

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

WE WELCOME NEWS, REVIEWS, LETTERS, ARTICLES. Latest date for No. 20 Monday October 9.

NEXT DESPATCHING DATE is Thursday October 12. Come and help from 2pm onwards.

Groups

ABERYSTWYTH. Mike Sheehan, 2 South St. Aberystrwyth

BRISTOL City. 4 British Road, Bristol BS3 3BW

BRISTOL Students. Libertarian Society, Students Union, Queen's Road, Bristol 8.

CAMBRIDGE. Raphael Salkie, Queen's College, Cambridge

Cardiff Anarchist Group: Write c/o 108 Bookshop, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

CORBY. Terry Phillips, 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

COVENTRY. John England, 48 Spencer Av, Earlsdon, Coventry

DERBY (and environs) Anarchists/Libertarians. All two of us welcome collaborators. Contact Andrew Huckerby, 49 Westleigh Av, Derby DE3 3BY, tel: 368678

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

EXETER Anarchist Society, Univ. of Exeter, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter

HASTINGS. Steve, 18a Markwick Terrace, St Leonards-on-sea, Sussex

HIGH BENTHAM. Ask at The Dragonfly on Market Day (Wednesday)

HUDDERSFIELD anarchist group: meetings every two weeks. For details phone 0484-38156 (Polytechnic students' union).

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

LEEDS. Box 101 'Leeds Other Paper', 30 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2

MALVERN & Worcester area. Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrridge, Malvern, Worcs.

MANCHESTER. See NW Federation

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE. Black Jake, c/o 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle NE1 4AG

NORWICH Anarchist Group, c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St (tel: 582506) or 15 Scotholme Av, Hysen Green (tel: 708302)

OXFORD - suspended during vacation

PORTSMOUTH - change of address pending

READING University anarchists, c/o Students Union, Univ. of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading, Berks.

SHEFFIELD Autonomous Anarchists. Write to Sheffield Libertarian Society, P.O. Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE

The groups at the above address are: Sheffield Autonomous Anarchists, Black Cross Group, IWW, Syndicate of Initiative, John Creaghe Memorial Society

SWANSEA. Don Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Dunvant, Swansea

THAMES VALLEY Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 6 Congress Rd, Maidenhead (tel: 062 2974)

WESTON-super-Mare. Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Rd, Weston-super-Mare, Som.

WILTSHIRE. Comrades in Swindon wish to start an anarchist group (as well as existing Community Arts Group). Get in touch with

Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon, Wilts.

FEDERATIONS

LONDON

Anarchist Communist Assn, c/o 182 Upper St, Islington N.1.

Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Av. Tel: 359-4794 before 7 pm.

Freedom Collective, 84b Whitechapel High St (Angel Alley), E1 (tel: 247-9249)

Hackney Anarchists. Contact Dave on 249-7042

Kingston Anarchists, 13 Denmark Road, Kingston upon Thames (tel: 549-2564)

London Workers' Group, Box W. 182 Upper St. N.1. (Tel: 249-7042)

Love v. Power, Box 779, Peace News (London office: 5 Caledonian Road)

West London Anarchists, 7 Pennard Road, W12

KENT

Ramsgate: Peter Ford, 22 Royal Road

Sevenoaks: Jim Endesby, 70 Bradbourne Road

MIDLANDS

Secretariat: c/o Andrew Huckerby, 49 Westleigh Av, Derby DE3 3BY, tel: 0332-3686 678

Groups in the Federation include Corby, Coventry, Derby, Leamington/Warwick, Nottingham, Oxford, Sheffield (all separately listed), Birmingham. Also:

LEICESTER. Contact: Lyn Hurst, 41 Briarfield Drive, Leicester, tel: 0533-21250 (days) or 0533-414060 (nights).

Newly formed

NORTH-EASTERN ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Secretariat: Leeds Anarchists, Box 101, 30 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2. Publishes mthly bulletin.

NORTH-WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION

c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester M1

Newsletter & quarterly meetings. Contacts in other areas.

MANCHESTER SOLIDARITY group has also recently reformed and now holds regular monthly meetings. Our members are involved in a number of local groups and activities which takes up much of our time but we intend to arrange some occasional 'readers meetings' to discuss specific 'Solidarity' politics. For further information write to: SOLIDARITY (Manchester), c/o 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester 13.

SCOTTISH LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION

Secretary: Nina Woodcock, 17 Cheviot Cres., Flintry, Dundee.

Aberdeen: c/o A.P.P., 163 King Street

Glasgow: c/o Box G.P.P., 146 Holland Street, Glasgow G2 4NG

Meetings

LONDON. Anarcha United Mystics meet every Thursday at 7.45 at 13 James Street, Covent Garden, WC2

Public Meetings organised by Libertarian Communist Group at Hemingford Arms, corner of Hemingford Rd/Offord Rd, N.1.

25 September, 8.00 pm. Libertarian Communism.

2 October, 8.00 pm. Public Sector Alliance - an open forum.

Further details from LCG, c/o 27 Clerkenwell Close.

Desires

DUBLIN ANARCHIST GROUP writes: Anarchism has little or no tradition in Ireland. However, since the beginning of this year groups have been formed in Belfast, Dundalk and Dublin. In Dublin we have been active on a number of issues including H-BLOCK, the anti-nuclear campaign and the defence of the IRSP 4. Members are also active in their trade unions, the women's movement and within the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression (TUCAR).

We now hope to open a bookshop and centre before the end of the year. This will cost us £1,300. We have already raised £520 within the group but we need £510 by the end of November. We are asking the international anarchist movement for aid. If you or your organisation can help us, please do so. Please make all monies payable to:

Alan MacSimoin
49a Leinster Road
Rathmines, Dublin 6, IRELAND.

We also wish to receive news from you and/or your organisation. Our group seeks information on the general situation in your country and about anarchist activities.

Yours for libertarian communism
Maeve de Paor

On 26 September Ron Wood, correspondence secretary for the San Diego branch of the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation of North America is leaving the US for London en route to E. Africa to take part in anthropological field work. He would like to make an arrangement with one or more groups for a place to stay for himself and his companion for 3 days in London and assistance in locating people and information in London. He especially needs to see people who have student or worker contacts in Cairo, Khartoum and Nairobi. Replies c/o FREEDOM.

Press Fund

7 September - 20 September inclusive
LONDON N8: V.E.P. £4.00; WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £1.00; J.K.W. £0.10;
LONDON NW1: AUM. £1.00; GLASGOW: W.B. £1.00; HULL: P.H. £2.80; ALBUQUERQUE, USA: W.R.D. £2.50.

TOTAL: £12.40
Previously acknowledged £847.35

TOTAL TO DATE: £859.75

EXTRA MEETING :-

LONDON WORKERS MEETING
Monday October 2 - 8pm. STRIKES OR OCCUPATIONS? Video film of last year's Greenwich Steel Factory occupation followed by open discussion. At Earl Russell, Pancras Road, N.W.1. ALL WORKERS WELCOME.

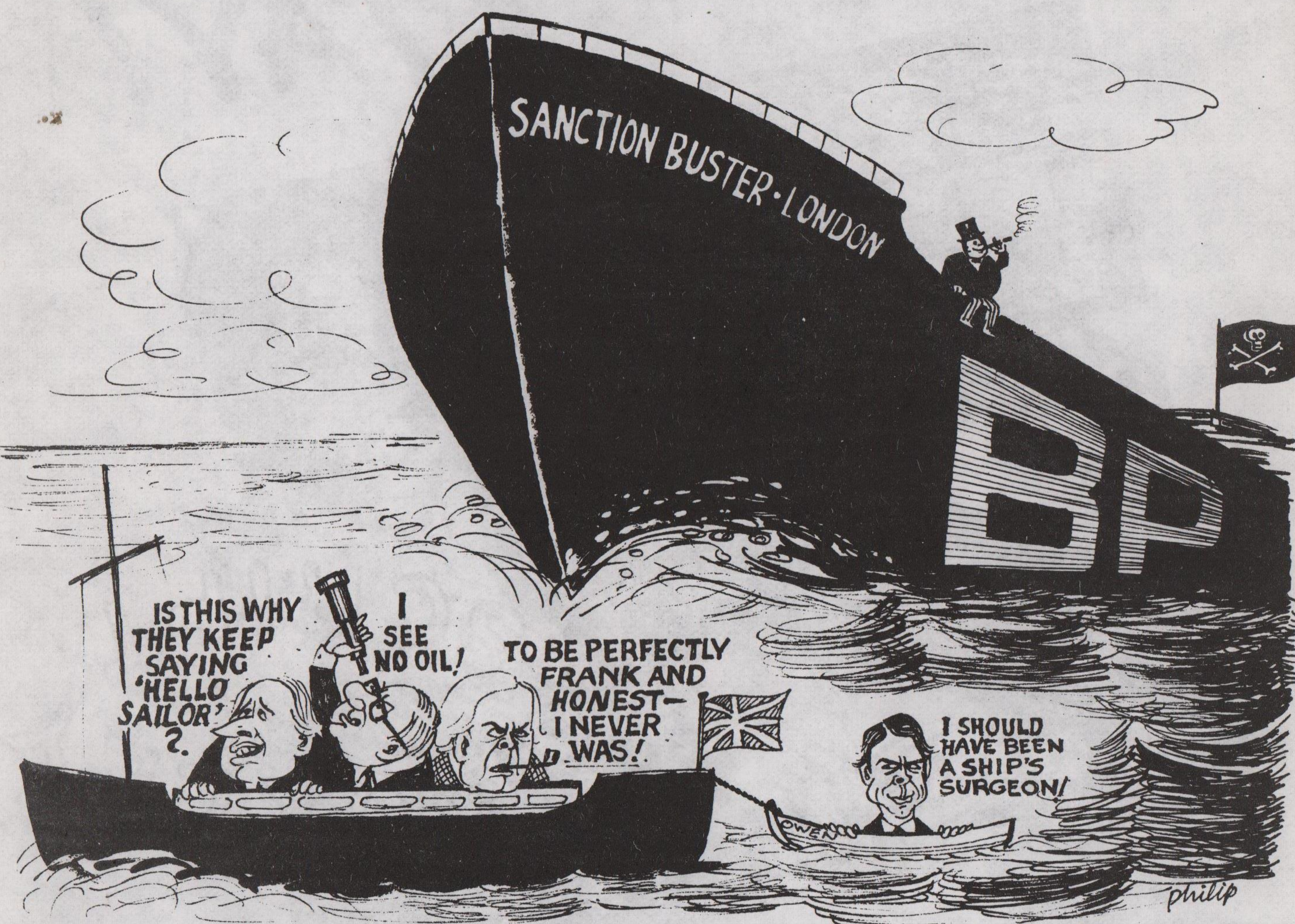
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Waiving the rules

THE recent wave of prosecutions relating to official secrets is a reflection not only of the determination of certain courageous individuals to 'let the public know' what it is the public's right to know — and what potential enemies know anyway — but also of increasing governmental sensitivity with regard to its own declared fields of knowledge. And by 'declared' we mean, or rather the government means, 'restricted'.

