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IMPOTENCE : THE MP's COMPLAINT

ANARCHISTS HAVE SAID so often that Parliamentary democracy is a farce if not a downright fraud and that the role of the individual Member is simply that of lobby-fodder, it probably comes as a surprise to discover many MPs agree.

Late last year, Sir Richard Marsh—a Minister in the 60s, then head of British Rail and now Chairman of the Newspaper Proprietors Association—suggested that Parliamentary government was all but finished in Britain. He said that the general contempt in which politicians were held was due to their inability to deliver what they promised.

"The reason they don't deliver," he said, "is not because they are dishonest. It is because there is an increasing area where their writ does not run; where they have no authority to deliver. Either the IMF stops them, or some world crisis, or the unions, or the employers."

The State—as anarchists see it—is made up of an alliance of gangs, each aiming to preserve its own patch of power over society. There are Ministers heading their departments, top civil servants running them, the police, the judiciary and, lately, trade union leaders. These all work to perpetuate the basic authority relationship: master and servant.

Each sector has its own territory, which is jealously guarded. The General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union, for example, has no power to arrest and beat up demonstrators. The police, on the other hand, do not have the authority to negotiate the wages and conditions for, say, lorry drivers.

BALANCE OF POWERS

The task of Government is to govern: to preserve the balance of power between the gangs. At the same time it is under constant pressure from other groups to keep its own power in check. Its final claim to authority, which no other gang has, is its mandate from a majority of the electorate.

Our interests—as individual members of the "general public"—are protected by our constituency members whom we have either voted or not voted to represent us.

To add to the confusion, the Government against which they are our shield is made up of MPs hand-picked by the majority party leader in the Commons. Or, as the situation is now, the leader who can keep enough balls in the air at one time to prevent anyone else having that right.

But as members of a fully-fledged gang with its own collective pride, backbenchers fear that their influence on events, which is the measure of status in the power game, is being eroded.

To redress the balance they are demanding the creation of authoritative Parliamentary committees to monitor Government activities, complete with independent expert research assistance to enable them to function more efficiently.

There are already Select Committees in existence but as they are now structured they face contradictions which act against the possibility of their wielding effective power.

Most MPs have ambitions to become members of the Government them-

selves and it is not in their personal interest to attack their party leaders too strenuously in committee. At the same time, the members of the committees are appointed by party whips and individuals likely to make "trouble" can easily be weeded out.

"I DON'T KNOW"

The past record of these committees leaves little doubt that MPs are right to feel their impotence. In 1973 the Science & Technology committee was simply denied access to an important report on nuclear power. In 1976 a committee on Cyprus called James Callaghan, then Foreign Secretary, to give evidence. To virtually every question put to him he replied: "I don't know."

The recent case involving the British Steel Corporation has highlighted the problem for MP's. A select committee of 7 MP's has been investigating the running of BSC. As the Western economy stagnates so the demand for steel slumps. The nationalised British steel industry has become a notorious

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BLACK AID

FOLLOWING the demonstration organised by Black Aid in protest against the deaths of the RAF prisoners in October and November and demanding the release of Irmgard Moeller and the lawyer Klaus Croissant, this group is now planning their follow-up campaign.

An Irmgard Moeller committee is being set up. This RAF prisoner has already completed her four and a half year sentence and has been in pre-trial detention again since January 1977 on the basis of evidence given by a crown witness whose reliability is hardly his strong point. Since mid-August last year she has been held in strict solitary confinement, not being permitted contact with Verena Becker and Sabine Schmitz, who are also being held at Stammheim. This solitary confinement was broken for a period of only four days before the beginning of the Schleyer kidnapping and for her appearance recently before the parliamentary enquiry at Baden-Wurtemberg into the Stammheim deaths, when Irmgard Moeller reiterated her earlier statement, denying any attempt at suicide. Black Aid are also to pressurise lawyers to take up the case of Klaus Croissant, the former lawyer for RAF prisoners who has been held in Stammheim, again in strict solitary confinement, since mid-November after his farcical extradition from France and is now facing charges of conspiracy or criminal association. Black Aid plans in addition to take up work on political prisoners in this country, 'that is prisoners who are resisting in prison' and has reprinted fifteen demands made by RAF prisoners in September 1974 as a suggested basis for a campaign. These demands are:

- The right to self-organisation of prisoners
- The standard rate of pay, right to education and work
- Old age and sickness insurance
- Medical care from non-prison doctors in outside hospitals and freedom of choice of doctors
- Self-administration of prisoners through elections to all functions

(from PG 1)

disaster area. This has implications for all of us, not least the steel workers who suffer through managerial incompetence.

During 1977 BSC's chairman, Sir Charles Villiers, was suggesting publicly that the Corporation's losses for 1977/78 would be only £255 million. Villiers appeared before the committee and confirmed this figure as being roughly accurate.

But he, and the Industry Minister Eric Varley, were both aware that the figure would be closer to £500 million. Members of the committee, which was supposed to be representing the public, as opposed to the Government interest, only learnt this through a leak.

Earlier there had been the Crown Agents affair in which the agency had managed to lose £212 million in a spree of speculative investment in dud property companies and shady fringe banks, one of the beneficiaries being gaoled ex-MP John Stonehouse. Individual members had warned of financial disaster but were powerless before agency and



- Unrestricted visiting rights without surveillance. Outside working hours. The possibility of sexual contacts
- The abolition of special treatment procedures
- The abolition of juvenile criminal institutions
- Mixed institutions
- The abolition of internal punishments
- The abolition of censorship of mail
- The abolition of prison medicine
- The abolition of the suspended sentence
- Free political information, free access to media and publications both foreign and domestic.

In one of three statements distributed for discussion, Black Aid's work is described as follows:

"Black Aid will serve no useful purpose, to my mind, if it does not work towards the total destruction of the concept of the state and its authority on a completely world-wide basis. Black in this sense can only refer to the revolutionary flag of the workers and to the flag of insurrectionists throughout history; for this reason the leftist movement as it is in this country will have to be confronted in most cases - I do not see much possibility of working with existing groups such as they are today - the united front has proven a disastrous tactic for previous bearers of the black flag. As I understand it the original West German Black Aid was formed to back up prisoners and to agitate from this position; no doubt it was

boosted and made realistic by the presence of a growing armed resistance within the Federal Republic. Of course such a group should be concerned about common law prisoners and not help to create a wall (between them and) so-called political status prisoners, but such a concern would drown the group and it would become just one more in the reformist field. For this reason I think that Black Aid can only be useful if the group turns its attention in the prison field to those who have shown themselves to be fighters and to those who may also be revolutionaries. The only useful ex-prisoner is a revolutionary one ...'

Black Aid has a centre at 13 James St. London WC2 (Covent Garden), which they wish to be run collectively by any anarchist group who cares to use it. Groups interested in what Black Aid is doing or in the centre should contact: Black Aid, Box 71, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Comrades concerned to secure the release of both Irmgard Moeller and Klaus Croissant and to get them out of solitary confinement could meantime send letters to: Prof. Dr. Engler, Minister of Justice of Baden-Wurtemberg, Schiller Platz, Stuttgart; Dr Hans-Jochen Vogel, Federal Minister of Justice, Stresemannstrasse, 53 Bonn - Bad Godesberg; and to the Generalbundesanwalt (Federal Chief Prosecutor), 75 Karlsruhe I, Herrenstrasse 45a.

Government determination to keep things quiet.

When the loss could be hidden no longer an enquiry was set up under Judge Edgar Fay. The Government planned to follow this with a private committee to apportion blame in a gentlemanly fashion: a few minnows would be sacrificed while the big fish swam away.

A FIT OF PIQUE

But the Commons insisted - in a fit of pique at the way it had been treated - on an open tribunal, the Government being able to muster only its faithful "payroll" vote. Members saw this as a minor victory.

According to the Sunday Times (22.1.78) MPs now feel themselves to be "at war with Whitehall". Faced with a corrupt and secretive Government with no policy other than to hang on till North Sea oil floats it back into power, they feel courageous - and desperate - enough to begin sniping.

What other weapon does the individual MP have when it comes to protecting us from the

excesses of Government? There is the much vaunted Question Time during which it is popularly imagined Ministers run a gauntlet of tough, probing interrogation.

But, says Nesta Wyn Ellis in Dear Elector, "It is a matter of real doubt as to whether asking questions in the House has any real value other than publicity. The whole performance of Question Time is a mixture of cynical behaviour from both members and Ministers alike. The former are out to get themselves on

the record either with their local party or floating voters. Often enough they trot out questions to which they well know the answer simply to get into the press."

Ministerial cynicism takes the form of planting questions to ward off the danger of any real information becoming public. When the Environment Department's Ministers were caught putting Tory backbenchers up to asking prepared questions to block awkward ones, Julian Amery, the Housing Minister, said he thought there was nothing abnormal in the practice. (continued yet again, on PG 6)

BRITISH ROAD TO FASCISM

THE BRITISH ruling class is one of the most—if not the most—securely entrenched of any in the world. It is over 300 years since Civil War ended Royal oligarchy and introduced democracy under the specious name of the 'Commonwealth' and a puritan dictator who promptly reneged on all the promises he had made to the men who fought for him, and made democracy the sham it has been ever since.

What has made British democracy so secure, however, has precisely been that sham—a system of carefully constructed checks and balances manipulated by cynical and brilliant elites who have successfully circumscribed freedom within a thousand civil liberties, privileges and carefully controlled 'rights'.

Behind the sham, black slavery was profitably operated and then sanctimoniously ended when no longer needed (compare Enoch Powell's recruitment of 'Commonwealth' labour when he needed it as Minister of Health—and rejection when no longer needed!); Nelson's victorious navy was manned by press gang methods. Earl Haig's victims were conscripted to their graves in Flanders. the common lands enclosed and the rural poor herded into urban industrial bondage with hanging, flogging and deportation for dissidents, the workhouse the reward for loyal service.

In the three hundred years since the birth of the Mother of Parliaments a mighty Empire has waxed and waned, an industrial revolution has changed the face of the earth, Britain has been involved in not only two world wars but more minor conflicts than any other country, depressions have come and gone and come again, Mother has looked blankly at other countries torn by revolution—but has never had cause to blink at any tremor likely to disturb her own stability.

Throughout all this fantastic history, the might of the British state has rested upon one particular British characteristic: compromise. Just as the Catholic Church, with an equally successful and bloodstained history, has survived through its ability to bend with the wind, so too, the cynical and brilliant British elites have known how to learn—and the most important lesson has been to know when to give way on unimportant issues whilst retaining the essential power. Think of the 'rights' of trade unions and of women's suffrage!

If there is one dirty word in the English language of ruling class diplomacy it is 'extremism'. Thanks to the grand concept of Empire, Britain has been able to export its greatest misery, its more extreme forms of government have been reserved for the lesser

breeds beyond our shores. Although public hangings of African rebels were part and parcel of the restitution of law and order in Kenya in the 1950s, our own liberal progression has denied us the pleasure of that charming spectacle in this country for over a hundred years. Indeed, hanging even behind closed doors has now been abolished in favour of the less extreme punishment of living death in prison.

Is the British ruling class the weaker for that? Of course not, for it cannot now be despised as a ruthless dictatorship or despotism, for it is seen to be humane, while the development of the welfare state has given the apparatus of government the aura of concern for our less fortunate fellow-citizens (the deserving poor, as the Victorians described them) but at the same time our stern parent will punish wrongdoers and protect us from them.

Although a large part of our ruling class had sympathy for the fascist and many dictators of the 30's, we can imagine the distaste with which they viewed the excesses of those crude regimes, led by vulgar upstarts—not, we hasten to add, out of sympathy for Mussolini's or Hitler's victims, but simply because such internal violence is counter-productive. It was only the expansionist policies of those dictators, when they decided they wanted a slice of the imperial and economic cake, that brought the 'democracies' into conflict with them.

The victorious allies of 1945, remember, made no attempt to march on to liberate Spain from a fascist dictatorship.

The same attitude is present today towards South Africa. It is embarrassing enough that this one-time jewel of our Empire should have degenerated into such a crude oligarchy—but, worse, it is so bad for trade, making one tread so carefully among the potentially great markets of the third world. Those boring old Boers really are so tactless.

