

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

LEEDS c/o Cahal McLaughlin, 12 Winston Gardens, Leeds 8

LEICESTER Peter and Jean Miller, 41 Norman Road, Leicester (tel. 549642)

OXFORD c/o Jude, 38 Hurst St. Oxford

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

THAMES VALLEY anarchists contact Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 4 Congress Road, Maidenhead, SL6 3EE (tel. 0628 2974)

Proposed Yorkshire Federation - Interested individuals or groups contact Leeds group.

SCOTTISH LIBERTARIAN Federation:

Aberdeen Blake, c/o A.P.P. 167 King St.

Dundee Malet, 1 Lynnewood Pl. (tel. 452063)

Edinburgh B. Gibson, 7 Union St. (557 1522)

Fife "Haggis", c/o Students Union, University of St. Andrews

Glasgow C. Baird, 122 Berners St. Milton, Glasgow G22 (336 7895)

Stirling D. Tymes, 99 Rosebank, Sauchie, Clacks.

INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

Canberra Anarchist Group, 32/4 Condomine Court, Turner, ACT

Melbourne Martin Giles Peters, c/o Dept. of Philosophy, Monash University, Melbourne New South Wales P. Stones, P.O. Box 25, Warrawong, NSW 2502

Sydney Fed. of Aust. Anarchists & "Rising Free", Box 92, Broadway, 2007 Australia

NEW ZEALAND

Anarchists resident in or visiting New Zealand contact Christchurch Anarchists, P.O. Box 22-607, Christchurch, New Zealand.

PRISONERS

The STOKES NEWINGTON FIVE Welfare Committee still needs funds for books &c. Box 252, 240 Camden High St. London NW1

DUBLIN ANARCHISTS Bob Cullen, Des Keane and Columba Longmore, Military Detention Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, Eire. MARIE MURRAY and NOEL MURRAY protest letters to the Justice Minister, 72-76 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2; the Irish Ambassador, 17 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7HR

PUBLICATIONS

THE WALL (an anarchist analysis of the Berlin Wall) still available. For 25p you can buy a historic trip into East German repression (from Freedom Bookshop, postage 9p)

(Cont'd from last issue)... she is happy and although she would have preferred a different colour to white it was the only colour the volunteers had been given. In any case no one had thought about the effect an all white room might have on an isolated person, other than it making everything look 'fresh and clean'. So the old and dirty room that our elderly woman had grown used to over the years was suddenly transformed. The young people were so happy at the shining white everywhere that they didn't notice the contrast with her remaining bits of tatty furniture and crockery. The woman noticed but didn't mind whilst the room was so alive with such exciting and interesting young people. Then they went away and suddenly, once more, she was alone. (to be cont'd). 'Ian the Printer' thanks fellow printer Nat Hong of New Haven, USA for his letter of support and understanding.

FREEDOM'S Anarchist Review

November 20 '76

Colin Ward

Anarchism and Participatory Democracy

As long as today's problems are stated in terms of mass politics and "mass organization", it is clear that only states and mass parties can deal with them. But if the solutions that can be offered by the existing states and parties are acknowledged to be either futile or wicked, or both, then we must look not only for different "solutions" but especially for a different way of stating the problems themselves.

—Andrea Caffi.

IF YOU LOOK at the history of socialism, reflecting on the melancholy difference between promise and performance, both in those countries where socialist parties have triumphed in the struggle for political power, and in those where they have never attained it, you are bound to ask yourself what went wrong, and when, and why. Many of us ascribe the failure to the ascendancy of the central-management design for socialism over a liberating popular-control concept. Some would see 1917 as the fatal turning point in socialism's history. Others trace the divergence back to the February revolution of 1848 in Paris as "the starting point of the two-fold development of European socialism, anarchistic and Marxist"¹. Many would locate the critical point of divergence as the congress of the International at The Hague in 1872 when the exclusion of Bakunin and the anarchists signified the victory of Marxism. In his prophetic criticism of Marx that year, Bakunin previsited the subsequent history of Communist society:

Marx is an authoritarian and centralizing communist. He wants what we want, the complete triumph of economic and social equality, but he wants it in the state and through the state power, through the dictatorship of a very strong and, so to say, despotic provisional government, that is, by the negation of liberty. His economic ideal is the state as sole owner of the land and of all kinds of capital, cultivating the land under the management of state engineers, and controlling all industrial and commercial associations with state capital. We want the same triumph of economic and social equality through the abolition of the state and of all that passes by the name of law (which, in our view, is the permanent negation of human rights). We want the reconstruction of society and the unification of mankind to be achieved, not from above downwards by any sort of authority, nor by socialist officials, engineers, and other accredited men of learning—but from below upwards, by the free federation of all kinds of workers' associations liberated from the yoke of the State².

The home-grown English variety of socialism reached the point of divergence later. As late as 1886, an early Fabian tract declared, "English Socialism is not yet anarchist or collectivist, not yet defined enough in point of policy to be classified. There is a mass of socialistic feeling not yet conscious of itself as socialism. But when the unconscious socialists of England discover their position, they also will probably fall into two parties: a collectivist party supporting a strong central administration and a counter-balancing anarchist party defending individual initiative against that administration"³. The Fabians rapidly found which side of the

watershed was theirs, and when a Labour Party was founded, they exercised a decisive influence on its policies. In 1919 the Labour Party finally identified itself with the unlimited increase of the state's power and activity through the giant managerially-controlled public corporation.

State Capitalism

And where socialist parties have achieved power they have merely created state capitalism, with a veneer of social welfare as a substitute for social justice. The large hopes of the nineteenth century have not been fulfilled; only the gloomy prophecies have come true. The criticism of the state and the structure of power and authority made by the classical anarchist thinkers, has increased in validity and urgency in the past century of total war and the total state. For the faith that the conquest of state power would bring the advent of socialism has been destroyed in every country where socialist parties have won—either by gaining a parliamentary majority or by riding the wave of a popular revolution or by entering behind tanks of the Workers' Fatherland. What has happened is exactly what the anarchist Proudhon said a hundred years ago would happen: all that has been achieved is "a compact democracy having the appearance of being founded on the dictatorship of the masses, but in which the masses have no more power than is necessary to ensure a general serfdom in accordance with the following precepts and principles borrowed from the old absolutism; indivisibility of public power, all-consuming centralisation, systematic destruction of all individual, corporative and regional though (regarded as disruptive), inquisitorial police"⁴.