If you accept the concept that the state has rights to official secrets for the sake of national security, then you may in your mind justify the suppression of information about bomber bases, and military installations in general. But under no circumstances can you justify the deception of the public in matters of the implementation of declared and public policy.

When Ian Smith declared UDI in Rhodesia all those years ago, it was perfectly clear that if the British Government had flown in troops to occupy Salisbury and neutralise any possible opposition, Smith's bluff could have been called

and the usual careful progress towards 'democratic independence' could have been ensured, which was its stated intention. But Harold Wilson didn't want to do that, or didn't have the nerve, for fear of a backlash and relied instead on the long-term pressure of sanctions.

We now know what an absolutely dishonest, despicable and ineffective practice that has been — with the full knowledge of subsequent Conservative and Labour Governments. It is totally impossible that Edward Heath, Harold Wilson, Jim Callaghan, Margaret Thatcher, David Steel, Enoch Powell and Uncle Tom Cobbley and all, could have been ignorant of the facts of, for example, oil reaching Rhodesia through South Africa. The only surprising thing is that African politicians have not made more use of the knowledge they must have had to alert the British public. But then — are they not in the government business themselves?

The anarchist analysis remains true: distrust everybody seeking power. They are liars, cheats and murderers, be they white, black or khaki. All rule by coercion and deceit.

ASTRID MUST STAY!



Astrid pictured with fellow mechanics at the garage where she worked.

THIS APRIL an article in

FREEDOM asked what would have happened to say, Louise Michel under the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, and noted that it was one of the most dangerous of the new legal weapons with which the ruling class has been equipping itself. It noted too the ironic connection between the strong self-confident, imperialist and highly racist state of the British Empire and its relative liberalism with regard to political refugees. None, of course, but the most rabid of the Tory right would look back upon that age as a golden one! This doesn't alter the fact that the more British governments and their armies retreat from the wide world to face growing cynicism about the political system at home, the prospect of economic collapse and (in the view, at least, of Federal German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt), very possible civil war, the more the 'democratic' wrapping splits, the nastier the inner reality it reveals. Even were it so inclined, which it manifestly isn't, one of the weakest states of western Europe today is not going to put up a fight against the thirst for revenge of a much stronger one. In this case, Federal Germany. Indeed, premier Callaghan has just tried to present to us, as a cause for congratulation, the fact that it is the fight against 'terrorism' which has brought about the closest possible cooperation, on all fronts, between the British and German governments.

This hardly means that we should not bother to oppose the extradition from this country of the political refugee Anna Puttick/Astrid Proll! On the contrary, it means that our opposition must be that much fiercer and more resolute. For

those who don't know much about the treatment of political prisoners in Germany, and because, to put it mildly, the mass media are unlikely to tell you much about it, it is vital to remember the following:

Astrid was a founder member of the Red Army Fraction with Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader. (Her brother Thorwald, who had taken part in the attack on the Frankfurt department store earlier, dropped out of the group once the decision was taken to form the RAF - never, incidentally, as the press insist on calling it, or some fictional predecessor, the 'Baader-Meinhof' group). She was first arrested in Hamburg in May 1971 on a charge of attempted murder of two policemen. For several months of a total of three years on remand in solitary confinement she was held in the 'silent wing', or to quote the euphemism, 'women's psychiatric' wing of Ossendorf prison, Cologne. As described in a letter from her lawyer Ulrich Preuss to the president of Nordrhein-Westfalen prison department, this was a one-storey building on the edge of the prison complex with only six cells and its own courtyard, much smaller than the normal prison yards. During the time Astrid Proll, then Ulrike Meinhof were held there no other cell in the wing was occupied. The cells and all the furnishings were painted white; at night there was white neon lighting which

couldn't be switched off and during the winter the temperature was kept permanently cold. Nothing could be hung on the wall to relieve the universal whiteness - a ruling which often still applies. The only sounds were the occasional footsteps or voices of the guards or one-channel prison radio. Of natural human sounds there were none.

The rigid conditions to which Astrid and later Ulrike and Gudrun Ensslin were subjected in the silent wing of Ossendorf prison were admitted by the authorities in letters since made public. A letter written by the then director of Ossendorf, Buecker, contained the words, "The prisoner Meinhof is also acoustically isolated in her cell", and about Astrid, in a report dated 20 December 1972 on a conversation he had had with state prosecutor Schaefer, he referred to fear that the defence would use the prevailing prison conditions as justification for demanding her release. "There is cause to suppose," he wrote, "that Proll's defence lawyer will, after the opening of the trial, claim that his client is unfit to stand trial on the grounds that the prisoner has suffered damage to mental health from the rigorous solitary confinement (our emphasis). Such indications have already been given by the defence."

In the event Astrid, who did not come to trial until February 1974 (after those years in solitary confinement) was released on bail by the Frankfurt court because of her serious medical condition. The decision was largely based on a report from the medical expert Schmidt-Voigt, which referred to symptoms which have since become familiar with regard to other prisoners held for long periods in solitary confinement and isolation (general exhaustion, acute headaches, dizziness and black outs, loss of concentration and ability to communicate with others, difficulty in walking, and so on). In particular he referred to a condition of very low blood pressure which was liable to prevent the free flow of oxygen and could well lead to fatal brain and heart injury were Astrid to remain in gaol. For although she had submitted to treatment in prison her condition had not improved but rather deteriorated further and the judge himself had on these grounds to order her immediate return to prison after her initial appearance in court. Dr. Schmidt-Voigt reiterated that "As long as Frau Proll is on remand, she will not be fit to stand trial." Not even the prosecution argued with this statement, and the court decided to release her on bail, observing that her condition "could not be remedied by continuing her detention in another prison and under other prison conditions."

As for the present situation in Germany, it's just not possible to argue that things have improved since Astrid was shut up in Ossendorf and the experiments with sensory deprivation at their height. (On the contrary, however serious a prisoner's health these days they stand no chance at all of release on bail). Some prison staff are believed to have themselves privately admitted that conditions in prisons like Stammheim are like those of a concentration camp. Apart from the fact that eight RAF prisoners have died in gaol since 1974, conditions are if anything worse than ever. Political prisoners held on remand, often for several years (like Astrid) before coming to trial, are placed in rigorous solitary confinement by the investigating judge as a matter of course. These solitary confinement orders list the manner of confinement in meticulous detail and are now more or less standard through the whole Republic. Convicted politicals are rarely integrated with the rest of the prison population and frequently remain in solitary. (Sometimes they are described as being 'integrated' when in fact anyone who tries to form a relationship with them is punished or removed elsewhere). The 2 June members hastily flown back to Germany from Bulgaria earlier this year are virtually walled up in their cells in Berlin and Cologne. The widely held view that silent wings, or sensory deprivation techniques are no longer used is incorrect, since there is evidence to the contrary. At the time of writing the RAF prisoner Werner Hoppe is in a Hamburg hospital in an 'alarming' state, after six years of solitary confinement and isolation. He isn't the only one. Most of those on remand are reported by doctors 'only partially fit to stand trial', which is what they say in public. Since nearly dying in October last year Irmgard Moeller remains in solitary on the seventh floor of Stammheim prison; for whole weeks at a time she speaks to no-one; even the food is now pushed through a hole in the door; for exercise there's a covered way under the roof from which one can't even see the sky. Amnesty is sufficiently concerned to have embarked on a major project on the subject of isolation in German gaols (but very belatedly, as usual).

