

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

2 February 1980
Vol 41 No 2

25p

Inside: *STATEMENT BY TAFF; REVIEW ON ELISEE RECLUS; PRISON NOTES*

'IN AN IDEAL WORLD...



POLITICAL GAMES

PRESIDENT Carter could hardly have prayed for anything more helpful in the run-up to the next presidential election than the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Having built up his reputation during his first term of office on his ability to do nothing (which as far as we are concerned is the best thing any president can do) while there was nothing to do - immediately something happens he is seen as a man of principle and action. Detente may be alright, but aggression (by somebody else) is paved with presidential gold.

And the great thing is - he still doesn't have to actually do anything

except strike moral stances, wait for the righteous indignation of all those for whom Vietnam has been erased from their selective memories - and collect the applause of the hawks.

For our own dear prime minister the situation is just as juicy. Having already established her political virginity as the Iron Maiden by rejecting the advances of the wicked Russian reds and fluttering her eyelashes at those other reds further to the East, she is now PROVED RIGHT. The Russians are imperialist and expansionist after all.

Conveniently forgetting that it was while the Soviet Union (under

Stalin) was our great wartime ally and while the greatest Englishman who ever lived, Winston Churchill, was our great leader, that Russia built up its empire of buffer states from the Baltic to the borders of Greece, Maggie is now able to screech out loud, "I told you so" while, like Jimmy, having to do little but strike moral stances.

One really spiteful reaction our government has unleashed has been to increase the output of news directed at the Soviet Union by the BBC External Services - by half an hour per day. Wow, that'll teach 'em to invade Afghanistan! So too will the

vicious decision to cancel the Red Army Choir and withdraw funds for Soviet film directors coming to London for a festival.

Perhaps a bit more sinister and interesting was the cancelling of 'exchanges' between British and Soviet navies and air force staff colleges. Dear reader, did you know that these exchanges took place - all the time our Iron Maiden was rattling her tin sabre?

The one big issue, however, upon which Mrs Thatcher has stuck her neck out is her call for a boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow next July. This could well be the greatest gamble of her career, which we hope will be mercifully short, but we must say that we don't remember her ever saying anything like it before.

Forgive us if our memory fails us - but did she ever offer a whisper of support for Peter Hain's 'Stop the 70s Tour' campaign against South African cricketers in 1970? Has she ever uttered one word of criticism of the blatant nationalism and revolting patriotic exploitation of 'golds', 'silvers' and 'bronzes' by all the nation states taking part in these nationalistic jamborees? Did Mrs Thatcher ever, before Afghanistan, utter one word of protest against the well-publicised

rounding up of young people and dissidents in Moscow?

It was reported here, loud and clear, that the Russian state was preparing, and proceeding with, the evacuation of Moscow by thousands of individuals who might be corrupted by contact with foreign visitors. Not only the known dissidents - of whom Sakharov is the latest and best known - but many workers struggling for free trade unions, monitoring the Helsinki human rights 'agreement' or simply getting tired of being pushed around.

For these, Maggie Thatcher was not prepared to jettison the advantages of 'detente' - for all this is an 'internal matter', like the treatment of the Jews in Nazi Germany until 1939, when it became a useful propaganda weapon.

Now, however, she is prepared to find these principles, for, let's face it, how much does Britain have to lose in Olympic terms - the terms that matter, that is? How many 'golds' do we stand to win, balanced against how many ignominious defeats by the professional amateurs of the super states?

It may well be hard luck for Sebastian Coe and Robin Cousins - but what do they matter in the real power games of the world? Expendable, like pawns in all the games.

We are not anti-sport. We are thrilled by human endeavour and perfection in all spheres of activity. What we should like to see would be a truly free Games, with individuals competing for the joy of the game, released from the inhuman pressures which are laid upon them by the patriotic crap of 'running for your country', hysteria for an extra half-inch in the high jump, despair for coming only fourth - among the world's best!

As for the despicable Margaret Thatcher, yes, we would like to - see a boycott - a boycott of everything she stands for. A boycott of all the political games that she and her kind play all the time, with athletes or steelworkers, miners and teachers, dockers and doctors, children and adults.

Recently Maggie said, "in an ideal world, we could divorce sport and politics - but we don't live in an ideal world". How right she was - and by her political games she tries to ensure we shall never reach an ideal world.