Kropotkin too, warned us that "the state organisation, having been the force to which the minorities resorted for establishing and organising their power over the masses, cannot be the force which will serve to destroy these privileges", and he declared that "the economic and political liberation of man will have to create new forms for its expression in life, instead of those established by the state". He thought it self-evident that "this new form will have to be more popular, more decentralised, and nearer to the folk-mote self-government than representative government can ever be"⁵. He claimed that we will be compelled to find new forms of organisation for the social functions which the state fulfils through the bureaucracy, and that "as long as this is not done, nothing will be done"⁶.

When we look at the powerlessness of the individual and the small face-to-face group in the world today, and ask ourselves why they are powerless, we have to answer, not merely that they are weak because the state is strong, but that they are weak because they have surrendered their power to the state. It is as though every individual possessed a certain quantity of power, but that by default or negligence he had allowed someone else to pick it up, rather than use it himself for his own purposes.

Gustave Landauer, the German anarchist, made a profound and simple contribution to the analysis of the state and society in one sentence: "The state is not something which can be

destroyed by a revolution, but it is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently." It is we and not an abstract outside identity, Landauer implies, who behave in one way or the other, politically or socially. Landauer's friend and executor Martin Buber, begins his essay "Society and the State" with an observation of the sociologist Robert MacIver that "to identify the social with the political is to be guilty of the grossest of all confusions, which completely bars any understanding of either society or the state". The political principle, for Buber, is characterised by power, authority, hierarchy, dominion. He sees the social principle in the association of men on the basis of a common need or a common interest.

Conflict of Principles

What is it, Buber asks, that gives the political principle its ascendancy? And he answers, "the fact that every people feels itself threatened by the others gives the state its definite unifying power; it depends upon the instinct of self-preservation of society itself; the latent external crisis enables it to get the upper hand in internal crises. . . . All forms of government have this in common; each possesses more power than is required by the given conditions; in fact, this excess in the capacity for making dispositions is actually what we understand by political power. The measure of this excess, which cannot, of course, be computed precisely, represents the exact difference between administration and government". He calls this excess the "political surplus" and observes that "its justification derives from the external and internal instability, from the latent state of crisis between nations and within every nation. The political principle is always stronger in relation to the social principle than the given conditions require. The result is a continuous diminution in social spontaneity"⁷.

The conflict between these two principles is a permanent aspect of the human condition. Or as Kropotkin put it, "Throughout the history of our civilization, two traditions, two opposed tendencies, have been in conflict: the Roman tradition and the federalist tradition, the authoritarian tradition and the libertarian tradition." There is an inverse correlation between the two: the strength of one is the weakness of the other. If we want to strengthen society we must weaken the state. Totalitarians of all kinds realise this, which is why they invariably seek to destroy those social institutions which they cannot dominate. So do the dominant interest groups in the state, like the alliance characterised as the "military-industrial complex" by Eisenhower in his last address as president.

Shorn of the metaphysics with which politicians and philosophers have enveloped it, the state can be defined as a political mechanism using force, and to the sociologist it is one among many forms of social organisation. It is however, "distinguished from all other associations by its exclusive investment with the final power of coercion"⁸. And against whom is this final power applied? It is ostensibly directed at the enemy without, but it is used upon the subject society within.

This is why Buber declared that it is the maintenance of the latent external crisis that enables the state to get the upper hand in internal crises. Is this a conscious procedure? Is it simply that wicked men control the state? Could we put things right simply by voting for good men? Or is it a fundamental characteristic of the state as an institution? It was because she drew this final conclusion that Simone Weil declared, "The great error of nearly all studies of war, an error into which all socialists have fallen, has been to consider war as an episode in foreign politics, when it is especially an act of interior politics, and the most atrocious act of all."⁹

It doesn't look like this of course, if you are part of the directing apparatus, calculating what proportion of the population you can afford to lose in a nuclear war—just as the governments of all the great powers, capitalist and communist, are calculating. But it does look like this if you are part of the

expendable population—unless you identify your own unimportant carcass with the state apparatus, as millions do.

Building Networks

In the nineteenth century, T. H. Green avowed that war is the expression of the "imperfect" state, but he was wrong. War is the state in its most perfect form; as Randolph Bourne said at the time of the first world war, "war is the health of the state". This is why the weakening of the state is a social necessity. The strengthening of other loyalties, of alternative foci of power, of different modes of human behaviour, is an essential for survival.

But where do we begin? It should be obvious that we do not begin by supporting, joining, or working to change the existing political parties from within, nor by starting new ones as rivals for political power. Our task is not to gain power but to erode it, to drain it away from the state. "One way or another, socialism must become more popular, more communalistic, and less dependent upon indirect government through elected representatives. It must become more self-governing."¹⁰ We have to build networks instead of pyramids. All authoritarian institutions are organised as pyramids: the state, the private or public corporation, the army, the police, the church. Each has a small group of decision-makers at the top and a broad base of people whose decisions are made for them spread out below. Anarchism doesn't want different people on top; it wants to destroy the pyramid. In its place it advocates an extended network of individuals and groups, making their own decisions, controlling their own destiny.

The classical anarchist thinkers envisaged the whole social organisation woven from such local groups. The commune or council would be the territorial nucleus, not as a branch of the state, but as the "free association of the members concerned, which may be either a co-operative or a corporative body, or simply a provisional union of several people united by a common need"¹¹, and the syndicate or workers' council as the industrial or occupational unit. These units would federate in a network of autonomous groups. Several strands of thought are linked together in anarchist social theory; the ideas of direct action, autonomy or workers' control, decentralisation and federalism.