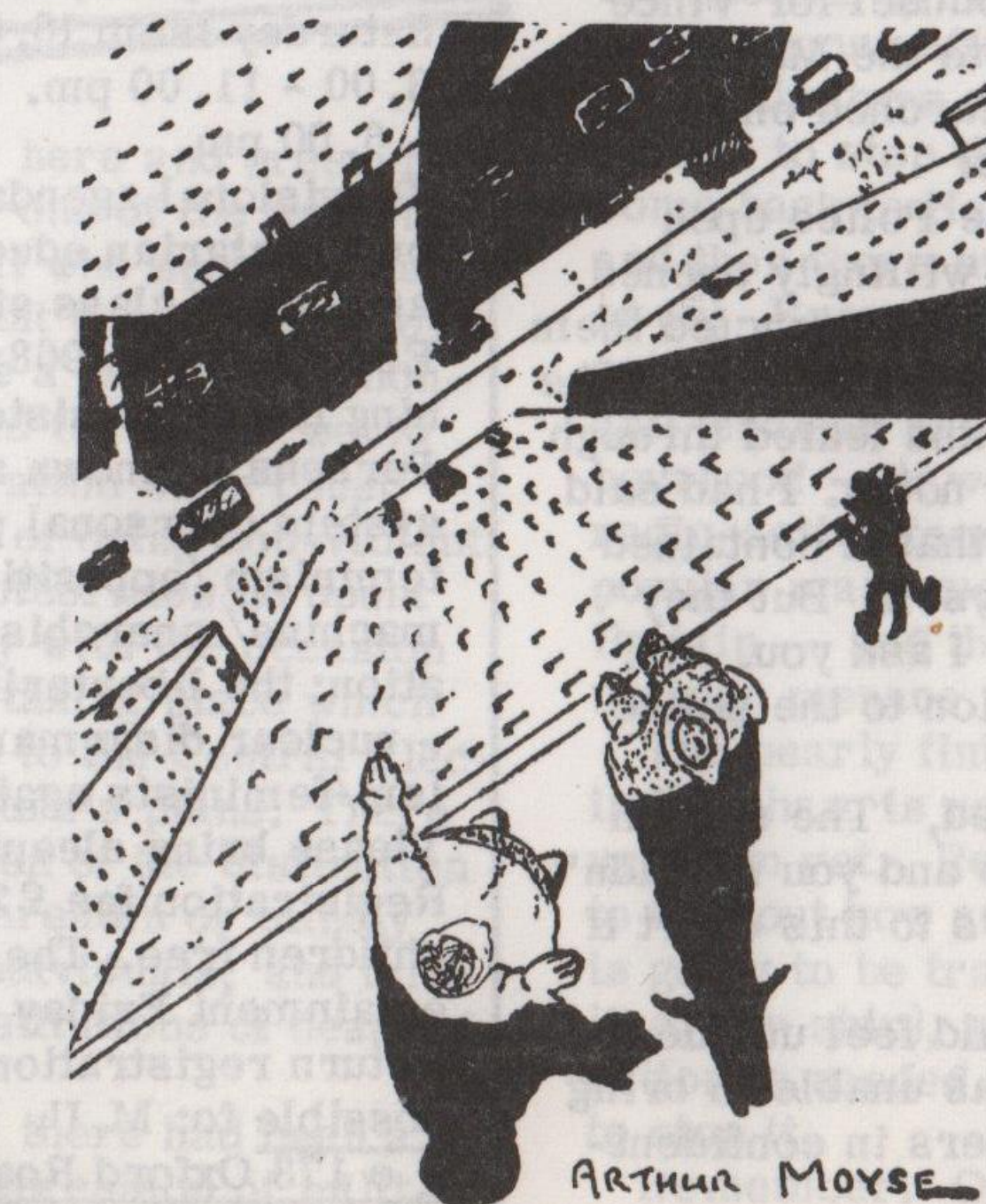
There is something especially sickening about the present moves for extradition. The only possible explanation for the arrest, apart from basic vindictiveness, is that the German police want to add a bit of polish to the apparent propaganda victory they won with their murder of Willy Peter Stoll in a Chinese restaurant the other week. Since coming to England Astrid has tried to begin a new life and had indeed succeeded, making new friends, helping unemployed youngsters through a training scheme on car mechanics, becoming involved in feminist activities. She has already been here for four years. Yet despite this and all the above, the state still wants its second pound of flesh ... As for the press, it has been filled with the expected sex-and-terror garbage and sadly, if one can judge from the quotes, some of her own acquaintances have been conditioned by it. ('I am astounded', one reportedly said, 'that she is a suspected terrorist. She is the sort of girl who would go out of her way to help people rather than harm them!') Thus does the media create, and lovingly nurse its own monstrous images.

Astrid is now in Brixton prison along with our comrades. An application for extradition was made at Bow Street court last week and the deputy head of the Anti-Terrorist Squad, Det- Chief Sup. W. Warnock made the application for remand. According to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate the German authorities have till 16 October to present their case for extradition. Tomorrow (Tuesday) friends, armed with roses, will be hoping for a mass picket outside Bow Street court.

As we go to press we don't yet know whether Astrid has been allowed association with Iris and Khloud, the Iraqi girl. What we do know, from Iris' experience, is that she will hardly find British prisons much better than German ones (!) There is now, indeed, an increasing parallel between the way in which the German authorities have tried to break down the will of their political dissidents through isolation-torture, and the way in which the British are treating, in particular, their women political prisoners.

We could go on, but space doesn't permit. Suffice it to add that Astrid has good reason to believe she wouldn't survive were she extradited, as the German government is confident she will. But they must simply not be allowed to take such a thing for granted. In the words of the defence committee, "She has already paid more than the price for her alleged crimes, through years of torture, severe illness and exile. She wants to live, and to live she has to stay here." Her struggle to do so is also ours.

Donations and letters of support to Astrid/Anna can be sent to Astrid Proll Defence Committee, c/o her solicitors Harold Weston & Co., 21/23 Westbourne Grove, London W2 4UA. Also: address of "Friends of Astrid Proll" - 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 ROAT. The aims of F.A.P. include: to fight her extradition; to fight for political asylum; to improve the treatment she receives here in Brixton prison; to expose the conditions of political prisoners in West German prisons; to give her the ongoing support to survive and believe in a future for herself.



"COME LAD,
STEP DOWN FOR
THE SAKE OF
THE PARTY"

Persons Unknown

ANARCHISTS at the Anti-Nazi League carnival in London on Sunday were doing what they could to propagate the message that the real enemy was the creeping fascism of the state itself. Hundreds of leaflets about the Persons Unknown case were distributed by members of the London support group, pointing out that in Brixton prison, less than a mile from the end of the march in Brockwell Park, six anarchists were being held in top security conditions as the result of a series of events which show 'what many of us on the left will have to face in the future if we fail to come to terms with, and to resist, the creeping fascism which is far wider in our society than the ANL, or much of the left, care to admit.'

The leaflet sought to show how the National Front and other overt fascist groups are being 'used by the Labour Party to divert attention from their own increasingly repressive policies.' It gave as examples the existing and proposed immigration controls; the increasing use of the police and armed forces in industrial disputes; the torture of Irish prisoners and on the mainland; the growth and increased activity of the political police in Britain and their cooperation with other European security forces; and the increasing amount of repressive legislation.

Over the past few weeks attention has focused around three main areas: the breach of defence confidentiality by the police, the identification parades and Iris' prison conditions which remain a fundamental preoccupation.

A PU press release on the remand hearing of 14 September reported an extraordinary overruling by the magistrate of the privilege extended to confidential legal papers. To quote from the release:

"James Saunders, counsel for Vince Stevenson, complained to the Magistrate about the way he was searched on entering the court. He states:

"I was searched by the Police upon entering the court, and willingly opened my briefcase. However, I instructed them that my client's file was confidential. The Police disregarded me and leafed through the confidential defence notes. I had said that I would show them that it contained no concealed objects myself. But they again disregarded this. I ask you, Sir, to give a clear instruction to the police about this."

The Magistrate replied, 'The search is the duty of the police and you shouldn't bring confidential papers to this court if you object.'

Saunders said, 'I would feel unable to continue the case if I was unable to bring my client's defence papers in confidentiality.'

The Magistrate came back with 'I'm perfectly happy with the actions of the police.'

Mr Saunders said afterwards: 'For centuries it has been established that the instructions of a client to his or her solicitor are absolutely privileged. The Magistrate today has sought to overrule this position by affording access, to the very squad of police who are prosecuting, to the absolutely privileged papers containing the defendant's instructions to his solicitor. This is clearly preposterous and it will severely handicap the defence as it will now be impossible to take to court the very documents which are necessary to pursue Mr Stevenson's defence. I see this as a clear example of the use of a pretence of security to sabotage a defence case.'

In a previous Press Release we asked who runs Lambeth Magistrates Court - the police or the judiciary. Today's events seem to give a clear answer - the police do with the consent of the judiciary. The implications for the possibility of a fair trial are disturbing in the extreme."

A flight y reference was made to this incident in a Guardian diary column (which, though rightly sarcastic of the handling of the whole case by the police and prison authorities, went to great lengths to make it all sound funny). Otherwise there was no mention of it in the national press. As someone from the

MANCHESTER. Libertarian Festival '78. 14 and 15 October. Venue: Manchester Student Union Building, Oxford Rd, Man. 13 (Sat & Sun). The Squat, Daves Street, off Oxford Rd (Fri & Sat nights).

Times: Friday 13 from 8.00 pm - 11.00 pm. Reception, disco and live music. Saturday from 10.00 am - 6.00 pm and 8.00 - 11.00 pm. Sunday from 10.00 am - 6.00 pm.

Provisional agenda includes workshops on libertarian education/ shopfloor organisation/ class struggle in Eastern Europe since 1968; nuclear power/ learning from our history (the last 20 years)/ Persons Unknown and ABC; the prison system/ personal politics; anarcho-feminism/ opposition to the military machine/ anarchism and national liberation; the libertarian press/arms trade - nuclear disarmament; anarchist activism/feminists against nuclear power. Please bring sleeping bags. Registration fee £2.00; claimants £1.00, children free. The fee includes the entertainment Friday and Saturday nights. Return registration forms as soon as possible to: M. U. Libertarian Society, c/o 178 Oxford Road, Manchester 13.



Guardian apparently commented, it just wasn't 'newsworthy'. Such things never are.

Greater success was won by defence counsel in gaining from a very reluctant director of public prosecutions (after initial point-blank refusal) the names of witnesses to be called to the ID parades and descriptions of suspects they had made to the police. An article in the Observer last Sunday, published after a visit to the paper's office by members of the support group, referred to their accusation that the police have been trying to generate an artificial climate of hysteria at the court hearings in Lambeth, but added optimistically that 'the result of the row over identity parades was seen as a victory by civil liberties' campaigners who have severely criticised the way in which such parades have been held in the past.'

In this case the ability to obtain information about what the witnesses had told the police was felt essential for the proper preparation of the defence. As it happens it is good to know that none of the charges against our comrades have been substantiated by evidence from the ID parades.

STOP PRESS We have just had the news that Trevor and Ronan have both been put in solitary confinement for two weeks (until 8 October), following an altercation with one of the guards during their association period. During the afternoon our comrades are locked up together in a cell, and it seems that at some stage on this occasion the guard was being deliberately provocative by ordering them out of the cell. Exact details of the incident are not known. The fact remains that for two weeks Trevor and Ronan are being allowed no association at all, and no food from outside the prison.

Meanwhile other forms of harassment are taking place - for instance interference with the mail. A letter to the support group in Liverpool reached them empty. Since then two letters to the London support group from Vince and Ronan, believed to be important for communication between the prisoners and the group, were returned to Persons Unknown by the prison on the grounds that the letters were addressed to no specific person. This is obviously absurd since the support group has been receiving letters from the prisoners for some time!

HEYSHAM- 2 Reports

ON Saturday, 16 September some 500 people walked to the partially-completed Heysham 'A' nuclear power station and held a rally in opposition to the plan to build a Heysham 'B' station to house part of the new generation of AGR reactors. (Heysham 'B' is the other site for an Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor, besides Torness in south-east Scotland). The march had started four miles away, by one of the piers in the Lancashire resort town of Morecombe; the five hundred were from many parts of Britain, and included a few supporters from abroad.