The great achievement of the British ruling class, however, is that it has spread its distaste for extremism right down through the classes. By being so democratic and arranging things so that there is this Official Opposition in Parliament, through which any citizen in the realm may seek justice, and by sucking the official labour movement into its own orbit, with jobs and status and monetary and meaningless rewards and honours, any disagreement or misunderstanding can be hammered out and a jolly decent compromise can be reached, leaving things very much as they were.

It is this 'leaving things as they were' which is the object of the exercise.

This is the real art of government—to appear to yield but without changing anything. Isn't this what was so damned clever about the end of the Empire and the birth of the Commonwealth (very similar, really to that first Commonwealth of Cromwell's but on a grander scale), for here, again, the long term defusing of the opposition resulted in the establishment of African and Asian regimes which owed all their expertise in ruling their peoples to the outgoing British.

And here again, you see, we have this occasional embarrassment brought on by such as Idi Amin and Mrs Gandhi—to say nothing of that shocking faux pas by poor old Anthony Eden when, as late as 1956, he lost his marbles and went mad over the Suez Canal!

No, the really 20th Century British way is so much more subtle than that, and it is worth noting that we have managed to teach at least one of our ex-enemies a thing or two. Clearly the present German state is in essence as authoritarian as the Nazis, though not in practice—Stammheim notwithstanding. Not by shouting and screaming and stamping about in jackboots; not by mass concentration camps and gross racialism, but by control of the media, by buying the labour movements, by the insidious spread of conformity—all helped, of course by the threat of the Reds at the gate and the urban guerillas within—a modern, scientific computerised police state has been gradually and quietly built up—with the help and approval of their erstwhile enemies, the 'democratic allies'.

And we may be very sure that the British, while teaching the Germans a better way of governing, have also learned a lot from watching how it developed there. True, Germany had the advantage of the 'economic miracle' which bought the bourgeoisie and the working class alike—but 'we' have the advantage of our history and political experience.

It is this history and the lessons that our rulers learn from it so much better than the British people do, that makes the possibility of British 'fascism', for want of a better shorthand word, so likely.

With the decline of Empire, long term problems for the capitalist system, and the impossibility of using large-scale war as a stabiliser, internal conflict becomes inevitable. And the British ruling class is obviously preparing for it.

The real threat of a fascist-type authoritarian regime here does not come from a bunch of psychopathic hoodlums being kicked into the headlines by screaming socialists—it comes from the establishment. It comes from a

(cont pg 6)

VIETNAM & CAMBODIA THE WAR CONTIN

Quoting the words of the US Libertarian League, a FREEDOM editorial in March 1968 noted: Vietnam is one of the points where rival systems clash - 'the "Free" world that is not free, and the "Communist" world that is not Communist. One, pseudo-freedom based on economic slavery; the other, pseudo-freedom based on political slavery. One is already authoritarian, the other is becoming so.' The following article, written ten years later, concentrating on the "Communist" position, demonstrates the continuing truth of this statement - but also how those rival systems need each other..

WHATEVER HAS HAPPENED to the protests concerning the war and injustice in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos? Don't be deceived, the fighting and the oppression are not over, neither is the suffering or the power politics. Were we only protesting against U.S. involvement in a little known region, or against the domination, control, slaughter and mutilation of millions of villagers, peasants, urban dwellers and ethnic minorities whatever the source? The west has closed its eyes to that far-off region again, it is no longer news so we assume matters have improved. This blatant hypocrisy abounds and astounds - apparently it was wrong for Americans to control and exterminate the Vietnamese but it is not wrong for the power seeking Vietnamese and Cambodians similarly to treat the vast majority of their respective populations. What is this phantom 'imperialism', and has it miraculously disappeared in that region overnight?

We have recently read (those of us who still remember those now unfashionable places) a few bare snippets about the outbreak and escalation of war between Vietnam and Cambodia. Both governments now claim that the other is chauvinistic and imperialist and, of course, that they themselves are revolutionary, socialist and sincerely searching for peace. How reliable is the information and interpretation available?

The Importance of the Past

It is difficult to discover, with any degree of accuracy, the facts of the present situation; neither government can be trusted - their motives and methods are too sinister, their records too bloody. However a historical perspective at this juncture might throw some light on this dark, complicated and misunderstood subject. We must be aware both of the internal policies of these states and the relations between them, specifically between the governments concerned over the past few centuries, and especially in the modern period. It seems that the present Cambodian government is claiming for itself a large area of what ~~was once called~~ Cochinchina (under French colonialism). The Vietnamese in their push southward over the past few thousand years did not complete the conquest of this area until 1757. In the process the state either pushed out or incorporated the Cambodian population under its own rule. As a result thousands of the Cambodian (Khmer) ethnic group remain to the present day in the southerly Vietnamese provinces. Hence the new rulers of Cambodia justify their own expansionist aims by referring to the size of the old Khmer kingdom in pre-Vietnamese days, and point to their 'brotherly' who they of course seek to 'liberate' - to place under their own control.

The Vietnamese government, in its turn, does not intend to lose control of this important rice-growing area. On the contrary the aim of Vietnamese governments in the past (whatever their professional ideology) included the control of the entire Indochinese area - incorporating present-day Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam - under the auspices of one all-powerful state apparatus. I would maintain that the aims of the Hanoi government have not changed from those of their predecessors. In fact it now carries with it (and has done since the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party) the political and social ideology whose avowed purpose is expansionism and world domination - Marxism-Leninism - involving the expansion of Communist Party power throughout any area which is vulnerable. The Vietnamese government also has its own justifications for the invasion of Cambodia - the latter's provocation, the bad treatment of its population (how ironic!), incorrectness of ideology and so on. In fact the Vietnamese CP intends to preserve and increase its own influence in the Indochinese region - by whatever means or pretexts it has at its disposal, as the long and destructive struggle since the Japanese invaders left the area has clearly shown.

The Role of the Party

The original Marxist revolutionaries ignored the colonies which they considered too backward for revolution. But this changed in 1919 when the Communist International (Comintern) was created in Moscow. It gave 'the east' a more important role in 'world revolution'. Lenin explained the failure of revolution in 'the west' after 1917 by turning Marxism upside down and helping to promote revolution in non-capitalist and colonial countries. Whatever happened to 'objective conditions' for revolution, you may ask? Well, the Leninist Party had changed all that - the 'subjective factor' (the Party) was of prime importance now; indeed its role was to create the 'objective conditions' itself, the situations in which it could grab state power. At the same time Lenin needed Marxism as the justification for his own actions, he required the authority of a body of theory behind him (a body which is constantly being dug up), so Marx was adjusted accordingly. The Bolshevik seizure of central power in Russia in 1917 was short and sudden, even though its extension over the rest of the old tsarist empire was a protracted affair. But this method later proved unsuccessful in China and Vietnam where the attempt to capture control became a long affair over a vast territory. But in one important way the bolshevik coup d'etat and the more drawn out wars were not opposed, their aims were identical - the seizure of state control. In Vietnam, as in China, the Communists moved to the rural areas only after they had failed in the cities, through necessity, and later, of course, justified their actions as deliberate and foreseen in Marxist-Leninist theory. Mao Tse-tung became the major exponent of this particular form of power seizure - his 'revolution from below' was opposed to the Comintern's early idea of 'revolution from above'. Mao's method, like Ho Chi Minh's after he had failed to take control of the major cities, involved overtaking the countryside before surrounding and capturing the towns. Mao, like Ho, realised that the peasants would make perfect raw material for his aims, so that the industrial proletariat were to play an almost insignificant role in the struggle.

The class struggle was transformed into a 'national war of liberation' and a 'people's war', the countryside became the chief area of operation. The organisational work and the effectiveness of CP propaganda improved in the 1930s in Vietnam. Some Vietnamese had received their revolutionary training abroad, and organised themselves on bolshevik lines. Nguyen-Ai-Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) organised the ICP along Moscow and Comintern policy of village cells, town and cantonal sections sending delegates to the all-directing and all-powerful central committee. The chief mission of the revolutionary organisation involved the agitation, regimentation and militarisation of the population in order to control them for their own power purposes. The CP in Vietnam used every conflict situation or potential one, and by no stretch of the imagination was the conflict simply a matter of class struggle. Vietnamese, Laotians, Khmers, tribesmen, tappers, intellectuals, capitalists, peasants and landlords were all ranged with each other on all sides in the struggle for social control.

The Indochinese Communist Party (composed predominantly of exiled Vietnamese) initially constituted a branch of the Comintern, and up till 1945 decisions on how it was to act were taken in unison with parties in other CPs throughout Asia. After 1949 China became the 'rear base area' for the CP who engaged in the attempt to take control of the Indochinese region. The entire conflict from the close of the Second World War till 1975 has been portrayed as one between 'national liberation' and 'foreign imperialism' by the Vietnamese among others, and this is still, surprisingly enough, 'popularly' believed in the west. However there are two glaring weaknesses and inconsistencies here:-

Firstly nationalist ideology was never a motive for ICP strategy, but a justification in order to fool the liberal west. During the Second World War the Viet Minh became a front for the ICP, and stopped referring for the first time to 'the Soviet fatherland'; instead they adopted the slogan of 'national salvation.' It was at this time that Vietnam primarily became the focus of nationalism, and the Party promoted and created separate CPs for Laos and Cambodia. Nationalism was a pretext for the seizure of power at all times. It was, in Leninist jargon, 'good opportunism' and not, as is assumed, the guiding ideology of the Communists. The CP had fooled the liberal west by declaring itself dissolved during the 'August Revolution' in 1945. At this time it suited them not to be called

Communist, whereas in reality their organisations and struggle continued. Their ruthless ambition for power was obscured, but not for long.

NUED

Secondly the Party's successful propaganda techniques, both in the east and west exhibited the war as one between loyal Vietnamese and the brutish French and American aims of domination. However the major power struggle was taking place between the CP and other parties and groups within Vietnam - for example the Dai Viet and the VNQDD nationalists - and was a contest for control of the population upon the departure of the colonialists. The French and the Americans were just as useful to the CP as to the Saigon regimes. Not only did they initially support Ho as an ally against the Japanese and as a nationalist, but even after the Japanese surrender, French and later U.S. presence in the country enabled the CP to appear to be at the forefront of anti-imperialism. Ironically the Americans were logistically supplying both the Saigon governments and the CP organisations in the South - one has only to examine the practice of guerrilla warfare in S. E. Asia to understand this. The CP, through its various fronts, promoted the view that their own struggle was the will of the people. They created what appeared to be a 'United Front', through the union of various 'mass organisations.' But these were merely the transmitters of Party propaganda - for example the FLA (Farmers' Liberation Association), the WLA (Women's Liberation Association), the YLA (Youths' Liberation Association). In fact there were Party fractions within every organisation, at every level from village upwards, who maintained control of the masses. The NLF (National Liberation Front) in the South was established prior to the organisations of which it was supposed to be a union, all of which were Party controlled. Through CP propaganda the peasants were persuaded that the 'revolution' included the solving of local problems, and not the total political power of the Party. The Communists needed to make it seem as though the French and the Americans intended to stay in the area indefinitely, and that they themselves were primarily interested in driving the French out by force. They sabotaged the plans for the transfer to power to a 'liberal-democratic' government and the French methods of social reform, and ensured that the Europeans stayed on to defend their interests. Thereby they were able to maintain that the French did not intend to leave at all. I would say that the issue between France (and later on, the USA) and the DRV (and Communists in the South) was not colonialism against independence but some form of 'liberal democracy' against totalitarianism...

The people forgotten, as usual

The Geneva Agreement in 1954 gave the CP control of half of Vietnam unquestionably. As usual little thought was given to the wishes of the local population in the negotiations between political powers. The DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) received the assistance and support of the USSR and the People's Republic of China. From the beginning the CP was pledged to the takeover of the whole of Vietnam through a 'people's war' - in other words through the use of peasants and villagers as manpower and cannon fodder in the struggle for power carried out for the 'revolutionary' elite. The Second Indochina War, after the Geneva Agreement, spread the horizon of the war to Cambodia and Laos and intensified it enormously. Though Communist forces were to be withdrawn to the North many cadres, Party cells and military units remained in the south, and they began the conflict as soon as ordered to by the Central Committee in Hanoi.