The phrase "direct action" was first given currency by the French revolutionary syndicalists of the turn of the century, and was associated with the various forms of militant industrial resistance—the strike, the slow down, encroaching control, sabotage, and the general strike. Its meaning has widened since then to take in the experience of, for example, Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign and the civil rights struggle in the United States. Direct action has been defined by David Wieck as that "action which, in respect to a situation, realises the end desired, so far as this lies within one's power or the power of one's group". He distinguishes this from indirect action which "realises an irrelevant or even contradictory end. He gives this as a homely example: "If the butcher weighs one's meat with his thumb on the scale, one may complain about it and tell him he is a bandit who robs the poor, and if he persists and one does nothing else, this is mere talk; one may call the Department of Weights and Measures, and this is indirect action; or one may, talk falling, insist on weighing one's own meat, bring along a scale to check the butcher's weight, take one's business somewhere else, help open a co-operative store, and these are direct actions." Wieck observes that, "proceeding with the belief that in every situation, every individual and group has the possibility of some direct action on some level of generality, we may discover much that has been unrecognised, and the importance of much that has been underrated. So politicised is our thinking, so focused to the motions of governmental institutions, that the effects of direct efforts to modify one's environment are unexplored. The habit of direct action is, perhaps, identical with the habit of being a free man, prepared to live responsibly in a free society"¹².

The ideas of autonomy and workers' control and of decentralisation are inseparable from that of direct action. In the

modern state, everywhere and in every field, one group of people makes decisions, exercises control, limits choices, while the great majority have to accept and submit. The habit of direct action is the habit of wresting back the power to make decisions affecting us, from them. The autonomy of the worker at work is the most important field in which this expropriation of decision-making can apply. When workers' control is mentioned, people sadly smile and regretfully murmur that it is a pity that the scale and complexity of modern industry make it impossible to put such a beautiful ideal into practice. But they are wrong. There are no technical grounds for regarding workers' control as impossible. Evidence for this can be found in studies of the organisation of work in British industry today. Seymour Melman's study of decision-making in a tractor factory showed to his satisfaction that "there are realistic alternatives to managerial rule over production"¹³, and the Tavistock Institute's study of the work system used in some of the pits in the Durham coal fields demonstrates "the ability of quite large primary work groups. . . to act as self-regulating, self-developing social organisms, able to maintain themselves in a steady state of high productivity". These miners are "free to evolve their own way of organising and carrying out their task. They are not subject to any external authority in this respect, nor is there within the group itself any member who takes over a formal directive leadership function. . . . The income obtained is divided equally among team members. . . ." ¹⁴ Such examples are rare, and they operate within the limits prescribed by a capitalist economy, but they indicate that workers' control is not an impossible demand. It is simply a demand which is not made.

Similarly, decentralisation is not so much a technical problem as an approach to problems of human organisation. For the sceptic, you can work out a convincing case for decentralisation on economic or organisational grounds, but for the anarchist there just isn't any other solution consistent with his advocacy of direct action and autonomy. It doesn't occur to him to seek centralist solutions just as it doesn't occur to the person with an authoritarian mentality to seek decentralist ones. A contemporary anarchist advocate of decentralisation, Paul Goodman, remarks that

In fact, there have always been two strands to decentralist thinking. Some authors, e.g., Lao-Tse or Tolstoy, make a conservative-peasant critique of centralised court and town as inorganic, verbal and ritualistic. But other authors, e.g. Proudhon or Kropotkin, make a democratic-urban critique of centralised bureaucracy and power, including feudal industrial power, as exploiting, inefficient, and discouraging initiative. In our present era of State-socialism, corporate feudalism, regimented schooling, brainwashing mass-communications and urban anomie, both kinds of critique make sense. We need to revive both peasant self-reliance and the democratic power of professional and technical guilds.

Any decentralization that could occur at present would inevitably be post-urban and post-centralist, it could not be provincial. . . .¹⁵

He concludes that decentralisation is "a kind of social organization; it does not involve geographical isolation, but a particular sociological use of geography".

Precisely because we are not concerned with geographical isolation, anarchist thinkers have devoted a great deal of thought to the principle of federalism. Proudhon regarded it as the alpha and omega of his political and economic thought. He was not thinking of a confederation of states or of a world federal government, but of a principle of human organisation. He envisaged local communes and associations co-operating in regional federations. The nation would be replaced by a geographical confederation of regions, and Europe would be a confederation of confederations. In such a federal arrangement, the interests of even the smallest province would be protected. Differences would be settled by arbitration. Bakunin's philosophy of federalism echoed Proudhon's and Kropotkin's too, drew on the history of the French Revolution the Paris Commune, and, at the very end of his life, the ex-

perience of the Russian Revolution, to illustrate the importance of the federal principle if a revolution is to retain its revolutionary content.

A Series of Engagements

Autonomous direct action, decentralised decision-making, and free federation have been the characteristics of all genuinely popular uprisings. Staughton Lynd has remarked that "no real revolution has ever taken place—whether in America in 1776, France in 1789, Russia in 1917, China in 1949—without ad hoc popular institutions, improvised from below, simply beginning to administer power in place of the institutions previously recognized as legitimate." They were seen too in the Spanish Revolution of 1936 and in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, only to be destroyed by the very party which had ridden to power in 1917 on the essentially anarchist slogan "all power to the soviets". In March 1920, by which time the Bolsheviks had transformed the local soviets into organs of the central administration, Lenin said to Emma Goldman, "Why, even your great comrade Errico Malatesta has declared himself for the soviets." "Yes," she replied, "for the free soviets." Malatesta himself, defining the anarchist interpretation of revolution, wrote:

Revolution is the destruction of all coercive ties; it is the autonomy of groups, of communes, or regions; revolution is the free federation brought about by a desire for brotherhood, by individual and collective interests, by the needs of production and defence; revolution is the constitution of innumerable free groupings based on ideas, wishes and tastes of all kinds that exist among the people; revolution is the forming and disbanding of thousands of representative, district, communal, regional, national bodies which, without having any legislative power, serve to make known and to coordinate the desires and interests of people near and far and which act through information, advice and example. Revolution is freedom proved in the crucible of facts—and lasts so long as freedom lasts, that is until others, taking advantage of the weariness that overtakes the masses, of the inevitable disappointments that follow exaggerated hopes, of the probable errors and human faults, succeed in constituting a power, which, supported by an army of mercenaries or conscripts, lays down the law, arrests the movement at the point it has reached, and then begins the reaction.¹⁶

His last sentence indicates that he thought reaction inevitable, and so it is, if the people are willing to surrender the power they have wrested from the former ruling elite into the hands of a new one. But a reaction to every revolution is inevitable in another sense. This is what the ebb and flow of history implies. As Landauer says, every time after the revolution is a time before the revolution for all those whose lives have not bogged down in some great moment of the past. There is no final struggle, only a series of partisan engagements on a variety of fronts.