During the previous week, there had been attempts to get the message over to people in the area, apparently including leaflets on the potential danger to those working at the site. It's clear that a lot of work had been put into organising the demonstration - especially by people from Half-Life, the local anti-nuclear group - so I make public criticism of comrades there with reluctance (and indeed the criticism is intended to be of us all as a movement). However, I have to say that, whatever the value of the previous groundwork in the area, the actual event at the weekend seemed to me to be largely a waste of time.

My criticisms concern both the degree to which the weekend will actually affect the building of Heysham 'B', and the internal dynamics and politics of the anti-nuke movement: the end-of-march rally at Heysham illustrates both points. The comparison with demonstrations at other current focuses of anti-nuke activity - at Torness, and against URENCO at Capenhurst - was startling. On these two previous occasions, there seemed to be genuine attempts to move towards a new style of organising. For instance: at Capenhurst there was continual information over the loudspeakers about what was happening, and everyone was asked what they felt about the structure of the meeting; at Heysham one felt like a spectator with no power to be involved in deciding what was happening. At Capenhurst all the speakers were activists who were taking part in the demonstration - rather than 'outside' speakers - and the microphone was available to anyone with anything to say; at Heysham several local councillors spoke and people from the body of the meeting who wanted to address the gathering weren't allowed to. At Capenhurst, there was political debate in small groups, and there were workshops on particular topics, during the rally; at Heysham there were the few speeches, then some people got up and sang and danced, and many people drifted off home. The very least that could have happened (if it wasn't possible to

stay long enough at the rally site) was that a gathering back at the camp site of those who'd been there all week could have been explicitly announced as a continuation of the rally for everyone. (Instead, the reference to the camp site was only in the context of a venue for meetings planned to discuss other anti-nuclear campaigns).

And perhaps the most damning comparison of all is over the lack of expressions of intent on the Saturday. At both Torness and Capenhurst the message that we ended with was that the developments we opposed were going to be stopped - we'd be back, and we'd do what we had to do (and at Torness, the event was in itself a symbolic occupation of the site) while at Heysham there was no political message beyond



the liberal 'pressure here and pressure there' level. Indeed, one of the women from the local council who spoke remarked how good it was that it had been shown to be possible to have a peaceful demonstration - how pleased the police would be. But the demonstration wasn't just peaceful in the sense of being non-violent: the reason that the authorities no doubt were extremely happy with the occasion was that nothing was taking place which posed any real threat to the Central Electricity Generating Board's plans. There seemed no appreciation of the distinction between refusing to threaten or blindly confront 'opposing' individuals, and failing to threaten the institutions of death of which they're a part.

At Morecome pier, there had been a similar lack of any expression of militancy. Those coming to join the rally found

people engaged in various picturesque activities. But there was no explanation of what was going on: the main theatre was intricate, and totally inappropriate as street theatre. Other demonstrators were unable to follow it, and hence alienated - let alone the public it was presumably aimed at, many of whom no doubt dismissed us all as a 'bunch of nuts.'

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7.

MORE THAN 100,000 live within five miles of Heysham. That is where an advanced gas-cooled nuclear reactor is nearing completion and expected to go on steam in 1980. And there are plans to build a second nuclear plant right next to it.

Half-Life, the anti-nuclear organisation of Lancaster, called for a demonstration on September 16th and about 400 protestors came. We gathered at Morecambe Pier, where games and street-theatre entertained us and a few local spectators for a while. Then we marched the four miles to the Nuclear Power Station where the demonstration ended after a short meeting in front of the main gates. Sixteen demonstrators attempted a symbolic occupation of the site of the planned second power plant, but failed.

Not everybody was happy about the fun and carnival atmosphere of the demonstration, since we don't really have any reason to celebrate. The demonstration may have served its purpose if it succeeded in encouraging the local people of Heysham and Morecambe to organise their opposition to the nuclear project in their front garden more effectively; but 400 demonstrators certainly are not enough to stop the project. We must come back to Heysham next year -- and then there must be at least 10,000 of us! Every one of us should become active now and organise autonomous anti-nuclear groups in her/his neighbourhood -- if we don't want to end up radio-active tomorrow. Only a real popular mass movement can save Britain -- and the world -- from the nuclear menace.

The nearly finished nuclear reactor in Heysham is not stocked with uranium yet. Research has to be done to find out how and when the uranium is going to be transported there (most likely by ship), phantasy and direct action is needed to find ways and means to stop it.

Remember: Only no nucs is good news. G.R.

CONTINUED FROM pg.12

In 1927 they started Beacon Hill School, which had strong libertarian tendencies - especially when Dora ran it herself during the late 1930s and early 1940s - and they both wrote about the subject. An even stronger libertarian experiment was that of Summerhill School, started by A.S. Neill at the same time and still going half a century later. As Albert Meltzer has said, although Neill never called himself an anarchist, he contributed more to anarchist educational theory and practice in this country than anyone else, producing a stream of interviews, articles and books, and getting full recognition from those who did call themselves anarchists.

My final complaint is that Quail fails to integrate his opening and closing material with the main body of his work. He says that he has evaded his publisher's request to say much about anarchist philosophy, because this would have been "balls-achingly boring", but his brief remarks on the subject are only profound enough to be provocative, and it is merely perverse to list as the only theoretical writings of contemporary relevance "the works of Murray Bookchin, Paul Cardan and the Situationists". Some significant things have been written by British anarchists too - Alex Comfort, Tony Gibson, Colin Ward, Albert Meltzer, Vernon Richards. Incidentally, the chronology, bibliography and index are not very good, though the notes are very useful. The real problem is that the book is too short - it could easily have been twice as long. But at least the job has been done at last, and done very well.

Before ending this review, it is perhaps appropriate to mention that there have been virtually no other reviews of *The Slow Burning Fuse*, partly because it is a paperback and because it was published in August (such trivial considerations do count). But one review ought almost to be reviewed - that by Stuart Christie in *Time Out* (8-14 September). One of its criticisms is: "Had the author consulted more people who took part in the events he describes... he would certainly have revised some of his judgements"; but it is unlikely that many people who took part in the anarchist movement before 1930 are still available for consultation. Christie then refers to the case of Mary Mowbray, who died in 1894; but it is even more unlikely that anyone alive remembers her at all clearly.

If Christie is saying that Quail should have made more use of anecdotal evidence - the stories which are handed down from generation to generation of militants - it must be said that such evidence generally proves very unreliable when it is checked against contemporary material, and that if anything Quail relies too much on memoirs written after a long interval and with a strong bias.

The second and third instalments of this review have concentrated on criticism rather than praise, not from any hostility to *The Slow Burning Fuse* but from the belief that it is a serious book which is worth taking seriously. Fraternal disagreement between Quail and myself has already appeared in *FREEDOM* (see his lecture on 19 July, my comment on 2 August, and his reply and my further comment on 8 November 1975), and no doubt there will be more. But the point is that, as he says in his book, "there will never be a final version" of the history of British anarchism, and that, as will be said by anyone who reads his book, at last it is possible to work out one's own version. Quail himself wouldn't want anyone to accept his version, but for some time to come everyone is going to start with it, because every previous version has now been made obsolete. My own view is that his version is too strongly biased towards people who called themselves anarchists and who were involved in working class politics, and that much significant libertarian theory and practice appears elsewhere; but this is not a final version either. Let the debate - and the movement - continue!

N.W.

Notes to 'The Anarchists on the Socialisation of Agriculture', page 15

Notes

- (1) Max Nettlau, 'Anarchism: Communist or Individualist - Both', *FREEDOM* (London), March 1914.
- (2) Rudolf Rocker, *Pioneers of American Freedom*, Los Angeles, 1949, pp. 110-11.
- (3) Voltairine de Cleyre, *Selected Works*, New York, 1914, pp. 113, 158.
- (4) M. Bakunin, *Oeuvres*, 6 vols., Paris, 1895-1913, V, 75.
- (5) *Ibid.*, I, 55.
- (6) P. Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, London, 1972, pp. 104, 164; *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, London, 1913, p. 23. See also A. Kochegarov (Karelin), *Zemel'naya programma anarkhistov-kommunistov*, London, 1912, based largely on Kropotkin's theories.
- (7) Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, London, 1966, p. 585.
- (8) See Manifest protesta anarkhistov-kommunistov protiv bol'shevistskogo pravitel'stva, New York, 1922.
- (9) See James Guillaume, "On Building the New Social Order," in Bakunin on Anarchy, ed. Sam Dolgoff, New York, 1972, pp. 359-61.
- (10) See, for example, Dekaratsiia gruppy russkikh anarkhistov, Buenos Aires, 1930, p. 13.
- (11) Volin, *The Unknown Revolution, 1917-1921*, Detroit and Chicago, 1974, pp. 574-76.
- (12) N. Makhno, *Russkaia revoliutsiia na Ukraine*, Paris, 1929, 172-76; P. Arshinov, *History of the Makhno Movement*, Detroit and Chicago, 1974, pp. 86-87.
- (13) Volin, *loc. cit.*
- (14) See Sam Dolgoff, *The Anarchist Collectives*, New York, 1974; Gaston Leval, *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*, London, 1975; and Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, rev. edn., London, 1977, pp. 553-65.
- (15) Augustin Souchy, in Dolgoff, *Anarchist Collectives*, p. 13.
- (16) Diego Abad de Santillán, *After the Revolution*, New York, 1937, pp. 97-99.
- (17) Isaac Puente, in Dolgoff, *Anarchist Collectives*, p. 31.
- (18) Dolgoff, *Anarchist Collectives*, p. 136.

Anarchist Review Freedom

30 September/78
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COMMUNITY AND COMMITMENT-3

TELLING IT
LIKE IT WAS?John Quail: *The Slow Burning Fuse*. Paladin, £1.95

IN THE last issue of *FREEDOM* I discussed the defects of the first half of John Quail's new history of the British anarchist movement. In this issue I shall deal with the second half.

To begin with, I have noticed a few more minor slips. The early nineteenth-century campaigner for press freedom (and atheism, republicanism, feminism, contraception) was Carlile, not Carlyle. Joseph Lane was born in 1851, not 1850. Johann Most got sixteen months' hard labour in the *Freiheit* case, not eighteen. The best-known libertarian colony is *Whiteway*, not *Whiteways*.

