

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

WE WELCOME News, reviews, articles, letters, cartoons, etc. Copy deadline for next issue, Monday 20 November. Send to Editors, FREEDOM, 84b Whitechapel High Street (Angel Alley), London E1.

NEXT DESPATCHING DATE:
Thursday, 23 November.

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, Storrige, 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, Hyson 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, Duvant, 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

ADDITIONS TO GROUPS:-

LEICESTER. Anarchist group. Lyn Hurst, 41 Briarfield Drive, Leicester. Tel: 0533-21250 (days)

0533-414060 (nights)

Bookshop. Blackthorn, 76 Highcross St, Leicester. Tel: 0533-21896.

Libertarian Education. 6 Beaconsfield Rd, Leicester. Tel: 0533-552085.

CHELTENHAM Anarchist Group. Contact JERRY at 23093.

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Meetings

LONDON. Friends of Astrid Proll are organising a Benefit Concert in support of her defence at Acklam Hall, Acklam Road, London W11 (off Portobello Rd) from 8 pm. to midnight on Tuesday, 14 November. Groups include The Passion, Clapperclaw and The Nips. Tickets on the door are £1.50.

SHREWSBURY. A meeting aimed at founding a Shrewsbury Anarchist Group is to be held in the Unicorn pub, Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury, on Tuesday, 14 November, commencing at 8.00 pm.

LEEDS. Benefit for 'Persons Unknown'. 17 November in the Music Room, the Woodpecker pub (bottom of York Rd). Irish folk and other traditional music all night.

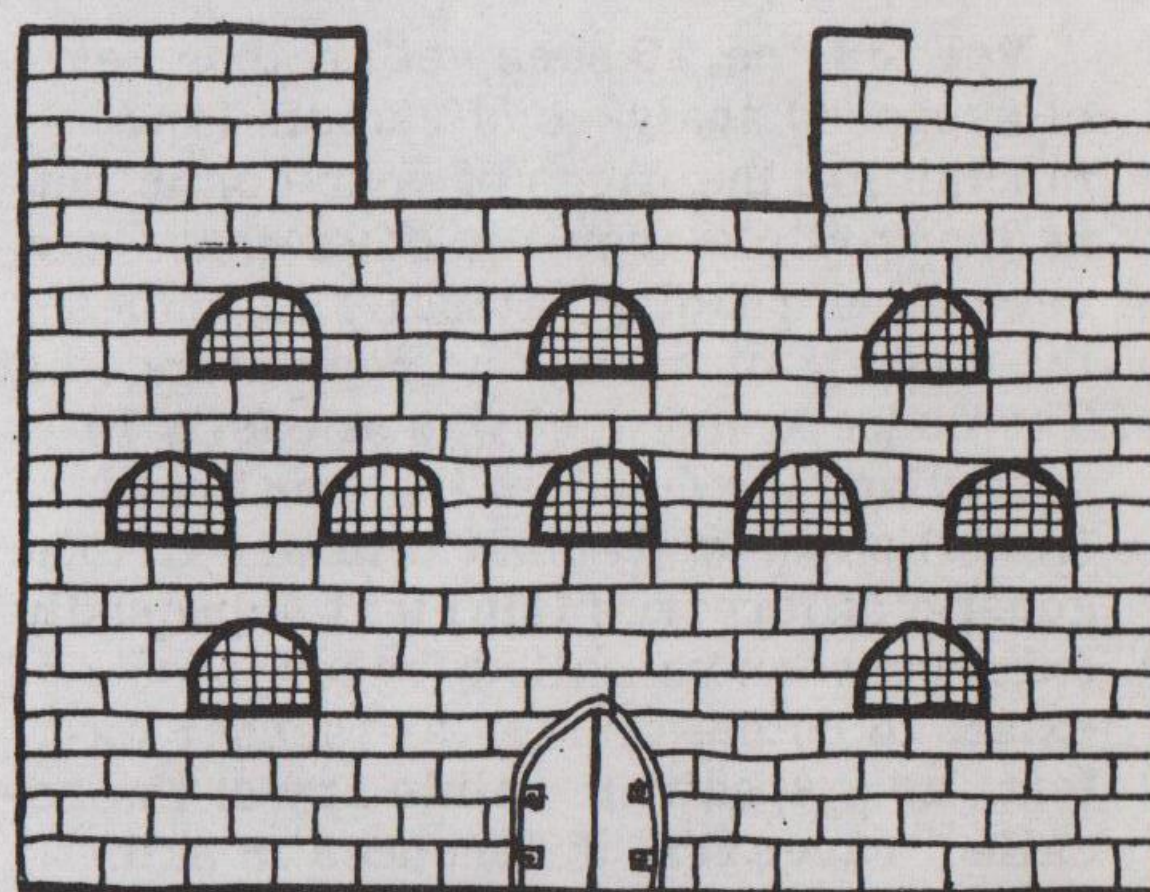
PUBLICATIONS

Latest bulletin of the North-Eastern Anarchist Federation is now available. SAE for a copy to Secretariat: Leeds Anarchists, Box 101, 30 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2.

APOLOGIES FOR MATERIAL OMITTED! PROBLEMS!!

£1000 Demolish a Prison Fund

Every £5 received in donations to
Persons Unknown removes one brick



in support of **RONAN IRIS**
TAFF STEW VINCE & TREV
PERSONS UNKNOWN it's starting to come down!

Freedom Press

IN ANGEL ALLEY

84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.

LONDON E1

PHONE 01 247 9249

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11 November/78
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IRIS IS FREE...

AS many will already have been overjoyed to hear, Iris Mills was released on bail of £10,000 from Brixton prison on Friday, 27 October, at approximately 6 pm.

Friends and relatives at Lambeth court that Thursday watched in suspense while the arguments for and against bail were put before the magistrate by defence counsel and police. The latter, in the form of Sergeant Tony Wait of the Anti-Terrorist Squad, uneasily reiterated their set piece about the serious nature of the (alleged) offence, and said that witnesses could be intimidated and further 'crimes' committed. They mentioned a threatening phone call from a man with an Australian accent, but were forced to agree with the magistrate that this could hardly have been Iris! They also admitted that the original police visit to the flat where Iris and Ronan lived in Kensington Square Gardens was to do with a national insurance card and not with conspiracy, and that all identification parades so far carried out in connection with their references to armed robbery have been 'totally negative'.

Peter Thornton, the barrister representing Iris, asked for details about the evidence on which the police have based their allegations of conspiracy, and wanted to know exactly what they found during their raid. The answer is already a familiar one. It lies in the form of a couple of bags of sugar and one and a half flour which, we are now at liberty to reveal, have been restored to Iris wrapped in cellophane and which at this moment are sitting demurely on her shelf....

To onlookers the pause before the magistrate's pronouncement was almost unbearable. Then some realised that he was actually writing down the conditions for bail. Magistrate David Prys Jones had earlier also ordered the release on bail of Trevor Dawton. Although it may seem like quibbling when compared to the nightmare Iris has been going through, it has to be said that, as in Trevor's case, the conditions are both stringent and absurd. Iris must report daily to the local police station and be home by 10 pm. every evening. There is manifestly no logic in the imposition of such a curfew, and it can only be seen as punitive.

Police concern, meanwhile, at the new turn of events is understandable. The release of Iris, following as it does

a month after Trevor's, must inevitably weaken the credibility of the image which the ATS, with the collusion of the Home Office, have done their best to convey. With a fervour equal only to their ignorance and singular lack of humour, the ATS have set out to show that our comrades were about to overthrow society. And the Home Office have told 'Persons Unknown' that no women's prison in the south east of England is safe enough to hold women as dangerous as Iris. Only those who know her have been able to appreciate to the full the exquisite idiocy



BUT

HARASSMENT CONTINUES

FOLLOWING Iris Mills' release on bail, the Anti-Terrorist Squad are once again acting against 'Persons Unknown'.

Iris Mills attended a meeting of the support group the Tuesday after her release - leaving early to comply with the 10 pm. curfew which is part of her bail conditions. While people were arriving for the meeting, two Special Branch officers were identified in a car outside the hall. One of them was leafing through a photograph album as he watched people go in.

After the meeting a member of the support group gave a lift home to three others. He dropped two of them off and went to the house of the third in Forest Gate for a cup of coffee. He parked his car round the corner (in Sebert Road). It seems clear that he was followed there.

of this statement. Suffice it that the magistrate himself, in his own dry way, has the wit to appreciate it a little.

Iris' release or transfer from Brixton had become the priority demand of the Persons Unknown campaign. Only a short time before the London support group had drawn up and circulated a five-page leaflet detailing the conditions of detention of Iris and the other two women held there, Astrid Proll and Khlood al Mugrabi. Added weight was given to this by a letter from her solicitors to the Home Office (not yet replied to), and which refers to the 'astonishing' circumstances of their detention in Brixton 'particularly as a new women's prison has only recently been built in Holloway'.

A couple of days before her release Peter Cadogan of South Place Ethical Society, who was to stand surety for Iris and act as character referee before the court, held a public meeting on her case which aroused some interest, indignation and surprise among liberals. And further public meetings are to be organised by 'Persons Unknown'. The release of Iris does not lessen the significance of the new method of treating 'Category A' women on remand, or the attitude of the government and police which is behind it. The campaign to put an end to this sudden change in penal policy (so far virtually ignored by the left and liberal press) will run parallel with the groups' continuing efforts to secure the release of the rest of our comrades in Brixton. And this means raising sureties and finding places where they can live and work while 'Justice' creeps on at snail's pace.

And like a snail on crutches, at that.

What is certain, however, is that when he returned to his vehicle 40 minutes later, it had been broken into and the address pages of his diary torn out and removed, as well as the photograph of a friend. By the time he had reversed his car the other car, a light-coloured Cortina, had vanished. As he turned into Romford Road, however, he noticed a commercial transit van on his tail. Since he was driving fairly slowly this struck him as odd. It turned off but after a while its place was taken by the Cortina. Fairly certain by now that he was being followed he took a series of random and fairly pointless turnings through back streets - sure enough the car followed him. At one point he actually lost it, but was picked up almost immediately by the

Continued on page 2.

SQUATTING IN AMSTERDAM

THE prosperous country of Holland (or to be more accurate, the Netherlands) still faces an enormous housing shortage affecting all layers of society, particularly in Amsterdam.

The inner city of Amsterdam was left relatively untouched until the end of the war; unlike Rotterdam, there was no bombing there. But, especially in the area where the nazis created a jewish ghetto and where many houses were left empty as a result of the deportations, lots of houses were demolished. This was due to a severe fuel shortage during the so-called 'hungry winter' of 1944.

After the war rebuilding plans were not implemented. The authorities continued with the demolition of houses to make new highways, offices, banks, etc., just as in most other European cities. These plans were prepared by the city council in conjunction with the political parties (from liberal to communist), the unions and the bosses.

Since the end of the sixties action and neighbourhood groups were formed by the residents affected, to oppose and postpone these development plans. Not all the people touched by the housing shortage were willing to wait any more for their turn to be housed; they had got cynical about the promises made at every municipal election and which were never fulfilled. They decided to solve their housing problems by themselves, and occupied some of the many empty properties in the city.

Within the last 10 years the Amsterdam squatters' movement has gained a lot of experience. At the present time there are between 8-10,000 squatters in Amsterdam. In the inner city, especially, during the last few years, squatters have resisted the demolition of houses which planners and developers have wanted to replace with hotels, offices, roads and so on, including the Underground.

Several times the squatters have rejected the authorities' proposals to re-house them elsewhere, in the knowledge that once the inner city is demolished the planners and developers will move in and do with it what they will. Such resistance has been made against English developers and investors who,

after Britain's entry into the EEC began to pump millions of pounds into the Netherlands. For instance, Bovis Properties, which planned to build a huge hotel in the Nieuwmarkt area of Amsterdam, but had to give way to the squatters and their large numbers of supporters. The buildings which Bovis were to demolish are now lived in by over a hundred people, who have converted them into homes and workshops.

