

FREEDOM

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A WREATH FOR FRANCO

Inscription above Carabanchel prison entrance:

I CAN AFFIRM WITHOUT FEAR OF ERROR, THAT ANYONE WHO HAS VISITED THE PRISONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, AND COMPARED THEM WITH OURS, WILL NOT HAVE FOUND INSTITUTIONS AS EQUITABLE, CHRISTIAN OR HUMANE AS THOSE ESTABLISHED BY OUR MOVEMENT. --Francisco Franco.

"NOT ONE or two, but five or ten turns of the handle are necessary before the victim stops screaming or wriggling. Not one or two minutes are necessary but ten or twenty." The executioner snaps the collar shut and turns the handle. Two turns are supposed to be enough. But it has rarely been enough. "The inexperience or nerves of the executioner more often than not turns the execution into a prolonged and horrifying spectacle."

--Sr. Daniel Suerio on the garotte, quoted in the Daily Mirror 25.9.75.

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FROM THE beginning of the war to



ARTHUR MOYSE

June 30, 1938 there were 1,167 bombardments by Franco rebels against civil opulations (an average of 1.5 each day over two years). Madrid had been bombarded 151 times, Barcelona 93, Valencia 79. The War in Spain (United Editorial).

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"THE REPUBLIC has been proclaimed in Spain. It is the duty of all, at the present time, to co-operate with their discipline and allegiance so that peace may reign and the Nation be permitted to direct itself through the natural judicial channels."

--Franco's order to the military academy at Zaragoza (praised by Marshal Petain) on the proclamation of the Spanish Republic 14.4.31.

IN 1934 under the Republic, Franco was recalled from exile in the Balearic Islands to put down 'left-wing risings' in Madrid, Catalonia and Asturias.

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"FRANCO RETURNED to his native

DEATH OF A WARRIOR

CIPRIANO MERA, veteran of the Spanish civil war, has died. He was a building worker, and a member of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) and the Federación Anarquista Iberica (FAI).

Mera's name first "hit the headlines" in 1933. Following the elections in November, and the formation of a so-called "centre" coalition government under Lerroux, there was a considerable intensification of the class struggle in many parts of Spain. In Madrid, the telephone workers - members of the CNT - went on strike. Spontaneous strikes broke out elsewhere, including a general strike in Valencia. But the greatest struggle was in Saragossa (Zaragoza), which lasted for fifty-seven days. The employers were, since the election of "their" government, determined to lower wages, while the landlords raised rents and evicted tenants. Many of the workers decided to send their wives and children away to Barcelona by rail; but the Gardia Civil fired on the train, and prevented it from leaving the station.

On December 8, the CNT-FAI went on the offensive. They organised a revolutionary committee, which included

land (c. 1930) after nearly fourteen years of constant warfare. He seemed to have borne a charmed life. Not 10% of his officers had survived his campaigns." The Spanish Arena (Right Book Club).

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ON JULY 29th, 1936 when interview-

ed by the News Chronicle in Tetuan Franco was asked, "How long, now that your coup has failed in its objectives, is the massacre to go on?"

Franco replied, "There can be no compromise, no truce. I shall go on preparing my advance to Madrid. I shall advance. I shall take the capital. I shall save Spain from Marxism at whatever cost."

To the further question by the correspondent, "This means that you will have to shoot half Spain?" Franco replied, "I repeat, at whatever cost."

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Noel Monks of the Daily Express visiting Guernica at daybreak on April 27th, 1937 saw 600 bodies of victims of the German-Italian-Franco bombing, "nurses, children, farmers, old women, girls, old men, babies". He expressed the belief that 1,000 civilians had been killed. The insurgents have always disclaimed responsibility, putting it down to 'Red arson'. Fleeing refugees were machine-gunned.

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Isaac Puente and Cipriano Mera. Under the direction of this committee, the workers fought for several days against the civil police, reinforced by the Army and backed up by tanks. The FAI proclaimed Comunismo Libertario. About sixty workers were killed, many wounded, and over 700 were jailed. Some while after, Cipriano Mera moved to Madrid.

In June and July, 1936, Generals Franco and Mola, supported by the great landowners, the big bourgeoisie and, of course, the Church, were preparing their military uprising against the Spanish Republic. Not a day went by without someone being murdered. And in Valencia, on July 11, the Falangists seized the radio station, and announced: "The Spanish Falange has seized this transmitter by force of arms. Tomorrow the same will happen throughout Spain." Huge demonstrations against Fascism were held. But it was in Madrid that conflict became most acute. There, the smell of civil war was already in the air.

Since early February, Madrid had been affected by many strikes. The

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DEATH OF A WARRIOR

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capital had hitherto been the stronghold of the reformist-socialist Union General de Trabajadores (UGT), but the CNT had been making enormous headway, by its greater militancy, over the preceding months. The young, aggressive, anarcho-syndicalists of the CNT-FAI emerged as the "leaders of the vanguard" of the Madrid working-class; and among them the building workers' representatives, David Antona, Teodoro Mera and, particularly, Cipriano Mera, were the most militant.

On June 1, the Madrid building workers began an "indefinite" strike, which at that stage was jointly organised by the CNT and the UGT. The employers resisted to the utmost. Nevertheless, the workers fought back. As they and their families began to starve, they forced the petit-bourgeois shopowners to supply them with food; they also seized a number of large restaurants. The petit-bourgeoisie took fright. But the police were helpless against mass pickets. The Falangists began to try out their methods of counter-revolutionary violence by attacking isolated workers. The CNT and the building workers' union, under Cipriano Mera, formed a Central Defence Committee, which took over complete control of the strike, and organised detachments of armed workers. These were, in fact, embryo militias.

The government attempted to resolve the strike, and made a few minor

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FROM A letter from Franco to the Duke of Alba for transmission to Prime Minister Churchill, 18 October 1944:

"I find it quite natural that great differences have existed until now between the attitude of Great Britain and the Spanish attitude, Spain being neutral, and therefore freer from commitments and more dispassionate, but as the war proceeds our identity of interests becomes clearer as do the preoccupations with the future apparent in the speeches, declarations, comments and journeys of the Prime Minister."

MEMO TO German Ambassador, Madrid: Conditions for Spain's entry into the war (8 August, 1940):

(1) Fulfilment of a set of national territorial demands, Gibraltar, French Morocco, part of Algeria ... (Oran), and further the enlargement of Rio D' Oro and of the colonies in the Gulf of Guinea.

FRANCO in a Letter to Mussolini 15. August, 1940:

"... Spain in addition to the contribution which she made to the establishment of the New Order, through our years of hard struggle, offers another [contribution] in preparing herself to take her place in the struggle against the common enemies."

(edited by J.R.)

concessions. These appeared to satisfy the local leadership of the UGT, who ordered their members back to work. The CNT, however, decided to continue the struggle. It now became a trial of strength between a section of the workers (supported by other workers) and the State. The CNT denounced the UGT leadership as scabs and strike-breakers. The Falangists stepped up their attacks on workers; and members of Mera's Defence Committee retaliated by machine-gunning the local Falangist headquarters. The police then closed down the building workers' union office, and arrested Antona and Mera. But the strikers, with a newly-elected Defence Committee, continued to fight the UGT leaders, the police and the Falangists. They would not give in.

Meanwhile, the CNT leaders, nationally, were demanding of the government that it "arm the people" against the inevitable Fascist and military uprising.

ON THE NIGHT of July 17-18, the army began its rebellion. General Franco left Las Palmas by aeroplane. On the morning of July 18, the government was forced to admit that "part of the army had revolted in Morocco". The same day, troops in Málaga and Seville rebelled. The government still refused to arm the people, even after being requested by the veteran "socialist", Largo Caballero. That evening, the CNT, followed by the UGT, gave orders for a general strike. Generals Franco and Mola soon achieved victories in Algeciras, Cádiz, Cordova and Seville, where hundreds of workers and their families were massacred by Franco's forces. The rebel generals went on to capture Saragossa; and, soon after, General Mola took Oviedo, an anarchist stronghold. But in Barcelona and Madrid, the generals were not successful. Barcelona, another anarchist stronghold, soon put down the revolt.

By July 18, the whole of the CNT-FAI in Madrid were on a "war footing". The building workers had recaptured - by force of arms - their headquarters. The next day, David Antona and Cipriano Mera were released from prison; and Antona, secretary of the CNT national committee, immediately went to the Ministry of the Interior and demanded that all workers and militants be released from the jails, otherwise the CNT and FAI would attack them and release the militants themselves. The prisoners were released. A general strike began. Some left-wing socialists unearthed some arms, and distributed them to the workers. The first barricades went up. Rifle fire was exchanged with a few Fascists who had been hiding in a convent. Organised by Mera and others, the first workers' militias were already patrolling the streets, though none of the soldiers had moved from the local barracks.

In the Montaña, all was quiet.

During the night of the 19-20 July, many churches were set alight. And in the morning the workers went on the offensive. Enormous crowds assembled in the Plaza de España. At 10.00 a.m. the workers' militias, who had by then got hold of two 75-mm field-guns, shelled the Montaña barracks. After five hours, the militiamen broke into the building. Almost all the troops and their officers were killed.

While small detachments of workers were mopping up Fascist remnants in the streets of Madrid, hastily-armed militias, with captured arms, requisitioned cars and trucks and, commanded by Moro, Antona and Cipriano Mera, set off for Guadalajara which they soon captured, and then Toledo which, after a siege, they also captured. They then marched on Cuenca, under the direct leadership of Mera, which they recaptured from the Army rebels.

The Revolution and the Civil War had begun in earnest. The Republican government, of course, had no army; but the workers had created, literally within hours, a far more effective force: the militias. These were mainly organised by the anarchists and, to a lesser degree, the left-socialists. And these militias soon formed columns. In Barcelona, the central committee organised the first column, 3,000 strong, under Durruti. In Madrid, the "socialists" formed columns; but, as elsewhere, the driving force were CNT-FAI militants. Again, Cipriano Mera came to the fore. Alongside the anarchist column in Madrid was the Fifth Regiment, controlled by the UGT and the "socialists" and, as time went by, the Communists. The anarchist columns were primarily a "people in arms"; the Fifth Regiment, under Enrique Lister, was a far more disciplined force.

But early in October, the militias were dissolved. But even two months previously, Durruti, Garcia Oliver and Mera had demanded a unified militia organisation, though they still wanted to preserve election of officers, and a single pay scale. The Communists were demanding a "popular army". They got their way. Cipriano Mera became a Brigade commander.

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IT MUST be admitted that quite a number of these "anarchist" commanders, now in the State-organised "popular army", began to behave more like traditional officers than like anarchists. Unfortunately, Mera was among them. He is reported as saying: "From now on, an iron discipline... will be offered freely... From today, I will deal only with captains and sergeants"! As one writer (Vernon Richards) has observed, the colonel's uniform went to Mera's head. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Cipriano Mera became one of the Republican Army's best divisional officers. He defended Madrid to the last. Indeed, he was the only man who was there at the start - and the end.

After Christmas, 1936, the Fascists attempted to cut the Madrid-Corunna road. They were faced, right from the start, by a column led by the former anarchist, Valentine González (El Campesino) and another led by Cipriano Mera. The Fascist attacks continued throughout January, 1937, and in the end reinforcements - Lister's brigade and the XIVth International Brigade - were brought up. Mera's division ran out of ammunition. But the Generals' offensive against Madrid was halted. Early in March, Italian fascist troops arrived. On March 8, they attacked. But their morale was bad. They were held. Lister and Mera counter-attacked; and for a while the anti-Fascist forces, under Lister, El Campesino and Mera advanced. Mera's division dug in, and established themselves, along the Brihuega-Torija road.

Slowly, month after month, the Fascists captured more and more Republican territory. The Republic began to crumble. But still Madrid held on.

AS THE civil war dragged on, and the Republic lost more and more territory to Franco, so did Communist influence in the Republican government and the army become more dominant. They, with the support of the right-wing "socialists" and the other conservative elements on the Republican side, had long destroyed the revolutionary gains of the workers and peasants. And to their shame, a number of supposed anarchist leaders in both the government and the army had, in

varying degrees, accepted the situation. For some considerable time, Cipriano Mera had worked, and cooperated, with Communist commanders. But, like many other non-Communists, after the fall of Catalonia early in 1939, he had had enough.