This is perhaps an appropriate place to correct the various typing and printing mistakes in the first two instalments of this review (September 2 and 16). The two possible approaches to the historiography of anarchism are either to describe only

those actions involving people who have actually called themselves anarchists, or else to describe all those actions which seem to be anarchist, whatever the people involved have called themselves. The *National Reformer* began refuting the lie that Bradlaugh had supported Irish Coercion in 1891, not 1882. Quail doesn't name many members of the original *Freedom* Group, but he does name some. Kropotkin said Nicoll should be beaten in 1897, not 1807. Nicoll kept his *Commonweal* going until 1907, not 1901. The libertarian cooperatives and communities date from the 1890s, not the 1880s. The Scottish anarchist who became a Communist MP was Gallagher, not Gallagher. The co-author of *The Anarchist Prince* was Avakumovic. Pedantry has its own pitfalls!

Getting on with *The Slow Burning Fuse*, there is in the middle of the book, between the accounts of the first and second rise and fall of British anarchism, a chapter on some "Cooperative Colonies" of the 1890s which is so imperfect that it should have been either rewritten or left out altogether. The problem seems to be that this is a side of anarchism which Quail isn't much interested in and hasn't done much research on. He therefore tends to rely on second-hand evidence, especially on the very hostile book *Confessions of an Anarchist* (1906) by W.C. Hart, a renegade from the anarchist movement. He would have done much better to rely on, for example, a more recent and more impartial book, W.H.G. Armytage's *Heavens Below* (1961), which contains short but good chapters on "Anarchist Colonies" and "Tolstoyan Communities".

Quail's account of Clousden Hill near Newcastle isn't bad, though too brief. There is also a brief account of the Brotherhood Workshop in Leeds. There is no account of the similar experiment at Norton Hall near Sheffield. The account of the Purleigh colony is very bad. Quail says that "not much information seems to be available about it", but there is plenty if you look for it. To begin with, it was not "between Croydon and Purley" in Surrey, but forty miles away at Purleigh in Essex. The confusion may have been caused because it was inspired by the Croydon Brotherhood Church, which was led by John C. Kenworthy. Quail mentions Kenworthy in passing, and describes Purleigh briefly as "a mainly Tolstoyan Anarchist colony", but he misses the point, which is the significance of the Tolstoyan movement at the turn of the century.

Tolstoy had a considerable influence in Britain as in many other countries, on Christians and atheists and ethical humanists in between, on liberals and anarchists and socialists in between. Kenworthy was the leading British Tolstoyan (until he became insane), and he was also a frequent contributor to the anarchist press. He was the most important person at Purleigh, but he was joined there by two other leading apostles of Tolstoy - his secretary and publisher Vladimir Chertkov, and his translator and biographer Aylmer Maude. Purleigh's progress from its foundation in 1896 to its dissolution in 1900 was recorded at the time in Kenworthy's paper, the *New Order* and it was remembered later in the second volume of Aylmer Maude's *Life of Tolstoy* (1910) and in Percy Redfern's *Journey to Understanding* (1946).

FREEDOM PAMPHLET.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Wars and Capitalism.

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

(Reprinted from *FREEDOM*.)

LONDON.

FREEDOM PRESS, 127 OSSULSTON STREET, N.W.

1914.

FREEDOM PAMPHLET.

THE

INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CONGRESS

Held at the Plancius Hall,

AMSTERDAM.

ON

AUGUST 26TH-31ST, 1907.

(Reprinted from "*Freedom*.")

Reprinted by K.W.

PRICE - - - ONE PENNY.

LONDON:

"FREEDOM" OFFICE, 127 OSSULSTON STREET, N.W.

1907.

One of the reasons for Purleigh's failure was the secession of the founders of Whiteway near Stroud in 1898. The account of Whiteway is also poor, mainly because it doesn't use the first-hand evidence of Nellie Shaw's Whiteway (1935). There have been many other references to it - thus Malcolm Mugg-eridge's family was connected with it through the Croydon Brotherhood Movement, and he includes a ritual sneer at it in the first volume of his autobiographical Chronicles of Wasted Time - The Green Stick (1972).

Quail in general misses the significance of the libertarian cooperatives and colonies. He says that "objectively they represented a withdrawal from the fray", which is mechanistic nonsense. He says that the movement they belonged to "represents a self-protective shell against a hostile world" and should be studied "in the context of a demoralised movement", but at the time it seemed to represent a coming way of life and was seen in the context of a far from demoralised movement - one which included not just anarchism or Tolstoyanism but secularism and ethicism, the Fabian Society and the Labour Churches, the Clarion movement and the Independent Labour Party, cycling and hiking, rational clothes and free love, back to the land and the simple life. In one sense, of course, anarchism had declined, in that the organised movement had collapsed; in another sense, however, anarchism had become accepted as an integral element of the British left (ten years earlier than Quail realises) - and communitarianism had become accepted as an integral element of British anarchism. (Quail doesn't mention that the militant William MacQueen was involved, editing a paper called the Free Commune from 1898 to 1899).

Here the figure of Edward Carpenter is crucial, and Quail fails to capture his elusive importance. So indeed does everyone who has tried to deal with the subject - even Sheila Rowbotham in Socialism and the New Life (1977) - because Carpenter transcended all the conventional categories of social, political and sexual theory and practice. But he should certainly be given more attention in a history of British anarchism than a few references to his work of raising money for imprisoned militants or of popularising sandals. He has recently been studied in the context of socialist thought (he was connected with almost every organisation) or sexual emancipation (he was one of the bravest pioneers of gay liberation), but he also needs to be studied in the context of anarchism. Quail mentions his autobiographical My Days and Dreams (1916), and his other well-known books are the Whitmanesque Towards Democracy (1883-1905) and Love's Coming of Age (1896) and The Intermediate Sex (1908). Less well-known but equally important books are England's Ideal (1887), Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure (1899-1921), and Towards Industrial Freedom (1917). Above all, Prisons, Police and Punishment (1905) contained a chapter on "Non-Governmental Society" which was reprinted separately as a pamphlet in 1911 and which had much influence as a short exposition of the anarchist primitivism expounded at length in Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure. In fact almost every libertarian theme raised in the counter-culture of the past decade or so had already appeared in Carpenter's life and work, and his omission is a serious gap in The Slow Burning Fuse.

Quail is anyway unhappy with the more personal aspects of anarchism. I have already said that his account of the Bedfordshire trial in 1898, and of the Adult and the Legitimation League, is too remote from the whole subject of the sexual liberation movement. For example, he mentions Lillian Harman, the American anarchist, who was elected president of the Legitimation League when it was taken over by anarchists in 1897 and he adds that she had co-edited her father's paper Lucifer. But he doesn't mention that Moses Harman was one of the most magnificent figures of American free thought and free love, a courageous champion of atheist anarchism for forty years and through four prison terms, and also one of the pioneers in the campaign for contraception. Lillian Harman, like Margaret Sanger twenty years later, was a transatlantic apostle of sexual liberation, and only one of many anarchists who contributed to this work. The last important obscenity trial for contraceptive literature in this country actually involved two anarchists, Guy Aldred and his companion Rose Witcop (not Lillian Wolfe, as Alan Albon suggested in the last issue of FREE-DOM), who were prosecuted for circulating Margaret Sanger's Family Limitation in 1923.

This brings us to Guy Aldred, a maverick of the British left for more than half a century. Quail's treatment of him is very uneven. He gives a good account of his sudden entry into the

anarchist movement in 1907 and his energetic adoption of syndicalist propaganda by word and deed. He describes the beginning of his relationship with Rose Witcop (sister of Rudolf Rocker's companion Millie Witcop) in 1909, but not its end in 1926 - when he married her two years after they had separated, to save her from threatened deportation to Russia. He doesn't even mention their prosecution for contraceptive propaganda.

He gives a good account of the Herald of Revolt and the Spur, which they produced from 1910 to 1921, including the three years Aldred spent in prison and detention as a conscientious objector. Quail says that "it is the opinion of the present author that the Herald of Revolt was a more vitally interesting paper than Freedom". This may be true - rather as it is the opinion of many people that Black Flag is more vitally interesting than FREEDOM today - but it is also true that it was very much a one-man paper and that it was kept going by money from the rich eccentric Sir Walter Strickland. Quail mentions Aldred's attempt to combine Marx and Bakunin, and his bold attacks on anarchist leaders such as Kropotkin and John Turner; but he also mentions his support for the Bolshevik regime for several years, without considering whether this may have been part of the same phenomenon. (Quail makes a similar remark about George Barrett's Anarchist of 1912-1913 - "It is the opinion of the present author that the paper produced was not what the movement needed at that time" - forgetting that a movement gets the paper it deserves).

Quail ends his account of Aldred with his publication of the single issue of the Red Commune and consequent imprisonment for sedition in 1921, commenting that "the Red Commune and the Spur never reappeared". But soon after his release from prison Aldred became a leading figure in the Glasgow Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation and began a new paper, the Commune. He left the APCF in 1933, but he continued to run his own organisation and to produce his own paper under a variety of names right up to his death thirty years later - getting more money from another rich eccentric, the Duke of Bedford, during the Second World War. He ended as a fellow-traveller with Krushchov; and it is hard to resist the comment that it is all very well being vitally interesting, but the point of anarchist propaganda is surely to spread anarchism, not to support whatever variety of revolution is fashionable.

Quail mentions Aldred's "colossal egoism", but it was even more colossal than he realises. No Traitor's Gait, which he published in instalments from 1956 and left unfinished at his death in 1963, was actually the fourth version of his autobiography, the first appearing as From Anglican Boy-Preacher to Anarchist Socialist Impossibilist in 1908, when he was only twenty-one! Nevertheless the final verdict on Aldred must be one of overwhelming respect for his sixty-year struggle against all the powers that be.

Rose Witcop is significant for another aspect of liberation - that of women rather than of sex. Quail says nothing about the women's suffrage movement during the early years of the twentieth century, and at first sight this does seem irrelevant to anarchism. But the struggle for men's suffrage had helped to convince many men that the mere vote was nothing, and the struggle for women's suffrage had a similar effect. Rose Witcop is remarkable for writing a letter in the Voice of Labour when she was only sixteen, welcoming the movement because it "shows us that women who so far have been so submissive to their masters, the men, are beginning to wake up at last to the fact that they are not inferior to these masters", but adding that "no Parliament ever can or will do anything towards bettering the conditions of the working man or woman" (2 March 1907).