In Cambodia, meanwhile, though Sihanouk attempted to keep the country out of war, Vietnamese influenced Communist organisations had sprung up in the border areas. Through a combination of factors, including Viet Cong pressure, Sihanouk agreed to allow the Communists the use of N.E. Cambodia for communication purposes for the Communist organisations with the Mekong Delta CP units and guerrillas.

By 1960 the CP had established itself in the S. Vietnamese countryside and was prepared to have another attempt at seizing overall control. The S. Vietnamese economy was sabotaged in order for it to become more completely dependent on the US for aid, and therefore be even more discredited.

At all times 'unification' in CP jargon meant the establishment of tight Party control over the area in question. The South, despite massive US involvement, was unprepared for guerrilla warfare, while the Saigon government itself was steeped in corruption and lacked legitimation institutionally and 'popularly.' Much of the history since that time is

widely known, if not truthfully interpreted. By 1972 the undoubtedly Vietnamese controlled Khmer Rouge were in possession of most of Cambodia - a weaker target than the Saigon regime. By 1975 the Communists had captured control of all of Vietnam, while Phnom Penh collapsed to the Khmer Rouge forces. The 'domino theory of Marxism-Leninism' had triumphed once again - establish a base area, negotiate, struggle, capture the new target territory, and in turn use this as a 'red base' area for further conquests. This had worked for the CCP in N.W. China (with the USSR as the base), for the Viet Minh (CP) (with China as the red base), and for the Viet Cong (CP) and Khmer Rouge (with the DRV and guerrilla sanctuaries as the red base).

Who is in control?

The Viet Cong and DRV played a crucial role initially for the Khmer Communists; indeed, without them they could not have mustered together an army. There is a great deal of debate here about who controlled the Khmer Rouge and what the influences are at present? Going by available meagre and scanty information the Cambodian CP seems to have been broken with Vietnamese advisers and organisers in favour of a more independent and self-contained Khmer state.

The original ICP (Vietnamese controlled) desired an 'Indochinese federation' - in reality one party with one strict, hierarchical, oligarchic structure to control all of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. It seems to me that it is highly debatable whether these aims have been disregarded. Vietnamese attempts at control of Cambodia appear to have failed since the 1975 takeovers, with the Khmer government allying itself closely to Peking rather than to the Soviet Union (contrary to the Vietnamese) or with the Vietnamese themselves. The Chinese, indeed, have promised \$1 milliard in aid to Cambodia over a six year period. The Cambodian alliance with China, in opposition to Vietnamese aims, is similar to the policy Sihanouk pursued during his period of rule - this is in China's interest.

We must not forget the large power interests in this war stricken region - primarily, at present, those of China and USSR. Soviet long-term ambitions in S.E. Asia include the containment of Chinese influence and the establishment of some form of 'cordon sanitaire' around China's periphery - an attempt at political and economic pressure. The Chinese government itself fears this situation, and though supporting the principles of Communist dictatorship in Vietnam, suspects the latter's ultimate aims with regard to foreign policy, and is frustrated by its lack of influence there. It would not be too far-fetched to assume that Chinese pressure on and influence in Cambodia, and Soviet influence in Vietnam have contributed to the recent conflict and open hostilities between the two Communist dictatorships in S.E. Asia.

Whatever happened to imperialism?

Imperialism must not be attributed solely to the methods and aims of the USA and other capitalist powers - it is the universal and inevitable organisation of states, especially large ones, and especially the USSR and the PRC. The latter are themselves the result of conquest of neighbours as well as the manipulation and control of the local population by the state and party apparatus.

In Vietnam and Cambodia imperialism involves the domination of people by a tightly disciplined oligarchy, which, if anything, has dramatically accelerated parallel with the increase in secrecy and the clampdown on the observation and reporting of the internal situation. In Vietnam since the takeover in 1975 hundreds of thousands of people appear to have been deported to 'correction camps' in the uncleared scrublands, while in Cambodia people were ordered to evacuate the cities to be accorded rigorous reconstruction work, watched over by loyal Party cadres. These measures were taken not merely in order to increase agricultural production by authoritarian measures, as is commonly assumed, but to break up any remaining centres of resistance to dictatorial power, and to effectively control the population through regimentation and militarisation (under close supervision and scrutiny). The accounts of the establishment of 'Gulag Archipelagos' in both Cambodia and Vietnam are not simply 'capitalist attempts to distort the facts', but seem to be logical outcomes of totalitarianism, especially in areas where resistance still exists and where people still have to be instructed in the realities of total state control in all aspects of their lives. It is especially obvious if we realise that one of the major hero figures, theoreticians and practitioners of such notable Party oligarchs as Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, Pham Hung, Le Duc Tho and Le Duan (in Vietnam) and Khieu Samphan, Poi Pat, Hou Yuon and Son Sen (in Cambodia) was none other than our 'good friend' and 'beloved father of the people' Comrade Joseph Stalin!

BELIZE — UP FOR GRABS

ROLL UP, roll up, 8,866 sq. miles of swamp and forest (inhabitants included) or 1,000 sq. miles and £ 50 millions, just do it peacefully and quietly, please. America and Britain (who hold the lease) seem to be willing to pay for somebody to take this inviting piece of property away from them. That somebody being Guatemala, with Mexico in reserve. Why?

It's a long, long story: would you believe started by British buccanniers in the early 17th century, who founded the trading post of Belize (the town). In 1678 the British without invitation assumed a quasi protectorate over the Mosquito (Miskito) Indians on the Caribbean coast of Honduras and Nicaragua. These were the good old days, we were building our empire! After Central American independence was proclaimed, England occupied the Bay Islands off the northern coast of Honduras and formally claimed the British Honduras (Belize was the capital) as a crown colony. In the 1830s and 1840s they extended their hold to the borders of Costa Rica (i.e. over Nicaragua). This was a direct challenge to the USA which had just annexed California and was very interested in a trans-isthmian canal, Nicaragua or Panama being the probable site. The dispute was resolved in an 1850 treaty by which the two nations agreed that, when and if a canal was dug "neither...will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over said ship canal...that neither will erect or maintain any fortification commanding the same...or occupy, or fortify or assume or exercise any domain over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast or any part of Central America". The USA never were very good at keeping treaties; Britain in fact abode by most of this and relinquished all lands except 8,866 square miles of swamp and

forest (inhabitants included)—British Honduras, to which Guatemala lays claim, as could Mexico if it wished. Which is where we came in.

Guatemala was soon bought by US multi-nationals, which helped no doubt in maintaining a record of reactionary military dictators as heads of state that any American puppet state would be proud of. However, I suppose national pride just won't let them stop sabre-rattling about the British Honduras, and stormy relations with Britain have been dragging on for a hundred years. The first military exercise designed to frighten the British out was in 1954; the one that led to the discussions at present being held took place in July 1977. Britain's having decided to let go of this hot potato by giving it total independence gave Guatemala the chance it had been waiting for.

Paradoxically, the only thing preventing General Laugarud from marching in is the presence of 1500 British troops and half a squadron of Harrier Jump-Jets that were rushed out there after the July scare (when the Guatemalan dictator moved troops, tanks and planes into the border regions).

No doubt negotiations have been going on ever since but the news finally broke into the national press about a week ago. Yet another British skeleton exposed. The sell out consists of the British and the Americans convincing Guatemala to revoke its claim to Belize (the name changed from British Honduras in 1973) and accept £ 50 million aid in an oil refinery project in addition to 1000 sq. miles of Belize and full control of the continental shelf offshore drilling rights. (An American company is already drilling a test bore there

for the Belize government.)

It was originally feared by some Belizeans that their premier, Mr. Price, would accept this so as to facilitate the transition to a fully independent state, with him as president. This would mean that, come the time for elections, which he and his party would almost certainly lose, there might be no elections. However, he has taken the totally opposite side, and vociferously too. He claims that giving any territory to Guatemala would prompt Mexico to claim as well, making the only possible result a three-way partition of Belize which would rightly condemn him in the eyes of his people, in perpetuity (afraid of ruining your reputation, Mr. Price?) "The government of my party the P.U.P. will not cede so much as one square inch of the soil of Belize to Guatemala or anybody else." Good stuff, Mr Price but Washington and Whitehall have different ideas. Dr. Owen promises "the British Government will continue its search for a negotiated settlement. . . in discussion with Guatemala and other interested governments." Does this mean we can all join in? In the House of Commons he said the ceding of territory was an essential part of the British draft plan for dealing with Guatemala, but if talks broke down they would still defend Belize. That's generous.

But somebody somewhere is in a hurry. Formal negotiations between Britain, Guatemala and America start again in a fortnight in Washington. The British ministers want to see it solved with a "territorial adjustment" so that they can then offer Belize (or what's left of it) full independence by June or July and finally get rid of it.

And what about the people? Well, Mr. Price said he wouldn't really mind a test of public opinion to determine how Belizeans view the Anglo-Guatemalan settlement and the British said that if talks did fail they may think about a ballot box. But with America watching over and wanting to get it quickly out of the way, £ 50 million should cover 120,000 Belizeans' votes.

STEFANO.

FASCISM

Labour Home Secretary who deports journalists; from a BBC executive who bans a television play about Borstal; from a friendly neighbourhood copper who has a walkie-talkie plugged into a computer with all the facts about you, comrade; from trade union officials who denounce as extremists those who fight for trade unionism; from social democrats who are sold out on the state and want, even paternally, more state control over everything; from all those who shamefacedly know that the Labour Party has produced what Harold Macmillan demanded 20 years ago—a pool of unemployment—but cannot face up to the economic facts that automation is banging on the table.

All power-seekers who cling to the old ways and cannot let go—these are the ones who will usher in the new style,

(from pg 3)

scientific authoritarianism. The National Front, discredited rump of the old style, will no doubt be useful in creating civil disorder, the better to invoke 'Law and Order', but the right wing of all respectable parties are the ones who will coalesce, will consign the NF to the dustbin, and, if they cannot agree on a leader from their own ranks, will beckon on to the stage that fine scholar of Greek and elegant doubletalk, Enoch Powell, even now waiting patiently in the wings.

If it is to be trod, this will be the British road to fascism. The state never has been and never can be anything but an enemy of the people. It is the main enemy and we forget that, we allow ourselves to be sidetracked, at our peril.

PHILIP SANSOM.

The individual MP's final claim to be performing any useful function for our benefit lies in his supposed power as a "fixer".

"Gas Boards, telephone engineers, housing managers and social security officers swing into action at the sound of the local MP's name," says Ellis. "A telephone call by the MP to the Town Hall is the key to every bureaucratic muddle in which the constituent is likely to find himself."

But, of course, these one-off successes do nothing to alter the situation in which we are bound as part of our daily lives to be victims of bureaucracy. The MP is as much responsible for it while deluding himself that he is capable of protecting us against it.

When the Parliamentary candidates begin to ask for our votes, as they must in the next year or so, we should remember their impotence and begin to consider ways in which we can retrieve the control over our own lives which we have allowed others to hold for too long.

It is not the impotence of MPs to act on our behalf that is the problem. It is the system of authority that works to prevent us acting for ourselves. MPs are as much the beneficiaries of this as they are the victims.

H.H

...News in Brief...

AUSTRALIAN URANIUM

AFTER THE RECENT electoral victory of the conservative Liberal Party the executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions directed its members to vote on the uranium issue. The government halted the export of uranium until the union ballots are all held. Already, two of the major unions involved - have decided against handling uranium apart from existing contracts. At this stage it seems that only those unions involved in the actual mining of uranium will support the pro-nuclear power policy of the Fraser government, a policy formulated in direct defiance of the findings of the Fox Commission which advised a two year moratorium on the mining and export of uranium.

At this stage the situation is quiet, but once the unions have voted and the government goes ahead with uranium exporting it will explode into the now familiar enormous street marches (except in Brisbane, where the advent of the uranium issue prompted the Queensland dictator, Joh Bjelke-Peterson, to outlaw physical protest), violent wharfside confrontations and multinational-funded propaganda campaigns of the Uranium Producers' Forum.

Two new factors will enter the struggle in 1978. A month of protest, culminating in the

occupation of a uranium mine, has been called for May in Darwin, capital of the Northern Territory where most of the mines are located. Darwin will be packed as thousands of people pour in to celebrate the official completion of its reconstruction after being destroyed by a cyclone some time ago. And back in the Eastern States, where the uranium is loaded aboard container ships, the government is almost certain to use troops to handle uranium.