On some occasions, even where squatters have lost specific battles, they have been successful in other ways. Three years ago it took as many as a thousand police together with armoured cars, bulldozers and water cannon, to evict 300 people from the Nieuwmarkt and make way for Amsterdam's first underground line. But the squatters, who were well-organised, managed to resist for three months and as a result of the furor which the police action caused, several prominent politicians lost their jobs and a decision was made to abandon building of the six other planned lines.

WHERE IS THE REMBRANDT HOUSE?

This question is asked by thousands of tourists who visit Amsterdam each year. And it is not a surprising one, as you wouldn't expect the house of the famous 17th century painter to be situated on a mini motorway with a massive office block opposite. (Or would you?)

Next door to the Rembrandt house is a large renovated office building which has been empty for four years, despite a huge sign outside saying it is to let by 'James Lang & Wooton' (who act as letting agents for the English/Dutch property developers Grand Vista, in which Equity & Law have a majority shareholding). Adjacent to these properties there are two houses, standing at some distance from each other - the houses in between having been demolished years ago. Between the houses a big banner is stretched, reading: '250,000 metres of empty office space versus 60,000 homeless people'.

In this street, de Jodenbreestraat, which borders on the militant Nieuwmarkt area, Grand Vista are planning to build another new office block, and thus to

demolish the two houses. ~~Not~~ are these just a couple of houses, since they contain eight dwellings as well as two shops and a community bookshop. One of the houses, which was gutted some years back, has been restored by both the squatters and other people from the neighbourhood, who put in hundreds of work hours and thousands of guilders.

Supported by several action groups, the residents have been resisting this kind of office development for eight years. The building proposed will cost about 20 million Dutch guilders and will be financed by the life insurance company mentioned above, Equity & Law.

The residents want the companies to sell the ground to Amsterdam city council; they also want the council to build houses instead of offices, the need for which has been grossly overestimated. This is because the expected increase of employment in office labour did not take place - indeed, the contrary happened because of the introduction of mini-computers, and a recent economic report calculates that the office buildings already being put up will be empty for between six and 14 years.

On 9 September the local residents, who are still resisting attempts by Grand Vista to buy them off with offers of other accommodation, payment of removal costs and a couple of rentfree years, organised a demonstration along the road with music, exhibits on housing and speakers from different neighbourhoods. On the 25th, at dawn, a strong-arm group from Grand Vista tried to evict the occupants of the community bookshop, which is in the basement of one of the condemned houses. But the alarm system, fortunately, worked well and woke up the rest of the neighbourhood, thus ensuring the failure of the assault. The houses have now been put under permanent surveillance by the resident action group. In the meantime they ask all sympathisers and well-wishers to express solidarity with them by writing in protest to the firms involved: Equity & Law, Korte Voorhout 20, Den Haag; Grand Vista, c/o Delaïressestr. 131, Amsterdam.

MARTIN WALKER

The case of Martin Walker, a member of the support group arrested outside the court at the remand hearing on 20 July, was heard on Tuesday, 31 October.

The magistrate said that "In circumstances such as this it is every citizen's duty to help and not hinder the police" and fined him £60.

PERSONS UNKNOWN (London) tell us that they are taking seriously points raised about the campaign by Alan Westfall in his article on Manchester in the last issue. Their reply will be in the next.

BRIEF EMBARRASSMENT

ANARCHISTS do not seek to influence governments; they seek to abolish them. Why is why it is not only logical but essential that they should play no part, neither as candidates nor as voters, in the election of governments and should say or do nothing that might look like advising any government on what would or would not be 'a good thing'. Anarchists' demands on governments are more likely to be that they stop doing something particularly obnoxious - like locking up our friends on trumped-up charges - than that they should do something.

Anarchist experience - and anarchism is based on experience more than on theory - shows us that when governments seem to be doing something, shall we say, sensible, they always do it wrong.

This is partly because governments can never give unreservedly. They can only allow. Concessions are made; rights or privileges are grudgingly granted; liberties allowed - and always only after pressure from below has grown to embarrassing proportions and votes, or power even, might be lost. They give up defending only when their position is totally indefensible, and even then they make compromises which do not solve the problem but, maybe, take some heat out of the argument.

One reason why governments cannot give unreservedly is simply because they have nothing of their own - except power. And even that is theirs only on sufferance, tolerated only by people who don't know what to do about it. But they make nothing, create nothing; all they do is to manipulate the wealth created by others and sullenly handed over under duress. It's the protection racket writ large and nobody ever expects the protection racketeer to give anything back.

All of which is by way of being a preamble to cover up the fact that we were momentarily embarrassed. We don't actually know if Sunny Jim Callaghan reads FREEDOM, but surely it is more than a coincidence that one of the proposed new joys promised the British peepul is very much in line with the one 'reformist' suggestion we made in a recent gratuitous and embarrassing front page blurb?

In our issue of 14 October last, we were saying that anarchists wanted the end of employment as we know it, which was 'why we don't join in the general

bleating about irrelevances like 5 per cent or even unemployment'. We then went on to say: 'If we did we should be demanding a three-day week as more just than the catch-as-catch-can and differential-squabbling of the unions'.

As is the way with FREEDOM's cryptic front page pieces, this was meant to be provocative or at least thought-provoking, no more than a hint of what we would demand if we were in the demanding business - like, for instance, the SWP, whom we sneered at for their servile 'Right to Work' campaign (and whatever happened to that?)

Imagine our surprise, therefore, and yes, embarrassment, when, no more than a fortnight later, the Queen, in the course of opening Parliament for the last time - sorry, we'll rephrase that - for the last session of the present Parliament, said something to the effect that 'My Government (hers you note!) will ... introduce ... legislation ... for ... encouraging the alternative of short-time working ...'.

And when, next day, details were sketched in by somebody or other, we learned that the Government was actually suggesting the introduction of a four-day week, with the fifth day's wages paid partly by the employer and partly by the Government, as an alternative to redundancy.

Our embarrassment, however, was extremely short-lived, for what had seemed at first glance to be a Labour Government striving after that well-known impossibility of Social Democracy, more freedom for the working class, which would have upset some anarchist applecarts, turned out to be once more a tricky little bit of reformist chicanery - whatever that is.

For the fact of the matter is that many workers welcome redundancy. Many a loyal wage-slave, after years of clocking on in a dreary factory job, is offered a sizeable sum of money to sling his hook and is only too delighted so to do. In the case of some steel workers, sums in excess of £10,000 are paid to long-service employees when the plant closes down. More money than they have ever seen in one lump ever before and more than they would ever see in one lump if they kept on working.

If, instead of this instant 'freedom', workers not temporarily needed are simply put on short-time instead of being paid princely sums to piss off, the employer can benefit in the long run by hanging on to his skilled labour force, waiting for the upturn in the economy, the government saves its share of the 'compensation' and for a part of one day's pay, saves the total cost of unemployment benefit! And it's all 'your' money anyway.

What's more, the employer will not even lose in terms of production, for, if you remember, when the late Mr

Edward Heath, of blessed memory, introduced the three-day week during his battle with the miners in 1974, production remained the same.

So many workers are on piece work, based on easily-achieved norms, that when Ted Heath tried to punish the whole working class by putting them on short time, they responded by doing the normal five-day's work in three. They in effect put two fingers up to the bewildered Ted, whose knowledge of real life is in direct proportion to his ability to conduct 'Land of Hope and Glory' while coming out of Cowes with a splash.

The fact is that employment as we know it has less and less to do with the production and distribution of wealth and more and more to do with the control of the population.

As we so provocatively indicated in our gratuitous etc. little front page piece on 14 October 'the technological revolution offers us ... the abolition of hard labour'.

The trouble, for a Labour Government, is that they cannot abide the thought of the abolition of labour (ha, ha). No more can the Tories, Liberals, Communists or Fascists, Moonies or Seventh Day Adventists. For they all must - absolutely must - control the labour force in the service of their private profits or their state power.

WORK ETHIC RULES OK? So when the Queen tells you that Her Government is going to do something to you that looks on the surface as though it might contain some benefit for you - look at it very carefully through a fine tooth comb.

Even the right things are done for the wrong reasons - and they never do the right things anyway.

PHILIP SANSOM



HARASSMENT

Continued from page 1.

transit van. It is evident that the two vehicles were in radio contact, for one or the other followed him from then on till near his home. Before going home he decided to see whether the other two support group members who lived nearby were all right - he merely passed the end of their street but could see nothing wrong. The car behind him, however, stopped, indicating that it knew where he might have been making for, and two of its occupants got out. He lost the car in a one way system and drove home.

He tried to ring the other two support group members but got no reply and a little worried drove over there again - again he was followed. There was no one at home but as he left he saw a man hiding behind a wall across the street, watching the house. He drove home again, followed by the van. At one point he lost it, but it suddenly caught up with him 400 yards or so from his house - evidently knowing where to make for. He doesn't think his house was watched. On ringing round other support group members, however, he learned that one of the other people he had given a lift to was under surveillance until 1 a.m. the next morning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A BETTER

anarchist fortnightly
Freedom

SINCE MY ARRIVAL in Britain late last year I have been acutely aware of the ongoing debate about the role of FREEDOM as a publication in and of the contemporary anarchist movement. In Australia where I have been active over the past few years the FREEDOM Anarchist Fortnightly has served as a lifeline for the movement through a period of inactivity and slackening support, and I'm sure it has served a similar purpose for isolated individuals and embryonic groups throughout the English speaking world. Selling books in Sydney's Domain or on the Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists' other regular bookstalls I was frequently asked for copies of FREEDOM by people who had previous connections with anarchism. Its unfaltering regularity and long history have been a great reassurance in a political movement which can be isolated and bickering as easily as it can be exciting and emotionally fulfilling.

Given the rapid development of the movement which has been going on in recent months and years, and the appearance of several important new publications - Open Road, Zero, the Cienfuegos Press Review - the much improved presentation of Black Flag and the re-emergence of Anarchy as a regular and useful publication, it is hardly surprising that FREEDOM (which once had the field almost to itself) should now be going through a major identity crisis. But I was shocked by the disdain and abuse heaped on this old friend by many British activists.

The FREEDOM collective have been asking long and loud what is their role in the anarchist movement of the 70s and whilst no-one has come up with a satisfactory answer I've heard plenty of criticisms of its present practice; they are wide ranging but there is a thread running through them which I will try to pick up at one end and follow.

Several people have expressed personal differences with the FREEDOM collective which have made it impossible for them to work on FREEDOM in the past. The FREEDOM collective themselves pay witness to the results of this in their frequent complaints that they can't get enough people to submit news copy; but they seem unaware of the growing claims from outside that FREEDOM itself is pursuing a deliberate policy of isolation and aloofness. As a result they are doing nothing to improve their image (or the reality behind it). Less and less people therefore are inclined to contribute, which is a supreme irony given that the movement is presently growing at such a rapid rate.

Now we have reached the absurd situation where anarchists are involving themselves in a great variety of events which FREEDOM makes comments or prints reports on, and yet the copy in FREEDOM all too often originates with people who have only third or fourth hand knowledge of the matter and therefore end up writing more about their own stock of cliché-ridden stereotypes (or worse, about the mass media's stereotypes). The result-

ant analysis is at best only negative and sceptical, usually it is shallow and uninteresting and quite often it is palpably inaccurate.

This alienates activists on the fringe of the anarchist movement, several of whom I know have simply written FREEDOM off as a waste of time. It encourages the image of anarchism as a purely negative ideology which is commonly held amongst those more distant from our ranks; and it means that those 'old faithfuls' of the movement's hard core who continue to subscribe, increasingly tend to ignore the majority of the news pages, probably only reading the review section which they find of relevance, and checking the contacts page.