That's the thing to boycott - all their political games. Then people could meet freely across the frontiers and prove themselves as persons and not as subjects, as personalities and not as objects of manipulation.

HUMAN RIGHTS 'MOSCOW 80' COMMITTEE

IT was the biggest press conference I can remember. The evening before there had been a sort of briefing meeting at a studio in the Marais. Back in 1970 I remembered Bukovsky discussing future actions with his friend Alik Volpin; now besides Bukovsky there was Plyushch, Kuznetsov, Gorbanevskaya and Amalrik, deciding how best to answer the predictably dim questions the press would ask (they did), chaired sensibly and humorously by Marek Halter, a Russian-born Parisian much involved in the events of May 1968. Ionesco had named these men as the alternative Soviet government and if you had to have one I agree with him. They were joined on the platform next morning by Maksimov, Fainberg and Ginsberg. How many decades of prison, camp

and 'hospital' had these people survived?

The hall was filled almost to suffocation and the photographers obstructed the TV cameras and there was much shoving and shouting. The eight Russians had suddenly become news again, thanks to Brezhnev's Blunder (or was it Suslov's? Kremlinologists are still arguing). Their patience was astounding and very moving in the face of the blandly ignorant questioning. I had previously heard British MPs putting similar questions to Bukovsky in committee at the House of Commons and I know I have no more patience. What is never even hinted at is the increasingly blatant evidence that the Soviet state is guaranteed by Western credit and Western investment (if you doubt this you should read Vod-

ka Cola by Charles Levinson). As it was with psychiatry, so it is with business. And so many would like it to be in the quaintly-styled 'sport'. What detente is all about as Lord Carrington was quick to point out after his truly frightening threat to give the BBC an extra half hour broadcast to Russia.

The press conference was clearly a success in putting over the dissidents' case, mainly because the speakers refused to be sidetracked, answering ignorance with humour and wisdom. What has not been answered is the full extent of the Western betrayal and the reasons for it. But these questions can only be asked by a westerner. When shall we start?

DM

TRAFALGAR SQUARE RALLY - FEB 10

A rally is being organised by the committee for 10 February in Trafalgar Square.

The Red Menace

I expect that many readers have spent much time and effort trying to ignore the press' horror stories about the so-called infiltration of the Labour party by Trotskyists. As with all such press fixations, the coverage is repetitious and unanalytical, but it reveals certain points that some people might expect but the average reader would not notice.

The most obvious reason for this propaganda campaign is as a counter-attack against the left's attempts to reform the party, and transfer power into their own camp. After the election defeat, the various sections of the party each looked for a scapegoat to blame it on to. The left-wing with the predominantly left-wing National Executive Committee, were the first into battle with Anthony Wedgwood-Benn (who now drinks out of a tin mug instead of Wedgwood china so that the workers will think he's one of them) as the high priest, and the party leader and ex-prime minister James Callaghan as the scapegoat. The N.E.C. were annoyed that Callaghan had taken out of the pre-election manifesto, the more left-wing proposals that they had voted for. They claimed, and seemed to believe, that with the manifesto in the form that they had wanted, Labour could have won the election. The N.E.C. therefore decided to introduce measures to give themselves power to decide on the contents of the manifesto, and also called for Callaghan to resign so that he could be replaced by one of their supporters. It is claimed that these measures were introduced to democratise the party, as the N.E.C. is democratically elected by the party members, but the people proposing it now would find some reason to oppose it if the N.E.C. were predominantly right-wing and the leader more left-wing.

The right were then forced to protect their power, and tried to gain public support by implying that the reformers were all extremists. Originally, Benn was constantly referred to in the press as a marxist, but his ideas were already too well known for such a label to have much effect, so the Trotskyist conspiracy was born. It has never been claimed that the N.E.C. had been taken over by the Trots, or that the left in general were involved in this conspiracy, but the idea was to create an atmosphere where any proposals for reform are met with suspicion. Unfortunately for the right, their timing was not very good, and the scandal they created has given the left cover to continue with their plans while the rest of the party worries about the Trots.