The large anti-uranium movement here has been tremendously encouraged by news of the protests with which ships carrying uranium are being greeted when they arrive in Europe. The Libertarian Socialist Federation is organising a national campaign both to present the particularly anarchist argument against nuclear power (especially the social implications) and, by taking advantage of the way in which this issue has started a lot of Australians thinking, to introduce the concept of socialist alternatives into the lives of as many people as possible.

JANIE JONES (Sydney)

ESSEX

ANARCHISTS AT ESSEX UNIVERSITY
Weekend Conference 27-29 January 1978

THIS SOUTH-EAST Anarchist Conference was attended by some 200 anarchists from all over the country and from abroad.

A long agenda was produced but the main discussion centred around feminism and the anarchist press. A lot of time was spent discussing this on Saturday, but there were workshops on various subjects carried on at the same time. Communication and the anarchist papers were also debated. It was decided in view of the strong feelings expressed on anarchism and feminism that a seminar of anarchist papers should be held to try to define our attitudes, widening the debate to include family, children, exploitation of animals and environment generally.

Subsequent to this, it was resolved to take certain cooperative action to mutually improve our information and effectiveness. It is planned to have regular meetings of the anarchist press.

A French film—*Nada*—on terror was shown, which was complemented by a talk at the closing session by German comrades, on the situation in Germany.

Some excellent real food was provided, and comfortable accommodation by our anarchist friends in Colchester.

ALAN ALBON.

... Since we sneered at the Sex Pistols, over a year ago now, they have shown that they deserved better. Now they are reported to have split up. Manager Malcolm McLaren commented, "The management is bored with managing the successful rock and roll band. The group is bored with being a successful rock and roll band. Ruining venues and destroying record companies is more creative than making it."

...Some 12 million men in the US are "physically abused" by their wives at some point during the marriage and an estimated 1 million are "severely beaten" according to researcher Roger Langley. Suggested victims are small men married to big women, older men married to younger, physically stronger wives and handicapped or sick men married to healthy women.

...The CIA says that it is reducing, but not abandoning, political interference and intrigue in the affairs of other countries because "We don't think that kind of interference in other people's Governments...is as useful a tool for this country"

CORRECTION

Dear Comrades,

There was an error (twice) in my article 'The Right to be Ourselves' in Freedom for 21 Jan 78, where I stated that if a woman is infertile AID can be used to impregnate her.

This was careless writing on my part, since obviously an infertile (or non-existent) ovum cannot be fertilised. Adoption is the only hope for women in this plight who wish to raise a child.

London NW1.

Philip Sansom

...W.H. Smith, the multiple retail newsagents and distributors who have persistently refused to carry anything controversial ('The Management's decision is final' of course) have weakened. Over the years they have carefully avoided sullyng their fingers with the likes of 'Private Eye' whilst happily peddling 'Confessions' of this and that, and 'Men Only' and whatever. Now they have agreed on an eight weeks trial, at ten of their London stores, of 'Socialist Challenge'.

...A new incident of "burning Jews" is reported to have shocked West Germany. Apparently a group of schoolboys (about 14 or 15 years old) made a doll out of cardboard, complete with hooked nose, stuck on a label saying "Jew" and a yellow star, and set it on fire.

...Also in West Germany, Dorothea Kuby has been arrested and accused of being a member of a group linked with the Red Army Fraction.

...And again in the FDR, a court has ruled that a pacifist cannot become a teacher because he would not "actively support the free democratic basic order." It could not be ruled out that he would fail to recognise Communist aims and was therefore not in a position to defend democracy when it was threatened.

...The Amnesty International report alleging "systemic" torture, political imprisonment and widespread human rights violations in South Africa has been banned there by the Director of Publications.

...A London magistrate was reportedly "shocked" by a "beautiful, fairhaired" (*Evening Standard*) Finnish girl. The woman in question was found guilty of being drunk and disorderly. Said David Hopkin, with the full weight of his judicial authority: "I can't imagine that, at the age of 22, an au pair in charge of a child has begun drinking." I believe you, David. And if you're so naive what are you doing judging others?

...North Korea has said that it is time to choose a successor to the Great Leader, Kim Il Sung. We would like to point out that we do not know any of the candidates and are, therefore, indifferent. Could we therefore hope that the flow of publications from Pyongyang will cease? However, we would like to acknowledge the (belated) New Year card and the thanks for our "active support and encouragement" in their "revolutionary cause". If you'd included a stamp, comrades, you could have had your envelope back as well.

...The *Daily Mirror* is extremely distressed that Tom O'Carroll, newly suspended from his job at the Open University due to his involvement with the Paedophile Information Exchange, has been a customer of a porn dealer, who runs his "vile trade" from "a house of shame in a picturesque village".

...A Kenyan-born school teacher has been beaten up by a group of pupils from his own school chanting "National Front", National Front".

...Ronald Bell M.P. for Beaconsfield, has to some extent redeemed himself. To a Commons motion, designed to protect children from the "poison" of the National Front and the Socialist Workers Party, he introduced an amendment to include the Inner London Education authority.

...Our friends in the Free Independent Republic of Frestonia (see FREEDOM 24.12.77) have taken to producing their own postage stamps. A number of these have slipped the vigilance of the postal authorities, and, duly franked and delivered, are no doubt due to become collectors items.

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

NEXT DESPATCHING DATE is THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY. Come and help from 2 pm. Folding session for Supplement No. 3 on Thursday 9 February, 6-8 pm

WE WELCOME NEWS, REVIEWS, LETTERS, ARTICLES. Latest date for receipt of copy for next issue (no.3) is MONDAY 13 FEB. No charge is made for use of the Contact Column, but notices for all events to occur between Feb. 19 and March 4 MUST be received by Monday 13 Feb.

International

AUSTRALIA

Canberra: Alternative Canberra Group, 10 Beltana Road, Pialligo, ACT 2809

Victoria: La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC, La Trobe Univ., Bundoora, Vic.3083.

Libertarian Soc. Fed. of Australia, c/o 4 Roosevelt St., Reservoir, Vic.3073.
New South Wales: Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists Jura Books, 417 King Street, Newtown, NSW, Australia (Library, meeting place).
Sydney Libertarians, P.O. Box 54, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010.

NEW ZEALAND

The anarchist movement can be contacted via P.O. Box 2052 Auckland
P.O. Box 22-607 Christchurch.
International Books, 123 Willis Street, Wellington.
Daybreak Bookshop, P.O. Box 5424 Dunedin.

U.S.A.

New York: Libertarian Book Club, Box 842 GPO New York 10012. Fortnightly mtgs. at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Avenue, 29th Street, N.Y.C. At. 7.30 pm.
March 9: Eric Gordon: 'Anarchist Movement in Brazil.'
SRAF/Freespace Alternate U, 339 Lafayette St, NYC 10012
Missouri: Columbia Anarchist League, PO Box 370, Columbia, MO 65201.
San Francisco: Free Socialist, PO Box 1751, San Francisco, CA 94101

CANADA

Open Road, Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver, B.C. branching out into activities outside the production of the paper. Write for information.

EUROPE

Denmark: Aarhus. "Regnbuen" Anarkistisk Bogcafe, Mejlgade 48, 8000 Aarhus.
Copenhagen: Anarkist-Synd. Bogcafe, Studiestraede 18 1455 Copenhagen.
Germany: Anarchist Federation of Baden: ABF Info-Büro, Postfach 161, 717 Schwabisch Hall.
'Gewaltfreie Aktion'. (Non-violent action) groups, associated with WRI, libertarian. For further information write Karl-Heinz Sang, Mathfesselstr. 69, 2000 Hamburg 19

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Soil of Liberty is at Box 7056, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, Minn.55407 USA.

Meetings

CANCELLATION. The conference advertised for February 23 in Bridgwater (Men Against Sexism) cannot now be held.

LONDON Feb. 6 London Workers group. 7.30 pm at Earl Russell pub, 2 Pancras Road, NW1 (Kings Cross tube). For independent militants and all those wishing to organise to take control of their working lives. All workers welcome (except Party-builders). Contact Dave 249 7042 or Adam 247 4829. Mtgs. fortnightly thereafter, same time and place.

LONDON Saturday 18 February "Finnegans Wake". Reading from and talk on Joyce's book by T.F. Evans and J. Cooke. 3 o'clock at 32 Tavistock Square, WC1. WEA. Tickets 30p from S. Billson, 33 Compton Road, N.1.

LONDON Sunday February 19. Aubrey-Berry-Campbell Defence Committee. To mark 1st anniversary of arrests a march assembling Tolmers Square NW1 (Euston, Euston Sq. or Warren St. tubes) 1.30, move off 2 pm via M15 headquarters and other 'officially secret' bldgs to the Home Office. Bring banners & contact the committee: ABC Defence Campaign, 374 Gray's Inn Road, WC1 (tel. 01-278 2377).

LONDON Mon. Feb 6 'Support Christiana' open meeting 6.45 pm prompt in Room 406, Ladbroke House (N. London Poly., Highbury Grove, N.5).

REGULAR MEETINGS

CENTRO IBERICO meets at 421 Harrow Road, London, W9 on Saturdays & Sundays 3-11pm.

Love V Power. Every Sunday weather permitting 3-5.30pm at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park (Marble Arch).

Anarchist Women's group (North & East London) meets fortnightly. New women welcome. Tel. 555 5248 or write 26 Huddleston Road, London, N7. Discussion/study/action.

Brixton Anarchist-Situationists meet every Sunday at 2pm. Details from 674 6402.

BIRMINGHAM Libertarian Socialists group meets Sundays 8pm in The Fox & Grapes, Freeman St. (near Moor St. station). Information from Peter Le Mare, 2 Florence Place, Ombersley Rd., Birmingham 12.

NEW YORK. Libertarian Book Club monthly lectures 8pm at Workmens Circle Centre, 369 8th Avenue, 29 St. New York City.
Feb.9: Film on Spain.
Mar.9: Eric Gordon - "Anarchist Movement in Brazil".

LONDON. TOWER HAMLETS WEA. Series of 10 evening meetings Action on Unemployment. Thursdays 7-9pm. Fee for course £2.50. Started Jan 19. Speakers from Trades Council, Socialist Environment & Resources Assn., Docklands Action Group etc. All held at DOCKLANDS ACTION CENTRE, 58 Watney St., E1 (near Shadwell tube). Information from Vic Anderson, 23 Benson Rd., SE23. Tel. 699 1464.

Desires

FUNDS needed to finance first issue of new Irish Anarchist/Anarco Feminist paper. Can you help? Donations c/o FREEDOM who will pass them on.

ANY COMRADES in the Greenford (Middle sex area) interested in getting together—contact Bob Mander, via FREEDOM

RETURNING to GLASGOW after 4 years in London BILL TAIT seeks flat, bed-sit, place in shared house, any district Glasgow. Offers to him c/o FREEDOM

PRISONERS AID collects books (anarchist & non-anarchist) and publications to send to prisoners. Send lit. to RAF SALKIE, Queens' College, Cambridge, England. And inform him if you know of a prisoner who wants literature.

CHILDREN. The A.S. Neill Trust is compiling a list of Free Schools, Communes, Home Education projects or any activities designed to secure more freedom and more respect for children. Please send information to Michael Duane, 10 Wavertree Rd., London SW2 or phone 01-674 4368.