The activists are coming to see the editorials and featured news items more and more as the outpourings of armchair theorists, as indeed they are. I do not mean this in a harsh sense - I appreciate the work which the editors put in and I realise the need to produce a certain amount of infill material that arises from time to time with any regular publication; however the pre-eminent work of an editor should be editing copy, not originating it - as I'm sure the present editors would agree, and when infill material which might adequately provide a regular column inside the paper comes regularly to feature on the front cover then the situation might be thought to have got out of hand. Most FREEDOM front cover articles these days are at best gratuitous and at worst downright embarrassing. And the front cover is crucial in determining the publication's image and in determining the number of bookstall sales - which is presently much lower than it should be.

I think the real problem is that FREEDOM's view is too broad, tending to focus on issues of 'major political significance'. Firstly this is an area which anarchists see mainly as only a distraction from the revolution in their day to day lives - and so have only negative and cynical things to say about them. And secondly, without having full time journalists to do the rounds of the corridors of power or fly off to the scene of earth-shattering events we are forced to rely on the mass media as a primary news source. FREEDOM thus becomes only a source of views rather than news - at least for the British movement. For overseas readers it provides a handy survey of the British media from an anarchist perspective - but to tailor the publication to this purpose is to neglect the needs of the British readership. What is more, within the UK these 'views' are often regarded with less than a welcome appreciation. This is because

FREEDOM's editors are the only ones who find much of what they print worth writing about. People rarely see a need to debate the issues even where published views might appear dubious. So FREEDOM's outpourings assume the mantle of pronouncements defining the anarchist view on subjects - a situation aggravated by FREEDOM's outstandingly long history - so that columnists' often ill-informed reflections assume an authority which they surely were not intended to have and which many activists instinctively mistrust.

Furthermore, activists often feel disinclined to write reports because they feel their involvements (eg. starting a new university group, selling papers at work, helping in a woman's refuge etc) to be of limited interest for a paper with such a broad focus; or even if they are involved in a major event - of the scale of Grunwick for instance - they might fear that their viewpoint is too parochial for the paper. So instead of providing the copy which might make FREEDOM more like the paper they want to see they just sit around moaning. This is not the anarchist way; FREEDOM is a paper of the anarchist movement so that every anarchist has some degree of responsibility for its character - if we don't like it we should work to improve it and not just throw shit at the people who are struggling to keep it alive. But it does come down to the editors in their responsibility to create an atmosphere conducive to this effort rather than an appearance which is hostile to it.

The last two months or so have seen some marked improvements which may make these comments appear unduly harsh, but I feel that these improvements are largely the result of fortuitous circumstances rather than changed editorial policy and unless this is clearly understood the momentum which has been generated could be lost with the passing of events just as easily as it could be carried over into a longer term journalistic renaissance. The present circumstances to which I refer are the 'Persons Unknown' case and the ABC trials. It is these kinds of issue, where the focus of anarchist and mass media attention coincides, in which FREEDOM's coverage has always excelled; but fortunately, such matters are not always of such gravity as the present cases - rarely making FREEDOM's content as balanced and as relevant as it currently appears.

What is needed is an editorial policy which will maintain the present dynamic under less desperate circumstances. The article 'Towards a Better Freedom' on page 5 of issue 15 refers to hopes for a continued improvement in FREEDOM's appearance - but this will only come through the clear understanding of the required editorial initiatives.

That article also pointed out that FREEDOM is unique in the English speaking movement in its frequency and its penetration - just about every group has a subscription or contains a subscriber. This makes FREEDOM uniquely able to fill the much needed role of 'in house journal' to the movement at large - for which there is a crying need. It is a role which it already serves to some extent through theoretical discussion in the review, the contacts page and some of the articles which appear in the body of the news section - particularly review articles pertaining to the movement in other countries like Germany and Greece. But it could be performed with more determination which would, I think, help the movement in its self activation and improve FREEDOM as a decisive and interesting newspaper.

HOW THIS MIGHT BE DONE

Firstly, the type of story which occupies the front page should be something primarily of importance to the movement rather than of importance to the world at large. For example, I would have seen the large anarchist presence at the Windscale demo, the anti-fascist carnival and/or the Torness rally as front page material (I apologise for the dated examples but I've been out of the country for the past three months) - applauding the strong turn out, commenting on anarchist banners and handouts and primarily directing critical discussion towards the role played by the anarchists who were present, drawing lessons from their experience and hopefully suggesting new ideas for future application in similar situations, rather than failing to consider what could be done to improve matters and focussing criticism on the organisers or the stewards or the Labour government (from whom we expect nothing but their predictable shabby behaviour anyway). Obviously these broader aspects could receive some consideration in the tail of the article, but as an anarchist paper the primary concern should be with anarchism and how it operates and presents itself. Another example of front page story material would be reports of major conferences in and of the movement - again drawing lessons and offering constructive criticism. As I have already said, where the concerns of the anarchist movement and the bourgeois press tend to overlap, FREEDOM's present practice is much better. But still, more attention could be paid towards the anarchist response to these things (or lack of it), thus playing a more positive role in these events.

I see no place at all on the front cover for frivolities or inconsequential non-issues like Prince Michael's love life, nor as a rule for things like Kolwezi. For although the latter are important questions in their own right we have no particular qualifications or news sources to make our treatment of them so important. It would be different if anarchists were involved or present and writing first hand reports, but this is not often the case.

In the body of the news section I would have lesser stories of similar subjects to the front page, plus of course substantial letters pages, articles on forthcoming events of relevance to the movement, together, where possible, with critical comment on their organisation, etc. I would also hope for a much expanded con-

tacts page supplemented by news items on new groups starting up, groups folding, new publications, etc., together with reports of existing groups' activities - both regular and occasional - bookstalls, film showings, pickets, leaflettings, demos etc (this could be particularly useful for giving ideas to people who want to act but can't think of how to get started).

I would set aside one page (say page 3 or 6) for an anarchist commentary on the British bourgeois press, as this is particularly useful to overseas readers (this is what the front page and much of the inside is now used for). Also I'd continue to run review articles about the movement in other countries - their triumphs and their problems.

One important innovation I would make would be to run substantial articles on the movement's resources - virtual 'how to' features - again largely for the benefit of new or would be activists. For instance, a review of an anarchist publisher - listing their publications with some comment - giving some history of their activities - instructions on how to go about ordering from them together with details of their prices, discount rates, postage costs etc., - appeals for funds perhaps where badly needed or appeals for manuscripts where the publisher concerned requests it. Obviously you could start with Freedom Press itself - but all the other publishers both large and small would receive occasional detailed coverage, from small ones like Bratach Dubh or Vacant Lots to giants like Black & Red, Detroit and Cienfuegos. Other resources which could receive similar treatment would be film distributors or capitalist presses or record companies with significant anarchist materials on their catalogues, anarchist theatre groups, badge makers etc.

Another source of copy I would draw on (particularly for 'infill' material) would be translations of articles in the

foreign language anarchist press - bearing in mind how little overseas material gets translated into English and how much of importance is going on, especially in countries like Spain, Italy, Germany and Greece.

The Review I would leave substantially as it is.

The overall thrust of the paper would then become one of encouraging new activity of all sorts in the movement and of amplifying existing activities. It would help to draw people on the fringes of the movement into its active ranks and to maintain the interests of those already involved. In projecting the movement as a vital source of news, FREEDOM could be an invaluable back up to the profusion of new and/or improving agitational papers of the movement instead of its present role of frequently turning people on the fringes away, and all too often boring the people who are already committed.

A CLOSING WORD

I hope that the FREEDOM collective will not take this as a personal attack. I must repeat that I have a great appreciation of the ongoing work they do. The last thing I want is to start another mindless feud to split the movement. I rather hope that this article will add impetus to a much needed debate that might bring major improvements for FREEDOM and the movement as a whole.

ALAN WESTFALL

EDITORIAL NOTE

We refrained from behaving like proper editors for just one more week so that Alan Westfall's letter could appear exactly as he wrote it. We hope thereby to encourage some response, for or against, from both loyal readers and contemptuous activists.

So--we should like to know what you think, but more briefly, please.

AN ANARCHIST ALTERNATIVE

Dear FREEDOM

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the recent Manchester conference so I cannot comment on most of Alan Westfall's review that appeared in FREEDOM (last issue). But I would like to take up the point that he makes in that article that many libertarians are forced to work within the Labour Party and SWP because there isn't a worthwhile anarchist alternative.

It was partly for this reason that some of us formed the Anarchist Communist Association about a year ago. Although the ACA is still relatively small in size, we are presently involved in support groups for the Ford strikers and in promoting libertarian ideas generally in our trade unions, various community campaigns and the women's movement. We have also recently started to publish our own monthly paper called Bread and Roses. Belonging to the ACA has helped us to break down our individual isolation and has enabled us to coordinate our activities so as to make a greater imp-

act. Although we realise we do not have all the right answers, we do believe that we are moving in the right direction of developing anarchism as a living and decisive force in the struggle of working people to overthrow capitalism and patriarchy.

I would, therefore, like to suggest to Alan and others who see a need for a more organised anarchist movement in this country that they consider joining the ACA. A list of our groups is printed on the contact page of FREEDOM and further information on the ACA can be obtained from any one of them. *

In solidarity
BOB PREW

Birmingham.

*see next issue: meanwhile addresses as follows: Birmingham - Bob Prew, 13 Trinity Court, Trinity Rd, Aston, B6. Burnley - Jim Petty, 5 Hollin Hill. Glasgow - Dave Carruthers, 53 Ormonde Av, G4. London - Gary Holden, 88 Speedwell House, Comet St, Deptford, SE8.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

WHAT IS IT?

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY, this year's Government White Paper (1) argued, is necessary to "improve the efficiency of our industries and the prosperity of our country." The day after the White Paper was published, *The Times* editor wrote that "The bane of British industry and industrial relations remains the ingrained attitude of 'them and us'. These attitudes are far less marked in the industries of our main competitors. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the more formal kinds of industrial democracy which many of them have developed and enacted contribute positively to their higher rates of productivity."

In other words workers will be given more latitude to develop their own ways of achieving the ends set for them by the bosses. "Do what you want so long as you give us what we want." More productivity and profits.

COMMON INTEREST CON-TRICK

This idea of industrial democracy seen as a tool of management is not new and even in its Owenite form in the 19th century could be seen as an experiment by managers intended to stabilize their labour force. In the late 19th century the main concerns underlying participation schemes were not philanthropic but were used to combat labour organisation, improve labour productivity and overcome resistance to change. And commenting on the growth of the system of Whitley Councils around 1920, J. Child said, "... it was becoming obvious that some employers had only dealt with the idea of shared control as a device to buy time." (2)

Clearly certain forms of industrial democracy - West German and Scandinavian models - are perfectly compatible with present day capitalist society. There seems little doubt that British management generally do not anticipate that industrial democracy should have the effect of becoming what Rand Smith (3) calls "the effective control by producers of the tools and products of their labour."

The employers' position as expressed by the Confederation of British Industry suggests that for them worker participation represents the latest fashionable term for management, designed to put over the con-trick of common interest within the firm of workers and bosses. This approach aims at creating a forum for putting across the management version of reality which would get workers to tone down their demands and accept the leadership of management.

CONTROL FROM BELOW

The thing is that there are two rival approaches to industrial democracy: the employers' stand which holds that all changes must be directed at the goal of efficiency for "the company", while workers often see democracy itself as the objective. Here the issue is one of power, and power is about whose definition of reality will be made to stick.

Though management usually takes the initiative over participation, the fact that management in most cases is reacting to a challenge to its own authority in times of industrial militancy injects the debate with its apparent confusion. This confusion is then reinforced by the seeming emergence of a chance to secure a real advance towards the control by labour of its own destiny, at least in the eyes of the workers' representatives. But when they see the boss try to divert the idea of worker participation into "triviality" schemes dealing with issues like "tea, towels and toilets" the novelty wears off.