And after a century of experience of the theory and half a century of experience of the practice of the Marxist and social-democratic varieties of socialism, after the historians had dismissed anarchism as one of the nineteenth-century also-rans, it is emerging again in the struggle for a society of participants. One thing on which most observers of the international student revolt and the events of May 1968 in France are agreed upon, is their anarchist character. Thus *Time* magazine (May 24, 1968) observed, "The black flag that flew last week above the tumultuous student disorders of Paris stood for a philosophy that the modern world has all but forgotten: anarchy. Few of the students who riot in France, Germany or Italy—or in many another country—would profess outright allegiance to anarchy, but its basic tenets inspire many of their leaders. Germany's 'Red Rudi' Dutschke and France's 'Red Danny' Cohn-Bendit openly espouse anarchy." And writing in *Encounter* (August, 1968), Theodore Draper declared, "The lineage of the new revolutionaries goes back to Bakunin rather than to Marx, and it is just as well that the term 'anarchism' is coming back into vogue. For what we have been witnessing is a revival of an-

archism in modern dress or masquerading as latter-day Marxism. Just as nineteenth-century Marxism matured in a struggle against anarchism, so twentieth-century Marxism may have to recreate itself in another struggle against anarchism in its latest guise." He went on to say that the anarchists did not have much staying-power in the nineteenth century, and that it is unlikely that they will have much more in this century. I don't think he was right about the old anarchists. They went down fighting, and they were their own hardest critics. Whether or not he was right about the new anarchists depends on several questions. First, have people learned anything from the history of the last hundred years? Second, will the many people in the East and West who seek an alternative theory of social organisation to the ordinary political theories grasp the relevance of anarchist ideas? Last, are anarchists imaginative enough to find ways of applying their theories to today's society so as to combine immediate action with ultimate ends?

Notes

- ¹Vaclav Cerny, "The Socialistic Year 1848 and its Heritage" (Prague: *The Critical Monthly* Nos. 1 and 2, 1948).
- ²Michael Bakunin, "Letter to the Internationalists of the Romagna", 28 January 1872.
- ³Fabian Tract No. 4 *What Socialism Is* (London 1886).
- ⁴Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *The Political Capacity of the Working Class* (1864).
- ⁵Peter Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (London, 1912).

- ⁶The same, French edition 1913.
- ⁷Martin Buber, "Society and the State" (London: *World Review* May 1951).
- ⁸Peter Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (London 1912).
- ⁹Simone Weil, "Reflections on War" (London: *Left Review* 1938).
- ¹⁰Peter Kropotkin, *op cit*.
- ¹¹Camillo Berneri, Kropotkin, *His Federalist Ideas* (Freedom Press, 1943)
- ¹²David Wieck, "The Habit of Direct Action" (*Anarchy* 13, Freedom Press 1962).
- ¹³Seymour Melman, *Decision-Making and Productivity* (Oxford 1958).
- ¹⁴P. G. Herbst, *Autonomous Group Functioning* and E. L. Trist et al.: *Organisational Choice* (London, 1962 and 1963).
- ¹⁵Paul Goodman, *Like A Conquered Province* (New York, 1967).
- ¹⁶Vernon Richards, ed. *Malatesta, His Life and Ideas* (Freedom Press 1965).

This article appeared as the chapter "The Anarchist Contribution" in the book *The Case for Participatory Democracy, Some Prospects for a Radical Society*, edited by C. George Benello and Dimitrios Roussopoulos and published simultaneously in New York by Grossman Publishers and in Canada by Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd., 1971. (Reviewed in *FREE-DOM* 9 Sept. 1972).

by PAUL HAMMOND

Be intolerant, be free!

introducing Georges Darien

Georges, who?

GEORGES DARIEN is virtually unknown outside of France. Novelist, playwright and pamphleteer, Darien is the Melmoth of political philosophy, politics' "cursed poet", a past master of the poetics of vituperation. Like Sade's, his writing represents a cultural terminus (and point of departure), a branch-line crossing such arid and relentless terrain that fellow-travellers are few. Darien's intransigence, his "ruthless criticism" of both Right and Left—still on the agenda for today's revolutionaries—made him few friends. His most famous book, a novel called *Le Voleur*, was like the rest of this pariah's work, a failure when it appeared in 1898¹. Even Alfred Jarry including it a few years later in Doctor Faustroll's "equivalent books"² in the company of Baudelaire, Coleridge, Lautréamont, Rimbaud and Mallarmé couldn't save it from fifty years of neglect.

Le Voleur (The Thief) is a libertarian novel. Written in simple, passionate language it uses the contrivances of popular melodrama—unexpected meetings, Machiavellian intrigue, sensational coups de théâtre—to bring people together so they can talk unremittingly about Life. The opinions they express express Darien's own contempt for the duped (the people resigned to their fate) as much as his hatred of society's victimisers (politicians, priests, reformers and friends).

On thieving

The manuscript of *Le Voleur* is something Darien stole himself, he tells us in the preface. It is the autobiography of a vanished thief, Georges Randal. The absent Randal is an angry man, with a foundry-full of axes to grind. Sparks fly when he takes up the subject of his bourgeois upbringing, describing how the "self", man's primitive, moral identity, is made to disappear in childhood:

A clear river flows through a nascent town. A bridge is built over it, then another, then a third. Soon it is completely covered. Its limpid current can no longer be seen. Its murmur is no longer heard. Its existence is forgotten. The river continues to flow through the blackness of the stone arches. Its pure water is muddy now. The waves that once sang to the sun mumble in the shadows. It no longer carries flower blossoms, it transports men's filth. It isn't a river any more, but a sewer.