Press Fund

1st - 25th January 1978

WINDSOR, Ont.: F.A. £2.78; LONDON N.4.: J.K. 50p; CAMBRIDGE: C.M. £10; TUNBRIDGE WELLS: B.L. £3; CARDIFF: G.P. £5; LONDON SW2: A.L. 50p; WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £2; J.K.W. 20p; EXMOUTH: A.B.H. 50p; LONDON E7: A.J. 10p; ISLE-WORTH: Lionel £1; CODROIPO: N. 50p; DUMFRIES: M.W. £5; LONDON N.3: A.C. £1; STROMNESS: J.L.B. £2; GLASGOW: R.M. 50p; MADRID: C.B. £1.36; SAFFRON WALDEN: B.W. £5; SUTTON, Sy.: B.R. £10; LONDON N.7.: I.J. £5; CAMBRIDGE: J.P.H. £2; BELLE, W. Va.: G.S. 53p; LONDON W2: I.W. 20p; WOLVERHAMPTON: B.L. £4.40; J.L. £1; J.K.W. 10p; NEWCASTLE: F.W.K. 48p; OXFORD: B.E.H. £1; LONDON SW2: M.D. £5; ST. CLOUD, Minn.: M.G.A. £21.65; ZURICH: P.C.L. 18p; LOS GATOS: L.M. £2.50; SHEFFIELD: P.L. £2; LEEDS: A.C. £1; RINGWOOD: Australia: M.B. 43p; REGINA: P.M. 73p; KINGS LANGLEY: H.A. £5; BRISTOL: C.C. £5; CHELMSFORD: E.A. 25p; LONDON W9: T.M. 20p; KANSAS CITY: B.H.M. £1.

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and 'MAGIC INK', MARGATE

ON SUNDAY, 15 January a fire bomb was thrown into a Barcelona night club after a day of clashes and demonstrations demanding amnesty for prisoners and the release of a theatre director held for 'insulting the armed forces'. Reporting this on Monday The Guardian quoted witnesses as saying that four young people, one of whom wore a 'Freedom of Expression' badge (the slogan of the above mentioned demonstration) opened the glass doors of the night club and threw the fire-bomb into the empty foyer. Four people died. The testimony of a 15-year old boy who was being questioned by the police was expected to lead to the arrest of those involved. They were believed to belong to a little known International Communism organisation, and the Guardian noted that earlier in the day the demonstrators had broken up an anarchist meeting. Yesterday (Wednesday the 18th) a BBC World Service news bulletin announced that the deed was attributed to the CNT, of which three members had been arrested and four more were sought.

The CNT strongly denied being implicated (while recognising that they could not answer for the actions of every individual in their many thousands of members) and pointed out that the CNT is the trade union organisation to which 70 per cent of the staff of that night club belong.

Our correspondent in Barcelona describes a situation of confused claims and denials from left wing groups (FRAP having claimed responsibility); harassment, and a vicious smear campaign (in the media) against the CNT. The number of people arrested at the time we received the report (Wednesday night) was nine: 6 men, 3 women, two of the men known by our correspondent to be members of the metallurgical section of the CNT, and known as pacifists! Between 80 and 90 people taken in for questioning, the police seizing the opportunity to visit the houses of all known anarchists. (No anarchist organisation has a legal existence in Spain; the CNT is recognised as a trade union.)

We will have a fuller report as soon as possible.

FREEDOM'S *Anarchist Review*

4 FEB 78

THE RACE AGAINST RACE

At a time when it is once again the subject of hot and acrimonious debate we publish the first of what we hope will be a series of articles on race, with the aim of trying to give it the serious analyses which has hitherto been absent from both sides of the argument. All contributions from readers will be welcomed. EDS.

THE BUNGLER IN OUR JUNGLE

AT A TIME when labels are randomly hurled about, whether in order to locate opponents or to tap the required responses from those who let others do their thinking, the mess about race is being stirred again. The notion of 'race' is as useful for the left as for the right - in fact for anyone looking for objective enemies and scapegoats, the 'racist' for one can be as essential as the 'race' for the other. Because of the tangle in semantics, implications and conclusions any new perspective would be valuable in our evaluation of the 'race problem' in contemporary society. In the 'race mess' as in other areas, national and geographical boundaries are of little significance, because we are searching for the roots of a problem which is widespread whatever form it takes in any locality. As anarchists we can provide an essential contribution - as critics of the assumptions prevalent in society, as well as in providing alternative models of human relations and social organisation.

RACE WITHOUT TRACE

Literacy, like contemporary education, has produced its own brand of illiteracy - that manifested in the manipulation of words. The vaguer a word the better for the user who wishes to gain from it - this is the principle of germination - and is of course more successful if the soil and climate are suitable. But do not be fooled, the 'problem between races' have not existed universally, as is often asserted, and in a sense does not exist now, as I will attempt to show.

So where do we start, and what is universal? Biologists and physical anthropologists, amongst others, have disagreed in the past, and many now consider that it is better not to use the term at all, because of its imprecision, lack of definition and its emotional and social implications. Various indices, including skin colour, nasal index, hair or head form, hair colour, facial index and stature are all unsatisfactory criteria. They may be combined in a var-

ety of ways, usually depending on the researcher's whim, in order to prove or disprove the existence of a supposed 'racial group'. Using physical criteria (those which the author happens to think are important) consists of searching for ideal types and representatives, where some people's certain physical characteristics are stressed above all else. Though such attempts to discover differences between people, 'races' become statistical abstractions and artificial constructs into which individuals and groups are squeezed (regardless of context and choice). Physical differences between people can be just as great (or small) within family groups as between those in widely separate populations, and are themselves only important if people choose to make them important. Only then does what we look like begin to determine who we are and what we do - because we are treated in a particular manner as a result. What I am trying to point out is that large canine teeth, freckled skin or bushy eyebrows may similarly become the cause or the justification for prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviour, just like dark skin or accent. Indeed in the designation of 'races' no physical criteria at all need be used, as in the case of the 'racial Jew', where imaginary stereotypes may operate, especially where there are unidentifiable 'racial characteristics'. Is that not a contradiction? you may ask yourself - the point is that nothing is contradictory in 'race thinking', as it does not operate on the level of causal logic, though we unfortunately presume it does.

SOCIAL RACES

Though 'races' are not valid biological categories for homo sapiens, their existence is very real, as social classifications, whether as a result of bureaucratic practice, legislative and governmental acts (as in South Africa) or in some vague 'popular' conceptions and stresses on particular differences between individuals and groups. These are often promulgated by and through the media and certain groups who seek advantage from such a state of affairs. As a result societies have their own specific racial categories, so that the use of the word 'race' cannot be divorced from its specific social context. All that is needed is the belief that the supposed important differences between people and groups are genetically transmitted, and therefore immutable. So that the criter-

ia of group membership are racial - in the sense of socially defined physical, moral (and so on) characteristics one is considered to be born with and which cannot be terminated.

The existence of 'social races' implies at least three requirements. Firstly, the existence of some form of stratification principle and system in society whereby groups exist in relations of inferiority and superiority - so it implies inequality, and often conflict. Secondly, some historical situation where two or more groups are in contact, are treated differently and kept apart by the simple criterion of group membership. Thirdly, some ideology or belief system underlying group relations and often perpetuating or justifying them.

THE PREJUDICED RACIST OR DISCRIMINATING RACIALIST?

Labels abound and meanings are taken for granted, we assume we all understand what we are talking about. But does anybody stop and reason for a moment? It is too easily assumed that somehow racism (the organised thinking and ideology about race), racialism (the practice of the doctrine), prejudice (generalisations and prejudgements in individual attitudes) and discrimination (which is specifically concerned with behaviour) are all straightforwardly interconnected. So that very often in 'popular thinking' the racially prejudiced person is assumed to have a coherent set of racist beliefs, the discriminator is always assumed to be prejudiced, the racist is considered to be prejudiced, racist and discriminatory ... and so on - and most often all the words and their meanings are jumbled up together. But this sort of thinking is too simplistic, and therefore useful both for the authoritarian right and left concerned with the domination and control of people. For them the simpler and more embracing the definition the easier it is to locate the enemy. Here all the features of 'social race' are muddled up and a scapegoat is found - the blacks, the Jews, the 'racists' or the fascists.

So how do we attempt to clean up the mess or at least to make it less putrefying? For a start the relationship between attitude and behaviour is not so simple. Racial prejudice (that directed against an entire group who are ascriptively defined) arises from a plethora of causes, including cultural norms, the



individual's particular social situation (for example at work or in the pub), and, as some have sought to establish, from the emotional dispositions of certain individuals - portrayed as the 'authoritarian personalities'. Prejudice may be emotional, or conformist, automatic or planned, or all these things on different occasions. The point is that people are not consistent; a person may be prejudiced in one situation and not in another. This is where the social setting is so important because people alter their prejudices, or lose or gain them, with regard to what is considered as acceptable. It is all too often assumed that prejudice is always aggressive and therefore perceptible, whereas it often tends to be merely an aspect of social conformity.

To understand discrimination we have to examine behaviour, we cannot assume that it occurs merely because people are prejudiced. The practice of discrimination can exist without the practitioner necessarily being prejudiced, without even realising that he/she is discriminating, and without the support of a racial theory. People may justify the differential treatment of particular individuals by maintaining that others did the same, or as it being company policy, and so on. On the other hand people may hold prejudiced and/or racist views without necessarily discriminating - due to fear or conformity, etc*. The prejudiced and the discriminators may not subscribe to or even be aware of any racist ideology or those that do may not always be prejudiced... In such confusion social patterns develop and are perpetuated every day, and often rationalised on hindsight. Racial discrimination can be both highly institutionalised or merely exist on a daily person-to-person level, where it is often imperceptible, even to the victim.

IGNORE IT AND IT WON'T GO AWAY!

Governments and the bureaucracy in Britain in the 1950s and 60s assumed that racial discrimination would naturally disappear over time, as the newly arrived immigrants would 'assimilate' into the rest of society. However, the longer they stayed and the more their interest and participation in society increased, the greater was their experience and awareness of discrimination. For example it was not only the poorly educated and culturally different who suffered discrimination but the highly qualified minority who attempted to move into occupations which were considered as exclusively white spheres.

I would say that discrimination was more widespread than was 'popularly' believed (and still is), because many of the victims did not always know when they were being discriminated against because of their colour or accent (or whatever). Many avoided it by not exposing themselves in the open job market, and the majority sought unskilled jobs where there was less discrimination. Legislation concerning discrimination shifted the problem from the open, visible practice to the hidden, often imperceptible level, while it could not tackle the problem of attitudes - you cannot legislate against prejudice, indeed you merely suppress and ignore the major underlying problem - social structure.

THE MYTH OF RACE RELATIONS

For a situation to be racial the groups in question need not look or act differently, speak different languages or have differing cultures (though it helps); they only have to be defined (by government, law, media and popular superstition) as separate races. The groups need not be homogeneous. Any criteria could be used for race, which are then associated with certain qualities which in

their turn are considered to be ascribed at birth and due to genes, divine decree, ancestors' history, the nature of their culture and so on. By the same argument groups may act and look different and yet not be defined as racial categories - but as ethnic, class, national or religious categories, which people can alter, whereas with race they cannot.

DESTROY THE RACES!

'Race relations' implies some form of distinction between imaginary categories which are used to label people, to account for supposed differences and to accord certain rights, roles and social positions.

Because we speak of relations we assume the existence of distinct groups between which these relations are apparent. The trouble is that these groups do not objectively exist, they are artificial and must be distinguished from ethnic groups, which define themselves, though ethnicity too can be used to formulate racial categories.

We talk about 'race relations' when we refer to 'racial problems' so we only eliminate 'racial problems' through getting rid of 'race relations', and the only way we remove 'race relations' is by eliminating 'races' - the social constructs. It follows that there is no such thing as 'good race relations' because you use false assumptions concerning 'races' as a starting point for arguments concerning harmonious relations. By assuming that the racial categories exist, immediately you are discriminating unjustly, and you assume that these 'races' possess inherent differences. In this sense most of the left is likewise 'racist', in that they take 'races' for granted. If we are to use and think in terms of labels and slogans concerning 'race' one will suffice - ONE RACE, THE HUMAN RACE!

JAN

LETTER

S.E. PARKER finds a "disturbing note" in my pamphlet *Blasphemy in Britain* (21 January), but I think he has misunderstood me.

He quotes my remark that the *Gay News* trial is one of several cases where "the extreme advocates of so-called 'permissiveness' provoked the extreme opponents into a 'backlash'", and he comments: "The inference is clearly that one ought to moderate one's language when dealing with subjects not to the taste of the traditional moralists. A rather peculiar view for someone who not only calls himself a freethinker, but an anarchist as well!" His inference is false. I was simply describing the fact that when we provoke our opponents they attack us, and that when we provoke them by breaking the law they attack us by using the law. My view - as someone who has broken most and has been attacked under several of the laws limiting freedom of speech - is not that we should therefore moderate our language but that if we do break the law we should do so with our eyes open rather than shut, on purpose rather than by mistake, and be ready for our opponents' attack.