The typical course of events is that disruption often occurs when management refuse to allow negotiation of working conditions, bonuses etc. in the context of a body they have

promoted as a channel for consultation and co-operation. A common outcome of this disturbance being a rapid decline of the joint participation committee, so long as proper bargaining channels are available in other ways.

The existence of collective bargaining and shop stewards for negotiating at shopfloor level means that British workers often already have considerable control over management from below. While workers in this country may lack control over the long term decisions of management, they have long had control over how managerial decisions are put into practice on the shopfloor, through both their restrictive practices and their workshop organisation. Industrial democracy as planned by the Government and the employers could weaken these other forms of shopfloor control and dilute collective bargaining.

ENCROACHING CONTROL

Should schemes for participation be rejected as attempts by management to con their workers

Not necessarily!

No doubt management intends to use participation as a means of placating their workers. An article in the journal of the British Institute of Management (4) spelled this out in no uncertain terms: "Soon we must take new measures to realise the main ideals of industrial democracy whilst safeguarding the wealth producing industrial framework."

Though the bosses may try to push their "big happy family" notion of the firm, workers will also operate from the position of their own practical self interest. In this sense they may be able to turn the machinery of consultation and participation into another arena for encroaching control and monitoring management decisions.

Even the existing works councils at Courtaulds, though tame in their design, did, I discovered, provide an area in which management may well be challenged by determined workers' representatives. It may well be that in some industries like textiles, in which the unions are weak and unrepresentative, that representative participation may open up the chances of more shopfloor power.

We can't be dogmatic on this since workers will exploit their situation according to the requirements of their own practical self interest, and regardless of their managements' original intentions.

At the same time, as the engineering union (AUEW) pointed out, the danger exists that union participation on boards may replace collective bargaining at company level and that union representatives would degenerate into the rubber stamps of management boards. Creating the illusion of power without the reality. The AUEW itself has called for the unlimited extension of collective bargaining to the right of unions to negotiate over areas such as pricing, investment, location, forward planning, sales and profitability.

At a general level, I think we can say that attempts to gain industrial democracy as an isolated reform within the existing set-up is unlikely to provide workers with any substantial control over production in an anarchy-syndicalist sense. An accompaniment to the meaningful democratic control of industry by workers must be the restructuring of the political-economic framework of society.

B. B.

- (1) Government White Paper on Industrial Democracy. Published May 23, 1978.
- (2) Cycles of Control: Worker Participation in Sociological and Historical Perspective. Harvie Ramsay in *Sociology* 1977 (Journal of the British Sociological Association).
- (3) Attitudes towards Workers' Control in France: Evidence from a sample of Trade Union members. W. Rand Smith in *Sociology* 1977.
- (4) "Industrial Democracy" (British Institute of Management). This article was published in 1968, and expressed concern of British management about the developments in Europe.

EGO AGAIN

Dear Editors

Marshall Colman misquotes Marx on egoism. What Marx actually wrote was that communists "are very well aware that egoism, just as much as self-sacrifice, is in definite circumstances a necessary form of self-assertion of individuals" (my emphasis). Just how I can assert myself by sacrificing my self Marx does not explain. Perhaps he thought it would be clear enough to those initiated into the Marxist mystery religion...

It should be pointed out that the section of *The German Ideology* from which this quotation is taken was written as a reply to *The Ego and His Own* by Max Stirner. Reading Stirner's book had compelled Marx to abandon the ethical humanism he had championed, but while he gave up his belief in 'The Essence of Man' he replaced it with a belief in 'The Forces of Production' - and tried to avoid criticism of his new abstraction by labelling it 'scientific'.

Marxism wins the support of the vast majority of its adherents not because of the obtruse metaphysics of Gramsci, Garaudy & Co. but because of its promise of an egalitarian millennium guaranteed by the Historical Dialectic. That there is not the slightest shred of evidence that this will ever come about no more deters the Marxist true believers than the fraudulent heaven of Christianity deters its true believers. One lot have faith in the 'Grace of God', the other in the 'Grace of the Revolution'.

Sincerely

S.E. Parker

London W2

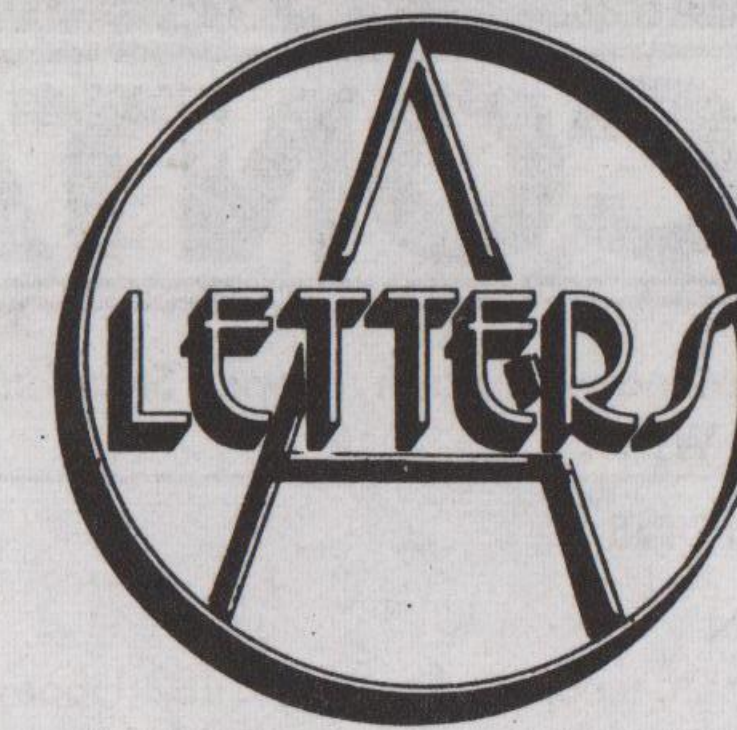
RACE AGAIN

Dear FREEDOM

Vol. 39, no. 20 sees yet another set of supposed analyses of racism (and fascism) in the pages of your comic but neither article, nor any other that I can remember reading, actually examines the concept of 'race' and racism together. The concept of 'race' was as easily invented and accepted as the concept of 'racial superiority' that followed it. The genetic differences (sic) that supposedly exist between so-called 'races' also exist, to both a greater and lesser extent, as a spectrum within any of the so-called 'races' cf. differences in skin/colour and/or facial shapes.

Race then becomes based upon the 'differences' that came out of centuries of interbreeding due to environmental factors, such as geographical barriers, but which now persist due to social factors, ie. 'race' and racialism.

Hence, for internationalists (sic) the concept of 'race' is both self-perpetuating as well as self-defeating. As the NF say, the mixing of races leads to the destruction of these 'races'. So in a society that 'allows' the mixing of 'races', 'race' is non-existent. Therefore, 'race'



becomes what we wish it to be.

Taking these two articles (in the last issue - eds.) on their own limiting and cramped ground, we find a critique of the ANL that shows up the short-sightedness of their views. Unfortunately it does not really broach open the chauvinism of this group. The machismo persona (eg. phallic arrow symbol, predominantly male (white?) gang fights, and the more traditional sexism etc.) of the ANL and other 'fasci-bash' groups is there for all to see.

Few examine the patriarchal views of the currently popular reggae bands or the machismo of the punk groups that play at the RAR gigs. Few even examine the whole consumerisation of ANL, RAR or Garden Gnomes against Nazis badges, stickers and all the other things commonly associated with the mindless exploitation of capitalist advertising techniques as opposed to rational argument.

The only function of the NF is that it helps the externalisation of what would, if they did not exist, be internalised hatreds and reaction which then overflow into the streets as racist violence. So destroying the NF will only bring about the reinternalisation of those feelings but will not bring about the destruction of racism and fascism.

As for the Martin Spence article, it is obvious from the start what is going to be said by the 'we of the left' and (pseudo) scientific posturing; with its inherently limiting, and whole-heartedly subjective approach, one knows that nothing new will be said (less done) about the whole problem.

The article is based upon the use of two words, 'fascism' and 'nazism'. Fascism is seen as a mass movement against the left and nazism is left undefined, but both effectively become interchangeable when it is found to be 'useful'. It is said that the NF is both a Fascist party and a Nazi party (because "its policies are very close to those of the German Nazi Party"), but that as fascism is a fossil, the NF will never rule. Reich's works on fascism are even referred to as a justification of this view. A great mistake! Reich viewed fascism as a mass movement (which the NF is not and never will be) that comes so through the acceptance of the irrationalities of racism, the 'Party' and identification with the Fuehrer figure (which neither Tyndall nor Webster fulfill) on top of the irrationalities of the state and society. Reich views fascism as an irrational life (self-regulatory freedom of development) negating force, and Fascism (both black - right wing, and red - left wing) as the institutionalisation of this, eg. party and state etc... All this is slightly at odds with the Martin Spence analysis.

The subjectivity is apparent (even though the comparisons of NF racism and state racism are valid) and to decry the 'banding round' and abuse of words because they will lose their meanings shows the reaction of the article. Language evolves, cf. 'Reactionary', 'State' etc.

Eventually, it all comes down to why people are against racism and facism, and it would appear that anti-racism (and fascism) is a reaction to and against an existing phenomenon, and as such, is on the terms of that phenomenon and cannot escape that. It does not exist because of an aesthetic of being against either and does not seek to counter either (one one's own terms). There is basically no freedom in anti-racism (or anti-fascism) because the concept of 'race' is as useless as the concept of sex (differences) and until it is realised that the colour of one's skin is as relevant as the colour of one's eyes (maybe I should say 'irrelevant', as it has a value system itself in this society) there will be racism.

So, Martin Spence and like thinking people, come to the conclusion that one must struggle for one's own freedom on one's own terms and that both the left, as well as the right, are anti-life or you will continue to get nowhere fast.

Anon. Brighton, Sussex.

SEX AGAIN

MARK Hendy (September 30) gives some examples of sexual oppression used by the middle class against the working class. He could have mentioned some more - prostitution as an overt form, and domestic service as a covert form - but he should have mentioned that sexual oppression is also used by the working class against itself, and by the middle class against itself. Consider the treatment of wives and daughters in all classes, or the treatment of children in school, patients in hospitals, inmates in prisons.

The point is that sexual oppression is not a simple matter of class, but a complex matter of authority. So it is not surprising that sexual liberation is not a simple matter of class struggle, but a complex matter of libertarian struggle. If anything, middle-class reformers have been more active in this area than working-class revolutionaries, the former frequently seeing sex as central and the latter generally as marginal. Thus Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis, the subjects of the book originally reviewed by Mark Hendy, contributed more to sexual liberation than anyone in the labour movement.

The other point is that revolution has so far led to an immediate increase in sexual freedom followed by a rapid relapse into sexual puritanism. Only a libertarian revolution is likely to have the right effect, here as everywhere else. Meanwhile, the libertarian struggle against sexual oppression goes on in all classes and can only be crippled by being confined to any one class.

N.W.

Bommi Baumann

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With Statements
by HEINRICH BÖLL
& DANIEL COHN-BENDITTranslated by
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NOTES to RGO Document

1. TUNIX. Name of a conference/festival of the extra-parliamentary left in Berlin between 27-29 January and attended by about 20,000 people.

(2) The heading given to a recent document on the 2 June Movement publicised in the press at the time of the opening of the 2 June trial in Berlin this year.

(3) Kaussen: housing racketeer who charged old people and immigrant workers extortionate rents throughout the FRG and whose Cologne office was blown up at the beginning of '77. MAN: South German machine factory. BVG: Berliner Verkehrs Betriebe.

(4) Daniel Cohn-Bendit: former student leader in France, now runs bookshop in Frankfurt and edits Pflasterstrand; was also

an ill-fated candidate on the ecological coalition 'Gruenen Liste Hessen'. SB: Sozialistische Buero, a group combining several left wing tendencies. Langer Marsch: left-wing Berlin monthly.