After military service he masquerades as an engineer, and begins to burgle, starting with the parents of an old school friend:

I want to be a thief. I will live without working. I will take from others what they stole themselves.

For Randal the thief is a symbolic being with a moral obligation; he is the eternal representative of individualism. A chance meeting with a boastful industrialist yields information of a safe to be robbed and an insight into labour relations;

Half to three-quarters of all strikes we /the industrialists /provoke ourselves. The capitalist and the manufacturer encumbered by overproduction can recover thanks to a strike.

Randal and an accomplice take time out on a burglary to become mouthpieces in a debate about the libertarian nature of art:

The pictures by the great masters that illuminate the walls of the museums, and the poems in stone and marble which sit resplendent beneath their vaulted ceilings, are cries of independence. They are vibrant appeals for a beautiful and free life, cries full of hatred and disgust for murderous legalities and morals that

enslave... Nothing is more anti-social, in the real sense of the word, than a beautiful work of art.

After encounters with Paternoster, a corrupt notary who redeems stolen shares, and Ida, a midwife and feminist, Randal meets Renée, the wife of an official in the ministry of finance. He agrees to reward her with one-third of all burgled booty—which she will use to maintain her chic lifestyle—in return for inside information.

Randal expresses his disillusionment with scientific socialism, the social democratic variety of Bernstein, Kautsky, Jaures and Guesde. The thief is buttonholed by a hirsute socialist:

"Listen closely," he says. "It is extremely important if you want to find out how scientific socialism can consider man as nothing less than a machine... An adult's daily food is potentially equal to half a kilogram of coal. The aforementioned half-kilo is in turn equal to one-fifth of one horse-power over twenty-four hours. As one horse-power is equivalent to the force of twenty-four men, the average day's work of an ordinary man adds up to a fifth of the potential energy stored in the food that the man consumes, which is equivalent, as you will see, to a half-kilo of coal. What becomes of the other four-fifths?"

I don't know, I don't know! And I don't want to know.

Randal's own conclusions about leftism are corroborated by a socialist worker and an anarchist hobo: both agree that police spies are the only ones to profit from leftist propaganda.

In another encounter Randal meets an old school friend, Edouard Montareuil, who asks him to contribute to his new journal, *The Penitentiary Review*, a rag printing reactionary claptrap about the "criminal type". Randal submits a wilfully absurd article called "The Influence of Tunnels on Public Morality"—the more tunnels the less crime—which is a great success.

Randal finds himself at home in the cynical company of thieves and prostitutes:

No more ignoble, these women of pleasure, than the upright, lawful wives of morality's defenders, stupid as Dandin and cuckolded like Marcus Aurelius, Ignominy on the one hand, infamy on the other. It all gets a bit confused. Was it the *cocotte* who perverted the honest woman, or the honest woman the *cocotte*? Was it the thief who depraved the honest man, or the honest man who produced the thief?

Randal has a child by his cousin, Charlotte, and, when the infant gets meningitis he is without money to pay for a doctor. He cannot bring himself to beg the supercilious Paternoster for a loan, so he robs and kills him instead. The child dies.

A meeting with Abbé Lamargelle, an enlightened priest who appears often in the book, leads to a discussion about corruption in the clergy, a topic stimulated by the priest's claim that his colleagues cheat at cards. Lamargelle is speaking:

In general it is difficult to imagine a more dirty-minded lot than men of the church. They are the dignified ministers to the contemporary soul. Their own morals... What would you expect them to be? The petrified morality of which they are the guardians can make them only saints or rogues. Morality can only exist alongside liberty. It must grow out of that liberty, be grafted onto it, nit immutably, but variably, in concordance with the general state of human culture. There are saints in the clergy, very few, but some. They are monsters in my opinion. As for the rest...

Arriving in London Randal sets about writing his memoirs. He has brought his fellow men unhappiness, now he will amuse them. In Paris his uncle, whom Randal had once planned to murder, dies, leaving him a fortune. Randal had forged the will. Wealthy now, he believes love must be his salvation. But his lover, Hélène, has been infected by his own ideas of independence.

Randal's rage has slowly given way to despair. He has, he tells Lamargelle, no goal to aim at now:

Ill health, the specialists tell us, is the organism's way of accommodating itself to the unfavourable conditions it finds itself in. Theft will have been for you but an attempt at acclimatising yourself to Society... So, if you really must have an ideal, go on stealing.

Lamargelle himself wears a priest's habit because it suits him in advancing his ideas of individualism:

Yes, the day when the Individual reappears, repudiating all pacts and ripping up the contacts that link the masses to the tablets on which their rights are carved; the day when the Individual, not leaving it to a king to proclaim, "We want," will dare to say "I want"; or, ignoring the honour of being a participating potentate, will want to simply be himself, completely himself; the day when he will not claim his rights, but proclaim his Force; that day will be your last, ruler of the Sovereign Mass, to whom it is taught that Man is nothing, and Humanity everything.

The abbé leaves Randal to the completion of his memoirs. Georges Randal can think of no pertinent figure or rhetorical emblem to sum up his life. His book must remain without conclusion. He will leave the manuscript in a Brussels hotel and disappear. Georges Darien will find it there...

"Permanent Paroxysm"

"Permanent paroxysm", somewhat akin to Fourier's "absolute doubt", is how J.-F. Revel³ described Darien's position. Georges-Hyppolite Adrien—"Darien" is an anagram of his surname—was born in Paris on 6 April 1862. His Protestant father ran a shop selling fancy goods. After the death of his wife Adrien Senior remarried a Catholic. Georges' refusal to become a Catholic placed further strain on life at home. An average pupil at school, he joined up in 1881. Two years later he was interned in North Africa. This was known as "Biribi", slang for the Compagnies de Discipline, stationed near Tunis. A soldier was sent there when he had accrued 120 days in jail. Discipline in the army was rigid and cruel; if he called a corporal names, for instance, a soldier could be sentenced to death. In March 1886 he returned to Paris, where he was put on reserve.