On February 23, Colonel Casado, commander of the Army of the Centre in Madrid, together with the "socialist" Professor Besterio, and Cipriano Mera, the then commander of the IVth Army Group, came out against the pro-Communist government of Negrin. Casado banned the publication of the Madrid Communist newspaper, Mundo Obrero. The situation in the field was now hopeless. Casado, speaking of the devastation and starvation, insisted that the war must end. And Mera argued for "an honourable peace, based on justice and brotherhood", though he remained at his post. A junta was formed, while the Negrin "government" was in Elda in total isolation, and protected only by a tiny detachment of less than 30 Communist officers and other ranks. The Communists continued to make a show of resistance, but in fact abandoned their posts. By March 3, Casado told Mera to take command of the Central Army.

By March 6, most of the Communist commanders, such as Lister, and the Communist politicians, such as La Pasionaria, took flight. A few Communist army corps remained in the Madrid area; and on March 7, one of them, led by Colonel Barcelo, was attacked by Mera. A week of "civil war" within the Republican camp resulted in the death of 2,000

in Madrid alone. By the end of March, there was no Republican Army. The Casado junta, which, in desperation, hoped for "an honourable" peace with Franco, held its last meeting on March 27. Casado left Madrid by plane. Everyone who could get out left. And hours before the arrival of the Francoists, Cipriano Mera also left. There was nothing he could do. Republican Spain was finished.

MERA WAS, of course, criticised by some of his anarchist colleagues for throwing in his weight behind Casado. He was blamed for risking a "precipitous act", or a faux pas. He, like Federica Montseny and Garcia Oliver, was also criticised for abandoning social revolution for "collaboration" with the bourgeois State in order to defeat Fascism. However, Mera managed to escape to North Africa, where he spent the war years.

For some while, Cipriano Mera continued to support the "collaborationist" tendency of Garcia Oliver, Santillan and Montseny; but by the mid-sixties he more or less admitted that he had, in some ways, erred. In an interview, published by Presencia (November/December 1966), he does not justify his role, as a disciplinarian and commander in the Republican "popular army". In his old age, Cipriano Mera, once again, became a "purist" anarchist. He accepted that comunismo libertario was the only answer to Fascism and capitalism.

Peter E. Newell.

INDUSTRIAL

MENACE ON 4 WHEELS

UNLESS THE Labour Government mounts a financial rescue operation for Chrysler's, the American corporation will either pull out of car production in Britain or retain a much smaller labour force for assembling French and Spanish models. This means that 27,000 jobs are affected directly and another 40,000 employed by component makers.

As we all know, the capitalist system operates to make a profit. Chrysler themselves finally took over the ailing Rootes company in 1967. Since that time they have always been the poor relation among the car corporations. They, unlike Fords and General Motors, also had difficulties in the United States and so they are unwilling to continue to lose money in this country.

The Government faces a dilemma that after its financial intervention in Leyland, it might not be so keen to spend more public money even though this would save the majority of Chrysler's workers their jobs. Meanwhile the other big three must be rubbing their hands and seeking ways of how they can win a part of the 9 per cent of the British car market Chryslers currently holds. This might be all

right for the big three and their employees, but what about those men and women who will get sacked?

Obviously there are no easy answers to this question. People are just not at the moment buying enough cars and even then they were, the Chrysler car did not, in the opinion of the public, match up to other products. But cars, even before the oil crisis, are expensive, wasteful of raw materials, take up too much space for the number of passengers they carry, pollute the air we breathe and clog up our towns and cities. In other words, they are a menace.

Even before this menace on four wheels takes to the roads its manufacture enslaves thousands of people performing repetitive, boring, soul destroying tasks. Like so many products of the capitalist system, cars are not made for their usefulness, but for a profit. And the car manufacturers and the oil corporations are a very powerful group which can bring a lot of pressure on governments to carry out policies that suit their interests.

I don't think many workers will share the views now of Bob Morris,

convenor at the Coventry Stoke plant, when he said in 1974 that he would rather be unemployed than work for peanuts at Chryslers. But unemployment will always be a part of the workers' lot while we have people's skills and abilities exploited for a profit. The 'right to work' only means a continuation of exploitation by a minority, while a majority are subject to booms and recessions of our economic system. The 'right to work' means being given a job, rather than seeking out what needs to be done to satisfy our needs, instead of the artificial ones of our present system.

P. T.

THE "March to Spain" noted in our last issue was banned from making its way to the Spanish border. Demonstrators were halted 15 miles from the border.

THE GERMAN Federal High Court at Bonn upheld a decision to continue the Baader-Meinhof trial in the absence of the four defendants. The trial resumed at Stuttgart last Tuesday.

STUART CHRISTIE was barred from entering West Germany on his way to an anti-Franco rally at Offenbach. He was also ordered by the Dutch authorities to leave the Netherlands.

REVOLT IS NOT ENOUGH

IT IS IMPORTANT to bear in mind that the Spanish libertarian revolution was set in motion as a consequence of the Francoist attack which made it possible to put into action revolutionary forces which without it were condemned to new and sterile failures. And when we say "sterile failures" we are referring to the attempts made in January 1932, January and December 1933 (revolutionary and insurrectional attempts organised and manned by the CNT-FAI) to which one must add the Asturian miners' insurrection in October 1934 in which socialist, UGT and CNT workers (in spite of the stupid opposition of the national Comité of the CNT) and even Communists took part. All these attempts were crushed by the more powerful forces of the State, supported by the non-revolutionary political parties which, for all that, were not fascist.

This last point needs elaborating. The tactical concepts of anarchist-communism (and before it anarchist collectivism) implied, according to a tradition going back to the First International, the attack by, and the victory of, the people. Therefore the armed struggles which took place under the Second Spanish Republic corresponded to a doctrine of action theoretically established. This doctrine, which coincided with the teachings of Kropotkin and taken up by his disciples including the present writer, considered that local uprisings, the attempts, even sporadic and so numerous before the French Revolution, constituted a training, a revolutionary exercise in which the people learned to fight, and would end by winning the last hand. A little like Peter the Great's celebrated remark in face of the continued defeats inflicted on him by the Swedes: "By going on fighting they will teach us how to beat them."

Unfortunately there was no proletarian Poltava and what we have just recalled provides an explanation that should be borne in mind. If we return to all the factors that intervened in this chapter of history we are obliged to conclude that the defeat of the Spanish libertarian revolution was inevitable. For every social revolution provokes the cohesion of the threatened forces drawn together for exceptional reasons, and in spite of those which normally divide them. It is the lesson that we learn not only from the final defeat of the Spanish Revolution but of history when studied with a concern for the truth.

Apart from some contemporary exceptions which have anyway led to new form of oppression, generally speaking it is the political revolutions that have triumphed, but the same men or the same parties who were fighting amongst themselves for a change in the power structure became reconciled when they were faced with a popular movement which threatened their positions or their privileges. Thus in France, the revolution of February 1843 was simple: liberal bourgeois and workers joined forced to overthrow the monarchy of Louis Philippe. But everything was changed four months later when the workers wanted to introduce socialism. Then the liberal bourgeois allied themselves with the monarchists and Cavaignac, the republican general, struggled with all his might against the insurgent workers.

Other social revolutions, or those which had a definite social content, whether it was the Commune of Paris, or the Peasant War in Germany in which Luther was allied to the nobility in provoking them to the wholesale massacre of the serfs in revolt, or again the Hussite movement in Bohemia, and all the peasant risings in the Middle Ages, are all a repetition of the same facts. One must go back to Egypt in 2200-2000 B.C. to find a victorious social revolution. and even then, two centuries later - probably even before that - a new dynasty had been enthroned and the castes re-established.

Bakunin himself wrote eighteen months before his death, thereby confirming what Elisée Reclus had written to him: "You are right, the day of revolutions is past, we have entered that of evolution." And he explained his opinion by recalling not only the terrible defeats suffered by European revolutionaries in the course of nearly half a century of heroic struggles, but in face of the scientifically organised military power of modern states, and the lack of revolutionary spirit, or desire for emancipation among the masses.

To be sure this latter consideration did not apply to the Spanish people, or at least to that large, dynamic section which made history. But facts oblige us to recognise that the Kropotkinian thesis, to some extent in opposition to the posthumous theses of Bakunin, Elisée Reclus and even of Proudhon, has not been borne out by experience. For fascist totalitarianism, which in Italy after World War I was answering back at a long period of disturbances which did not end in revolution, made its historical appearance. And fascism is the "preventive counter-revolution" of those who are threatened by subversion, even when it is incapable of changing the social order. The people themselves end by preferring the suppression of political and civic liberty to permanent disorder which, let us face it, is also an attack on freedom if only of living a normal life.

There is therefore the danger in pursuing these revolutionary exercises, with an undending series of partial strikes, continuous general strikes and insurrectional attempts, of harming the stability of society.

This is probably what happened in Spain before the unleashing of the fascist attack. Certainly it is not a question of condemning outbursts caused by hunger, impatience, despair, anger a hundred times justified in those who saw their babies dying from lack of treatment, or who had spent most of the year looking in vain for work, and having to send their children barefoot to school -- when a school was available. But those who set themselves up as leaders of the CNT and FAI - the latter embodied a revolutionary passion rather than intellectual worth - needed a strategic vision which they lacked. Here too they were not equal to the situation. The greatness of the libertarian movement was its almost exclusively proletarian character, but it was also its weakness. And this weakness permitted the demagogues, and we had our share of them, to play a role for which they were not cut out.

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But even more responsible were the socialist and republican leaders who had neither the inspired initiative, the intelligence nor the courage to undertake, with the proclamation of the Republic, daring social reforms which might have satisfied the hunger of some and tempered the impatience of others. They have a great share of the responsibility because they were better educated and had great means for action. What was the reason for their indifference? Undoubtedly power had made them fainthearted, had dulled their imagination as so often happens to the happy beneficiaries of new political regimes. We are not saying this in a partisan spirit. About 1935 an enquiry had shown that the largest percentage of enchufistas (people who hold more than one official employment) were to be found among the Socialists and the Left Catalanists. Social reforms interested them much less than the enjoyment of newly acquired privileges. In such an ensemble of conditions, the revolutionary act had to occur.

On the other hand, one of the consequences of the continuous social conflicts was to drive people of the Centre parties towards the Right and to swell the conservative, reactionary, and fascist forces. The figures at the February 1936 elections prove this, and here one can speak of the responsibility of the revolutionaries. But if the socialists and left republicans had given land to the starving peasants and had undertaken daring social reforms which were clearly exceptional in a situation which was itself exceptional, the tumultuous social struggles would not have been of such a grave nature and perhaps the fascist reaction would not have resulted. But they preferred to limit themselves to copying the constitution of the Weimar Republic.

from Gaston Leval's "Epilogue" to his "L'Espagne Libertaire" (Collectives in the Spanish Revolution)

NORTHERN IRELAND

I take the Editors' point about the consistency of their line on Northern Ireland. However to say the prosecution of the fourteen is simply related to "the rights of open discussion", as Harrow Libertarians put it, is just missing the point.

The British Withdrawal From Northern Ireland Campaign is not, by titular definition, a group simply demanding "open discussion", the fact of which has been happening for some time in all of the media, and anyway is not being denied. This is not why the fourteen are being prosecuted. Both main political parties are heartily sick of the Northern Ireland business anyway. If anyone could make a useful suggestion. . . ? The BWFNI is mixing up and muddying two separate issues.

The one is something I consciously support, attacking the State by attempting to destroy and disaffect its military arm. This is something that all anarchists and most pacifists (at least the non-violent direct actionists) would agree with. Also as an ex-National Serviceman I'd emphasise my acute detestation of the military in all its aspects.

The second is quite different and I think mars the fourteen's case. The term 'British' in the BWNIC presupposes Northern Ireland is part of a separate country held against its will, bleeding; under the heel of the British jackboot and crying for its release. The facts just do not bear this out.

Most Ulstermen I have talked to feel themselves as British. Yes, they are Irish too, but in the sens of Ulster being like Scotland or Wales, requiring some regional independence, but being an integral part of the United Kingdom. They do not see themselves nor wish to be part of Eire and certainly not an Eire dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, though if this did not exist their views might be rather different. This surprisingly seems to be the view of both Protestants and Catholics alike.

Therefore, though many are heartily sick to death of the whole business this does not mean that they want the British army to leave. Readers will remember this was called in to keep the two sides apart. It was also called in, it is true, to hold the IRA gunmen in check, but it was that or a bloody civil war, which ironically seems to have occurred anyway.