He quotes my remark that in the wave of blasphemy prosecutions during the early twentieth century "the freethought movement was reluctant to support such cases, the various organisations opposing both the manner and the matter of the offending speeches", and he comments: "Indeed it seems that Nicolas Walter is still maintaining the attitude of those respectable freethinkers." Again, his inference is false. I was simply describing the facts. My own view is that both the rude blasphemers and the respectable freethinkers were right to do what

they did but wrong to criticise each other, and that every victory for free speech has been won by a combination of direct action and indirect argument. He adds: "Maybe if the free-thinkers of those days had carried the war more 'extremely' into the camp of their enemies by demanding proof of just who or what was being attacked by 'blasphemy' such an offence would not still be legal." In fact that is exactly what the freethought organisations did. The problem is that they failed then, and that we look like failing again; neither method has yet won this particular victory.

NICOLAS WALTER

Rationalist Press Association



ANARCHY AND TECHNO~FASCISM

THERE IS GREAT enthusiasm among expansionist thinking scientists (1) about the possibility of 'extra-terrestrial intelligences'. As a general interest this is quite understandable. There is sufficient challenge and curiosity for action and the whole enterprise is respectable to human consciousness as a question of philosophical/ontological importance. To oppose such interest or action on 'it wasn't meant for us to do it' or 'God will punish those who dabble in such inhuman matters' grounds (which can still be heard!) totally lacks any plausibility, and is a return to a kind of awareness immaturity more common perhaps in an earlier age when the use of supernaturalism was in widespread use to suppress and coerce thinking.

However, it is chastening to realise at least two things in connection with technological ideas relating to the above example I have chosen. The first derives from the factual knowledge we already have that it is extremely unlikely intelligent life will be found in the solar system (Mars, Venus etc). Moreover, it seems from searches already being made that nothing intelligent is being radiated from star systems within a radius of a few tens of light years. Thus if intelligent beings with radio transmitters exist at all, they are likely to inhabit their small slip of a place somewhere about or beyond hundreds of light years away from us. So, the round trip at the speed of light would take hundreds or thousands of years. The interesting ontological question (but relatively uninteresting to the majority of technocrats, nearly all male, engaged professionally on gaining power to do such projects) is the existential fact that human life "three score years and ten" is considerably less than the likely minimum time ever possible for 'communication' with life elsewhere.

Most human beings have only a limited interest (2) - although not zero* - in happenings that would only have an effect beyond their lifetimes - in the present context a happening which would only have a remarkably limited effect even then (500 years for an exchange of 'hellos!'). More immediately of interest is the admittedly even more remote possibility of an intelligent life form, radiating not just a signal, but a whole stream of their cultural, religious, technological and so on, information which we could pick up and learn about immediately, even if the donors would be unlikely ever to know about our successful reception of the information, if it occurred. But would you bother to blaze away into empty space all knowledge, advertise your position, at great cost etc. on some off chance that it might be picked up? (And for what purpose?) One must admit that our own high technology has recently launched a space vehicle with a recording of human and Earth sounds, from babies crying, dogs barking and so on, to Beatles music, just in case it is captured by some intelligent life in millions of years' time.

The other question entirely missing from the scientific and technological literature is discussion of purpose, reasons and so forth for doing such huge experiments at all - Cyclops, for example (3). We can say this at least from the point of view of ordinary people, as distinct from feeding the ego trips of some power-holding scientific cadres who, using the driven ethos of capitalism, wish to corner and accumulate the new capital, namely, esoteric 'knowledge.' To be sure, the day-dreaming about it, the arguments, calculations, 'rational speculations' and 'exhilarating applications of information theory, noise figure calculations, receiver sensitivities/serial gains - data processing etc., etc' of the people with technical

* In another context, it is becoming important that awareness of effects caused by what we do now could irretrievably destroy the making of the (human) future within any meaning of the word Freedom. Although this is a teleological question, anarchist thought must cope with it, and hopefully soon. (see, for example, the works of Barry Commoner, Rattray Taylor and Murray Bookchin in this connection).

'objective consciousness' (4) is very exhilarating indeed. The main motivating force in these consciousnesses (and you might like to note the personal comment that I am surrounded by these types as colleagues) is to gain the enormous public support - hundreds of millions of dollars - to carry out the great project. (c.f. Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' (5) or Francis Bacon's 'The New Atlantis' for that matter (6)). Great personal prestige accrues from getting a research grant of such magnitude - and just think of the boost to trial runs of capitalist production and division of labour!

Of course all this applies to any large project, for example CERN (7) and my own analyses of professionalised structures from state school systems to centralised breeder reactor power station projects - '... to be carried out on a vast scale' as one supporter of such schemes put it. It is the same peculiar instrumentality of the rather blind human mind, which tends to develop from the processing or social engineering approach in vogue throughout modern industrial society. It accounts for the ascendancy of technological drivenness, amounting to a creeping 'techno-fascism' as one author has put it. All this is very likely to be induced by our highly competitive educational practice in schools etc. Even when produced, it is always acknowledged and perpetuated as 'necessary and good for competitive free enterprise.' But how even a socially turned-off person can maintain an argument about 'free enterprise' in a world of multinational companies, state systems, central computer data banks and so forth, is an enigma I have not seen explained. Some component of capitalism and conflict is always present, of course, but again in spite of theories of mutualism, how to coexist with conflict and competition, coercion and persuasion is remarkably absent from anarchist theory.



Returning to the particular scientific project I used as an illustration above, I have often been asked by friends, 'Wouldn't you organise, direct, work on and carry out such a project as a receiving station for an extra-terrestrial intelligence search?' It seems insurmountably difficult for a lay person (note the labelling!) to follow the enormous complexities of the scientific and engineering analyses, in for example 'Cyclops' (see reference 3). But all those name droppings, mathematical integral signs etc., are just the jargon. There are large numbers of people who follow the arguments, 'Just like that!' (as a well known English comedian puts it).

JULES VERNE AND THE ANARCHIST NOVEL

SEVERAL NOVELS have been written in which anarchism, or the figure of the anarchist, have been dealt with at some length. In the vast majority of cases, the treatment has been ill-informed, hysterical and altogether unsatisfactory. A recent exception was *The Dispossessed*, by Ursula Le Guin. Among the earlier works dealing with the anarchist position, one of the most interesting is Jules Verne's *The Masterless Men*, which was first published in 1909.

This work, which was virtually the last that Verne completed before his death, is interesting both in its own right and for the insight it provides into Verne's own political beliefs. Insofar as these can be discovered from the book, Verne's philosophical preference was clearly for anarchism, though he had doubts about its political practicality.

The Masterless Men forms the first part of a two-volume story. The story concerns the 'Kaw-djer', an anarchist who, fleeing the tyranny of the world's governments, settles on an island at the extreme southern tip of South America. Here he remains, happy and undisturbed, until a ship full of colonists bound for another country is wrecked on his island. The Kaw-djer is unwilling to become involved with the survivors, but out of common humanity is led to aid them in several ways.

The shipwrecked colonists, attempting to survive on the virgin land of the island, organise themselves and Verne uses the situation to discuss the political ideologies. He chooses to concentrate on the radical philosophies. Communism and socialism are tried in turn by the colonists, producing only suffering, dictatorship and civil strife, as well as hunger and poverty. At the height of these calamities the Kaw-djer, against his wishes, realises that he has to save the colonists 'from themselves' and steps in to create an enlightened despotism under his personal rule.

The anguish within the Kaw-djer's soul that this decision produces, and the arguments leading up to it, reveal that Verne conceived of anarchism as essentially a philosophy of individualism. He seems to have lacked an awareness of anarchism as a social phenomenon. Thus he wrote that,

"That dictatorship essential for the working of a collectivist society the anarchists reject. What they proclaim is absolute and integral individualism. What they want is the suppression of all authority, the destruction of every social bond."

This individualist approach is obviously not the anarchism of most modern anarchists, nor was it the case in the early 1900s when Bakunin was thirty years dead, but Kropotkin, Berkman and Malatesta, to name but a few, were active. Verne's lack of awareness about the ideas of libertarian communism is therefore difficult to understand, particularly in an era when the French UGT, the main trade union confederation, was still syndicalist-inspired. Being well informed on French politics, Verne must have been aware of all this. The explanation of Verne's emphasis on individualist anarchism would seem therefore to be that it expresses a personal preference, a likelihood reinforced by his known horror of collectivism. In addition Verne may have been unduly influenced by the atmosphere of the 1890s, the years of the enrages and of 'propaganda by the deed.'

'THIS TERRIBLE SECT!'

The dichotomy between the ideals of anarchism, with which Verne was clearly familiar, and the stereotype of the cloaked bomb-throwing assassin projected by the press is reflected in Verne's description of the anarchist movement in his novels - 'this terrible sect' as he calls it!

"Neither God nor Master!" - that is the classical formula of the anarchists. It was thus to be assumed that the Kaw-djer likewise belonged to that sect, a heterogeneous assortment of criminals and mystics. The former, gnawed by envy and hatred, are always pre-

pared for violence and murder; the latter, real poets who dream of an chimerical humanity from whom evil might be banished for ever by the suppression of the laws designed to combat it!"

As the use of the word 'chimerical' reveals, Verne felt that anarchism underestimated the limitations imposed by human nature. Nevertheless, his sympathies were strongly with the anarchist ideal, a fact which is hinted at by his anti-statist and anti-militarist earlier novels. The problem as Verne saw it, was that an anarchist society was as much metaphysical as physical, that its attainment required a moral revolution as much as it did the social and political one. Any new-born society carries within it still many of the conceptions and prejudices which haunted the previous society. Human nature cannot change overnight. Thus an anarchist society surrounded by authoritarian states is vulnerable to pressures both from within and without. The tragedy of the shipwrecked colonists in *The Masterless Man*, seen through the Kaw-djer's eyes, is that they carried the social mores of capitalism with them to a new life. The idea of property in particular remained an article of faith. The absurdity of this which, as Verne points out, is 'so dazzling in the eyes of a libertarian philosopher', was in no way appreciated by the colonists, though he clearly underestimates the forces making for human solidarity and mutual aid in situations of this sort.



Verne's Captain Nemo, by the American illustrator N. C. Wyeth (1882-1945).

SOCIAL ORDER

Placed in the position of being the sole aware anarchist in a mob of authoritarians, the Kaw-djer is forced to meet the colonists on their own terms and propose a solution to their problems which is based on their observed behaviour rather than on the latent capacities which he knows all human beings to possess. From the anarchist point of view it is very disappointing that Verne is unaware of the possibilities of libertarian communism, since he thus does not consider it as one of the possible solutions to the Kaw-djer's moral dilemma. In its absence, the Kaw-djer, whose individualism is inappropri-

(cont next page)

riate to the demands of the solution, falls back upon an authoritarian one. In Verne's words,

"...integral liberty no longer had the same unique value in his eyes, and he was now turning over in his mind the need for authority and social hierarchy."

Given the two alternatives Verne allows him, the Kaw-djer virtually has no option. The path he chooses, that of autocratic reformism, is plainly influenced by Jules Verne's own political experience as a town councillor in Amiens, a position he won after a hotly contested election in which most of the political -isms were represented (though presumably not anarchism). Verne was a successful councillor, and was encouraged as a result to run for the French Senate. He declined to do so. Verne's own brand of radicalism reflected his concern for humanity. But he felt that revolution as such was too costly, that the social costs of rapid change were too great and that gradualism was therefore not only preferable but inevitable. Humankind, he saw, chooses to 'fumble towards a perpetual future.'

Obviously Verne's conclusion is not one that would be shared by anarchists. Nevertheless the point is valid that it is difficult to improvise a social order and that the likely background to any large scale implementation of anarchist ideas could well be extremely unfavourable; in that case the experiment might fail, though not because the ideas themselves were inadequate. The results of the Spanish Revolution illuminate this argument. The defeat of Spanish libertarian communism in 1939 was brought about by the hostility of the bourgeois democracies, the sabotage conducted by the Communist Party and above all by the armed might of European fascism. It was not any particular weakness of libertarian communism that led to the disaster. At the same time the successes of the first years of the revolution were due to the extraordinary strength of the Spanish anarchist movement in 1936. There was social revolution because so many understood its values, its aims and its methods. Revolution was not faced by a population clinging blindly to the old uncertainties and incapable of rebuilding their social relations when the opportunity presented itself.