By the end of 1888 Darien had completed a novel, *Biribi*, discipline militaire, which, due to the cold feet of his publishers, remained unpublished for a couple of years. In December 1889 Darien published *Bas les coeurs* (Down with Courage), a novel about the treachery of a French bourgeois family during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Its dialogue was gleaned from the chauvinistic rantings of contemporary newspapers. This was a favoured strategy of Darien's: by placing an "authentic" document in a hostile context its signifying capacity was transformed, subverted. *Florentine*, a novella, appeared in January 1890.

Meanwhile, Lucien Descaves' *Sous-Offs* (NCOs), an anti-military novel, had caused a scandal when published in 1890. The time was right to bring out *Biribi*. With the poet Edouard Dubus Darien wrote a satirical pamphlet, *Les Vrais Sous-Offs. Réponse à M. Lucien Descaves (The Real NCOs. A Reply to M. Lucien Descaves)*, which assumed a patriotic rhetoric so zealous as to be ludicrous, thereby justifying Descaves' position. Later in 1890 Darien and Descaves wrote a play based on an episode from *Bas les coeurs*, which they called *Les Chapons (The Capons)*. Riots broke out on the first night.

Darien's riposte to the hysterical press reaction was both subtle and scathing:

The spectacle of true patriots quitting the auditorium, shamefaced and indignant, in the way one leaves some sordid place where one has been taken by surprise, was enough to excite the saddest thoughts in an author with neither evil nor bias in him. Doubts were entering my mind bit by bit and, when I saw Mlle Pierson pass by crying bitterly, I tell you I felt remorse.

Darien's sarcasm soon gave way, though, to real acrimony:

But then these same bourgeois, so placid during the occupation, so resigned to the victors' might, grew far stronger three months later. They applauded the infamous little Thiers bombarding Paris under the laughing gaze of the Prussians. Sooner than enter into discussions with the Commune they were ready to betray it. Those bourgeois who trembled at the thought even that the red flag was flying above the crest of the barricades, were the same who stoned the communard prisoners, and would have hacked them to pieces if the military hadn't intervened.

A new novel, *Les Pharisiens* (The Pharisees) contained thinly disguised portraits of Leon Bloy, the Catholic literateur, Savine, his cold-footed publisher, and the author himself. Darien published a number of sarcastic essays about Salon painting. One of these, "I Speak of the Glory of the Painters", appearing in *Le Figaro* on 22 October 1892, ensured that he wasn't invited back. From this conservative newspaper he moved to *L'Endehors* (The Outsider), a libertarian journal edited by the anarchist Zo d'Axa. Felix Feneon, Emile Henry, Malatesta, Octave Mirbeau, Saint-Pol Roux and Louise Michel were contributors. Darien contrived to offend his colleagues:

You are socialist novelists, novelists with a tear in the eye. You are virtuosi of pity, the soprano Jeremiahs of liquified lamentation... To see clearly the eyes of a writer must be dry, not reddened by crocodile tears dabbed by a black-edged handkerchief.

Darien took his leave and, in November 1893, founded his own weekly *L'Escarmouche* (The Skirmish).

This journal will become, then, the organ of avant-garde combatants, sharpshooters whose fire, mindless of the word order, will make the cannon's voice boom, snipers with free opinions.

Toulouse-Lautrec collaborated on the magazine, which ran for five months. In 1894 we find Darien in London where, for three years, he worked on *Le Voleur*. Ayriant, his biographer considers that the book evokes Daumier. It was a flop. A one-act play, *L'Ami de l'Ordre*, about the Commune, performed in November 1898, failed too. Darien returned to London where he worked on several projects, *L'Epaulette*, *L'Intellectuel* and *La belle France*. In a way *La belle France* (1901) is the most transparent of Darien's writings. A long polemical essay, it displays its author's manic compulsion to repeat himself, to keep on turning to the same problems. A closed system, it contains some of Darien's darkest thoughts:

I don't like the poor... Their resignation disgusts me, Be faithful like dogs and you will be treated like dogs. I'd like to see the abolition of human suffering so as to be no longer obliged to contemplate the repulsive spectacle it presents. I'd give a lot to accomplish that. I don't know if I'd go as far as sacrificing my own skin, but I'd sacrifice the skins of a great number of my contemporaries without a moment's hesitation.

All of Darien's obsessions are here: the stigmata of France's defeat in 1870, the Commune, his critique of militarism; his anti-Catholicism linked to feminism; his hatred of private property, its necessary abdication in favour of a single tax on the land. Even the language of *La belle France* suggests a ceaseless, haranguing hiss: "ces paladins sont des baladins", "cette coalition d'assassins et de matassins."

concluded next issue

Sacred Text?

BOOK REVIEW

WILLIAM GODWIN. *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness*. Edited by Isaac Kramnick. Penguin Books, £2.25

Political Justice is one of the few classics of libertarian thought written in English, and one of the first. It was produced by the Whig journalist William Godwin between 1791 and 1793, and published in 1793; a revised edition appeared in 1796, and a definitive edition in 1798. It was immediately and intensely successful. Pirated editions appeared in Ireland in 1793 and 1796, and in the United States in 1796. Soon after 1800 both the book and its author fell into obscurity.

Political Justice was revived during the growth of secularism and socialism in mid-nineteenth-century England. In 1842 the 1798 edition was reprinted by James Watson, the leading freethought publisher of the time, and this version was widely circulated during the next twenty years, but in the 1860s it fell back into obscurity. It was again revived during the regrowth of socialism in late nineteenth-century England, but on a much smaller scale. In 1890 the section on property from the 1793 edition was reprinted by Henry S. Salt.

Political Justice has never been popular during the twentieth century, but it has occasionally reappeared on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1926 an abridged version of the 1793 edition was produced in the United States by R. A. Preston. In 1929 Salt's extract was reprinted in Britain. In 1945 an abridged version of the chapter on law was printed by the Freedom Press. In 1946 a complete version of the 1798 edition was produced in Canada by F. E. L. Priestley, together with a companion volume of commentary and notes, including all the variants from the 1793 and 1796 editions. In 1971 an abridged version of the 1798 edition was produced in both Britain and the United States by K. Codell Carter.