In any case why should the 'British army' leave whilst Ulster is part of Britain? Be reduced, yes, but why leave altogether? In other words, yes we want to see it go, in the sense of wanting it to cease to exist, to wither away, but surely the BWNIC mean 'return to barracks'; has it not just as much 'right' to be in Ulster as in England, Scotland or Wales? A lower profile in other words. Or do the BWNIC have something else in mind?

No doubt members of the BWNIC have

LETTERS

their political preferences. I do too and and it's not a sell-out to Catholicism. No doubt many are more interested in 'Irish unity' though if this is so they owe it to their public to spell it out. It must however be clarified that there is nothing morally superior about pacifism or direct action; nor about violence or terrorism either. What is important is not merely the methodology of political action. What is important is what you are discussing, what supporting and how it related to truth, to reason and rationality, to understanding and compassion, to love and to tenderness and living your life to create a libertarian society with your fellow creatures.

In a sense revolution is about the methodology of action; but anarchist methodology must be concerned about right action, right decision-taking and right results, not merely somebody else's romantic dream of 'Nationalism at any price', even if the public do not want it. It is perhaps a hard lesson for the vociferous minority in any situation to realise that today is not necessarily your day.

Peter Neville at 25/10/75.

ARRESTING UNEMPLOYMENT ?

Dear Friends,

It is a popular misconception put about mainly by the police that they wish to see the crime rate reduced.

But I have been reliably informed that upon entering the force a Constable has to make a set number of arrests in order to qualify after his probationary period. If he/she fails to make these arrests he/she is presumably kicked out of the force.

Although I do not know the number of arrests that he/she has to make, you will appreciate that even one would not be in keeping with the above statement concerning crime figures.

So the next time you are stopped by a young policeman do not complain if he arrests you, remember he is only saving his job.

Yours in peace,
James Percival.

PORTUGAL

Dear Comrades,

The short article by Claude (25.10.75) seems to typify the negative attitude taken by FREEDOM towards Portugal. The French magazine La Lanterne Noire (No. 3) contains some interesting extracts from the journal Combate, which is reported to have "evolved towards a critique of leninist concepts of political action and of the workers' movement", and to be "a medium through which the work-

ers can exchange their experiences and thus reinforce their autonomous organisation in the fight against capitalism". If this is really the case, surely it deserves at least a fair hearing and not the carping criticism in which Claude indulges. I have no knowledge of the Portuguese anarchist periodicals which he lists, but the June edition of The Match quotes one of these, A Voz Anarquista, as speaking with approval of the Yugoslav version of "workers' control".

The reports which I have seen clearly suggest that there is a widespread movement for workers' councils and factory occupations, and also some collectivisation of land in rural regions. To poke about after ideological purity in this emerging movement would be pointless. Some of the actions are clearly instigated by groups such as LUAR and the Revolutionary Brigades (the latter supported in this country by International Socialism): others appear to be genuinely autonomous. Should this movement assume a coherent form then of course it will be subject to attempted take-overs from political organisations, both leninist and reformist, just as the CNT was. As I understand it, the FAI was formed precisely to counteract this threat. If the situation arises in Portugal, does there exist the basis of an anarchist organisation which will be able to deal with it? This, surely, is the crucial question, and not whether the Organisational Platform is "leninist" or not.

Fraternally,
Carl Chatfield.

Freedom Press

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BWNIC Trial

DID A "Sunday Mirror" reporter help a deserter and encourage him to go to Sweden? This was one of the main questions which came up during the fourth week of the trial of 24 supporters of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign charged with conspiring to seduce soldiers from their duty or allegiance. Paul Donovan, now night news editor and then a reporter on the "Sunday Mirror" gave evidence that in June and July 1973, he had had several meetings with George Exelby, a lance corporal who was already AWOL. After their first meeting, Exelby found his way to various peace and alternative organisations, including Peace News, International Times, the Peace Pledge Union, War Resisters International, and BIT. One of the people he met was defendant Gwyn Williams: after Exelby had gone to Sweden, Gwyn Williams and a number of other people in the peace movement were interviewed by Donovan and an article appeared in the "Sunday Mirror" which "revealed the secret route of runaway soldiers". Exelby denied that he had been given anything other than "moral assistance" by Donovan. However, the "Sunday Mirror" expense account, which was produced in evidence, showed that Donovan had "entertained" Exelby on several occasions.

The evidence of Exelby and two other soldiers who had deserted to Sweden, Dave Brown and Dick Oliff, was admitted to the trial after several hours of legal argument. John Hyatt, one of the 14, is charged under the Army Act with assisting Oliff knowing him to be absent from the army, and Gwyn Williams is similarly charged with regard to Exelby. These charges are the subject of a separate trial, yet to be heard, as are similar charges against Howard Clark and Penny Strange - not among the 14 - with regard to Dave Brown. However, Justice McKinnon ruled that the evidence of all three soldiers was relevant to the conspiracy with which the 14 are charged, although none of the 14 are charged with any offences relating to Brown, and Gwyn and John have pleaded guilty to the Army Act charges.

Gunners Brown and Oliff went AWOL about a year later, when they decided not to return to their unit in Colchester. Oliff said he "didn't want to go to N. Ireland again" "I was getting cheased off with the army and getting mucked about". After contacting Release, they were put in touch with At Ease, a counselling service for soldiers which advises on legal ways of leaving the army and other problems, and the National Council for Civil Liberties. At the NCCL they met Howard Clark, co-editor of "Peace News", who Brown alleges helped him in various ways. Dick Oliff gave evidence that John Hyatt, also a co-editor of "PN", helped him obtain a British visitor's passport and an air ticket to Stockholm. Some time after this, Dave Brown said, he was

similarly helped by Penny Strange. Dave Brown returned from Sweden after a few weeks because "it was not my idea of what it would have been", and has since obtained a discharge on medical grounds. In cross-examination he admitted that the people concerned had discussed with him the difficulties of going to Sweden and that he had decided to go, without Sweden "being cracked up as a wonderful place". Dick Oliff agreed he had "insisted and continued to insist that Sweden was where I wanted to go" and he had decided that when he first went AWOL, before meeting any of the people who later helped him. In fact Oliff remained in Sweden (and was interviewed there on the "Midweek" TV programme broadcast last autumn) until March this year, when he suddenly returned just before the committal proceedings against the 14 and gave evidence there. He was court martialled in April, sentenced to six months and given a discharge.

The last witness of the week was Inspector Rex Haslett of the Special Branch. He gave evidence of the various raids in which he was involved, including that on the London office of "PN". Cross-examined by Gwyn Williams, he agreed that he was in overall charge of the case but admitted that even after a year on the case "I really don't know anything about any of you". He agreed with Rock Tansey, one of the defence counsel, that he would either be involved in or have knowledge of any interviews or arrests requested by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Rock Tansey then referred him to the statement of intent issued by BWNIC at its inception in June 1973 and asked whether any interviews had taken place with a number of people who had signed it, including John Arden, May Hobbs, Adrian Mitchell and Spike Milligan. Mr. Haslett said to the best of his knowledge no such interviews had taken place. Six of the 14 have their names on the statement and the prosecution is presenting this as evidence of the conspiracy with which all 14 are charged.

At one point, when the judge was complaining about the expense of the trial, Michael Wescott, a defendant, pointed out that, estimating the cost of the trial as a quarter of a million pounds, "the last NATO exercise would have paid for the trial five times over."

*

THE FIFTH WEEK (27-31 Oct.) saw the end of the evidence which the prosecution is bringing against the defendants. The prosecutor, ably and sometimes positively enthusiastically assisted by the judge, has outlined his case: that the BWNIC is an organisation primarily formed to seduce soldiers from their duty or allegiance, in particular by means of two leaflets: "Some Information for Discontented Soldiers" and its predecessor, "Some Information for British Soldiers", as such, anyone found to be in association with it (or rather, anyone the DPP decided to 'pick on, as at least 100 people obviously associated in some way with the Campaign have been left alone) is therefore guilty of a criminal conspiracy to attempt such seduction.

It is the way the army treats soldiers about which the prosecution is most defensive, as they saw fit to call extra witnesses (i.e. people not called at committal hearings) in the form of serving soldiers concerned with recruits. Colonel Hearne is the officer in overall charge of the Strand and Great Scotland Yard recruiting office in London, and he was examined on the Notice Paper which all recruits are supposed to study before they take the Oath of Allegiance. He was obviously called because of the large number of soldier witnesses who had displayed, both during committal hearings and at the Old Bailey, a degree of ignorance of their rights of discharge. Col. Hearne was cross-examined by one of the defendants, Michael Wescott, on the Notice Paper, particularly on one of the conditions on which a discharge may be deferred, i.e. that a state of war exists. Asked whether the situation in Ireland was regarded as a war, Col. Hearne replied "No". He was then asked "If a soldier was given an order to do something that he believed to be wrong, and which he regarded to be an atrocity of some sort, has he a right in any circumstances to refuse to obey that order?" Col. Hearne replied, "In my experience, if a soldier is given an order he carries it out." Michael Wescott then asked whether Col. Hearne remembered the Second World War and the Nuremberg trials. "Were you aware of the precedent that came out of Nuremberg that a soldier is not excused from committing an atrocity against the human race because he has been ordered to do so by his commanding officer," Judge McKinnon intervened at this point to say, "Volumes have been written upon this topic. We have all heard of My Lai and the unfortunate Americans who got into trouble there." "I would have thought it was the unfortunate Vietnamese," replied Michael Wescott.

When Major Berret, in charge of the Recruit Selection Centre at Sutton Coldfield, was cross-examined by defendant Ronnie Lee about a film which was shown to recruits of the jobs that are on offer in the army, he was asked whether this film showed soldiers doing the "jobs" of riot control, house-to-house searches and the taking of people and placing them in internment camps. Major Berret was not prepared to comment, and the judge interrupted, yet again, a line of cross-examination that had, for state purposes, become too political.

"IT'S A JOB"

Two seamen, one a merchant seaman and the other a serving sailor in the Royal Navy, then gave evidence against Bill Hetherington, who is charged alone under Section 1 of the Incitement to Disaffection Act with attempting to seduce the latter from his duty or allegiance. The two men gave very muddled and in some places contradictory evidence about a conversation which occurred between them, Bill Hetherington and a fourth man travelling on trains between Cardiff and Birmingham one night in April this year. Mr. Balloch, the merchant seaman, said that Bill Hetherington had said things "that if you ever got a serviceman who

was a bit fed up it might just be the turning-point to put him on the wrong road". But, cross-examining, Bill Hetherington recollected that the conversation, which was a friendly one lasting several hours, included discussion about experience with the police, life in the navy (in which Bill did his National Service) and, finally, a discussion about whether or not this was a free country, in the course of which Bill talked about the trial of the 14, about which he had been addressing a public meeting in Cardiff that evening. On being pressed to give further information, he produced copies of "Peace News" and the "South Wales Echo" with stories on the case. The fourth man then asked to see the leaflet which was central to the case, and Bill produced a photocopy, which was eventually passed to the sailor, who looked at it and returned it. When he came into the witness box the sailor, James Woods, was very hostile to Bill and on several occasions tried to avoid answering questions. Bill pointed out that the questions were important for him, for he stood the chance of two years' jail on the strength of them, Mr. Woods replied, "You don't deserve two years; you should have twelve." He admitted reluctantly that he had been AWOL from the navy and had joined up straight from school -- "Why? It's a job. There's nothing in civvy street."

Several of the servicemen who have given evidence for the prosecution have clearly shown that there is an effective economic conscription in operation, that they are not adequately or consistently informed of their rights, particularly of discharge, and that there is considerable discontent in the army. The defence are planning to call more servicemen who are likely to corroborate this, but in the meantime it is significant that there are so many discontented soldiers who have been called by the prosecution.