SPECULATIVE FICTION

'Rebuilding' is the key to Jules Verne's failure in *The Masterless Man* to endow his character with full anarchist insight. Verne's anarchist advocates the destruction of the old social order but has nothing to put in its place other than a chaotic individualism. The idea of a society running along anarchist lines is absent. Verne's concept of society is one involving rigid laws and judicial machinery. The absence of laws, despite his attraction to the concept, is a possibility that frightens him. Thus towards the end of *The Masterless Man*, the Kaw-djer declares that,

"My convictions are unshaken. I know that freedom has its drawbacks, but they will lessen as we get used to them, and in any case they are better than the laws which so foolishly claim to prevent them. The events of the last few months have saddened me, but they haven't changed my ideas. I was, I am, I shall always be, one of those who are classed under the infamous name of anarchists."

Yet, at the end of the book the Kaw-djer is forced by circumstances to behave in a way that is contrary to his deepest beliefs, 'to see broken at his feet that idol which he had erected in his heart.' As Verne says, 'What a defeat!' The sequel, *The Unwilling Dictator*, charts the measures which the Kaw-djer takes to improve the colonists' lot. At the end he leaves them in search of another uninhabited island, 'dropping out' once more. From Verne's standpoint both the integrity of his central character and the socially inappropriate nature of his beliefs are thereby vindicated.

From the anarchist point of view *The Masterless Man* and its sequel are interesting for several reasons. In the first place Verne is genuinely sympathetic towards anarchism and discusses its application as a social theory insofar as his knowledge allows him. The result is an interesting examination of the problems that can arise in a post-revolutionary situation from the anarchist standpoint.

Moreover, Verne's novels, like Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, illustrate the usefulness of speculative fiction as a medium for discussing and explaining political and social theories. Such fiction brings the ideal into focus in a way that

simple political tracts cannot do, because the validity and interrelatedness of the various ideas can be seen operating in a social context which has greater reality, with human beings living within it. The ideas put forward can thus reach people who would normally remain unaware of them.

The success of an idea or ideology will be in proportion to the degree to which the intellectual climate of the day has been prepared for it. To be truly effective an idea must appear regularly in every type of medium. Popular fiction, particularly speculative fiction, can do a great deal to create a receptive climate. Jules Verne was well aware of this truism and it is noteworthy how many of the ideas he put forward so boldly in the nineteenth century have become accepted and have been acted upon since his day. It is particularly encouraging for those who look forward to the implementation of the philosophy of those 'who are classed under the infamous name of anarchists.'

JOHN DRAKE

† *The Masterless Man* by Jules Verne. Arco Publications, London 1962.

Anarchist Praxis

JUST a few points which you probably didn't know about when you published the article on 'philosophy of praxis' recently.*

I don't know if there has been any 'reaction' to the article, which was difficult to read and could have been said much more clearly and concisely. Rather than any 'defence' of the views contained within the article (first published in a Scottish Libertarian Federation internal newsletter in September 1976) it would be more a case of self-criticism at this point in time.

The article, with its advocacy of a coherent method and strategic aims for the anarchist movement, arose out of the particular situation within the Glasgow anarchist group at that time. There was a widespread realisation that despite all the activism associated with the Murrays and Fair Fare campaigns we were not making much headway with the wider populace. This sparked off a period of self-examination with some comrades stressing 'commitment', others 'organisation' and others 'clarity of purpose.'

Eventually this led to the formal 'dissolution' of the group exactly a year ago. Some comrades, influenced by the perspectives of industrial intervention and the formation of anarchist cells tried to put this into practice. The others went on to form six months later the Glasgow Peoples Press, a monthly 'alternative' paper. Others put their 'politics in the first person' in the form of Claimants Unions.

Although we haven't exactly set 'the heather on fire', to coin a phrase, we are much further forward than we ever were with the old group structure. There is a slight communication breakdown as far as keeping in contact with other libertarian thinking and activity is less insular and libertarian ideas are at least more publicly available.

To coin it all, I joined 'Solidarity' because I came increasingly to appreciate their ideas regarding autonomous struggle and the role of libertarians (for example in their critique of 'Big Flame' as neo-narodniks, which wasn't too far removed from some of the ideas in the old G.A.G.).

What I do stick with, is the idea that libertarians should realise that short-term successes are less important than a commitment to sustaining the flow of libertarian ideas to 'the mass' (with a view towards 'fighting mass with class' as one American article on 'anti-mass' put it).

Fraternally

Keith

* 'Towards a Philosophy of Anarchist Praxis', FREEDOM, vol. 38 no. 34 (10 December 1977).

TECHNO~FASCISM (CONT)

Study experiences and occupational choices even within our own rather dehumanised social system, have enabled me to know just what serials would suffice for a preliminary search. The receivers etc would not cause any real problem, the capitalist production system has certainly produced all the goodies required to build these. But then any knowledgeable radio amateur - often self taught - could do the same. Yet he or she would not count in our highly rigid elitist system and would not in any way gain the resources to do the job.

Gaining access to these resources is a political question. If you get hold of manipulative knowledge, you are definitely expected to use it to maintain the status quo and there are sanctions if you do not! As an example, observe the doctors, BMA and so on, for this normative influence. The references that follow up this argument include Rose and Rose (7) and more recently Illich (9). The general outlook seems to be if you are a very good boy - with a good capitalistic consumer consciousness development - bright enough (but dehumanised to some extent with it) to follow the initiation into the jargon I mentioned above, then you might very well get a little support to contribute a miniscule sub-project to the whole in such an enterprise, and write your half a paragraph for the publication of results! But you would have to conform to the professionalism of the alienative hierarchy, which is in all probability linked in overt and covert ways to the 'defence' system, certainly the government. This is especially so in the USA where nearly all such projects are coupled with the military (see for example magazines like 'Electronic Counter-measures', 'Microwave Journal' and 'Microwaves').

And yet I claim to maintain my interest in some of these large scale projects, seemingly in contradiction to the 'small is beautiful' philosophy. So to complete my answer regarding the question of the viability of such projects, I would only be able to go ahead with a collective of all interested. Decisions would require consensual agreement. Complete open access would be necessary. The village children would be working away with me and many others (if they were interested?). Model engineers, radio amateurs, union members - in fact people would all have an equal status.

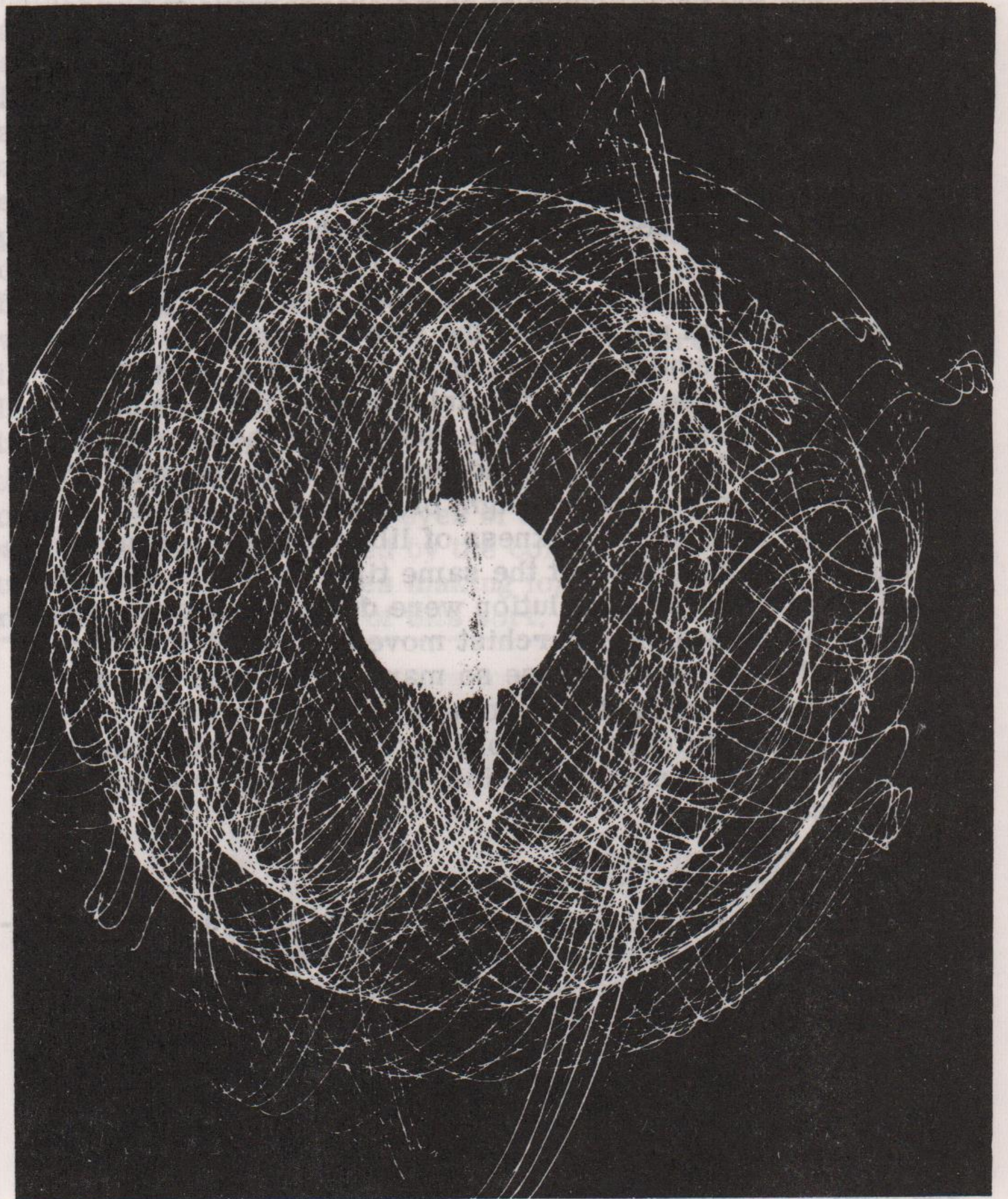
Such a vision is anathema to power manipulators and capitalists (again on the 'left' or the 'right') and social structure being what it is - there isn't the slightest chance of such open humanised projects. (Even the 'Open' University in the UK does not approximate to such an approach, it is far too professionalised).

The theoretical background for the libertarian left would have to analyse and cope with problems of this enormity. 'How can anarcho-minded individuals and collective minded but free small group members help mount the cultural revolution, one result of which might enable benign scientific/technological projects, although large, like the example I have discussed, to be carried out in the way I mentioned? How would the, hopefully by then, well grounded anarcho-psychology handle the not-so-benign large technology of say, Concord? How would the same anarchistic world view, which in its old unstructured forms has always failed, remember, cope with downright malignant forms of technology like fast breeder reactor nuclear energy conversion - in a world where the internalised coercion (10,11) drives people with near panic fear about 'energy running out' and so on!?"

The social forms, the knowledge hierarchies, class cultures, central bureaucracies, all operate with enormous support of the 'fear of freedom' syndrome. Anarchism, if it is to be anything more than Benjamin R. Barber's (12) collection of 'poets and dreamers ... tribe of failures ... consorts of criminals', will have to evolve some new structures, some diverse and richly divergent grasp of the natural order, and humanity's ability to make the future and live with nature and not against it; all vital for the new consciousness. And it must evolve some approximation to, and agreement with, the consciousness, drives and conflicts of ordinary people as actors not just re-actors, for any hope of the cultural revolution occurring at all.

The vitally important stance to help people, especially youth, to adopt is one of critical scepticism towards any expert, or professional, especially those who claim to have the power to determine and prescribe. Such oligarchic development is one of the most dangerous in modern programmed living. We will never be free if we do not shake off this addiction to 'expert manipulators.'