She was not the only one. Lily Gair Wilkinson wrote a pamphlet for the Socialist Labour Party called Revolutionary Socialism and the Women's Movement in 1910, but she wrote another called Women's Freedom for the Freedom Press in 1914. At about that time, Lillian Woolf (as she then spelt her name) came to the anarchist movement from her experience in the suffrage and syndicalist movements. This anarchist element in feminism before the First World War is discussed in Sheila Rowbotham's Hidden from History (1973), one of the very few books produced by the new women's liberation movement which takes seriously the anarchist contribution to the history of feminism. It is a pity that Quail doesn't take equally seriously the feminist contribution to the history of anarchism - especially when one remembers how important women have been at all levels of the British movement.

CONTINUED ON P. 11

Quail is much happier with the revival of anarchism as a part of - and as a result of - the syndicalist movement during the decade before the First World War, and his two chapters on this episode give an excellent account of syndicalism from the anarchist point of view. As it happens, between the completion and the publication of The Slow Burning Fuse appeared Bob Holton's British Syndicalism 1900-1914 (1976), the first book to give proper consideration to British syndicalism in the international syndicalist movement and to anarchism in the British syndicalist movement. (The publisher of both Rowbotham's and Holton's books was Pluto Press, a Marxist firm connected with the Socialist Workers' Party; honour where honour is due). Quail fills in the story told by Holton, and does so with enthusiasm and excitement. But there are some raps.

Holton makes the good point that the main areas of syndicalist agitation were also all "centres of immigrant (especially Jewish) anarchist activity". Quail makes occasional references to the Jewish movement, and mentions Bill Fishman's book East End Jewish Radicals (1975), but he doesn't integrate it with the British movement. Although the two movements were separated by language and race, they grew very close during this period, and it should be noted that the foreign one was larger than the native one. At the International Anarchist Congress

the movement ten years before the war, that "if Freedom was the centre it was a hollow one" and was "apart from" the "wider movement", and that only two people were involved in producing it. The answers are that anarchism is rightly wary of strong organisations, that Freedom never pretended to be the organ of the movement, and that there were always more than two members of the group. Quail relies on Aldred's later claim that the Freedom Group "as a group never functioned", when the fact is that he was excluded from it. Quail then exaggerates Keell's individual responsibility for rescuing Freedom from the pro-war group round Kropotkin in 1914, when the fact is that he worked from beginning to end with the people who had become the Freedom Group and who were also involved in producing the syndicalist Voice of Labour. The problem here is that Quail has relied on subsequent memoirs rather than on contemporary documents.

Quail then fails to give a proper account of the official repression of the anti-war anarchist papers, groups and individuals. He doesn't mention the International Anarchist Manifesto on the War which was published as a leaflet in London in February 1915 and republished in the anarchist press all over the world. The initiative was taken by the Jewish anarchists in Britain who were closely involved in the international movement, and the signatories included the most active opponents of the war in the British movement. (The last survivor, Lillian

FREEDOM PRESS,
PRINTERS, PUBLISHERS & BOOKSELLERS,
127, OSSULSTON STREET,
LONDON, N.W.

Dear Kropotkin

Dec. 21/14

Since we last met I have thoroughly threshed out all your arguments in favour of the workers taking part in this war, & I must say frankly that in my opinion they are a contradiction of almost every thing that we have told the workers previously, & also a contradiction of Anarchist ideas as generally understood. That I am not alone in this opinion is proved by the Anarchist papers that come to the office from various countries. The English comrades also combat your ideas vigorously, & it would be a disaster to Freedom if it was understood that your views were the editorial views. Up to the present I have been content to admit articles & letters

Keell's letter to Kropotkin splitting over the latter's support for intervention in World War I

in Amsterdam in August 1907, whereas my grandfather Karl Walter reported the existence of seven or eight groups in the "English movement proper" and the publication of a regular paper with a circulation of 1,500. Rudolf Rocker reported the existence of eleven groups in "the Jewish movement in England" and the publication of a regular with a circulation of 2,500.

Quail doesn't mention this congress at all, though a report was printed in Freedom and reprinted as a pamphlet. Karl Walter used to tell a good story about being followed home by a detective (one version appeared in the University Libertarian in autumn 1958), but on a more serious level it deserves attention as an indication of the British presence in the international anarchist movement at the beginning of the revival. One of its decisions was to re-establish the anarchist international which the London and Chicago congresses had failed to maintain in 1881, and it is ironic that a new congress was being arranged for the end of August 1914.

The First World War, of course, brought a complete change to the whole British left. The process has often been described from the point of view of socialism or pacifism, but there has been no proper description of British anarchism during that period. Quail's account is much too brief and superficial, and it also suffers from his persistent bias against Freedom. He has already insisted that there was no strong organisation in

Wolfe, died in 1974). He mentions that Freedom Press was raided several times (four, in fact, not three), that Aldred, Keell, Lillian Wolfe and several others were imprisoned, and that the Voice of Labour was suppressed; but he doesn't make it clear enough that the whole anarchist movement was under constant and crippling pressure. Again, he doesn't bring the Jewish movement into his account, though Rocker was interned in 1914 and deported to Germany in 1918, the Arbeter Fraint was also raided and suppressed, and dozens of comrades imprisoned. He doesn't mention the Anti-Conscription League, which was the anarchist counterpart of the pacifist No Conscription Fellowship.

Quail also fails to take proper account of the lasting significance of the experience of the First World War. Anarchists had been opposing wars for several decades - he mentions several instances, though not the International Anti-Militarist Congress which was associated with the International Anarchist Congress of 1907 - but the scale of the war and of the war-resistance between 1914 and 1918 brought a permanent pacifist element into anarchism, which had not been achieved by the earlier influence of Tolstoy, and which has never disappeared since then.

Another omission is a great pity. Quail doesn't mention

Last meeting with
P. Kropotkin

Brighton, Nov. 29/14

Interview with
W. Tcherkesoff
Nov. 29/14

Freedom could not
be a free tribune &
must stop

Why should Malatesta
& Grave write in Freedom?

The first page of Keell's notebook, referring to the last meeting he would ever have with Kropotkin

OPEN LETTER TO BRITISH SOLDIERS.

This letter to British soldiers, reprinted from *Sheldrake's Military Gazette* (Aldershot), of March 1, 1912, is the subject of the charge against Crowley, Guy Bowman, the Buck brothers, and Tom Mann. Read and judge for yourselves. Let the voice of the PEOPLE be heard!

Men! Comrades! Brothers!
You are in the Army.

So are We. You in the Army of Destruction. We in the Industrial, or Army of Construction.

We work at mine, mill, forge, factory, or dock, producing and transporting all the goods, clothing, stuffs, etc., which make it possible for people to live.

YOU ARE WORKING MEN'S SONS.

When We go on Strike to better OUR lot, which is the lot also of YOUR FATHERS, YOU are called upon by your officers to MURDER US.

DON'T DO IT!

You know how it happens—always has happened.

We stand out as long as we can. Then one of our (and your) irresponsible Brothers, guided by the sight and thought of his and his loved ones' misery and hunger, commits a crime on property. Immediately You are ordered to MURDER US, as You did at Mitchelstown, at Featherstone, at Belfast.

Don't You know that when You are out of the colours, and become a "Civvy" again, that You, like Us, may be on Strike, and You, like Us, be liable to be MURDERED by other soldiers.

Boys, DON'T DO IT!

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL," says the Book.

DON'T FORGET THAT!

It does not say, "unless you have a uniform on."

No! MURDER IS MURDER, whether committed in the heat of anger on one who has wronged a loved one, or by pipeclayed Tommies with a rifle.

Boys, DON'T DO IT!

ACT THE MAN! ACT THE BROTHER! ACT THE HUMAN BEING!

Property can be replaced! Human life, never!

The Idle Rich Class, who own and order you about, own and order us about also. They and their friends own the land and means of life of Britain.

You DON'T. We DON'T.

When We kick, they order You to MURDER us.

When You kick, You get court-martialed.

YOUR fight is OUR fight. Instead of fighting AGAINST each other, We should be fighting with each other.

Out of Our loins, Our lives, Our homes, You came.

Don't disgrace YOUR PARENTS, YOUR CLASS, by being the willing tools any longer of the MASTER CLASS.

You, like Us, are of the SLAVE CLASS. WHEN We rise, You rise; when We fall, even by your bullets, You fall also.

England with its fertile valleys and dells, its mineral resources, its sea harvests, is the heritage of us to us.

You no doubt joined the Army out of poverty.

We work long hours for small wages at hard work, because of OUR poverty. And both YOUR poverty and OURS arises from the fact that Britain with its resources belongs to only a few people. These few, owning Britain, own OUR jobs. Owning OUR jobs, they own OUR very LIVES.

Comrades, have We called in vain! Think things out and refuse any longer to MURDER YOUR KINRED. Help Us to win back BRITAIN for the BRITISH, and the WORLD for the WORKERS.

keep going. The problem here is again that he has relied on subsequent memoirs rather than on contemporary documents. Thus Keell didn't want to move to Whiteway - he had already done so. Nor did he try to stop the movement producing another paper - he simply asked those involved not to call it Freedom.

Quail also gives a poor account of the rival Freedom which was finally started in 1930, and which was associated with the Libertarian Association and the Union of Anarchists. It continued not just until 1933, but until 1936, when it merged with various Scottish papers and finally ceased publication to make way for Spain and the World, which had begun with Keell's blessing in December 1936. Quail rightly mentions that Albert Meltzer joined a living if latent movement in the mid-1930s; he might have mentioned that Vernon Richards did exactly the same thing at exactly the same time. Meltzer's valuable if unreliable book *The Anarchists in London 1935-1955* (1976), certainly shows that British anarchism was full of energy even at the worst time, and no doubt more research on that period would unearth more evidence.

Quail ends his account of the first half century of British anarchism without mentioning some of its little known but long lasting achievements. One example is libertarian education. Quail mentions Louise Michel's International School only as the place where the police spy Coulon worked, yet it was a significant experiment. He says that Francisco Ferrer "was a Positivist rather than an Anarchist but had become widely identified with the Anarchists through his Modern School movement", but this is a reversal of his real position, which was that of an anarchist posing as a mere rationalist. Moreover his schools had a wide influence far outside Spain.