Defence evidence is likely to take several weeks, particularly as most of the 14 will be going into the witness box. Support, both in the public gallery of Court 12 and outside the court, will be much appreciated. There will be a mass picket on November 20 by trades unions and labour movement groups, and others at various times. Please contact the Defend the 14+ Campaign at 01-337 9794 for details

PLAYTIME

ON OCTOBER 11th Britain's Finest lined the King's Road outside London's Chelsea Town Hall to throw tomatoes, bags of flour and non-constructive advice at the members of the right wing National Front as the nation's supermen sheepishly edged their way behind a massive police guard to attend their well-publicised secret meeting. The National Front then and now have refused to give any account of that meeting but the cause and the complaint for its being called is a fundamental split within the minority thinking echelon of the Front. There are those who see the "Front" as an elite racial organisation and as such no more than a permanent political minority group, and those who seek political power by broadening the "Front's" base so that by making its arse as flat as its head they can win a small



ARTHUR MOYSE

but significant mass vote and, on the Liberal pattern, put the fear of Christ up minority governments. At this moment in time the NF has a 20-man ruling body but since 1974 when the po-faced John Tyndall failed to get re-elected as Chairman of the Directorate he has tried to change the rules - if I can't play I'm taking my ball home - by reducing the Directorate to four members and the abolition of the two-thirds majority voting. It is curious that the 'Populists' within the NF now offer 1933 as the awful warning of what Tyndall and his Spearhead group might do with their 'leader' fixation so that within the NF a grass roots Populist movement (a term coined by the Guardian) has now come into being. Tyndall at this moment is out but the plump Martin Webster like a night cat is angrily walking the fence even to bounding into secret cabal meetings of the 'Popes' to, first, accuse them of mutiny and secondly to get a mental picture of the attendance. It is also curious that Webster states that it was a Gerry Gable, an alleged agent of the Zionist 62-Group and an alleged editor of the magazine Searchlight, who supplied the Guardian with their information, and the 'Popes' hint that the information came not a thousand miles from John Tyndall's office.

All this is the game of politics and as long as 'they' are impotent it is amusing, but what is now being debated within the NF is future policy in relation to our living. If Webster wins, for Tyndall is at this moment in time chalked up with the living dead, then the NF will carry on as part of the lunatic fringe of the extreme right and no more than an excuse for a pleasant Saturday's anti-fascist get together, but if the 'Popes' get their claim for a broad-based party then we shall have genuine cause for concern. For the weak sisters, the political neurotics and the racial fanatics will have found a mask of respectability to expound their evil message of hate and fear; for as the National Front Populists say, and I say it against them, "Remember the lessons of 1933".

Lumpenproletariat.

THE BLOODY TRAFFIC

THE CAMPAIGN Against Arms Trade, which works for an end to the production and sale of arms and for the retraining of people employed in the arms industry, is to launch a daily picket at the Defence Sales Organisation, Soho Square, beginning at noon on Monday, 3 November. The picket, which will continue for a month, aims to point out, to Defence Sales Organisation em-

ployees and to passers-by, the extent of Britain's involvement in the international arms trade.

Further information from Sandy Merritt, Co-ordinator, C.A.A.T., 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N.1. 9DX. Tel. 101-278 1976.

IN BRIEF

A MILAN magistrate ruled that Pino Pinelli who was found dead in the courtyard of a police station was not a victim of suicide or murder, but probably of dizziness.

PRESIDENT FORD at a dinner to welcome Egypt's Sadat forgot himself so far as to forget that it was not 'Israel' he was now greeting as a friend of peace and freedom (or whatever it was) but 'Egypt'. He proposed a toast to 'you and the people that you represent, the great people of the Government of Israel - Egypt, excuse me!'

PETER HAIN, leader of the Young Liberals, was charged by the police with a bank robbery at Barclay's Bank, Putney. The prosecution did not state their case, an identity parade was held two days after he had been charged. He was remanded on bail but refused legal aid. Young Liberals have frequently held demonstrations against Barclay's Bank for its S. African connections.

THE ALDERSHOT police apologized to Pat Arrowsmith for her detention under the Terrorism Act. Other Acts will doubtless be used to curb Pat's activities.

IT IS reported in Michael Tobin's "Hapotoc Newsletter" that three anarchists in Dublin, Ronan Stenson, Noel Murray and Marie Murray, have been charged with murder of a policeman in a £7,000 bank raid. Hapotoc states that the accused were all "taken to different police stations and 'questioned' - beaten for over thirty hours and forced to sign dictated 'confession' statements". The trial, for which no date has yet been set, will be heard in the Special Criminal Court - a panel of three judges with no jury. Michael Tobin reports raids on families and friends of the accused (preceding the arrests) with the usual brutality. The death penalty is still maintained in the Irish Free State - although rarely used it could be in this case. Hapotoc draws parallels between the situation in Ireland and Spain, with which Ireland has affinities and good relations. The accused, who have been active in the Prisoners' Rights Organization are in the Curragh Detention Barracks, The Curragh, Co. Kildare. Marie Murray is in The Prison (Female Section), Limerick, Co. Limerick. Hapotoc suggests letters should be sent to the Premier, Liam Cosgrave, Government Buildings, Leinster House, Dublin.

Sancho Panza.

WE WELCOME news, reviews, letters, articles. Latest date for receipt of copy for inclusion in next Review section is Monday 10 November; News/Features/Letters/announcements Monday 17 November.

NEXT DESPATCHING date of FREEDOM is Thursday 20 November. Come and help from 2 pm onwards. You are welcome every Thursday afternoon to early evening for informal get together and folding session.

MEETINGS

CONFERENCE Amnesty International. Women Against Torture. 8 November 9.30 am- 6 pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Creche available. CONFERENCE on Sarvodaya "A Vision for a Communitarian Society" Dec. 13th, 9.30 am- 6 pm at Conway Hall. Meetings Friday 12 & Sunday 14th at Eastbourne House, Bullards Place, Bethnal Green, London E2. Participants, Lanzo del Vastro, E.F. Schumacher &c. Tickets £ 1. Enquiries to Satish Kumar, Eastbourne House. British Withdrawal from N. Ireland Campaign (BWNIC) says: No Military solution in Ireland, Withdraw the Troops, End the Union. London Group meets 1st Tuesday in the month at 6 Endsleigh St. WC1 Women Against Fascism in Spain meet Fridays, 6 pm at 38 Earlham St. WC2, anarchist women would be welcome.

Anarchist Forum, Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, alternate Sundays 1 pm. Speakers, listeners and hecklers welcome. Every Sat. & Sun. Centro Iberico/International Libertarian Centre, 83A Haverstock Hill, London NW3 (entrance in Steele's Rd, 2nd door) tube Belsize Park/Chalk Farm. From 7.30 discussion, refreshments etc. NEW YORK: Libertarian Book Club Thurs. 7.30 pm at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Avenue NYC (SW Corner 29 St.) :- November 13: Anarchism in Contemporary Science Fiction, Irving Levitas December 11: Anarchy and Authority, Sharon Presley. Free admission, coffee, tea, cookies. Libertarian Book Club, GPO 342, N.Y.10001

SATURDAY Nov. 3. Spanish Solidarity Committee, at Student Polytechnic, 102 Whitechapel High St. (Aldgate East tube). 4 - 7 pm Discussion on Spain. 7 pm - midnight. Benefit and Dance. Admission 60p at door- half price students.

NORTH WEST WORKERS Alliance meeting. John Byrne on Workers Control of Industry. Thursday Nov. 13 at 8 p.m. at The Bath Hotel, Union St. Oldham. All trade unionists welcome.

PEOPLE/ORGANISATIONS/WANTS &c.

11-year old daughter of a Swedish comrade has been learning English at school for 3 yrs. Father asks "Is there any friend with a child of approx. the same age as Anna who would like to have correspondence with Anna?" (Carlos Maynar, Stovargatan 83, 12441 BANDHAGEN, Stockholm, Sweden).

COMMUNE: We're trying to get a commune going & need at least one other to form nucleus. Contact Roger McGrath and Steve Cook c/o 36A Newark St. London E1 2AA STAN (ex-8 St. Martin's Close, Camden) Came to see you about the Commune but you had moved. If still interested contact us as soon as possible -Steve Cook.

LITTLE BIRD, a monthly information package of collation of leaflets, documents and hand-

CONTACT

bills from Merseyside and elsewhere. Send your materials to us, about 100 copies, & we will circulate it. Material & subscription to Little Bird, c/o News from Nowhere, 48 Manchester St. Liverpool 1.(051-227 2514) Address all correspondence concerning the forthcoming book "The Cuban Revolution, an anarchist perspective" to Sam Dolgoff, 208 East Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10002.

WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL needs financial help. Donations to Ralph DiGia, WRI, 359 Lafayette St. New York, N.Y. 10002, or (GB) Kees Koop, c/o PPU, 6 Endsleigh St. London WC1 ODH. Triennial Report now available £ 1.

PORTUGAL. The Portuguese anarcho-syndicalist paper A BATALHA (sales 5000 copies per fortnight) needs the support of all comrades outside Portugal. Send your donations books, pamphlets &c to A BATALHA, Rua Angelina Vidal 17-2-E^o, LISBOA, Portugal

ANARCHIST FEDERATION CONFERENCE will be held at WARWICK UNIVERSITY (nr. Coventry) on the weekend of 28/29/30 NOVEMBER. Full details will be in current AF Bulletin.

GROUPS

ABERGAFENNI Contact 31 Monmouth Road. BATH Anarchists & non-violent activists contact BANANA, c/o Students Union, The University, Claverton Down, Bath.

BOLTON Anarchists. Contact 6 Stockley Avenue, Hatwood, Bolton. Anyone interested in the Syndicalist Workers' Federation in Bolton area contact or write SWF also at above address.

CORBY anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby Northants NN17 2LL. Every Sat. bookstall Corporation Street 2-4 pm. Come and help.

COVENTRY. Peter Corne, c/o Union of Students, University of Warwick, Coventry.

DUNDEE. Brian Fleming, c/o Anarchist Soc., Students Union, Univ. of Dundee.

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

EDINBURGH. Bob Gibson, 7 Union St. Edinburgh, (tel. 031 226 3073).

GLASGOW now has a centre at 17 Bute Gardens, Hillhead, Glasgow.

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

IRELAND. Libertarian Communists contact Alan Mac Simoin, 4 Ard Lui Park, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, with view to form organisation.

LEICESTER Anarchist Group. Contact Pete and Jean Miller, 41 Norman Street, Leicester (tel. 549652).

LEICESTER Anarchist "Libertarian Circle" continues to meet every Thursday at Black Flag Bookshop, 1 Wilne Street.

OXFORD Anarchist group c/o Jude, 38 Hurst Street, Oxford.

PORTSMOUTH. Rob Atkinson, 21 Havelock Rd., Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants.

SWANSEA group new address: 37 Glanmor Road, Uplands, Swansea.

Libertarian POSTAL WORKERS - How can we spread the ideas of anarchism re organisation in the Post Office? Contact Dave Morris, 36 Mitford Road, London, N19.

NEW ZEALAND. Steve Hey, 34 Buchanans Road, Christchurch, 4 (tel. 496 793).

SIDCUP & BEXLEY: Will any anarchists contact 29 Halfway Street, Sidcup, Kent.

WANTED: Copy of "The Knapsack" by Herbert Read, an anthology. Good condition if possible. For Geoff Hazard, 13 Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3.

PUBLICATIONS

DIRECT ACTION no. 9, paper of the Syndicalist Workers Federation, 5p from c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7DU

PRISONERS

RONNIE LEE (184051) HM Prison, Du Cane Rd., London W.12, serving sentence for action against vivisection &c, at present also on trial as one of BWNIC 14. Postcards please. DUBLIN ANARCHISTS Bob Cullen, Des Keane, Columba Longmore. Address for letters and papers: Military Detention Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, Eire.

STOKE NEWINGTON FIVE Welfare Committee still needs funds for books &c. Box 252, 240 Camden High Street, London, NW1. GIOVANNI MARINI Defence Committee: Paolo Braschi, CP 4263, 2100 MILANO, Italy. RALF STEIN, awaiting trial, postcards to him at JVA, 5 KÖLN 30, Rachmanstr. 30.

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WOMEN IN SPAIN

TIMES OF great political ferment have almost always encouraged women's movements. The turbulence of revolution and war in England that roused women into a flurry of petition writing and demands for equal treatment; the 1800s in France when cigarette-smoking, red-belted women militants of the Commune demanded the abolition of marriage and of government, took part in workshop schools and frightened the "wretched male sex" (wrote a Times correspondent) "with sundry angry glances"; the 1900s in England again, in Russia, in China, in America, have all been well documented. On the other hand, and despite the wealth of literature on the Spanish Revolution - from this country in particular - the role of Spanish women at the time has been neglected by feminists. (Sheila Rowbotham, for instance, in her valuable study of "Women, Resistance and Revolution" does not once mention Spain.)