(5) Reference to the hi-jacking of the Lufthansa plane in October 1977 by the Martyr Halimeh Commando, to Mogadishu.

(5a) Werner Sauber was shot dead by police on 9 May 1975 after exchanging fire with them at a police checkpoint. Later on his companions Karl-Heinz Roth and Roland Otto were acquitted of the murder charges against them. (see FREEDOM, vol. 39, no. 13, 9 July '77).

(6) KOB: Kontaktbereichsamt. Police system according to which a policeman is responsible for a specific area and gathers together an informer network to cover it.

(7) Reference to the doctors who exploit women having abortions.

(8) The omitted paragraph refers to the INFO-BUG case, previously reported on by FREEDOM, and left out for reasons of space.

Freedom

THE RESISTANCE OF EVERYDAY LIFE —a document from the revolutionary guerrilla opposition

It is a year since the Schleyer kidnapping and the deaths of Red Army Faction prisoners in Stuttgart and Munich, and this issue concentrates on the topic of guerrilla struggle in the Federal Republic of Germany. The common thread running through it is the need for the guerrilla movement to give greater emphasis to everyday issues within the FRG itself and less to the international anti-imperialist struggle in solidarity with the third world liberation movements. The first piece is a discussion document from an offshoot of the 2 June Movement, whose authors are writing from prison in Berlin, and which has never before been published in English. Although we may find that the references to the 'capitalist' and 'bourgeois' state do not sufficiently reflect its more complex nature in the second half of the 20th century, and although the call to end the fragmentation of the left is surely easier made than done, there is much in the analysis that will be of interest to anarchists. This review on Germany will be followed the issue after next by one on the guerrilla movement in Italy, with particular reference to the Red Brigades and the Revolutionary Action group.

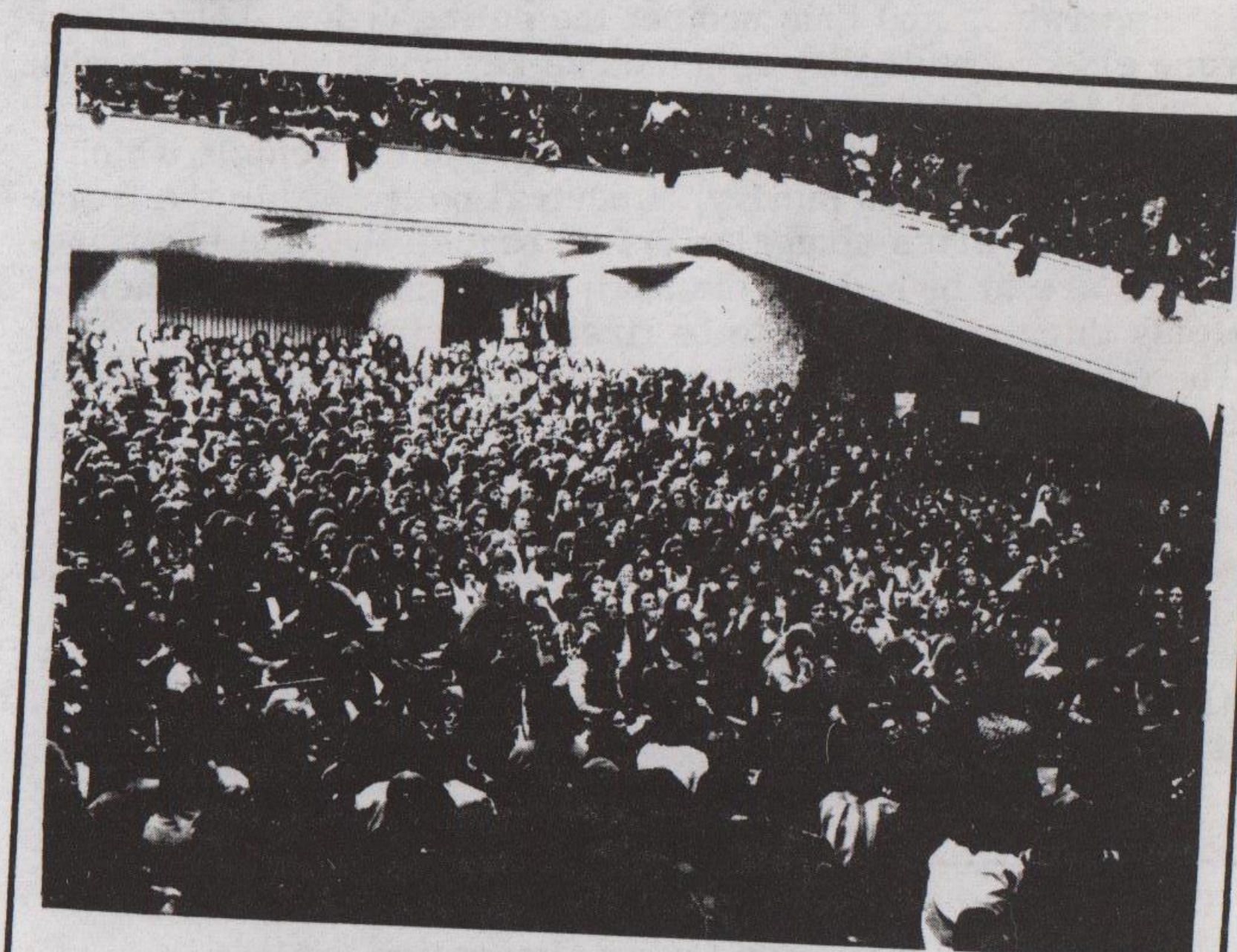
ON THE "TUNIX" MEETING (1)

WE welcome the initiative taken by comrades in setting in motion a long needed debate. We should have welcomed it even more had, through TUNIX, a start finally been made in overcoming the utter fragmentation of the left. It's not, of course, that everyone's star should be painted in the same colours on the same wall with the same brush. It would have been enough to at least embark on something together.

We're not suffering from the illusion that from the safe distance of prison we're better placed to judge the difficulties which have arisen in recent years regarding struggle and resistance than the comrades grappling daily with the guerrilla war. But we hope to be able to contribute a few critical and self-critical trifles to the discussion.

OVERCOMING THE FRAGMENTATION

WHAT we have to realise if we don't all want to dig ourselves into a political mass grave, is that we must put an end to our fragmentation, and finally be able to raise our heads again over the horizon of our mini-groups. While the left wing forces in this country have been at loggerheads with one another the right has been gathering the spoils. The unprecedented offensive by the forces of reaction over the last few years has been due not least to the harmful and senseless infighting of hundreds



Diskussion über



von deutschen und ausländischen Genossen/innen

of groups and mini-groups. Not only have the concessions won by the struggle of youth and of the student rebels been erased without anything taking their place, but the power apparatus of the state has, without resistance, been able to develop on a massive scale and take all-embracing control of every area of life in a way that wasn't possible even under the Third Reich. That today's methods are different, and that the excessive brutality issuing from the direct confrontation of that period has not been reached, should not obscure the fact that it is solely the weakness of the left that has made it unnecessary. Fragmented, resigned and/or bogged down in dogmatism, the left is at present not in a position to endanger the capitalist order.

The splintering of the left into dozens of groups has made it horribly easy for the ruling class to isolate it and to neutralise the danger and attraction of intensified street revolt.

Above all, being isolated from one another, by obstinately following each their 'one and only' road, by destroying them-

elves in a war of competition against the corner deviationist, the whole anti-capitalist opposition has ended up in a cul-de-sac.

THE ALTERNATIVE PEOPLE

THOSE who felt they'd gained a place for themselves in society have tried zealously to fill it with so-called alternative projects. In the euphoria of apparent victory they overlooked the fact that it's impossible to break away from established society without altering those same social conditions. Instead of making of their projects a foundation for the expansion of their struggle ... they were interested only in proving the superiority of what they were doing. This attitude led to compromise upon compromise, just to save their project - until it became nothing but a caricature of its original concept. What began as an alternative to the establishment ended up as an alternative to the struggle. The consciousness of resistance degenerated into the mentality of the social worker. Compromise in individual cases led to a bargaining away of consciousness in general.

This is what has happened to most projects. The small remainder have been disciplined or destroyed by other means.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PATH

AND where are those who would transform the institutions from within? Either conformed or disappeared. Only the people themselves have changed; the apparat serves reaction in just the same old way. Which was probably the one foreseeable thing. For whoever will attain to the key places within the institutions must firstly satisfy the demands of the machine - and do so better than others; in other words, they must run the state apparatus, and thus protect the ruling order, better than anyone else. And if they reach these key positions that is what they will have done.

These comrades see the state as a technical vehicle which can be run for all and sundry, a neutral polity within the framework of which class struggles unfold peacefully, and positions of power are to be had for the asking; a running-track where the only thing required is to be first to the tape.

The comrades forget the fact that the state is an instrument with quite specific functions. The role of the bourgeois state is, after all, to protect and maintain the capitalist order.

Even if formerly powerless people succeed in obtaining power this state apparat is unchanged - all that signifies is that they were interested in changing roles. A fundamental upheaval of society, with the aim of creating a humane order without rulers, has not the slightest need for this state. It's in the way.

THE FAMILIAR CONTRADICTIONS

THIS is all very general. It's by no means true that every comrade who has struggled for an alternative project or taken part in the struggle from within the institutions, has become completely corrupted by the experience. There are enough examples of where this hasn't happened. But these comrades are no longer in the institutions.

We don't say it's wrong to try, as teachers or social workers in schools or children's homes to raise an awareness of their own interests, to clarify to young people the reasons for their shitty situation, to propagate resistance as the alternative to conformity and self-denial.

We say that the contradiction between carrying out a mandated function and consistent revolutionary work leads to a point at which through mere tactism you get lost in reformist demands if you're not prepared to draw even the personal consequences.

It follows that legality must be broken through; the pre-ordained functions can no longer be carried out; they must be sabotaged.

The example of prison makes this especially clear. Anyone intending to unite revolutionary work with the role of gaoler is, to give the most charitable interpretation, being ridiculous. S/he's locking doors just like everyone else. To draw conclusions would be to unlock the doors, never to shut them again. Anything less is only a masking of the brutality, a reformist tactic of avoiding conflict. Revolutionary politics have nothing to do with an ad hoc resolution of conflict but with sabotage of the functions of the ruling class. Only in this way can work within the institutions be seen as revolutionary politics.

ABOLISH THE STATE - DON'T REFORM IT!

WE must also be critical of the proponents of another point of view, one which has become general especially with the militants and armed groups: the fixation on the state as the seemingly uniquely fundamental wrong; that the state needs only to be removed for a new social order to emerge.

These comrades fail to realise that the bourgeois state is not the cause of the prevailing social conditions, but their effect. For the readiness of the oft-quoted masses to submit doesn't only depend on the violence of the state machine. The concentrated power of dis-information through the mass media, the schools and fascistic mass literature, the manipulation through control by the representative organisations like the trade unions and so-called 'mass parties', the ideological role-playing and supply of deceptive alternatives to deflect discontent and aggression, and above all the social threat of unemployment, job disbarment (Berufsverbote) and deportation of foreign colleagues, should not be underestimated as instruments of the ruling class. Thus, those who fix their sights exclusively upon the destruction of the state are making no social revolution; it is not in this way that the colonised consciousness of the above-mentioned masses will be destroyed. In addition, and in fact as a result of the above, this isolated project is condemned to failure from the outset because we have to be more in numbers. And this we surely shall not be if we ignore the starting points offered by the social miseries of people and their insecurity, instead of intervening and thereby bringing about an all-round confrontation.

In no way do we wish to support the opportunism of relying on numbers. If ten people say the sky is a banana and one says it is not, that hardly means the majority will be right for some time to come. We can't say, "The consciousness of the masses is not yet sufficiently widespread" (2) but we must ask ourselves how this consciousness is, bit by bit, to be aroused.