Quail mentions that they were "libertarian in their methods and trenchantly secular". So have been several of the progressive schools which have appeared in Britain, as in so many western countries, and some attention should have been given to some of them.

For example, Bertrand Russell, who wrote a sympathetic account of anarchism while he was involved in the anti-war movement - *Roads to Freedom* (1918) - and an unsympathetic account of bolshevism after he had visited Russia - *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1920) - became interested in education when he and Dora Russell had their own children.

INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST MANIFESTO ON THE WAR.

Europe in a blaze, twelve million men engaged in the most frightful butchery that history has ever recorded; millions of women and children in tears; the economic, intellectual, and moral life of seven great peoples brutally suspended, and the menace becoming every day more pregnant with new military complications—such is, for seven months, the painful, agonising, and hateful spectacle presented by the civilised world.

But a spectacle not unexpected—at least, by the Anarchists, since for them there never has been nor is there any doubt—the terrible events of to-day strengthen this conviction—that war is permanently fostered by the present social system. Armed conflict, restricted or widespread, colonial or European, is the natural consequence and the inevitable and fatal outcome of a society that is founded on the exploitation of the workers, rests on the savage struggle of the classes, and compels Labour to submit to the domination of a minority of parasites who hold both political and economic power.

The war was inevitable. Wherever it originated, it had to come. It is not in vain that for half a century there has been a feverish preparation of the most formidable armaments, and a ceaseless increase in the budgets of death. It is not by constantly improving the weapons of war, and by concentrating the mind and the will of all upon the better organisation of the military machine that people work for peace.

Therefore, it is foolish and childish, after having multiplied the causes and occasions of conflict, to seek to fix the responsibility on this or that Government. No possible distinction can be drawn between offensive and defensive wars. In the present conflict, the Governments of Berlin and Vienna have sought to justify themselves by documents not less authentic than those of the Governments of Paris, London, and Petrograd. Each does its very best to produce the most indisputable and the most decisive

CONTINUED ON Pg 16

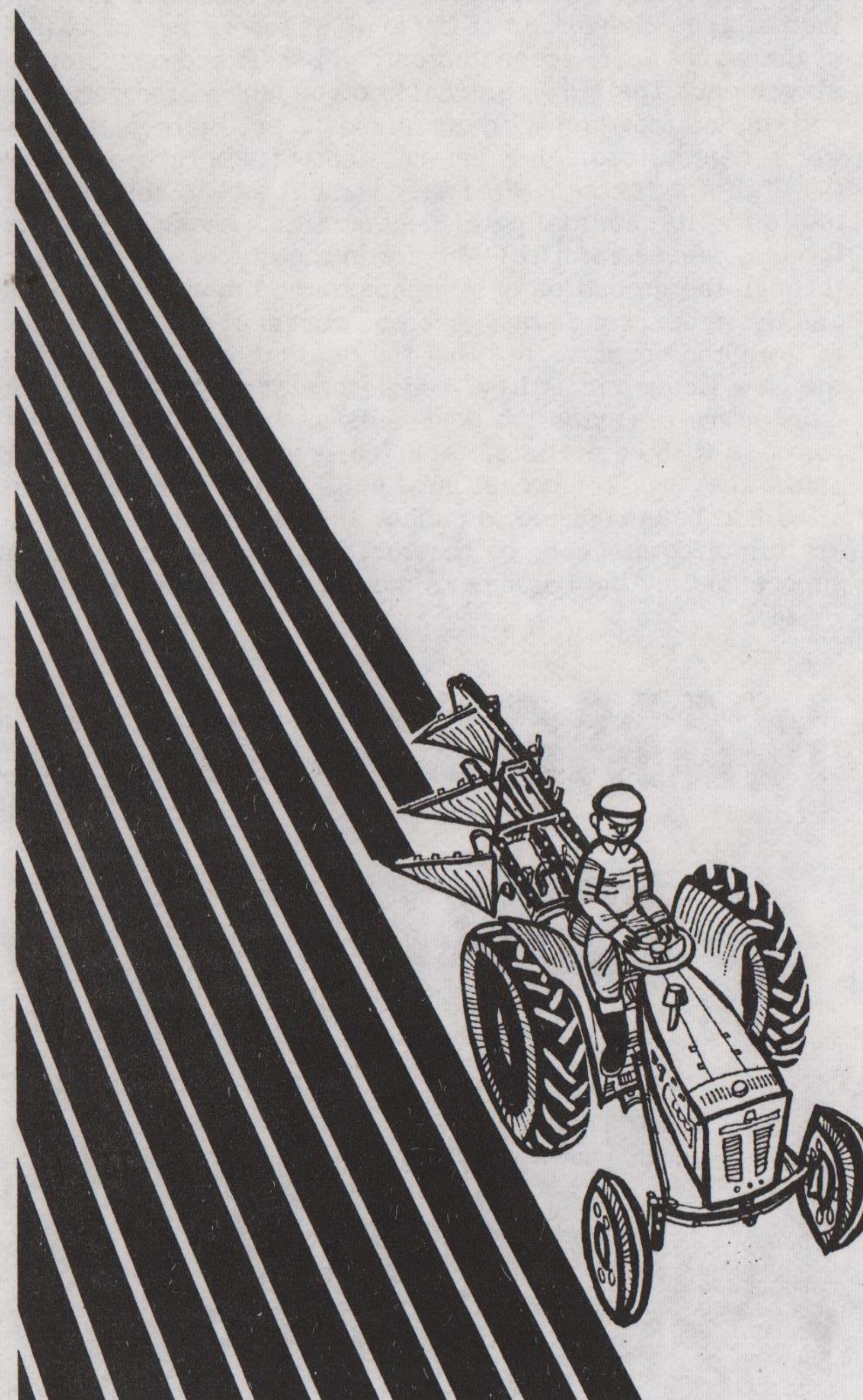
THE ANARCHISTS ON

THE

SOCIALIZATION

OF

AGRICULTURE



TO DESCRIBE the anarchist position on the land question is no easy task. For the very nature of the libertarian attitude - its rejection of dogmatism and conformity, its avoidance of systematic theory, and above all its stress on freedom of choice and the primacy of individual judgement - creates the possibility of a variety of viewpoints such as would be inconceivable in a closed authoritarian system. The essence of the anarchist message is that peasants and workers must be free to determine their own way of life. As Proudhon and Bakunin insisted, socialism without freedom is the worst form of tyranny - indeed is no socialism at all.

The anarchists called therefore for flexibility and tolerance in economic matters as in other areas of life. Their watchwords were pluralism, heterogeneity and self-determination. Humankind, they argued, is too diverse to be squeezed into any preconceived mould, whether political, economic or cultural. Economic preferences, they insisted, will vary according to local customs, climate, natural resources, and individual taste. Consequently no single solution can be universally applicable, no one method can suit all peoples and conditions. Anarchism, according to its foremost historian, Max Nettlau, "always demands a choice of ways, a plurality of possibilities." (1). As the German anarchist Rudolf Rocker put it, "the first objective is to secure the personal and social freedom of men, no matter upon which economic basis this is to be accomplished." (2). In a similar vein, the American anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre wrote that a whole variety of economic systems, ranging from individualism to communism, might be "advantageously tried in different localities. I would see the instincts

and habits of the people express themselves in a free choice in every community; and I am sure that distinct events would call out distinct adaptations ... Liberty and experiment alone can determine the best forms of society." (3).

In spite of this undogmatic approach, the overwhelming majority of Russian anarchists followed the ideas of Bakunin and Kropotkin on the question of agriculture. What were these ideas? To begin with, both Bakunin and Kropotkin called for a free federation of communes organised, as Bakunin put it, "from the bottom up" (4). Such a system, they believed, based on local initiative and autonomy, would respond to the true needs and desires of the peasants themselves. The state, by contrast, with its powerful administrative and economic bureaucracy, imposes its authority from above, without direct sanction of the local community. Regardless of its form, they believed, the state inevitably develops objectives of its own and seeks to harness the energies of the society it rules to pursue purposes alien to it.

Under Bakunin's system of decentralised and non-authoritarian collectivism, each member of the local community was obliged to perform manual work, for which s/he would be rewarded in proportion to "direct contribution of labour." (5). Kropotkin, by contrast, regarded any system of rewards based on the individual's capacity to produce as just another form of "wage slavery." By drawing a distinction between superior and inferior labour, and between what is mine and what is yours, a collectivist economy such as Bakunin advocated rendered itself incompatible with the ideals of pure anarchism. Collectivism (overpage)→

ism, moreover, necessitated some authority within the peasants' association to measure individual performance and to supervise the distribution of goods and services accordingly. For Kropotkin, therefore, the collectivist order, even in its libertarian form, contained the seeds of inequality and domination.

Kropotkin considered his own theory of communist anarchism the antithesis of the wage system in all its guises. No centre of authority would compel any individual to work. Furthermore, for the principle of wages was substituted the principle of needs. Each person would be the judge of their own requirements, taking from the communal storehouse whatever they deemed necessary, no matter how much labour he contributed. Kropotkin's benign optimism led him to assume that, once political and economic exploitation had been eliminated, all people would work of their own free will, without any compulsion whatever, and take no more than they required for a comfortable existence. Members of the community would work from their twenties to their forties, four or five hours of labour a day sufficing for a comfortable life. The division of labour would yield to a variety of pleasant jobs. For happiness, Kropotkin believed, required a diversity of occupations, on the land and in the workshop, which would be located together in a single 'integrated' community. (6).

For Bakunin and Kropotkin, then, the Golden Age meant a return to an earlier simplicity that existed before the rise of the modern centralised state. They yearned to recapture the direct human relationships of the commune and handicrafts cooperative, the *obshchina* and *artel*. The society of the future was to be patterned after the society of the past, a federation of small communities free from compulsion and exploitation, whose members were joined by the ties of cooperative effort and mutual aid. In essence, this was an idealised version of the old village commune, purged of its patriarchal authoritarianism. In such a society, the toilers in the fields and workshops would regain the dignity of being their own masters or mistresses and no longer treated as chattel or as a marketable commodity.

Not that Bakunin and Kropotkin rejected scientific and technological progress. For all their romantic yearnings for a simpler past, they welcomed new mechanical devices that would relieve people of tedious labour and allow time for cultural and intellectual pursuits. Yet they wished to preserve the advantages of machinery within the context of a decentralised society, free from the coercive and dehumanising features of both capitalism and state socialism.