Now Isaac Kramnick has produced a reprint of the 1798 edition - the first complete version to appear anywhere since 1842, the first to appear here since 1842, and the first to appear at a relatively low price since the original editions escaped prosecution because they were so expensive. In the

1790s it cost 3 guineas, about the same as the average monthly wage; in the 1840s and 1850s it cost 5 shillings, about a third of the average weekly wage; a century later it cost 5 guineas, still about a third of the average weekly wage. Today it costs £2.25, about a third of the average daily wage.

The one good thing about this edition is that at last it puts *Political Justice* within reach of virtually everyone who wants it. Most libertarians - and most students of political thought - have heard of the book, but hardly any have read it, if for no other reason than because it has been so difficult to get hold of. It is now more easily accessible than it has ever been, and once again the Pelican Classics series has rescued a masterpiece from oblivion. The original two volumes have been packed into a fat paperback containing 800 pages which should be read by every anarchist who takes anarchism seriously. Yet it should be remembered that, although Godwin was a libertarian and although *Political Justice* is an exposition of philosophical anarchism, he was not an anarchist in our sense, and it is not a straightforward anarchist text. The failure to realise this destroys the value of the other 50 pages of the book.

To begin with, there are some minor things wrong with this edition. The publishers have got the title wrong; although the original title-page is reproduced in the book (on page 59), the new title-page inexplicably refers to "Modern Morals." The publishers have also illustrated the front cover with an irrelevant cartoon against universal suffrage by Cruikshank and got his name wrong.

But the major thing wrong with this edition is that the editor has got the book wrong, right from the first sentence of his introduction. "Every political philosophy has its prophet and sacred text" says Kramnick. Even if this is possibly true in general terms - he lists liberalism (Locke's *Civil Government*), democracy (Rousseau's *Social Contract*), conservatism (Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*), and socialism (Marx's *Communist Manifesto*) - it is certainly untrue in this particular case. "Anarchism is no exception", adds Kramnick. "Its prophet is William Godwin and its first sac-

red text, his Enquiry Concerning Political Justice."

This is complete nonsense. Anarchism has no prophets and no sacred texts, and even if it had they wouldn't be these; for more than a century anarchists have refused to give authority to writers and books as much as to rulers and laws, and anyway Godwin didn't express what most of them have thought of as anarchism.

This opening misconception dominates and distorts the whole introduction. Kramnick continually refers to "Godwin's anarchism", which obscures the nature of Godwin's ideas in his own time and the nature of anarchism afterwards. He repeats that Political Justice is "the bible of anarchism" and "one of the most sacred texts in the anarchist tradition". He calls it "the first great trumpet blast against the 'brute engine' - government." He says that it contains "the original set of anarchist ideas that so dazzled Shelley and subsequent generations of libertarians and anarchists." He listens for echoes of Godwin not only in Shelley, where they are explicit, but also in Proudhon, Thoreau, Marx, Tolstoy and Kropotkin, where they are often non-existent. I know no evidence that Godwin was ever read by Proudhon, Thoreau or Tolstoy. Marx, who was familiar with the work of the early English writers in the socialist tradition, seems to have ignored Godwin completely. Kropotkin didn't read Godwin until he was in his fifties, long after he had developed his version of anarchism.

Kramnick occasionally realises how thin his thesis is. "Some nineteenth and twentieth century anarchists have read Godwin's Political Justice," he says; "some have not." But there is no doubt that virtually all have not. He understands anarchism itself as little as he understands Godwin's relationship with it. "The romanticism of the 'dinamitero' and the 'pétroleuse' is the anarchism of Bakunin and Nechaev, not Godwin," he explains. But Nechaev was not an anarchist, and Bakunin was not a terrorist.

The facts, as opposed to the fantasies, are as follows. Political Justice had a considerable libertarian influence during the 1790s, but it was entirely unknown to the founders of the actual anarchist ideology during the mid and late nineteenth century, and it was scarcely known even in this country during the emergence of the anarchist movement in the 1870s and 1880s. It was discovered by some anarchists during the 1890s, when they began to examine their historical and intellectual roots. Thus Max Nettlau, the first and still the finest writer on anarchism, called Political Justice "the first strictly anarchist book" (Bibliographie de l'anarchie, 1897); and Peter Kropotkin, the best-known anarchist inside or outside the movement, called Godwin "the first to formulate the political and economic conceptions of anarchism" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, 1911). After that Godwin was often included among the main exponents of anarchism by writers on the subject, from Paul Eltzbacher at the beginning of the twentieth century to George Woodcock in our own day. But no serious student of the subject has ever supposed that Godwin was more than a philosophical anarchist or a precursor of anarchism.

A similar case is that of Gerrard Winstanley, the leader of the Diggers during the English Revolution in the mid-seventeenth century. Much of what was said in the anarchist classics of the nineteenth century could easily be traced back to Winstanley - except for the difficulty that his writings were completely forgotten for more than two centuries, being rediscovered by socialist historians only in the 1890s (at about the same time as Godwin).

In his determination to trace the imaginary influence of Godwin, Kramnick misses his real influence. I doubt whether he had any influence at all outside the English-speaking world, except for short periods in Germany and France. A German translation of Political Justice appeared in 1803. The French writer who was influenced by him was not Proudhon but Benjamin Constant, the liberal thinker who was Godwin's contemporary and who made a French translation of Political Justice by 1800; but this wasn't published at the time, and finally appeared in Canada in 1972. There was renewed interest in both France and Germany in the early 1900s, but only for a time.

In the United States, Godwin's influence was not so much on Thoreau as on Thoreau's friends, William Ebury Channing and Amos Bronson Alcott, and on such earlier writers as Elihu

Palmer and Nathaniel Rogers; and his ideas had been the subject of discussion during his own lifetime, in the controversy just before and just after 1800 between the centralising Hamiltonian Federalists and the decentralising Jeffersonian Republicans.

Kramnick gives a decent if derivative account of Godwin's influence in contemporary Britain, up to his relationship with Shelley in the 1810s; but then he loses touch. He doesn't mention the Godwinian influence on such early socialist writers as William Thompson and Thomas Hodgskin or in the later Owenite and Chartist movements, or the Godwinian elements in the thought of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, William Morris and Oscar Wilde.