Solidarity's new pamphlet "Women in the Spanish Revolution" is therefore very welcome - all the more so in that it is the fruit of extensive reading and of careful, balanced assessment. Liz Willis sees not only the general necessity of rescuing the history of women from obscurity, but of rescuing it from "two contrasting strands of attention it receives from time to time: the patronising line about women doing a grand job, being one hundred per cent behind the men (where else?); and the counter-tendency, which occasionally comes over in women's liberation writings, to regard everything done by women as good and beautiful by definition". Her own view of Spanish libertarianism in this context is measured and critical.

The first part of her essay covers the earlier stages of the Revolution, when women had their first taste of emancipation. It describes the full part played by women in the military insurrection of July 1936, their improved economic conditions in the collectives and elsewhere, the formation of groups like "Mujeres Libres" (Free Women) which ran seven labour sections, and stressed the importance of education in throwing off the old sexist conditioning; the role of women on the front and in the defence of Madrid as organisers of mass demonstrations, ammunition supplies, home and neighbourhood committees, soup kitchens and first aid stations (the two latter being run in the main by the more middle class women) and so on. Liz Willis notes the growing self-assurance of women, often appearing on their own in public for the first time, and evidently excited at the prospects opened up by the new radicalism, but she is careful to show the limitations of

revolutionary spontaneity, in bringing women freedom.

Though individual anarchists had contributed much to the women's cause, this was not seen by the strong anarchist movement in Spain as a "priority concern" or even as a specific issue - a fact that became more evident as the revolutionary tempo slowed down - but rather one that would somehow sort itself out automatically with victory. Meanwhile many fighting women were still chaperoned! In the collectives women's conditions improved greatly but they were often paid lower rates than their menfolk. The patriarchal attitudes that still survived in some anarchist literature (for example in C. Berneri's "La donna operaia", the "Working women", republished in Volontà, no. 4 July-August 1975 with Molaschi's reply) ran too deep to match the general social and political upheaval, notwithstanding significant improvements. Puritanical tendencies imposed a certain conformity in both work and sexual patterns - witness segregation of the sexes in a few collective dining-rooms or children's homes. The women themselves at times showed an unpleasant trait reminiscent of suffragette white-feather chauvinism; nor could many spontaneously throw off the ingrained conditioning of woman-as-object, or else they returned to it later (though fondness for nice clothes does not, of course, necessarily imply such conditioning!).

One of Liz Willis's main criticisms, and it is possibly over-severe in the circumstances, is of the tendency among women libertarians, as among men, to put anti-fascism first and foremost, thus neglecting the deterioration of anarchist positions before the quick and massive encroachment of a Communist party with Russian arms. This was one of the deepest dilemmas facing libertarians and one that certainly troubled Orwell, who could see no alternative to the popular front, even when this meant the ultimate sacrifice of one of its main components. For women especially, it would have been hard not to feel that "anything was better than fascism" - even the "anything" that helped destroy social revolution - when the alternative was a Falangist-backed Church of Rome with the most poisonous anti-woman ideological arsenal of all time (... who can look at Goya's "caprichos" and doubt it?) Certainly in this sense it would have been over-simplistic to regard fascism and authoritarian communism as equally repressive.

Liz Willis concludes that an anarchist victory might not have brought about sexual equality, at least in the short term. And although she points out that the "reluctance of libertarians to envisage changes in sex roles and values should not be exaggerated", she acknowledges the criticisms of Temma Kaplan, who raises such issues as the absence among the Spanish libertarians of a programme preventing exploitation of women in a revolutionary society. "The liberation of women had not been thought through in theoretical and practical terms". This owed much to the "wilful lack of clarity that bedevils libertarian movements and was to prove fatal in confrontation with the CP". It is surely this lack of a clear, sharply-defined plan for revolutionary war (notwithstanding libertarian practicality in other matters) that was more crucial to the collapse of the social achievements of the anarchists than the later, and only consequential, concentration on the "greater evil" of Francoism. Certainly it is one for anarchists to bear well in mind.

N.B. For another recent booklet on women, this time the black woman in South Africa and her twofold struggle against the general oppression of women and against apartheid, see "For their triumphs and for their tears" by Hilda Bernstein, available from International Defence and Aid Fund, price 50p



BRITISH ANARCHISM

A REPLY TO A REPLY

John Quail's article, based on a talk he gave on "A History of British Anarchism", appeared in FREEDOM 19 July, 1975 and N.W.'s comments in the following issue.

I'm glad N.W. wrote down his comments on my Solidarity talk. So little gets discussed in the Anarchist movement - if that's not too dynamic a word for it - and even less reaches print. There are some important points raised by his comments on my brief history of the British Anarchist movement, points of more than historical or Anarchival significance. I hope that my comments are of more use to people than a poke in the eye with a burnt stick.

RADICAL TRADITIONS AND ANARCHIST BEGINNINGS.

FIRST I would like to comment on something which is implied in N.W.'s comments and certainly provides the basis of an important difference between us. I refer particularly to N.W.'s comments on the origins of anarchism in Britain. Like Nettlau and others, N.W. seems to see anarchism as a set of principles outside history and would see nothing strange in entitling a book "Anarchism from the Earliest Times Until 1840" or whatever. From my point of view, however, anarchism is a political movement and ideology of a particular historical epoch. In addition it is self-conscious, self-defining, and more or less distinct. Thus I would say that it makes little sense to talk of 'unconscious' anarchism, or the anarchism of Lao Tse, or the anarchism of the Nuer except in the most carefully restricted use of the word. Even here there is confusion and I would prefer to describe the anti-authoritarian traits that one is pointing out simply as 'libertarian' and have done. One does not have this difficulty with Marxism which is an area of discussion and dispute with a hazy boundary but which retains the sense of a collection of doctrines and movements. I would like to preserve some sort of similar boundary for anarchism. In pursuit of this, while talking about anarchist history I would like to distinguish between anarchist material, material of interest to anarchists and material to do with the roots of anarchism: they are not the same thing.

There were certainly currents in the working class Radical movement in Britain in the Nineteenth Century which are clearly libertarian in tendency. They are of interest. So too - and this is another example of N.W.'s - are the Diggers of the Seventeenth Century. But why not go back further to, say, the Peasants Revolt of 1381 or the alleged utopias said to have existed prior to the Norman Conquest. They are of interest to anarchists, they may come in handy for arguments but they are not examples of anarchism. If one is interested in the anarchist movement in Britain then let us look at where that movement that defined itself as anarchist came from. The libertarian and socialist tendencies in the Radical movement were important only in a general way and it was this general importance that I indicated in my talk. For the history of British anarchism the most important fact is that individuals from this milieu played an important part in first the socialist and then the early anarchist groupings. It is the process of development which I find more interesting than the starting point.

The influences which made anarchists out of some Radicals are open to different assessments. The reasons for my emphases are as follows. I emphasised Tucker's Liberty because it was a specifically anarchist influence and of some importance most particularly in its translations of French material and its letters from France which were anarchist communist in tendency. It had some effect on Joseph Lane and Ambrose Barker, two men who were active in Radical circles and who were later to become anarchists, and this as early as late 1831. Barker, at least, started a correspondence with Tucker which lasted until the latter's death. Lane and Barker cannot have been the only ones so influenced. By 1834/5 Henry Seymour and others were in contact with Tucker, without doubt, and probably earlier. It is thus my opinion that Liberty deserves the honour of being the first paper to introduce anarchism per se to the British Left. As to the

publication of Freedom being claimed as Year I of British Anarchism, E.P. Thompson claims it as such and Woodcock implies as much. There are innumerable bits of bad history knocking about which I do not want to talk about but they also make this claim. So my claim for Liberty is rightly made I think. (Incidentally I blush and admit the mistake over the publication of Liberty: it was due to tongueslip and bad proofreading.)

Liberty was introduced in all likelihood through contacts made at the Anarchist Conference in London in 1831. (Kitz, Lane and I think four other English delegates were present.) As to the conference itself, the minutes reveal the English delegates with the exception of a rather mysterious chap called Hall to have taken no part in discussions. Contacts made there may have been important but there is no evidence to show that anarchist ideas were picked up by the English delegates there: neither Kitz nor Lane mention it in their memoirs. The same thing can be said of the defence campaign for Most (bar the bit about the memoirs). The latter for the greater part of his stay in London is probably best considered a dissident Social Democrat. His paper, the Freiheit, did contain anarchist articles but described itself as a Social Democrat organ for a surprisingly long time. By the end of his stay in England Most was an anarchist. Yet it should be remembered that his propaganda had been directed towards Germany and that the defence campaign on his behalf was an almost completely English affair. It was conducted within the Radical traditions of free speech and press and the right of asylum for refugees from foreign oppression. The copies of the English Freiheit started during the defence campaign which I have seen describe themselves as 'socialistic' and seem to contain little other than material of immediate relevance to the trial and defence campaign. The furthest I will go is to accept that through this campaign the most nebulous kind of socialist consciousness was introduced to the Radical Clubs.

While we are on the question of influences, N.W. asks why I mention the Germans specifically but not the French and Russians. The answer is simply that the Germans were more numerous and seem to have been in closer contact with English Radical militants. The Russian exiles seem to have preferred Switzerland or France as a place of refuge. The French socialists were, despite occasional difficulties, able to work progressively more freely in France itself. In 1831/2 there was probably a net outflow of the more active French spirits back to France. The Germans had come into London in a flood after the anti-Socialist Laws of 1838. They had not yet accepted their exile as final. It was on the initiative of the Germans that the Rose Street Club was formed. And while it is true that there were contacts between all the exile groups and the native population there is no doubt that in their contribution to the early socialist movement in the first few years of the 1830s the Germans stand out. They provided founder members for both the Social Democratic Federation and the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League. Other groups of exiles were to become more influential later.

INDIVIDUALISM AND ITS INDIVIDUALS

There could be no anarchist movement in Britain until the importance of certain traditional concerns of British politics had been undermined for significant numbers of Left politicals. The most pervasive concern was continual pressure to increase the scope of the franchise with the eventual intention of electing a working class majority to Parliament. This was linked to an assumed identity of interest of capital and labour (the 'productive classes') in opposition to the aristocracy etc. (the 'unproductive classes') which I mentioned in my talk. For anarchism to emerge in Britain first the conflict between capital and labour had to be understood and a society based on a democracy of producers envisaged. This is a rudimentary formulation of socialism. Then the means whereby the producers' democracy runs and the means of achieving it are discussed. When the options taken are consistently libertarian the result is anarchism.

In this formulation it is possible to distinguish between an

individualism which represents its individual aspects - an insistence on individual freedom, an insistence on not losing sight of the tree for the wood - and an individualism which clearly lies beyond it. Seymour, whom N.W. mentions, was a Proudhonian out of his time who wobbled between the two. In his earlier days his commitment to revolutionary change gave his projected democracy of small individual proprietors co-operating one with another on a basis of equality a certain attractive quality. However, his later 'anarchist' pronouncements represent little more than a defence of the 'right' of those with property to preserve it against the (self-evidently) lazy swine who had none. What had been a defence of the individual property of the artisan had become the defence of property of any kind in the present. Auberon Herbert was throughout an 'anarchist' of this latter variety and a member of the Liberty and Property Defence League which in my view represented the unearned income and small businessman brigade. I have nothing much to say for or against Albert (not Henry) Tarn who led the small group of 'Tarnation or do-nothing Anarchists' as a correspondent of Freedom called them in the late 1890s. N.W. is welcome to include them all in a catalogue of British anarchists but if he wants to include Auberon Herbert and the later Henry Seymour he is going to have great difficulty in differentiating his anarchism from laissez faire capitalism. In any case with the exception of Henry Seymour none of them had any influence on the movement which is worth pointing to in an hour long talk.