OUR ISOLATION AMONG THE PEOPLE

AT this point we of the guerrilla movement have also to ask to what degree we ourselves may be blamed for our isolation. The majority of comrades involved in the politics of armed struggle have dissassociated themselves from the - unfortunately far too few - actions like, for instance, those against Kaussen, MAN, BVG, 218 (3), and engage only in a straight military encounter with the state machine. In this way we have accepted allocation to a political ghetto, instead of breaking out of it.

Certainly the other sections of the left have also contributed to the lack of open debate. Because of their fear, the state could use them against us in a psychological war; criticism was abandoned and police propaganda took its place.

Our arguments were distorted by the equation of the left with types like Cohn-Bendit, SB or Langer Marsch (4) who have openly called for the denunciation of comrades or, as in Frankfurt, done the job of the bulls (police) for them by drawing up a card index of sympathisers. With such bull-helpers no further communication on this level can take place.

CRITIQUE OF THE RAF POSITION

WE see the orientation of armed groups to a new 'anti-imperialist concept' as a form of resignation.

The comrades say that owing to the corruption of the masses in the FRG metropole, a broad development of proletarian counter-power is impossible, and the building of a social resistance movement senseless. Because the peoples of the third world are the most oppressed and exploited it follows that only these can provide the basis for the development of a worldwide revolutionary war. They still see the FRG only as a field of military operations and adjust their politics accordingly.

We cannot adopt this position.

It is obvious that practical solidarity with the peoples of the third world and their liberation struggles must form a substantial part of our struggle, but the best and most effective solidarity with them lies in the construction of a strong revolutionary resistance movement here; this would make it impossible for the capitalist state to implement its imperialist aims.

It is fatalism to accept as given and unalterable the present weakness of the pockets of revolutionary resistance. As the crisis of capitalism intensifies, it liberates at all levels an

ever growing potential upon which to concentrate. Schmidt is being unequivocal when he says that "the terrorists' ground must be drawn out from under them today if tomorrow it is not to draw into itself the army of young unemployed". So is Kohl when he observes that they (the state) will "have lost if in the next five years terrorism is not completely destroyed". And the massive rearmament of the state machine is taking place not least on account of the weak - as well as economically and militarily still extremely ineffective - state of the guerrilla struggle.

We will clearly not convince people of the necessity of our revolutionary position if we direct it against them.

All of us have distanced ourselves from the fascist bombings in the railway stations of Bremen, Hamburg and Cologne. We have all, and always, said that guerrilla actions and policies are never directed against the people, but against the rulers.

But: who was actually sitting in the holiday plane on the cheapest flight to Mallorca?! (5)

THE PEOPLE AND THE GUERRILLA

IN January 1975, in an analysis of the 'anti-imperialist concept' our comrade Werner Sauber wrote as follows:

"A practical discussion with militant workers on the connection with armed struggle has not been accepted (by the comrades). Instead, the comrades presented themselves as revolutionary 'secret service troops' who saw their base only in the liberation struggles of the three continents. According to their anti-imperialist concept, it would be better to link up with a liberation movement of the third world and from that concrete base fight the metropole. But in this way the comrades are neither fish in the water nor birds in the air. They will work with oppressed fringe groups or with the left to gain new blood for the anti-imperialist struggle, but not to strengthen the class struggle of the oppressed in the metropole itself.



Werner Sauber

....

The struggle must arise from the context of day-to-day resistance, without which the workers are living under a capitalist siege-state in a worse situation even than is necessary. All resistance is made concrete only by this connection with the everyday situation. If instead of this it only engages with the imperialist superstructure, without anchorage in the factories and neighbourhood areas, the capitalist state can, without difficulty, encircle and crush it with straightforward police methods.

The outcome is merely that the work done to establish a Red Army remains in skeletal form. The bombs they throw, they hope to throw into the consciousness of the masses ... Revolutionary violence is then reduced to a statement. It does not issue from the experience of class struggle and oppression and is consequently not a means of counter-attack ..." (5a)

This assessment remains, in its entirety, true today.

Certainly it's difficult and abstract to speak of 'the workers' living in that way. The upward absorption of a large part of the working class into the middle class is a fact as neglected as, on the other hand, the specific situation of women, economic immigrants, the unemployed and young people.

THE CONTEXT OF EVERYDAY RESISTANCE

THE central point is that the struggle can and must be built on and developed out of "the context of everyday resistance". In the areas in which this is taking place and in which people are no longer caught up in the criteria of traditional class concepts. At its most evident this is to be found among the militants of the anti-nuke movement, incorporating everyone from farmers to university professors.

To develop the struggle from within the context of day-to-day resistance also means, for instance, to attack a police station or town hall during a demo if an occupied house is being evicted and pulled down by the fire brigade; - to set fire to Springer's news stands and delivery vans if our printers are being arrested; - to hold steal-ins in stores if the cost of living rises (not forgetting the cash tills); - to strip KOBs (6) to their underpants and tie them to lamp-posts if they're snooping around too much (a sound thrashing would also do the trick); - or 'renovate' the practices of the gynaecologists (7) or fill them with offal from the slaughterhouse.



There are plenty of starting points, and fantasy knows no bounds. And practical solidarity is best proved through the burning down of firms which supply nuclear weapons to Iran or South Africa.

LEGALITY - WHOSE LEGALITY?

AND, of course, at this point, the other side will again raise the question of violence, legality and illegality.

Legality is whatever does not put the ruling order in danger. Illegality is whatever wants to do away with the capitalist order and, above all, act accordingly ...

Legality has no fixed proportions. Legality is a question of power. Under the Third Reich laws were created for everything. What happened happened within the bounds of the law. It's no different today. Whoever respects the law as such, at some time or another will respect the legality of fascism.

So we are not of those who would define what in this state is legal and what is not.

..... (8)

ON THE VIOLENCE QUESTION

THE question of violence is in itself superfluous. Daily reading of the newspapers will show clearly where violence comes from ... We, that is all of us who are, or wish to be, no longer compatible with this state, must learn to understand that, in the pursuit of our needs and interests, we cannot relinquish the armed revolutionary groups because of the presence of a state armed to the teeth. In this respect we have to make it absolutely clear that a violent conflict with the state cannot be avoided. This must be understood as a political necessity, if not as a fetish.

HOW GO ON?

"The movement as such, without reference to the goal pursued, the movement as aim in itself, is nothing to us, the goal is everything!" (Rosa L.)

We don't all ignore one another. And why should we?

If we want to advance, we shall be obliged to arrive eventually at the point where resistance is no longer to be separated from resistance, where comrades no longer feel it necessary this: to make divisions between different forms of resistance. We should realise that within the manifold layers of conflict we do not only have mutual needs but are also dependent on one another. Only uncompromising struggle at all levels will lead to a situation in which, in actual practice, we are 'one big family'; in which, at least within the undogmatic left, our differences are nailed to the wood of history and left-wing philistinism, thoughts of rivalry and acts of hostility have been overcome.

FOR AN OFFENSIVE WAR IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE!!

FOR THE ORGANISATION OF TOTAL RESISTANCE - HERE AND NOW!!

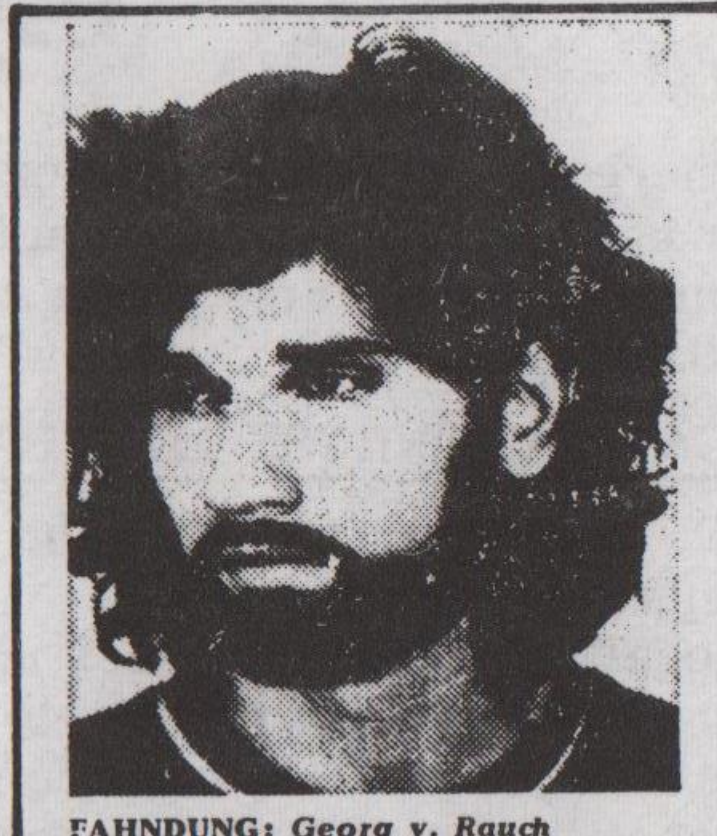
FOR A REVOLUTIONARY GUERRILLA MOVEMENT!!!

- RGO - Revolutionary Guerrilla Opposition from the bankrupt's estate of the 2 June Movement. (Spontius Baer, Rowdy Rebell, Carlos Caballo, Satan der Weisse and Tarzan Stepke!) - all from Moabit prison (CUNT 1976)

Berlin blues



Gesucht wird: Baumann



FAHNDUNG: Georg v. Rauch

Wie alles anfang (How it all began), 'Bommi' Baumann, Pulp Press, Canada 1977. Trans. Helene Ellenbogen & Wayne Parker, \$3.50. Orig. ed. 1975, Trikont Verlag, Munich.

THAT this is such a belated review of *Wie alles anfang* has its advantages; not least that it has provided the opportunity of setting the book in a little more perspective than would otherwise have been possible.

The American translators are themselves, perhaps inevitably, enthusiastic about it - "the best thing", they say, "we have seen on the personal development, motivation and the daily realities of the urban guerrilla". This may well be. But it's a pity that it should be so, and that there's nothing else so far to compare with it - unless one includes the 'confessions' of Hans-Joachim Klein. As it is, we know that the 2 June Movement has rejected the book as essentially false. (It denies, for instance, that the guerrilla group destroyed itself, as Baumann claims, through its extreme self-isolation and that it had continued to be extraordinarily active after Baumann's separation from it, as illustrated, say, by the planning and method of the Lorenz kidnapping).

This isn't the place to go into a history of the publishers' and the general left-liberal struggle with the law to get the book into general circulation in Germany. FREEDOM has reported on the Trikont case in the past and it wouldn't be worth repeating the facts now. But some mention should be made of the English language edition which, unlike the original, carries statements by Heinrich Boell and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, as well as the translators' own foreword.

In fact the foreword provides a curious contrast with the two German statements at the end. Heinrich Boell remains the inveterate liberal, above all concerned to promote the book for the way it will put off 'young people who ... are toying with Underground and anarchist ideas'. It's a very unpleasant statement to me. Cohn-Bendit, who was instrumental in the campaign to get the book re-published after its initial confiscation, is entirely uncritical of Baumann's 'masterpiece'. As opposed to this, the translators' foreword tends to a glorification of the German underground as a whole. It displays a singular lack of political acumen in commenting that "The recent assassination of Siegfried Buback, the chief political prosecutor in the German Federal Republic, is a good example of the failure of the State apparatus, and the growth of armed struggle in Germany today". (There are examples of such a failure, and of such growth, but this is not one of them). It also provides a case of that disturbing Newspeak we attack so bitterly in our opponents but use far too often in our own propaganda - the kind that refers, as here, to the 'murder' of Ulrike Meinhof

and the 'assassination' (or 'execution') of Siegfried Buback.