Coming down to the 1960s and 1970s, Kramnick sees the influence of Godwin in the "counter-culture", which Godwin would have despised as he did that of his own time, and among the "libertarian" academics either of the right (Chamberlain, Hayek, Friedman) or of the left (Marcuse, Wolff), who would despise him. Indeed a more recent "libertarian" academic, Robert Nozick, explicitly does so in his argument for a "minimal state", Anarchy, State and Utopia (1974), dismissing with a single, simple sneer "Godwin, if you like that sort of thing."

Kramnick even tries to see Godwin's influence in the contemporary anarchist movement, finding echoes of him in Paul Goodman, Colin Ward and myself. Whatever such people may have said which might remind someone of something by Godwin, the direct influence is minimal. Paul Goodman did approach a semi-Godwinian position towards the end of his life, but I doubt whether he ever read Political Justice. Colin Ward and I have certainly read the book, but all we have done is to name Godwin as the first person who made a systematic exposition of anarchist ideas, and to discuss a few of them, our interest in libertarian organisation and libertarian action taking us, like the anarchist movement in general, far beyond his philosophical position. If modern Godwinians are seriously sought, they are much more likely to be found among such figures as Herbert Read and George Woodcock; the former wasn't in fact much interested in Godwin, although he resembled him even as far as accepting honours from the state, but the latter was and still is, and wrote the only post-war biography of him - William Godwin (1946).

Kramnick's failure to understand the nature of Godwin's influence on other writers is matched by his failure to understand the nature of other writers' influence on Godwin. He mentions the obvious sources among the French philosophes of the eighteenth century Enlightenment and among the English radical Whigs and Tories, but he misses what Priestley has described as "undoubtedly his chief source" - Burke's Vindication of Natural Society (1756). This was a satire against the tendency of radical criticism of revealed religion to turn into that of established society, and the tendency of the advocacy of "natural religion" to turn into that of "natural society" - i.e. anarchy. But it was so skilfully written that it could just as well be taken as an argument for rather than against anarchy, and this was how Godwin took it. Political Justice was not "the first great trumpet blast" against government, but rather the first attempt to orchestrate such blasts.

The point is that during the period of the French Revolution, like so many other revolutions, anarchy was in the air. Godwin was the man who caught it on paper, not for the first time or for the last. Winstanley did it 150 years earlier, and Proudhon 50 years later. Winstanley and Godwin were followed by a few people for a short time, so their influence was historically negligible; Proudhon was followed by many people for a long time, so his influence was historically crucial in the anarchist movement. Kramnick's mistake is that of so many academics - he is, ironically, a Professor of Government! - in assuming that anything written is influenced by what was written before it and influences what is written after it. In politics, as in literature, things are not so simple. People who study anarchist theory in universities may trace it back through a series of books to one particular book, but people who join anarchist practice in the real world work in a very different way.

Godwin's Political Justice is a classic of English libertarian thought - like Winstanley's pamphlets (which have also appeared in the Pelican Classics) and Burke's Vindication of

Natural Society (which has not) - but it is not a sacred book or even a source book of anarchism. The best thing would be to ignore the introduction (and the incomplete and inaccurate notes and bibliography) and to read the book itself. At least

this is now easy to do, and for this alone the new edition is welcome. In a future article I shall discuss Godwin's book, rather than Kramnick's misunderstanding of it, and try to show what it does mean for anarchist theory and practice.

NW

Godwin On Law

The consequence of the infinitude of law is its uncertainty. This strikes directly at the principle upon which law is founded. Laws were made to put an end to ambiguity, and that each man might know what he had to depend upon. How well have they answered this purpose? Let us instance in the article of property. Two men go to law for a certain estate. They would not go to law if they had not both of them an opinion of their success. But we may suppose them partial in their own case. They would not continue to go to law if they were not both promised success by their lawyers. Law was made that a plain man might know what he had to depend upon, and yet the most skilful practitioners differ about the event of my suit. It will sometimes happen that the most celebrated pleader in the kingdom, or the first counsel in the service of the crown, shall assure me of infallible success five minutes before another law officer, styled the keeper of the king's conscience, by some unexpected juggle decides it against me. Would the issue have been equally uncertain if I had had nothing to trust to but the plain, unperverted sense of a jury of my neighbours, founded in the ideas they entertained of general justice? Lawyers have absurdly maintained that the expensiveness of law is necessary to prevent the unbounded multiplication of suits; but the true source of this multiplication is uncertainty. Men do not quarrel about that which is evident, but that which is obscure.

He that would study the laws of a country accustomed to legal security must begin with the volumes of the statutes. He must add a strict enquiry into the common or unwritten law; and he ought to digress into the civil,

the ecclesiastical and canon law. To understand the intention of the authors of a law he must be acquainted with their characters and views, and with the various circumstances in which it owed its rise and by which it was modified while under deliberation. To understand the weight and interpretation that will be allowed to it in a court of justice he must have studied the whole collection of records, decisions and precedents. Law was originally devised that ordinary men might know what they had to depend upon, and there is not at this day a lawyer existing in Great Britain presumptuous and vain-glorious enough to pretend that he has mastered the code. Nor must it be forgotten that time and industry, even were they infinite, would not suffice. It is a labyrinth without end; it is a mass of contradictions that cannot be extricated. Study will enable the lawyer to find in it plausible, perhaps unanswerable arguments for any side of almost any question; but it would argue the utmost folly to suppose that the study of law can lead to knowledge and certainty.

A farther consideration that will demonstrate the absurdity of law in its most general acceptation is that it is of the nature of prophecy. Its task is to describe what will be the actions of mankind and to dictate decisions respecting them. The language of such a procedure is, "We are so wise that we can draw no additional knowledge from circumstances as they occur; and we pledge ourselves that, if it be otherwise, the additional knowledge we acquire shall produce no effect upon our conduct." Law tends no less than creeds, catechism and tests to fix the human mind in a stagnant condition, and to substitute a principle of permanence in the room of that unceasing perfectibility which is the only salubrious element of mind.

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