In the case of the early Henry Seymour who published the Anarchist in 1885, he clearly has his place and it is recognised in my book. There are two reasons why he didn't get a mention in the talk. Firstly because it's a bit difficult to gauge just how influential his paper was before it was eclipsed by Freedom and his innocent involvement with a German police spy. Secondly, his short involvement with the group that later produced Freedom is as significant as the publication of Freedom is significant. As will be realised I am not disposed to mark up the significance of the appearance of Freedom too highly. My reasons for this follow after a few more pontifical remarks.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOVEMENT

N.W. is wrong when he writes that I 'concentrate on anarchism as it appeared in the labour movement' and I'm sorry if I give that impression. I am interested in anarchism insofar as it changes things and makes things happen: that is to say, insofar as there is an anarchist movement. As a 'class struggle' anarchist, of course I'm interested in working class developments, however one defines the working class. Yet if one defines the working class as the class whose work is directed by others and whose production is at the disposal of others, even such a 'work oriented' definition does not mean that only struggles in the work place have significance. Opposition to the consequences of an exploiting society (e.g. pollution, inhuman town planning); opposition to the institutions which brainwash people to accept things as they are (e.g. the school, the church, the media, the family, etc., etc.); a readiness to examine new ideas in every area and to be prepared to take part in new and attractive movements without losing one's crap detector -- all this is of primary importance because it is inseparable from the most basic forms of economic oppression and opposition to it. So when I look at the history of British anarchism I look further than the struggle in the work place. But I look for struggles, for developments, for happenings. And from this stems my preference for agitators. I do not think that publishing a paper or writing in one gives one an automatic right to a place in the history books, though it is not necessary to do more than write sometimes to be an agitator. Sometimes - much more often, in fact - some level of organisation is necessary. But the simple tests are the questions: were events influenced by the activities undertaken? was this the intention?

As far as Freedom was concerned - they clearly stated in Vol. 1 No. 1 - it was not the intention to be an agitational organ. They intended, they said, to develop the theoretical aspects of anarchism and to comment on events of the day from a distance. I haven't much patience with this for two reasons: 1) theory is a generalisation from social facts and social practice and without constant attention and involvement in social movements, theory becomes airy-fairy and irrelevant -- see for example New Left Review; 2) the relation of the reader to the paper was rather like the audience at a

brains trust. There was a subtle but unmistakeable air of patronage.

This is what lies at the back of my attitudes to Kropotkin in England and to Charlotte Wilson without exception, attitudes which N.W. finds disturbing. But let us consider our differences. Kropotkin came to England after his release from prison in 1886. On Kropotkin's trial and imprisonment I mentioned Liberty rather than the Times and other straight papers because of its circulation among the politicals and its sympathetic and inside coverage. In terms of anarchist influence it was the best example unless one could read French. And I have not heard of many people being converted to anarchism by the Times. . . (nasty crack). This was the context in which I thought I'd talked of news being brought to England of the trial. The leaflet mentioned by Nettlau I have not seen and I thought I'd been through the Archive in Amsterdam with a nit-comb. Ah well, you can't win them all. As far as Kropotkin's founding of Freedom goes in a letter quoted by Woodcock Kropotkin states quite clearly that he has been summoned to England to start a paper. In letters of Charlotte Wilson at Amsterdam she says that they can't start Freedom yet because Kropotkin is nursing his wife. This seems to me straightforward enough. The group could carry on without Kropotkin yet it seems to me that they didn't want to. And what Kropotkin had done was to join a group of people whom he would have no difficulty in dominating. It was clearly open to him to become deeply involved in the Socialist League and it seems to me a grave mistake that he did not. Here was an organisation under the logic of its own development moving in an anarchist direction with some of the most politically experienced libertarians of the period in its ranks and instead of it Kropotkin chose a group of 'middle class faddists' as David Nicoll was later to call them. J. H. Mackay may have written up Charlotte Wilson but she deserves no more praise than is due to someone who had the time, the money and the intelligence to run a paper as a sort of managing editor. Looking through her letters in Amsterdam it is astonishing how little her anarchism seems to have changed her life. I'm sorry if I hurt N.W.'s feelings but I do not think that Charlotte Wilson was a very significant anarchist.

I am also sorry to say that I insist that Kropotkin's English was anything from not very good to appalling, according to taste, and although obviously it got better as he stayed in England his letters as late as 1897 reveal his English to have been seriously defective. I suppose that the only way to settle this is bombs at five paces or a systematic look through all the material in Amsterdam.

There is the question of propaganda by deed. I would have thought N.W. would have known me a bit better than that (in the words of Bob Dylan) in suggesting that I was under the impression that it meant nothing but bombs. The theory of propaganda by deed is quite clearly to act in such a way that it encourages the masses to revolt, the act being the propaganda and so on. But when I said that bombing rhetoric and an increasing fascination with dynamite etc. in the ranks of the ex-Socialist League anarchists caused trouble with William Morris and led to the involvement of a number of people in bomb conspiracies I meant just that. People got really hung up on bombs. From this distance it is a bit difficult to see how compelling the example of Ravachol was at the time. But when a hopeful workers' movement reaches the moment when it realises that it has achieved very little and that this little is being taken away from it then thoughts turn to revenge. And this began to happen from 1891 in England. When Ravachol bombed the houses of the prosecuting counsel and judge in a particularly vicious trial of some anarchist in France he was considered a hero. The reason was that at least he was fighting back. We ought perhaps to be in the position where such acts are a real temptation before we condemn them and their authors outright.

One final word. N.W. writes that I haven't really written an anarchist book if it's basically to do with working class self-activity and that a concentration on the latter is as much the Jewish Chronicle style as only writing about anarchists without reference to context. I would say that this is not true. Working class self-activity is the context. It is, historically speaking, an accurate barometer of the health of the anarchist movement. Further it is the means which the libertarian tries to survive with and the authoritarian to squash or control.

It is what changes worlds. And to widen the focus a little: mass self activity preceded anarchism as I have defined it. It could well post-date anarchism too. There is a sense now in which anarchism is a Nineteenth Century ideology as much as Marxism. Anarchism has provided an informing spirit of liberty and struggle in the Twentieth Century. It has provided heroic examples of the possible. This is enough to hold my allegiance for the present. But I have been long aware that in providing the analysis of the nature of and opposition to the new corporatism out of my own experience and for my own needs that I am operating in a post-Marxist, post-anarchist world. The anarchist sages have good things to say but their relevance is obscure to most people now. The libertarian in the present world should perhaps beware of labelling himself --it is thought and action which change worlds, not labels.

John Quail.

N. W. replies: John Quail's comments on my comments on his lecture clarify some points of difference between us and obscure others. I don't want to make further detailed comments, but I do want to add a general thought.

Far from seeing anarchism "as a set of principles outside history", I see it as a set of principles throughout history, certainly much more than only a century old. I would indeed see nothing strange in a book on anarchism from the earliest times to the nineteenth century -- any more than on socialism, pacifism, or humanism. It is absurd to think of anarchism as "a political movement and ideology of a particular histori-

cal epoch"; it is the ideology of society without government, which cannot be narrowly confined to the historical movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (To call it "self-conscious, self-defining, and more or less distinct" seems to me to verge on Hegelian mysticism.) The origins of the anarchist movement are to be found not only in the political practice from which it emerged but also in the political theory which helped it to emerge. The theory continued to be important when the movement had appeared, and it remains important even if the movement has disintegrated and even if J.Q. has little patience with it.

I find his attitude to anarchist theorists not disturbing but distorting; it is just silly to say that Kropotkin made "a grave mistake" in not joining the Socialist League or that Charlotte Wilson was not a very significant British anarchist. I still find his distinction between agitators and propagandists mystifying, and I am puzzled by his reference to hurt feelings and nasty cracks. I am completely lost by his belief that "there is a sense now in which anarchism is a nineteenth-century ideology" and that we are living in a "post anarchist world". I think the main trouble is that he sees the connection of anarchism with socialism but not with liberalism, that he fails to see the importance not just of working-class self-activity but of all self-activity. Of course there is difficulty in differentiating anarchism from laissez-faire capitalism, just as there is in differentiating it from libertarian communism; nevertheless it is different from the former as it is from the latter, and a history of an anarchist movement should be based on a recognition of this fact.

RIFF RAFF

SEEING BOOKSHOPS like Grass Roots in Manchester and Peace Centre in Birmingham makes you aware of what a good community, radical bookshop and centre should be like. Fourth Idea in Bradford, Mushroom in Nottingham, News From Nowhere in Liverpool, and so on, also! If you want help in starting your own, in your own locality, in your own very personal way, visit any, or as many of these as you can - or the one already in your area - and ask.

*

IF YOU happen to pass through my hometown of Burton-on-Trent you will be inclined to think that it is the centre of the Chemical Industry. It is! For here is brewed a mockery; a libellous fraud of what was once the best Beer in the land. You will see tall aluminium-framed and cased chemicalisers; huge tankers which look like petrol or ICI tankers -- but carry what the 'Giant' brewers call their "best" or "tankard" or some other cat's piss. I should add that in Burton, which has a beautiful collection of unspoilt old pubs, there are Marstons and Everard's breweries which brew beer not a little unlike it used to be everywhere - before the chemists got their hands on this big business. (Answer? Brew your own.)

*

THERE ARE only a tiny number of political trials in this country. Judge McKinnon said so. He should know. He has been so long on the bench that not only his arse but his head often goes to sleep. He said in this current trial that it is not political. This is no doubt why Amnesty International has an American attorney sitting in as observer. This is no doubt why the

judge refused the right of an individual to leaflet outside the court; this is no doubt why he has been chosen to 'judge' this case. They are after all defendants without any political beliefs (?), they are ordinary citizens going about their business: leafletting soldiers at bases, camps, stations, town centres. . .; they are devoted to papers like New Society, Rolling Stone, Peace News, Private Eye, Anarchy, Freedom, Bosses' Enemy, etc.; they are just your average hairy/not hairy poet, socialworker, claimant, revolutionary jester and fool. Hence their articulate nature. Hence their refusal to plead; hence the 23 gentlemen and women of the hard-up legal profession. Meet you in the Old Bailey Public Gallery, eh?

*

FREEDOM, like most anarchist publications, needs sellers. It needs people to do bookstalls. If you are on the dole or in University there is scope! * You only need to borrow a table if in university or college (you are the 'Libertarian' college group, Right!), stick it outside cafe or dining hall, walk round tables with papers held up so they are obviously for sale!! and show you mean business. There is no 'sales-point' unless you organize one. It is the pivot of widening the movement. It may seem not your style. Well, it isn't anyone's. But we all must share in this work. It is the basis of more ideas/more involvement/more awareness/more understanding. Write, if you will help, to Freedom Press in Angel Alley, 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX or telephone 01-247 9249.

Dennis Gould

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"THE LIBEL CASE THAT NEVER WAS"

FOLLOWING the publication in the January 1975 issue of The Freethinker of an unfavourable review of the anti-abortion book Babies for Burning, solicitors for its authors, Michael Litchfield and Susan Kentish, wrote to The Freethinker demanding an apology, retraction, compensation and indemnification in respect of legal costs. The Freethinker replied that any claim their clients decided to pursue would be most strongly defended.

It is now over seven months since legal advisers to The Freethinker last wrote to Mr. Litchfield's and Mrs. Kentish's solicitors, and as they have not replied it is assumed that they do not intend to pursue their claim. However, the unfulfilled threat has cost The Freethinker over £200, and its editor, William McIlroy says, "These legal expenses will not put us out of business, but a bill of over £200 would be a serious blow to many small journals with limited resources. The libel laws of this country are unsatisfactory, and it is intolerable that a person can threaten libel action which he apparently has no intention of pursuing, but nevertheless puts other people to a great deal of trouble and expense." He hopes that, as The Freethinker has a limited circulation and no advertising revenue, people who value truth and the right of free expression will respond generously to the appeal, which is sponsored by Lord Houghton, Mrs. Renee Short, MP and Mrs. Maureen Colquhoun, MP. The book was quoted extensively by supporters of James White's Abortion (Amendment) Bill, and Mr. White is reported to have acquired much of his "information" from the book.

Donations should be sent to The Freethinker, 693 Holloway Road, London, N.19 (tel. 01-272 1266).

M. H.

MAN OF PRINCIPLE --ANOTHER WHO WAS NOT

ROBESPIERRE, George Rudé (Collins, £ 4.95).

CHARLES FOURIER, Pascal Bruckner (Seuil, coll. "Ecrivains de toujours", 11.40F).

AS IF TO shake off his identity as the historian of rioting and revolutionary crowds, George Rudé now turns an eye upon their governors -- an eye, one might add, glowing not with scorn but admiration. For Rudé has set out to present Maximilien Robespierre as the much-maligned "first great champion of democracy and the people's rights".