What this implied was a system of regional self-sufficiency, of which Kropotkin was an articulate advocate. He argued that the use of electric power, distributed among small units of production, would permit a reduction in the size of industrial enterprises, so that the manufacture of goods could be shifted to the countryside without the sacrifice of up-to-date technology - a kind of libertarian agorogorod, or an anarchist version of Lenin's formula of 'soviets plus electrification' as the solution to rural stagnation. At the same time, Kropotkin believed, methods of intensive cultivation would increase the production of food to the point where even the most populous countries might feed their inhabitants without relying on imports from abroad. In short, as Lewis Mumford has written, Kropotkin saw in advance of later proponents of the 'garden city' - and, one might add, the proponents of the 'small is beautiful' theory of economics, from Ernst Schumacher to his California disciple Jerry Brown - that the use of electricity, together with the techniques of market gardening, might lay the foundation for a decentralised society combining the advantages of urban and rural life while allowing full scope for the development of the individual personality (7).

To the Marxists, committed as they are to a firm belief in the superiority of centralisation over decentralisation and to the indispensability of strong leadership as opposed to the free-wheeling spontaneity of the anarchists, such visions are utopian, unscientific, and removed both from the conditions of modern society and from the laws of historical development. Whatever their points of contact, Marxism and anarchism embody two rival conceptions of the revolution and of the society that is to follow it, the one based on a disciplined political party working towards the centralised direction of social life, the other based on a libertarian belief in a loose association of autonomous organisations in which the means of production are controlled by the workers who use them. For Russia, the Stalinist kolkhoz and sovkhos represented the victory of the

revolution from above over the forces of federalism and local rule to which the vast majority of the population aspired. For Stalin, indeed, autonomy and self-government were evil words, evoking the spontaneous forces of the masses, which had to be harnessed to the needs of the regime.

The anarchists, for their part, condemned forced collectivisation as a 'new enslavement' of the peasantry. They denounced state-controlled farms whose members were compelled to deliver a large proportion of the crop at low prices as exploitation of the worst sort, indeed as outright theft and economic enslavement. Their own emphasis on decentralism versus centralism, on freedom versus authority, set them against the whole centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of the Stalinist regime. What they wanted was to restore the Revolution to its original path, decentralist, spontaneous and egalitarian, whose central feature was the dispersal of authority through the formation of autonomous communes and councils and the widespread emergence of workers' self-management in town and country. Not that they called for a restoration of the New Economic Policy, which they scorned as a cynical manoeuvre to revive the bourgeois system, a reactionary compromise with capitalists, technical specialists, and rich peasants. They would not rest until state and private capitalism alike had been reduced to rubble and superseded by a free federation of communes, by the sort of grass-roots organisations suppressed by the bolsheviks during their consolidation of power (8).



"Toilers of the land. The Soil is yours!"

In place of both the NEP and forced collectivisation the anarchists advocated the equalisation of land allotments to eliminate disparities of wealth in the village, to be followed by the gradual and voluntary formation of self-governing communes. They approved of a range of cooperative and individual enterprises in the countryside. Provided that the wage system was abolished, they had no fear of a mixed agricultural system in which the land was cultivated by communes and smallholders side by side (9).

All anarchists, however, agreed that there could be no restoration of profit or interest, no hiring of labour or renting of land. Land tenure, whether by group or individual, was to be limited by use, and distribution of the land was to be vested in the people and exercised through local grass-roots organisations.

ions. These views harked back to the Populist idea of a *chernyi peredel*, a general and equal distribution of all the land to those who worked it. In this respect, they differed little from the viewpoint of the Socialist Revolutionaries, or from that embodied in the bolshevik land decree of November 1917, of which most anarchists approved.

Beyond this rather vague picture, few anarchists were willing to venture. They refused to draw up detailed blueprints of the future order that would force the natural evolution of society into any preconceived mould. They were content, rather, to rely on what Kropotkin called the 'creative spirit' which the mass of people would display once freed from the shackles of capitalism and government (10). Furthermore, while rejecting the leasing of land and the hiring of labour, they did not make it clear how these were to be done away with in a free society, or how idleness, greed, and theft were to be prevented. As a means of resisting anti-social behaviour they tended to rely merely on the power of moral suasion, of public opinion, of the pressure of the community.

Such were the theoretical foundations of anarchist land policy. It remains to examine how well anarchist agricultural experiments worked in practice. The most prominent examples occurred during the Russian Revolution of 1917 to 1921 and the Spanish Revolution of 1936 to 1939. Unfortunately, we know very little about the former, apart from the experiments of Nestor Makhno in Ukraine. Makhno, the celebrated guerrilla warrior, aimed to throw off domination of every type and to encourage economic and social self-determination. "It is up to the workers and peasants," said one of his proclamations in 1919, "to organise themselves and reach mutual understandings in all areas of their lives and in whatever manner they think right." (11).

Makhno's army expropriated estates of the local gentry and distributed the land, livestock and implements from the wealthier peasants, leaving the owner two pairs of horses, one or two cows (depending on the size of his family), a plough, a seeder, a mower and other basic equipment. Under Makhno's supervision, anarchistic communes - called 'free' communes or 'workers' communes - were organised in Ekaterinoslav province, each containing about a dozen households with 100 to 300 members. There were four such communes in the immediate vicinity of Gulyai-Polye, Makhno's home town and base of operations, and a number of others were formed in the surrounding districts. Each commune was provided with as much land as its members were able to cultivate without hiring additional labour. The land, as well as tools and livestock, was allotted by decision of a Regional Congress of Peasants, Workers and Insurgents, and the management of the commune was conducted by a general meeting of its members. The land was held in common, and kitchens and dining rooms were also communal. But any members who wanted to cook separately or to take food from the kitchen and eat it in their own quarters were allowed to do so.

Though only a few members actually considered themselves anarchists, the peasants operated the communes on the basis of full equality ("from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs") and accepted Kropotkin's principle of mutual aid as their fundamental tenet. It is interesting to note that the first such commune, near the village of Pokrovskoe in Ekaterinoslav province, was named in honour of Rosa Luxemburg, who, though not an anarchist, was regarded as a martyr in the struggle for freedom and equality. Here was an example of the undoctinaire approach of the anarchists to social experimentation. (One awaits the establishment in the Soviet Union of a 'Kolkhoz Bakunin' or 'Kropotkin'! - 12).

Given the conditions in which he operated, Makhno's efforts at economic reform were necessarily sporadic and restricted. Forever on the move, he had little time to carry out his experiments. The *Makhnovshchina*, in the words of contemporary observers, was "a kingdom on wheels," "a republic on peasant cats." As always, said his comrade Volin of Makhno's projects, "the instability of the situation prevented positive work." (13). The communes, needless to add, were dissolved by the bolsheviks as soon as they gained control of the area.

Turning to Spain, we find a much more extensive effort to establish libertarian communes. According to reliable estimates, there were some 1700 rural collectives during the Civil War period, embracing more than 3 million peasants and their families (14). In anarchist strongholds like Aragon, no less than three-quarters of the land was collectivised. These coll-

ectives were not conceived in accordance with any single plan or forced to conform to a particular model. "Economic variety," remarked a German anarchist at the scene, "is the true manifestation and indispensable pre-condition for a free society. Regimentation, the imposition of a uniform economic system by and for the benefit of the state, works to the detriment of the people." (15). As a Spanish participant noted: "In each locality, the degree of communism, collectivism and mutualism will depend upon the conditions prevailing. Why dictate rules? We who make freedom our banner cannot deny it in the economy. Therefore there must be free experimentation, free show of initiative and suggestions, as well as freedom of organisation." (16).

Accordingly, the Spanish collectives varied greatly in size - some having as many as 4000 members - as well as in structure and regulations. Some villages were fully collectivised, but most had a private element alongside the collective. In such cases, small proprietors were induced to join the collective not by force but by example and persuasion. Free communism, as one anarchist leader put it, allowed room for individuals who preferred "to remain independent or to form their own associations to meet their own needs," provided, however, that they did not employ hired labour. (17). In all cases, moreover, profit and interest were excluded, as well as wages and rent. Furthermore, many of the collectives did away with the inequality of incomes by inaugurating distribution according to need. For such collectives Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread* served as their theoretical bible. "Here is the new gospel!" declared an anarchist in one collectivised Aragon village. "Here, in black and white, is written how to institute well-being for all" (18). Some abolished money, only to replace it with vouchers, tokens or other media of exchange. Attempts to do away with money altogether were not generally successful.

In addition to tilling the soil, many of the collectives expanded their operations by starting small industrial enterprises such as flour mills, bakeries, carpentry shops and iron works. They built and repaired roads, installed wells, and processed animal waste into fertiliser. Free services rendered by the collectives included clinics, schools, libraries, cinemas, laundries and barber shops. Some also built parks, baths and cultural centres with names like Villa Kropotkin and Villa Bakunin. Most had communal dining halls, though members, as in Makhno's communes, were allowed to eat separately if they preferred. Questions of admission or expulsion from the collectives were handled by a general assembly. Membership, however, was voluntary, and individuals might secede if they so desired. Finally, to coordinate activities and to facilitate the exchange of products, the different collectives were knitted together by a network of committees and by regional congresses and federations.

It must be recalled that these experiments in free communes (*comunismo libertario*) were taking place simultaneously with the emergence of authoritarian collectivism in the Soviet Union presenting a dramatic study in contrasts. Small wonder that the Spanish collectives were attacked and liquidated by Communist as well as Francoist forces, both of which regarded them as a menace. The same fate had befallen Makhno's communes, the victims of Red and White forces alike.

It is hard to measure the success of the Spanish collectives. For, as in Ukraine in 1919 and 1920, they were conducted amid conditions of civil strife, economic dislocation and military repression. In moral terms - which must be placed alongside production statistics as an important criterion of judgement - they commanded widespread and enthusiastic popular support, in contrast with their Stalinist counterparts. The feeling of exhilaration experienced by the Spanish peasants resembled that of the Russian peasants in 1917, who felt that they were at last gaining control of their own destinies. But in economic terms, too, they were successful enough under adverse circumstances to convince more than a few historians and contemporary observers that they present a workable alternative rather than a utopian dream.

PAUL AVRICH

For Notes, see page 16.