KEN SMITH



REFERENCES

- (1) See for example the writings of Carl Sagan et al. 'Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence', MIT Press.
- (2) This is very well illustrated by the graph on page 19 of 'The Limits to Growth', D.H. Meadows, et al. Pan.
- (3) 'Project Cyclops', NASA Report CR-114445.
- (4) 'Where the Wasteland Ends' and 'The Making of a Counter Culture', Theodore Roszak.
- (5) This analysed very well in the book 'Metropolis', no. 39 in the Classic Film Scripts series, published by Lorrimer.
- (6) See any of the published accounts of Bacon's classic science fiction story, which appeared in 1627. (Or see my review in 'New Scientist', Christmas 1977).
- (7) These huge projects are analysed interestingly in Rose and Rose, ('The Political Economy of Science'), admittedly from the classical hard left (Marxist).
- (8) 'St Scholastica's Curse', forthcoming critique of schooling.
- (9) See Illich (editor), 'Disabling Professions', Marion Boyars.
- (10) 'Culture Against Man', Jules Henry, Penguin.
- (11) A very telling analysis from a human and compassionate point of view is given by Erich Fromm in his book 'Escape from Freedom.'
- (12) 'Superman and Common Man', B.R. Barber, Penguin.

COCKUP

This is the introduction to a pamphlet 'To Represent Our Saviour' (Open Head Press, 2 Blenheim Crescent, London W.11 INN) containing twelve plates showing aspects of godhead as phallus, and which we think is fun. Beautifully produced, if a bit expensive at £ 1. (We should like to point out that we also recognise mother figures!)

For the last time
I laid my lips around the tip
of that great cock, the instrument
of our salvation, our eternal joy.

THE above are the offending lines from a poem, written by James Kirkup and published in *Gay News*, which an English judge, directing a jury, has recently ruled to be blasphemous, penalising its publishers.

It is the object of this pamphlet to point out, with irrefutable illustrative proofs, that these lines, far from being blasphemous, are an expression of ancient and true Christian orthodoxy. In only one detail does the poet deviate from the most authoritative representations of Jesus Christ: in that he attributes to Our Saviour the possession of a "great cock", whereas, according to the early sources, Jesus did not just have a big cock, he was a big cock. To conceal this fact, to promote the big lie in the matter of religion, Christianity has deployed every force at its command, its book burners, heresy hunters, missionaries, witch-finders, inquisitionists, right-minded pig-heads, policemen and judges, all for the purpose of selling an image of Our Saviour which is the exact opposite of the vision of the early Christians.

Jesus the "great cock" has been replaced by the moralistic and infantile 'gentle Jesus' cults of the modern Churches.

The emasculation of religious symbols began early in the history of the church, when the original Christian revolution against the materialism of imperial Rome reversed its dynamic and became the Church of Rome, concerned with presenting an authoritarian image and with suppressing the truth about its origins. At the same time the old prophetic ministry of priests with spiritual or shamanistic gifts was replaced by the rule of bishops who were originally the church treasurers. Those early Christian fathers were effective political commissars. They exterminated the science and psychology of the ancient world. They looked on ignorance as a mark of piety. The spirit of original Christianity was officially abandoned when St. Augustus announced that the promise of Christ's kingdom on earth had already been fulfilled by the establishment of the church. Thus the cyclical nature of the recurrent influx of cosmic energy, known as the coming of Christ, was denied. Finally the Church induced such popular ignorance that it was able to assert that the earth was a flat disc with Christian Jerusalem at its centre.

St John on Patmos was an early protester. In the thirteenth chapter of Revelations he identified cryptically the tyrannical image of the beast with the number 666 as the image of the crucified man, a symbol of materialism with much the same meaning and effect as Lenin's mummified corpse in the Kremlin.

The subtle meaning of the fertility god bound to the world-tree and stretched out across the plane of the cosmos was lost in the cruel literalism of human flesh nailed to the cross. To that perverted image is due the development of asexual Christianity.

Plate 1. shows a very early gnostic representation of Our Saviour. Well into the middle ages a similar image featured in the rites of such esoteric Christian groups as the Knights Templar. Here the cockerel's head is an emblem of solar energy. The phallic nose represents the transmission of that energy to earth, thus identifying it with the upright stone pillars of prehistoric elemental science. The whole figure is neatly labelled in the Greek inscription SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.



A universal feature of ancient religious ceremonies was the exhibition of male and female genitals. This amiable practice was carried on into Roman Christian times, even though by then the meaning of it was no longer generally known. Iamblichus in his 4th century book on the Mysteries explained that the reason for erecting phallic pillars at festivals was to make these powerful objects generally familiar and to provide occasional relief from sexual inhibitions. He added that there was a further esoteric reason connected with the prehistoric science of terrestrial fertility.

The male organ set up at Roman festivals, and discreetly celebrated in England at the maypole fairs until these were suppressed by the Puritan movement, was a descendant of the megalithic pillars of archaic science which both symbolised the power of divinity and invoked it for the practical benefit of all. To represent the deity as a "great cock", as in Mr Kirkup's meek poem, is such a timeless, universal and hallowed practice that its orthodoxy needs no laborious proof. We now turn to its meaning and motive.

Freudian literalists have popularised the erroneous belief that images of the male and female sexual parts refer always to human sexuality. This obsession is anthropomorphic fantasy. In fact, human genitals are merely symbols, among many other such, of the dual powers, proceeding from one source, that govern the universe. The phallic nose on the gnostic bust of Our Saviour is an image of the positive, yang

side of nature which complements the yin or receptive tendency. Nothing could be more chaste and sublime, nothing less obscene. Obscenity in this context is exclusively in the minds of those who project filthy imaginings onto sacred objects.

The deity is figured in images that have the form of human genitals because nature sets the example. The proofs of this are illustrated in this pamphlet.

These same images are born within us as part of our human mental constitution. Of this C. G. Jung offers ample proof through his writings. In his autobiography he describes an initiatory dream when he was 3 or 4 years old which changed his entire view of life. He entered a dark subterranean chamber in which sat enthroned a tall pillar. 'It was made of skin and naked flesh, and on top there was something like a rounded head with no face and no hair. On the very top of the head was a single eye, gazing motionless upwards ... This dream haunted me for years. Only much later did I realise that what I had seen was a phallus, and it was decades before I understood that it was a ritual phallus.' The fact that what he saw in the dream was beyond his infantile experience convinced Jung of the archetypal nature of the erect penis as an image of divinity.

Thus we conclude that to refer to Christ the world-saviour as "that great cock" is in accordance with the truth of things as well as with the most respectable precedents. To call nature and human nature blasphemous is an absurdity to which only the legal profession could descend, and only in times of such general ignorance of the true philosophy and its symbolism as the present.

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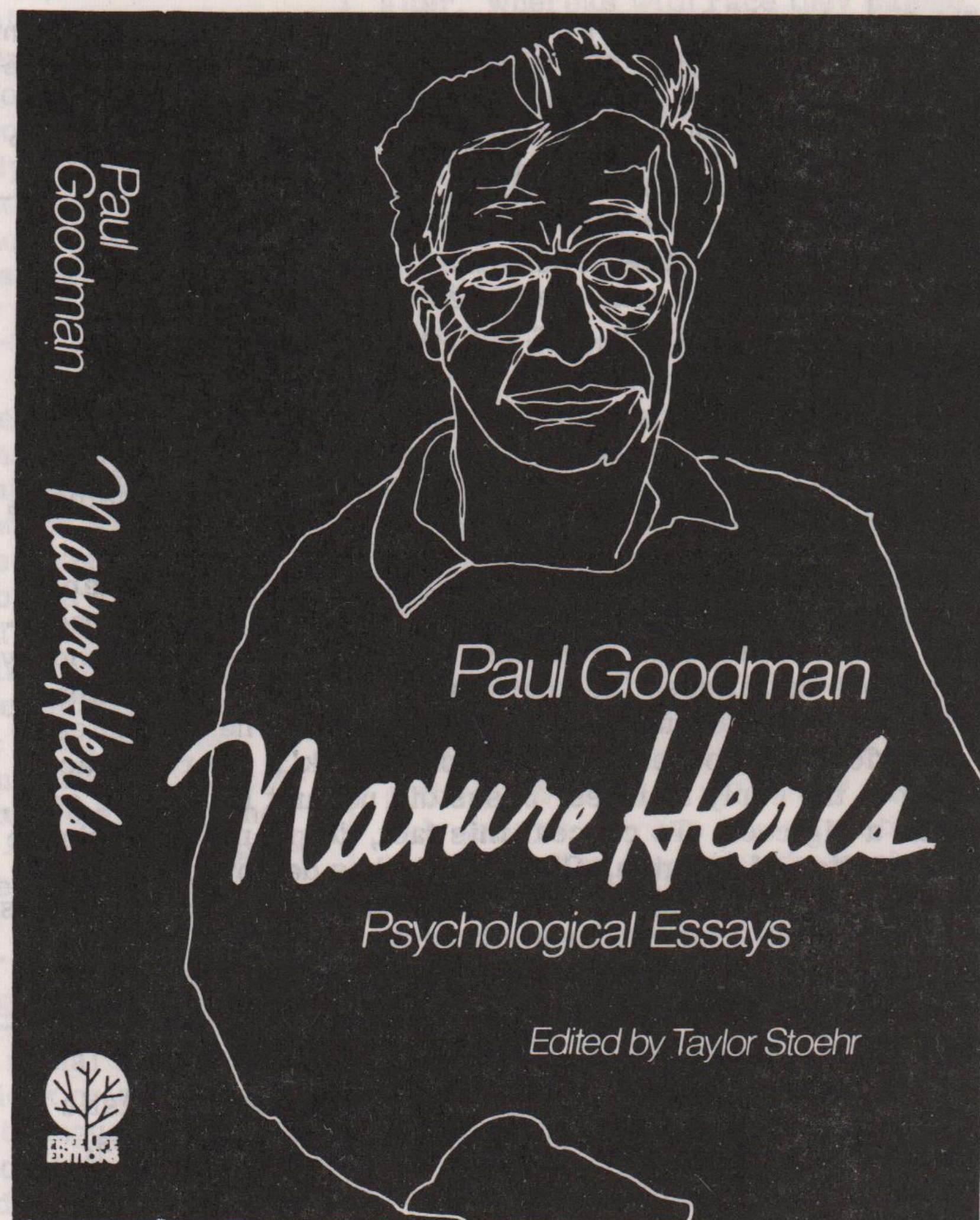
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LETTER

The following small article was sent to FREEDOM by a correspondent of Carl Harp who is jailed at Walla Walla in Australia, and who wishes for its distribution in anarchist journals.

ALL THAT a person achieves and all that they fail to achieve is the direct result of their own consciousness. In this world, this universe, individual responsibility must be absolute. A person's weakness, strength, purity, impurity and/or freedom, are their own, and not another person's.

They are brought about by themselves, and by no one else. They can only be changed by themselves, and not by any one else. The conditions they live in are also their own. Their suffering, their hunger, their enslavement are evolved from within, and taken advantage of by others for the good or the bad. As they think, so they are. And as they continue to think so they remain.

A strong person can never help a weaker person unless that weaker person is willing to be helped, and even then the weak person must become strong of themselves. They must, by their own efforts, develop the strength which they will need to set themselves free. No one but themselves can alter their condition or set themselves free; liberation requires, before collective reliance, self-reliance.

History records people as always thinking and saying "Many people are slaves because one is an oppressor; let us hate

the oppressor. Now, however, there is an increasing tendency to reverse this and to say "One person is an oppressor because many are slaves; let us despise the slaves." The truth in reality is that the oppressor and the slave are co-operators in ignorance.

True knowledge knows the weakness of the oppressed and misapplied power of the oppressor. And those persons whose consciousness holds this knowledge are free. Free people have conquered weakness, they desire not to rule or be ruled, therefore they belong neither to the oppressor nor the oppressed. A person can only rise, conquer, achieve and be free by their own thoughts; acts alone are not enough. Our surroundings, our world depend upon our consciousness. Those who remain weak, abject, miserable, hungry and enslaved do so by refusing to lift up their thoughts as they lift up their fists.

Those of us who are free already, who see this truth, and who struggle mentally, physically and spiritually for its totality must help from cells, groups, cadres, organisations and communities. As we grow and move forward we must defend our consciousness, and spread it everywhere to everyone. As we agitate and instigate, as we struggle to be free and move forward, we must also educate, for without a liberated consciousness all is useless - the liberation of humanity will remain a pipe dream, its continued enslavement a reality. Without consciousness all the theory, and all the practice that we may have and do, is in the long run wasted

CARL L. HARP