In Rudé's new book what Carlyle describes as "the small soul, transparent, wholesome-looking as small ale" becomes the rich and potent beer of popular democracy. Robespierre is seen as the most consistent protector of legislative against executive power. Forced to modify his position under successive waves of military and economic crisis and the harsh pressures of revolutionary Realpolitik, he rises to the peak of emergency government and the Committee of Public Safety, convinced that the progress of the Revolution towards a republic of small proprietors and artisans can be maintained only through physical elimination of the egoistic rich and a massive drive to cure the people of their ignorance and counter-revolutionary superstitions. But this, says Rudé, is wholly consistent with Robespierre's view of legislative democracy and no bad reflection on his integrity. He is an honest man and no "buveur de sang". Yet even if he were this "would perhaps not in itself be a serious indictment of a revolutionary leader who was concerned for the safety of the state. . ." One cannot disagree after all!

But it is uncomfortable and odd to find a historian of Rudé's stature resorting so often to justification of his thesis through such superficial methods as constant quotation from the written or spoken word, taken at an almost touching face value. That Robespierre is a man of virtue and no vampire we are led to see in the magic new formula of Virtue and Terror combined ("Virtue without which Terror is squalidly repressive, Terror without which Virtue is disarmed"), that he is a great popular democrat is at least partly shown in his remark "Je suis peuple moi-même" as well as by his frugality. That he is a by no means careless discriminator between friends and enemies we see in his distinction between "royalists and conspirators" on the one hand and "peaceful citizens" on the other and between "scoundrels and humanity".

This use of language raises the issue of Jacobin formalism, that has since had a marvellous career in constitutions, bills of rights and codes of law. But Rudé doesn't deal with it - perhaps because he is a believer in such things - and despite the fact that Robespierre's own colleagues were not united in their views on what exactly constitutes the Nation, what Humanity, what the People (...though for Robespierre they are surely little but a pale and puritanical reflection of his "single will", good but not over-zealous patriots, not corrupted by blood, wealth or poverty, consumers of bread but not sugar, coffee or the midnight oil, cautious and law-abiding, virtuous and cruel to be, ultimately, kind).

One passes from the unsatisfactory to the preposterous. That Robespierre is Lenin's model we can appreciate; that he is in tune with Winstanley must make the libertarian mind truly boggle! Yet, in support of the Seagreen's long power struggle in the revolutionary cause he is indeed quoted and crazily out of context. ("...Kingly power is like a great spread tree, if you lop off the head or top bough and let the other branches and roots spread, it will grow again and recover fresh strength"). The almost elementary knowledge of Winstanley's work shows, of course, that for him, as for all social libertarians, what must be torn away are the social and economic roots of capitalist society (which, after all, non-capitalist Robespierre does not do, unless sending Danton and the "spoilt child" Desmoulins to the guillotine is supposed to count), and that there is no possible point of comparison between the social revolutionaries of George Hill and their condemnation of all power as "kingly power" and the bewigged, bepowdered jurist who, to borrow Saint-Just's own word, "iced" the Revolution with the icing of direct democracy.

The most interesting part of Rudé's book is his survey of the fluctuations in Robespierre's reputation over the last 200 years, from the bitter indictment of Taine through varying degrees of liberal reservation and cautious praise to socialist and Marxist eulogy to the evident distaste of the great anarchists (Proudhon, Bakunin, Malatesta, Kropotkin, all logically condemning the use of Terror and its inevitable corollary of dictatorship -- though Kropotkin pays warm tribute to Marat).

It is a condemnation Rudé notes, in a show of balance and fair play, but he never gets to the base of all the criticism. For instance he brushes off Guérin's concept of a sans-culotte pre-proletarian vanguard as new but simply wrong. He quotes Talmon's conclusion on the "incompatibility of the idea of an all-embracing and all-solving creed with liberty" but again doesn't deal with it as it certainly deserves, and he ignores Kropotkin's demonstration of the inbuilt self-destructive mechanism of political power. The latter, while realising the great significance of the Revolution for modern statism, falls into the positivist trap he has himself warned against and his conclusions are bathed in a rosy glow that must seem complacent today. It is only after Stalin and World War II that Talmon and Camus can write their own accounts, more philosophical, perhaps more generally compassionate, and more severe. For if, like its predecessors, the French Revolution is an incubator of progressive ideas, it is above all the seedbed of modern nationalism, military conscription and total war, a more sophisticated feudality and the "ethical state" of revolutionary fascism. At the same time that it carries the People to the still burning altar of Divine Right it gives rise to the first explicit justification of State terrorism whose victims, impure and unprincipled scoundrels and perpetrators of the new crime, "lèse-nation", are 70 per cent peasants and labouring people.

No doubt his youth spared Fourier, for whom the Revolution brought little but the pong of inflation and speculation. The Continental class war had begun but the war against commerce had not and it was this that mattered. For Fourier, that "bourgeois-decadent", that "pornocratic bigot" (Proudhon said), the taste of strawberries or sweet drinking water was worth more than "twenty centuries of political imbecility". The point is made by Bruckner, who also underlines the difference between destruction and subversion, and Fourier's preference for the latter. According to Fourier the established order is not to be bust up but derouted, diverted to a point approaching madness -- though not quite. Laws, for instance, are not to be abolished but increased to such an extent that their very over-abundance necessarily entails their annulment. . . . Clearly, like Robespierre, Fourier lacked a sense of humour, hence a sense of proportion that was in Robespierre's case disastrous. But in Fourier's case, element of regimentation apart (and what child would have stuck the Harmony sanitary squad for more than a week?) the sheer exuberance and often quite un-Utopian practicality of his visions have something infinitely attractive about them and their criterion of pleasure is, after all, beautiful serious! To Bruckner the stress on pleasure is what separates Fourier from socialism, or indeed from any kind of -ism aimed at political power, since pleasure is not compatible with it, as Robespierre himself remarked. . . . Supposing then that we begin to take Fourier a bit more seriously? Just supposing, to quote one reviewer of *Charles Fourier*, "this carefree, totally, systematically 'irresponsible' approach to the State is what we lack?"*

G. F.

*See also, in English, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier*, Selected Texts, *Design for Utopia* (selected writings of Charles Fourier) and likewise *Harmonian Man*, all available from Freedom Bookshop.

Emma Goldman on

WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION

... she can give suffrage or the ballot no new quality, nor can she receive anything from it that will enhance her own quality. Her development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right to anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc.; by making her life simpler, but deeper and richer. That is, by trying to learn the meaning and substance of life in all its complexities, by freeing herself from the fear of public opinion and public condemnation. Only that, and not the ballot, will set woman free, will make her a force hitherto unknown in the world, a force for real love, for peace, for harmony; a force of divine fire, of life-giving; a creator of free men and women.

THE GREAT AMERICAN DREAM

ONLY IN AMERICA could one have the attempted murder of a President twice in 17 days.

Only in America could one have women as the putative assassins.

Only in America would the saviour of the President from the errant markswomanship be an admitted homosexual Vietnam veteran who claims that the media suppressed the fact of his homosexuality.

Only in America would the security services let a prior confession of an intent to assassinate the President pass by on the grounds that there were too many prospective assassins standing in line for consideration.

Only in America could a gun be bought as a citizen's right to self-defence from a right-wing dealer in defence of citizens' rights and his profits.

Only in America would a President respond to pressure from the gun manufacturers' lobby by not outlawing guns by legislation.

Only in America could an imprisoned murder-cult leader influence a disciple from jail to attempt to slay a President on the grounds that he had not done sufficient for the cause of conservation.

Only in America could one have a kidnapped heiress 'converted' to the 'sympiotic' liberation views of her captors. . .

...Only in America could her millionaire parents claim that she was brain-washed and her capture on charges of bank robbery etcetera was a liberation.

Only in America would a jail-cell be bugged in order to overhear the heiress confess to a friend that her supposed brain-washing was a ploy to get bail.

Only in America would such a device be admitted, allowed and publicised.

HISTORY is there to teach us that all governments resemble one another and are worth the same. The best are the worst. More cynicism among some, more hypocrisy among others! At bottom, always the same proceedings, always the same intolerance! Government is liberal only in appearance, for it has in reserve, under the dust of legislative arsenals, some nice little law... for use against troublesome opposition.

--Kropotkin, on trial at Lyons
1883 (quoted by Paul Berman in
Quotation from the anarchists)

Only in America could a magazine called 'High Times' be published devoted to drug-taking (soft and hard).

Only in America could there be pro-capitalist anarchism.

Only in America could there be an Institute for Plant (i.e. flowers, etc) Communication.

Only in America could a kidnapper pretend to be a radical, ask for an astronomical ransom and a plane and finish up by exchanging two hostages for ten cans of beer, communicating with a radio programme, and giving up quietly.

Only in America ?

One takes the half-boasting phrase from Harry Golden's patriotic cosy *schmalz* about the wonders of American life. But one knows full well that all these (and many more other) excesses, peculiarities and outrages of the American way of life - and death - are the natural result of systems of government, business and finance which will undoubtedly recur (like fashions) after a lapse of time in the countries which follow those same tracks. America is but a capitalist state write large; and the projection of individual wishes and fears upon the giant screen of America is but the production of the Great American Dream.

* * *

For many years it has been a left-wing fashion to hate all things American. The evocative phrase 'C.I.A.' generates as much adrenalin and saliva these days as the magic phrase 'Ku Klux Klan' did in the twenties and thirties. But one cannot judge a whole nation by its worst excesses. Due partly to Hollywood the American nation lives (and dies) by its images. The celluloid image of the cowboy has lived longer in screening time than he did in his history. The screen World War II ran for twenty years with every conquered people a *maquisard* and every American a conquered hero. The stutter of Chicago's twenties' machine-guns reverberated round movie theatres for years after Capone died in Florida from V. D.

These images of America have obscured much of the reality, and, needing someone to hate, the authoritarian left seized upon this rag-bag of the Great American Movie Nightmare and elevated it to folk-memories and historical facts.

If countries have a collective consciousness America is a young, adolescent country with pimples and mistakes. This year it is celebrating its 200th anniversary. It was founded in revo-

lution; revolutionary principles (including the right to revolt) were written into the declaration of independence. It gained its freedom from Britain (in fact the young colony had maintained its independence by self-reliance and decentralized townships before the physical revolution which merely changed the masters). A civil war was necessary to establish the Northern industrial supremacy. (Slavery had little to do with it.)

A recent history of a people in whom the instinct for freedom, opposition to tyranny (for many of them were refugees from authoritarianism) is not without idealism and its virtues. The American people have a long and honourable roll of revolutionaries, the American government treated many of them abominably (as any government would) but we cannot dismiss as totally lost a country which nurtured John Brown, Henry D. Thoreau, Walt Whitman, William Lloyd Garrison, Voltairine de Cleyre, Wendell Phillips, Benjamin Tucker - to name only the native-born. When we call the roll of those who looked for freedom in the U.S. - and found it within themselves - the names are legion: Berkman, Goldman, Most, Sacco, Vanzetti, Spies. . . These have left their mark on radical history.

The Great American dream of freedom often turns to nightmare but whilst there are those that dream we may yet awake into the reality of freedom.

Jack Robinson.

PUBLIC SPENDING

...Continued from P. 15

Both in New York and here in Britain very scant mention is made of the status symbols and the overloading with highly paid "parasites" of local government in the "cut public spending" debate. No mention is made of the obvious solution to the State's crisis -- the destruction of power and privilege which will inevitably follow from the elimination of the State (both in its central and local manifestations) and of the concept of private property. Homeless people need housing. Certain sections of society have more than they need. The police and the courts are there to ensure that they retain more than they need. Local councils, which continue to be administered according to the dictates of the powerful will continue to administer services in the same manner as the capitalist and spend their time evicting squatters whilst retaining a huge stock of empty property.

The State is in serious trouble all the world over. New York's bankruptcy will according to Chancellor Helmut Schmidt have a "domino effect on the finances of Europe". Here in Britain Denis Healey has asked the country to pay for the crisis by cuts in real wages, and cuts in public services. When the poor man goes to the rich man and asks for help, he is promptly told to "fuck off". Our answer to the State which comes to us asking that we help it out of its crisis should be the same.

Nino Staiffa.