And finally, the blurb on the back is confusing to say the least. Can it really be true that Bommi 'left the June 2nd Movement and the urban guerrilla struggle in 1972, and went underground to write this book'?

Michael Baumann comes from a working class family who emigrated to West from East Germany when he was still very young. The main interest of his book lies, as the publishers point out, in its description of the stages of his, and his friends', drift, over the turn of the decade, into urban guerrilla activity. He started out as a construction worker, but could find no satisfaction in a job that wasn't a craft any more but "more and more a screw driver operation". He found pleasure instead in rock and blues and long hair - all of which put him beyond the pale of established society and against authority, without that necessarily being his intention. But it was out of this primarily physical attachment to the hippy scene that he came into contact with left wing ideas. After joining the socialist student federation, SDS, he met the people of K1, Berlin's first commune - people who were more approachable than the straight political types and who had the "right connection of politics and counter-culture", and a concrete alternative in collective living. Some of these were to form the nucleus of the 2 June Movement.

'Bommi' got involved in K1, but the euphoria didn't last - in his view because it took too long to make a proper alternative movement out of it; because, therefore, it collapsed from isolation and inability to communicate with similar groups. (This would form the basis for his criticism of the later guerrilla movement also).

K1 was his apprenticeship. These were the days of the satirical 'happenings' that have been mainly associated with Fritz Teufel (now languishing in Moabit prison), and which were to have their effect on people like Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader. The burning of the department store in Frankfurt by these and other subsequent RAF founder members (an act which could be traced back, at least in part, to the influence of Teufel's 'Burn, Warehouse, Burn!') led to a split in the left. K1 itself published an open letter of disassociation in *Spiegel* with which Bommi could not agree.

This division increased with the police killing of Benno Ohnesorg on 2 June 1967 during a demonstration against the Shah of Iran; this and the attempted killing of Rudi Dutschke, after a vicious campaign against him in the Springer press, were to have a marked effect on the 'first generation' of guerrilla fighters in Germany. "It did a crazy thing to me", says Baumann, who left K1 for the Wieland Commune where he became friends with the anarchists Georg von Rauch and Tommy Weisbecker. Here, among many other things, they pirate-printed Bakunin's *Collected Works*, and lived on store rip-offs of caviar and champagne. Here the "first urban guerrilla cell" was formed from a smaller group within the commune, and began experimenting with bombs.

Then the Wieland Commune too dissolved and the era of the 'hash rebels' (69/70) took over. Things were moving rapidly. The underground anti-authoritarian paper 883 was founded at this time, and with it the ironically named Central Committee of Roaming Hash Rebels became associated.

They mixed Bakunin with a strong dash of Black and White Panther and with Mao (particularly his reference to the robber bands from which came the first cadres of the Red Army). From the Central Committee came the Blues, "half counter-culture, half political underground". Some of the group came to London to study the "whole English scene" and in particular what was happening with the release houses for drug addicts - the London example leading to the creation of Hamburg Release, but on a different plane from the Blues. Then there was Jordan/Palestine and the guerrilla training camps. Efforts were meanwhile made to continue the half legal, half illegal Blues, but in the end to no avail. Then the RAF came into prominence; then the 2 June out of remnants of the Blues.

There's no room to focus on any but the main points which may be gleaned from Baumann's account of the origins of the urban guerrilla movement. The first, of which he's very much aware, even though this hasn't altered his own use of exceptionally make chauvinist language in the book, is that the Blues were a "terrible men's sect" and that the oppressive treatment of the women contributed to its collapse.



"So we went in early in the morning and there happened to be snow flurries, totally favourable weather. Of course, we had dressed up so noticeably that we almost died laughing when we saw ourselves in the glass in front of the bank. Our own masquerade was just so impossible again!" (Cartoon and quote from the book).

Another point is the radical left's political machismo, which the writer refers to in the context of the burning of the Frankfurt store. Baumann detects rivalry among the groups, based on the principle that "whoever does the heaviest action determines the direction". It is this form of machismo with which he explains the drift into the guerrilla. "The irrational pressure to achieve was brought in, which in the final analysis remains abstract, because it's a matter of self-assertion, and it makes the thing increasingly serious and humourless. That's why the action form of 'happenings' failed: not only because of the opposition, but also because of the internal pressure to achieve. So the individual's capacity to achieve was overridden, manoeuvring one further and further into situations in which you didn't know beforehand if you could make it through".

There were also, of course, political as well as cultural and psychological differences between the groups, which can be illustrated by those between RAF and 2 June (even though much between them was and is interchangeable). Politically the RAF have emphasised the anti-imperialist world struggle, while the Blues/2 June have given more importance to the search for new life forms, development of 'concrete utopias', direct work in the factories and community within the FRG and particularly within Berlin. But also the RAF "vanished into apartments in new developments, with short hair and fat cars outside the door, and they had shooting irons in their hands". The Blues "never operated with weapons, never had any, just placed bombs or threw molotovs during street fights". They believed that "logistics have to be simplified, universal. Like the skeleton key in your pocket"; made of everyday, ordinary materials. Their attitude to violence, he believed, was more 'healthy', more natural and spontaneous, less puritanical and dependent on technology, wittier. But the RAF saw the Blues as fools and dilettantes "who handled things in a totally unserious way, and were unpolitical crazies". The RAF were dead straight. No comic strip, quasi-dadaist lingo. No rattling around in a car labelled CAREFUL, DYNAMITE TRANSPORTER! that actually is ...

"Our group", Baumann goes on, "was made up of proletarians. The majority were workers, except for Georg and three or four others who were students. RAF, on the other hand, had only a few workers, and were purely a student group at the core, all intellectuals. The problem of violence was dealt with differently".

It is on violence that Baumann finally takes issue with the whole guerrilla movement. Rauth's death, witnessed by him, began to change his mind. In his book he condemns the RAF's "insane bombing campaign against God and the world",

which he attributes to pressure from the left to prove they were political fighters rather than merely 'criminal' bank robbers. He equally condemns as Manson-type murder the killing by the Black June Commando of the student grass Ulrich Schmucker. In the final chapter, while justifying his past actions as right at the time, he makes an oddly simplistic division between 'terror or love' with love as the new element of 'revolutionary praxis'. Nowhere, with all his previous emphasis on the concrete does he show what he means by this in real terms. And he falls into the danger of interpreting 'terrorism' as a form of suppressed sexuality, a theory already beloved of the establishment intelligentsia - especially where women are concerned!

Baumann's book is interesting, for the lay person at least, and I feel he makes some valid and worthwhile points. But one must remember that there is nothing else so far with which to compare it and that, after all, he leaves only a confused and ambiguous idea of himself and the alternative he has chosen (and of which - who knows? - we may one day know more). He has also left only a very patchy idea of the theoretical basis of the Blues/2 June - but this may be because it is patchy - and his references to anarchism are very much those of the black hat and bomb caricature, with some black magic thrown in.

Since writing this book Baumann has remained at large, while giving various clandestine interviews to the mass press. He has not, it seems, denounced his former friends (most of them dead or in prison), and expresses sympathy for them while continuing to oppose guerrilla actions (Buback, Schleyer, Moro etc). Oddly, his descriptions of the intentions of the group he belonged to, as mentioned in *Stern*, June '78, seem to have shifted emphasis, i.e. "we saw ourselves as the Fifth Column of the Third World and were fairly indifferent about the working masses" how on earth does this tally with his earlier references to the influence of Lotta Continua or Gauche Proletarienne and finding "a militant solution to work conflicts in the factories"? He now also contributes to general anti-terrorist hysteria by warning the state of the danger of nuclear blackmail by guerrillas.

Such interviews or statements by ex-guerrillas like Baumann, Klein or Mahler invariably leave a bad taste in the mouth. Not because of the fact of their having abandoned the guerrilla struggle, but because of the way they lend themselves (regardless of actual individual denunciations) to the interests of the mass media and establishment in general.

Klein, current protege of Satre and Cohn-Bendit, has recently attributed to the Revolutionary Cells a key role in a whole series of raids, massacres and hijackings with the Palestinians, and called Wilfried Boese the 'leader' of the Revolutionary Cells. Given that they are, as described in the press, "more anarchist than Marxist-Leninist, that they 'do not make an absolute principle of clandestine activity', and that 'they advocate the creation of further revolutionary cells to which full political autonomy in the choice of individual actions is conceded'" (*Espresso*) Klein's portrayal of them appears not only remarkably one-sided but highly confusing. Given also that he has, without qualification, attributed Ulrike Meinhof's suicide to the torment inflicted on her by Gudrun Ensslin (which isn't necessarily to deny there were bitter arguments) one can only hope that Sartre's Help-Klein bank account will enable him to stop giving press interviews in the future ... And what can one say of ex-RAF member Horst Mahler, whose sorry performance we can read if not in the conservative pages of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* than in the libertarian ones of *Solidarity for Social Revolution*. This man, no doubt instrumental in winning several young people to the RAF as well as writing some of their tracts, abandoned them shortly afterwards for a complete espousal of everything he and they justifiably criticised about the dogmatic left. This repentant sage of Tegel prison is now so safe, and such a star example to liberals of the way you can get out of the guerrilla scene, that a campaign is underway for his release on parole while former co-defendants die and rot all over the place.

Which again, is not to attack dissent per se from guerrilla war, but the way it is done, and the evident bankruptcy of the alternatives, if any, that have been chosen.

Gaia

From 'On the Concept of the Urban Guerrilla', June 1971

- "We do not say that one can replace legal proletarian organisations by these illegal resistance groups, the class struggle by isolated acts, political work in the factories and neighbourhoods by armed struggle. We maintain only that the development and success of one supposes the other. We are neither Blanquists nor anarchists, although we hold Blanqui to be a great revolutionary and we in no way despise the heroism of a number of anarchists".

- "There can be no process of unification (of socialist intellectuals and workers) without a revolutionary initiative, without the practical intervention of an avant-garde formed by workers and socialist intellectuals, without a concrete anti-imperialist struggle. We maintain that an alliance between them can only be realised through a common struggle, whereby the most conscious fraction of the workers and intellectuals does not direct the 'mise en scene' but gives the example."

- "The Red Army Fraction affirms the primacy of the practical. It is right to organise armed resistance, if it is possible to do so, and it is by practical experience that this will be decided."

- "We haven't yet had one year of experience. That's too short a time to want already to be judging the result".

- "Urban guerrilla struggle starts from the principle that there is no ready made way by which hypothetical revolutionaries will lead people, in Prussian order, into revolutionary struggle. Urban guerrilla warfare starts out from the fact that it will be too late to think of armed struggle when the situation is ripe. It is based on the observation that, even when capitalist development has created better conditions than those prevailing today, there will be no revolutionary orientation without revolutionary initiatives in a country like Federal Germany where the potential for violence is so strong and the revolutionary traditions so weak. Urban guerrilla warfare is the result of the long negation of parliamentary democracy by its own representatives; it is the inevitable response to the emergency laws and the law on grenades; it is the readiness to fight the system with the means the system uses to crush its adversaries. Urban guerrilla warfare is based on the recognition of the facts and not on their mythification.

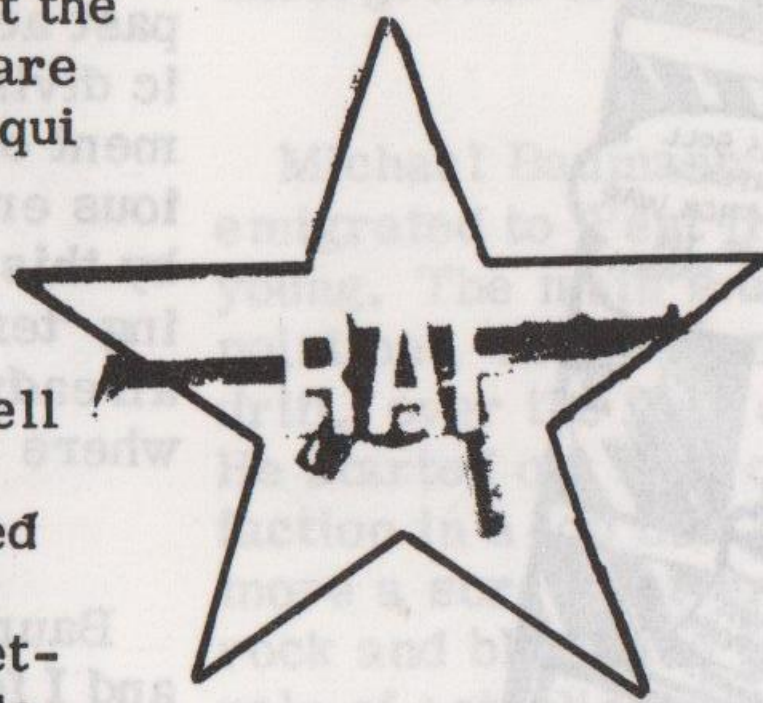
"The student movement already knew in part the potential for urban guerrilla struggle. This can give concrete shape to the agitation and propaganda to which left-wing work is still limited. It is viable for the anti-Springer campaign ... for the occupation of houses in Frankfurt, for the military aid supplied by the federal republic to the compradores regimes of Africa, for class justice and the prison system, for the employers' police and justice in the factory. Urban guerrilla warfare can give concrete form to proletarian internationalism by supplying arms and money --- Urban guerrilla warfare aims at touching the State apparatus in precise areas, putting it out of working order, destroying the myth of the omnipresence and invulnerability of the system".

- "To choose urban guerrilla struggle is to refuse to become demoralised by the violence of the system".

From 'On the Armed Struggle in Western Europe', July 1971

- "Unlike putchism, terrorism is no political short cut, but the point of departure for political work; the guerrilla must become a school of political training, forging the revolutionary cadres, elaborating on the spot the transitional programme which is to be adapted to the level of consciousness of the masses and recreating it constantly as this level rises, by means of the struggle".

- "When the enemy is obliged to gather together its forces to contain the oppressed classes, that is not a bad but a good thing; it shows that the proletariat is clouting its class enemy with effect. Fascism is a great evil, the greatest of all capitalist evils. But fear of fascism is already part of its victory. The proletariat must not fear it but fight it and repare for the fight. It would be quite false to renounce, through fear of fascism, the superior forms of class struggle; this would



Letter to 'N'

mean abandoning the field to capitalism without a struggle, guaranteeing its domination until, through its contradictions, it draws humanity into a catastrophe that will end in barbarism ... That would be suicide through fear of death ..."

- Trans. from the French, *La 'Bande à Baader' ou la violence révolutionnaire*, éditions Champ Libre 1972; orig. ed. Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, Berlin 1971.

TO your death the press paid relatively little attention. One respectable French paper even remarked on the lack of emotion it aroused. After all, there had been many deaths by now. And then again, every day and night, someone somehow dies in gaol.

I don't know and it doesn't matter, why later on you and that death of yours began to haunt me ... Maybe knowing someone who had known you very well and who made you more real; maybe a piece written about you during those summer nights in Berlin when you all stood talking and laughing together at the windows (it was before the age of the security blinds); about your gaiety, your 'unrelenting strength and energy', your readiness to talk with people, your 'patience' (certainly it was a piece which implied your political and intellectual superiority over the ex-prisoner who wrote it!); or photographs I saw or letters I read - letters not meant just for anyone but which told me in a few lines more about the insanity of the world than I had learned in years - as many, almost, as yours - of objectively knowing it. But at the same time they rubbed salt into the running sore of my ignorance, and of my terrible curiosity. I hadn't known you then but now almost did, I hardly thought about you while you lived and couldn't tolerate your death. It amazed and infuriated me in a peculiarly egoistic way. I who had never lifted more than a finger to help you, when you died, was drinking Dutch gin and exchanging jokes in a restaurant far to the north, across the sea. I was angry at first only with you....

What had you been really thinking? Reports written for public consumption were, not surprisingly, different from letters. Their at least seeming refusal to accept criticism troubled me, yet their very harshness attracted and challenged. I see that there were reasons for your anger and contempt with the critics of the legal left and their protégés still in hiding. When I look back on things I myself have said or written, and which have sometimes been reprinted, I regret their facility and ignorance. It would have been better to criticise on the basis of the RAF texts themselves.

The charges against RAF of 'vanguardism', 'elitism', 'militarism', 'authoritarianism' all have to be placed in context. Otherwise they are mere empty labels. Nor is it good enough to do as anarchists have done and simply regurgitate - sometimes at length - the old anarchist arguments against the old Marxist ones. That is to miss the point. While RAF may have based itself on the criteria of Marxist-Leninism it took from many sources (though its scant references to anarchism seem to show a complete misunderstanding or ignorance of it), and its whole philosophy hinges upon the rejection of Marxist determinism.

The RAF texts of 1971 are explicit in their belief, shared by anarchists, in the necessity for voluntaristic action, the 'revolutionary initiative', the 'practical intervention', without

which no revolutionary struggle can mature sufficiently to take advantage of the crisis when it really comes. The guerrillas are there not to make the revolution itself but to prepare the ground for it, act as point of transition. They are a vanguard, yes, but not from a basic desire to lord it over others; they are a pragmatic vanguard, working deliberately towards their own redundancy. RZ (the Revolutionary Cells), reputedly more anarchist, in their current battle cry to build cells everywhere, do no more than RAF of old in foreseeing an initial revolutionary phase of decentralised, independent, commando groups undertaking commando actions, establishing relations among themselves and coordinating what they do in such a way that they can dispose of their forces effectively and economically.

When one looks back on these texts one can't help but wonder at the way RAF has become characterised by its obsession with third worldism, by its spectacular clashes with the super-structure or, indeed, by its supposed task of actively encouraging fascism. Like 2 June or RZ, RAF sees the necessity for militia groups rooted in the factories and community. For the need for popular support as pre-requisite of success. And it sees fascism not as a dragon to be taunted from its lair, but as one which cannot be allowed to just go on lying there as a pretext for doing nothing.

As I understand it from a libertarian point of view, the real problem is the distinction RAF draws between the guerrilla commandos and the militia. Each have their own functions; the militia works at ground level, locally, and calls upon the 'real commandos' when needed to cope with emergencies. It is in this distinction between the two groups, and not in the existence per se of the guerrilla, that the seeds of elitism lie, and the consequent danger that the commandos will lose touch with their people on the ground. Even while still talking in terms of independence, self-determination, and equality a de facto leadership will surely emerge from this situation, and will be reinforced, moreover, by the individualist and sensationalist attitude of the press. (And is it untrue that this also happened among you in prison, some setting the correct line for others under the heading of survival, and casting off those who would not conform?)

The other main point as I understand it is that while it was ok for old Marxists not to elaborate upon their ultimate goal - a stateless communism achieved through the state - as long as they remained comfortably and safely determinist, inured in a quasi-religious dogmatism, this cannot apply to voluntarist methods. Once you have decided to get up and go somewhere you have to be less vague about where you're actually going ... Towards a free, anti-imperialist, truly communist society maybe, but merely be the overthrow of the bourgeois and imperialist state. Isn't there much more to it than that? RAF doesn't say.

Thus, while rejecting the old dogmatism you hadn't thrown it off completely; those bits of it that still clung to your guerrilla gear impeded the general effectiveness of your action. Things were not thought through all the way. At least that's what strikes me when I see RAF catapult straight out of its texts into direct confrontation on the highest and most abstract level Where then, while these grand gestures are made, are the grass-roots militia, the alliance being cemented between guerrillas and workers in factories, schools, hospitals, community at large? Had they really been given a chance?

The abstraction itself spelt death; how could it at that level break through the psychological barrier dividing you, and us, from people in general? And as the long agony and humiliation began, much of the left forsook you. Debate became confined, on the whole, to internal prison memoranda. Later 'communiques' from commando groups outside were parodies of what had been; their actions were technically competent but introspective, unrelated to the fundamental aims. To achieve the necessary psychological break they should have been more concrete, specific and localised, appealing more to the wit and imagination.

It comes down to a question not of violence/non-violence, but of the kind of violence, at least where exemplary actions are concerned. Among anarchists Malatesta understood this perfectly. Rather than say the end justifies the means, say every end needs its means. Since morality (a profoundly revolutionary motivation!) must be sought in the ends, the means are determined. Thus 'to have found the right means, herein lies the whole secret of great men and parties that have left

their mark on history". Malatesta recognised that the revolution must of necessity be violent and illegal, but that the violence had also to be liberating.

Which brings me back to the darkness of objective where RAF is concerned ... Are we sure we know what one another wants?

RAF was all up in the sky about anti-fascism and anti-imperialism, Vietnam and Palestine, and I think that to it has so far failed, not by my criteria as an anarchist so much as by its own. Yet what it has achieved is considerable.

And I don't mean the 'tearing off the mask' for which RAF has been praised or condemned, but the fact that the complacency has gone, or relatively, that the doubts and questions have grown, that a whole country has lost its fat smile.

From a revolutionary point of view there can be no question of its success in generating new and increased offensives and, in however indirect a way, debate. What you have done, and become, has shaken us to the core. We couldn't ignore you even if we had wanted to. We are learning from your experience and at your expense, and we must be aware that that is so.

In West Germany today the Revolutionary Cells are the most active, and no doubt the most successful of the guerrilla groups. An element of the success is illustrated by the fact that at a time when 18 actions alone this year have been attributed to them, the authorities are at a loss to know quite what they are and so how to deal with them. RZ have a paper in which they express their ideas and discuss how they can be carried out. (It had to go underground but it circulates). They seem so far to have maintained the loose, decentralised, autonomous, grass roots structure that makes it so hard to identify them. One reason for this must be that they have resisted the temptation to attract the press through particularly spectacular acts. For the story of RAF must, to some extent, be a story of high drama exploited by the press rather than vice versa, and that the press made them into their own pet monsters, and thus into their victims. While RZ have gone for more modest targets, mainly property, but on a very broad scale, causing many millions of marks of damage and directly relating it to concrete social issues at local level. The sensitive cord between legality and illegality has not snapped. The essential dialogue with the radical and undogmatic left has been kept up. The perspective has not been lost on everyday life. But it was the RAF example that gave them much of their initial impetus.

I believe that if the guerrilla struggle is to continue and spread - and, related to this, not cost so much in human terms - it must be on the RZ rather than RAF level; and further, that groups should develop their own specific interests, become largely specialists in particular social, economic, ecological areas over anything from prisons and multi-nationals to the sea! They must be totally autonomous. They can't afford to be less than shrewd or psychologically cunning. They must not allow themselves to be put on the defensive. The issues dealt with must be real to the people in the environment in which they operate. The state can never be destroyed, or even really dented, by the seeming image of itself. Rather than a machine the state is an amorphous kind of shadow. A shadow to be quenched by light, far more than a machine to be put out of working order by another....

Already a year has passed. Of this the tv thoughtfully reminds us. We're again shown film of the Stuttgart funeral, the burial place set apart from the rest and strewn 'misguidedly' with fresh flowers. And there too is the hesitantly smiling face of Manfred Rommel, mayor of Stuttgart - if only young people would be more reasonable

A year later and the circumstances of what happened are still obscure. People who could have thrown some light have refused. Disturbing questions of detail have not been answered. I think of all the years you spent, while I wasted my life outside, you who had always been so full of energy and anxious to do things, struggling for sheer preservation of dignity. I see you in that special 'security' cell ideal for 'suicide' and the old pain and astonishment swells inside. There are times, they say, when a part of oneself dies with someone else. It might be just as true that a part also starts to live, no longer fearing death as it once did, and in cool anger, in one's own way, N, intent on avenging you and those you loved.

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