PUBLIC SPENDING

WHENEVER WE are told that "we" are heading towards bankruptcy as a "nation" (?) the cry goes out from the "poor" ratepayers that the obvious solution is to cut public spending. The cuts, furthermore, must take place in local government where such "luxuries" as social services, housing services and up until recently, education, are squandering people's hard-earned rate contributions. Only the "communist" (i.e. pro-Soviet) extremists suggest cuts in such "essentials" as "defence" (or do they mean "aggression"?).

Whilst we do not wish to make excuses for the obvious inefficiencies of local government, we must consider the hypocrisy of these "militant" ratepayers who forever worship the god of power and privilege, who has ordained them to be the chosen people, with the prayer of "cut local authority spending". One cry which is often heard from the poverty-stricken owner-occupied hovels of suburbia is, "Oh to be a council tenant!" These evil and lazy "council tenants" receive huge subsidies apparently which are procured from the pockets of the oppressed, god-fearing, hard-working, owner-occupier.

One fact which is conveniently ignored is that the owner-occupier is subsidised by the public purse to a much greater extent than the council tenant. The tax relief for owner-occupiers with a mortgage is one obvious example of giving the biggest subsidies to those who can afford the biggest mortgages (or any mortgage at all). Secondly, the services which are provided such as gas, electricity and water, without which their precious piece of "independence", the owner-occupied house, could not exist are always accounted for in the estimates for showing us how council tenants are subsidised. However, the private builder does not have to provide these services as they already exist, which explains how the independent owner-occupier manages to afford to pay the cost of building the house. Thirdly, only the owner-occupier is allowed to benefit from improvement grants for older property. This latter subsidy is chiefly responsible for the "gentrification" of older working-class areas, turning them into middle-class ghettos. There are, of course, an infinite number of ways in which the present social system is geared towards perpetrating and then protecting the private property owner.

Who has really paid for the accumulation of wealth, property, power and privilege in the past? Who is now required to pay for the current government's financial crisis (whilst at the same time protecting private property)? It is the people who have to "do without" so that a certain section of society can live with more than they actually need. As a hypocritical gesture of charity, society has made available unemployment benefits, council blocks (built as cheaply as possib-

le), a national health service, protection of tenants' rent levels and aid in finding people some sort of housing accommodation. This never has been a charitable gesture on the part of the privileged. It is a means of control. Without this excuse for aid the power and privilege structures of society would have collapsed long ago.

Nevertheless, when the state finds itself in a financial crisis this "charity" must be cut to even more inadequate levels. You boy, guilty of never having had the money to live in bourgeois luxury, must now pay for this obscene act of defiance by putting up with even less "charity"! And think yourself lucky! Meanwhile, don't you dare occupy that empty house over there or I'll lock you up!

In New York the impossibility of retaining the same power and privilege that has always been there is manifesting itself with much greater repercussions than have so far been seen here. The city of New York is very near to being declared bankrupt. If the city is declared bankrupt, the city will go into receivership and come under the control of a federal judge. The result will be that there will be no cash left to pay municipal workers, and there will be no welfare payments for the poor. Why does not the Federal Government intervene to save New York City - government which is, after all, a mainstay of the hierarchical system? There are two reasons: they think (a) the effects are only really felt by the poor who can easily be controlled by the National Guard, and (b) President Ford regards New York as a monument to Democratic Party mismanagement and he is not too unhappy about keeping it that way. Hence, the lives of poor people are being used as pawns in the election game. We've always said this, of course, but "nice" Gerald Ford is very crudely demonstrating this in this case.

In "newly-Communist" Turin it has again become obvious that the old Christian Democrat administration had been squandering money. What was not known was just in what manner the money was being squandered. The Turin city hall was an example of unbridled luxury. The furnishings and all the rest of the "pomp and circumstance" regalia was costing the city a fortune. Quite rightly the leisure rooms of the top knobs have been converted to offices and "shocked" officials now find themselves working 10 to 12 hours a day. Furthermore, the expensive furniture is being handed out to the poor. The cries of despair of the Christian Democrats in parliament are being heard all the way from Rome. "Nice" Gerald Ford is no doubt standing by with his "liberationist" murderers to stop the country becoming (God help us!) Communist. As the comics say, "GASP !!!"

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BOOKSHOP NOTES

All the titles mentioned in these notes are available from Freedom Bookshop, 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX at the prices - plus postage - itemised. For callers the bookshop is open:

Tuesday-Friday 2 - 6 p.m.
(Thursdays until 8.00 p.m.)
Saturdays 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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THIS WEEK I am going to concentrate on what H. N. Brailsford entitled, in his sadly out of print book, "Shelley, Godwin and their circle".

Firstly a new biography of Mary Wollstonecraft by Eleanor Flexner (£1.95 + 21p) which emphasises her role as a pioneer of the Modern Women's Liberation movement; another biography of her is by Claire Tomalin and entitled The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft (£4.75 + 42p) - possibly a more scholarly work, but the scholarship is not permitted to obscure the relevance of Wollstonecraft to today, nor her historical and political significance.

Mary Wollstonecraft's own classic work, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (£1.00 + 16p) is also available, edited by Miriam Kramnick. Her husband William Godwin is, of course, the author of among other things, the Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (£2.50 + 42p), which is not available complete, but this edition abridged by K. Codell Carter contains most of the meat of his various arguments concerning the Powers of Man, the Principles of Society, the Principles of Government, the Operation of Opinion, Of Legislative and Executive Power, Of Crime and Punishment, and lastly, Of Property. This volume also contains short extracts from his books The Enquirer and Thoughts on Man, together with the Thoughts occasioned by the perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon, preached at Christ Church on April 15th, 1800.

The Letters of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft to each other are available in Godwin and Mary (£1.75 + 24p), edited by Ralph M. Wardle.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was of course William and Mary's son-in-law. His Address to the Irish People (£0.90 + 9p) has an immediacy in the light of current events which is often uncanny. Also available are his magnificent poem, The Mask of Anarchy (£0.30 + 9p), written while Shelley was in Italy in 1819 on hearing of the Peterloo Massacre; and his Necessity of Atheism (abridged) (only .01p + 7p post) the writing of which, of course, occasioned his expulsion from Oxford University.

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THROUGH THE ANARCHIST PRESS

SPAIN

THE ONE THREAD linking all the anarchist papers in the last month or so is, of course, denunciation of Franco's execution of the five ETA and FRAP militants. The papers seem divided over what epithet to apply to the moribund (by the time this comes out one hopes, dead) dictator, but the choice seems to come down to Franco-the-executioner or Franco-la-Muerte. It will be interesting to read his obituaries in Frente Libertario, Espoir, Le Combat Syndicaliste, etc. They should make an interesting contrast with what appears in the Telegraph.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Spain occupies a special place in the anarchist movement because of what happened there in 1936-39, the nearest we have yet come to an anarchist revolution. The practical application there of self-management, an idea that has come to the forefront of revolutionary thought since the ferment of Paris in May 1938, is arousing more interest in English-language circles all the time, as is witnessed by the publication of Sam Dolgoff's anthology, "The Anarchist Collectives", of Vernon Richards' translation of Gaston Leval's "Collectives in the Spanish Revolution", and the translation in progress of Frank Mintz's book on "Autogestion dans la Révolution Espagnole".

The English 'Solidarity' group are the people most concerned with the theory and practice of self-management, in this country. A couple of months ago they issued a discussion document on whether self-management must necessarily be socialist/revolutionary, in view of the Ulster Workers' strike in 1974. And their very latest pamphlet, "Women in the Spanish Revolution", by Liz Willis, casts doubt on whether self-management (in the light of what happened in Spain during the collectivization period) necessarily furthers the cause of women's liberation (for a longer review of the pamphlet, see elsewhere in this section. Solidarity have also reprinted Maurice Brinton's "The Irrational in Politics", with a new introduction to the 1975 edition).

The movement towards collectivization in Spain did not, of course, arise from nothing. It was the product of long years of propaganda and teaching by the CNT, the strongest ever anarchosyndicalist organization. The latest (October) issue of De Vrije Socialist, the monthly paper of the Dutch Anarchist Federation, contains an interview with the secretary of the Amsterdam section of the CNT, on the present situation in Spain, in view of the recent executions, and the trials and imprisonment of CNT and other anarchist militants in the last few months.

WORKERS' COMMISSIONS

In the interview he talks about the origins of the Comisiones Obreras (they were originally started by dissident Falangists, fed up with the impotence of the official unions, by radical Catholics, and by the Communist Party) and how they attracted workers who saw in them a possibility of real struggle against the employers, but of how they have been bureaucratized by the Communist Party, who want to integrate them into the official unions, and thus legalize the power-structure they have set up.

OFFICIAL PROTESTS

Later in the interview, he gives his opinion on the officially inspired protest about the Spanish executions, in the Netherlands. He is rather scornful that the Dutch people should have to be prodded by the government into protest, and very clear-sighted about the hypocrisy of Western governments, which on the one hand condemn Franco's "fascist brutality" and on the other are in the process of constructing special prisons for the mental torture of inmates. He cites the cases of Pinelli and Marini in Italy, the treatment of the R.A.F. in West Germany, British internment and occupation in N. Ireland, the building of the Bijlmer bajes" (isolation cells) in the Netherlands.

SWISS REPRESSION

He could have added the pre-trial detention conditions of accused people in Switzerland. The 18th October 1975 issue of Umanita Nova, the weekly paper of the Italian Anarchist Federation, has a long article entitled, "The testimony of the revolutionary Petra Krause on prison brutality in the land of 'social peace'". The practice of holding people accused of violence against the State in prison for months and even years before trial, seems common to all the police forces of Europe (East and West), and Switzerland, the "apolitical" country, is no exception. Indeed, from reading Ms. Krause's description, the conditions in the cells at Zurich police station seem medieval, and Schlapfer, the superintendent of police there, has nothing to learn from Pinochet or Lopez Rega.

Nowadays too, the police are scarcely restricted by national frontiers. The Swiss police having discovered absolutely no evidence against Elizabeth Van Dyck, an alleged member of the R.A.F., released her after a long detention, but instead of allowing her to leave the country, by her own route, "accompanied" her to Basle, and put her on a train to Freiburg in West Germany, where she was arrested by the German police. Now she is in the Köln-Ossendorf prison, in the isolation wing from which Astrid Pröhl had to be released because of physical and mental breakdown. The Swiss police, like their French counterparts, have also furnished information to the Spanish police, which has resulted in the arrest of anti-Francoists in Spain.

FEDERATION NEWS

On a more positive note, we can announce the publication of the first issue of the Anarchist Federation Bulletin, a first step along the way towards creating a new anarchist federation in this country. This is not an easy task as the examples of other countries prove. There are three federations in Italy, a country with a far stronger anarchist tradition than ours. There are disputes in the Dutch federation which have surfaced in public discussions between the editors of De Vrije Socialist and De As, another Dutch anarchist monthly. We have just received news that the Norwegian Anarchist Federation has split into two parts, the FAFS (Federation of Anarchists/Libertarian Socialists) and the RAF (Revolutionary Workers Union), and the situation in France is scarcely more united.

BLACK FLAG

Black Flag has a new administrative address: 10, Meltham Road, Lockwood, Huddersfield, Yorkshire. This is an address for mail only. Wildcat seems to have ceased publication.

D. L. M.

BOOKSHOP NOTES.

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Among other titles in stock again are two pamphlets by Alexandra Kollontai; firstly, two works combined in one volume - Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle and Love and the new morality, translated and introduced by Alix Holt (£0.30 + 9p), and also Women Workers Struggle for their Rights translated by Celia Britten and with an introduction and notes by Sheila Rowbotham and Suzie Fleming (£0.30p + 9p).

Lastly, two new titles, the long awaited Valpreda Papers (£6.00 + 42p) - these are the Prison Diaries of Pietro Valpreda. It is as well to remember that although Valpreda is at present "free" after awaiting trial in prison for over two years, he has still not been completely cleared of the charges made against him by the Milan authorities and may yet have to face a trial. (This book was reviewed in our previous issue.)

A lighter touch may be permissible to complete this week's notes - 95% is Crap: A Plain Man's guide to British Politics (£1.75 + 24p) is a humorous but not unserious look at the political scene by Terry Arthur and illustrated by cartoonist Cummings; perhaps 95% is an underestimate, but this delightful compilation of quotations, misstatements, errors, contradictions and unintentional humour for the masochistic, of our "leaders", all tied together by Arthur's pithy prose, is more than just a good laugh.

J. H.