Another reason for these claims, is that after nearly four years of bungling along in office, the Labour party has had to try to convince the public that it actually has a party line. As attempts to turn their muddle of vague electoral promises into a consistent policy would be impossible and would alienate many sections of their voters, who turned to them because of some minor concessions granted to them, the party must find some popular bogeymen and thus define what the party line is not. In some ways it is fortunate for the party that the manifesto expresses the will of the leader and not the party as a whole; otherwise it would show up better the inconsistencies within the party. The party's contradiction between the socialist language they have inherited and the social democratic policies they pursue is largely covered by the leader avoiding any situation where he might have to choose.

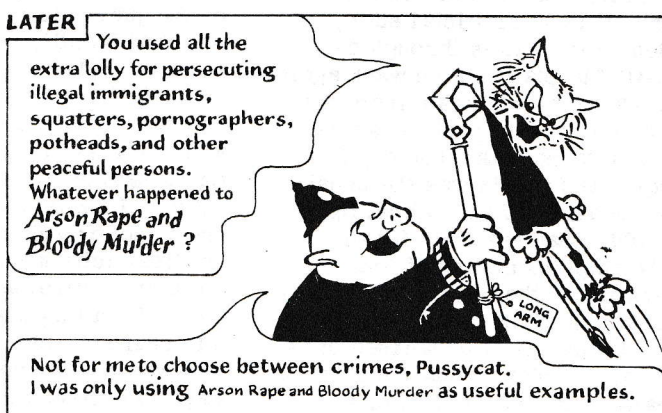
What there is of a party line is taken from the policies of the ruling

group within the party, minus anything that blatantly contradicts the policies of the other groups. To bring the other groups into line behind the ruling group, in the name of solidarity, a scapegoat can be useful to turn people's attention and energy in one direction and away from criticism of the ruling group. The current ruling group in the Labour party is using this tactic to prevent the left from taking over leadership, but if the left should succeed, they would soon start a similar campaign to assure continued support.

Should even greater splits develop or if the ruling group were to attempt to institute policies totally contrary to the beliefs of the majority of the party, a more spectacular way might be required of detracting attention. In the present situation in Britain, any group chosen as a scapegoat could leave the party when things started getting too heavy, and set up or join another party. But in a situation where the party has more power, they could take their pick from purges, repression or sacrifice (with an ice-pick).

Who then are these 'infiltrators'? Unfortunately, they are not subversives out to undermine the Labour party as some papers would have us believe. The only difference between the 'Militant Tendency' within the party, and the S.W.P. or W.R.P. is that they believe that the workers' party already exists in the form of the Labour party, so there is no need to start up another one. There has been no real infiltration; they have been quite open about their membership. Of course they try to convert other party members to their ideology, and their propaganda methods are based more on the regimentation expected from Trotskyist, but there is no more conspiracy among them than among any other group in the party.

Myk Zeitlin



TAFF'S STATEMENT

The following statement was sent to FREEDOM by Taff Ladd, one of the original defendants in the Persons Unknown case, who 'disappeared' on the eve of the trial.

The reason I did not turn up at the trial is that it was being used by the state to introduce new measures for its increasingly repressive role. (New means that so far only Irish republicans have experienced them). To appear in court would have made me party to the state's intentions, manipulations and game. I say this even after the verdicts.

The image built up of the six charged, from the first arrests, had a very similar pattern to the media campaigns against assorted comrades in Europe. Having witnessed at first hand such events in West Germany, and then in other countries, it became increasingly obvious to me that the trial was being used to have exceptional measures become normal measures, after the West German model of inner stability. (The involvement of German police on some raids as well as the passing of information about the case to the German Embassy - this is provable - shows clearly that this was not entirely a local mission by local police) What remains open to question is whether events were shaped to a conspiracy or a conspiracy shaped to events - the conspiracy being the "great international terrorist" attack against the state. Such a theme, fed to a willing sensationalist media, is used to justify "counter-measures" - psychological warfare which has already been scientifically refined and tested in West Germany and exported with the aim of denying the legitimacy of resistance against both the repressive nation state and the intended super-state of Europe. Foreigners are used to imply that natives would never, on their own, be motivated to attack the state, and also to awaken fears of foreign domination. The reason for West Germany's role as the leading counter-insurgency agent in Europe is to be found in its history. It is an artificial state, founded by the Allies through the Marshall Aid plan as a bulwark against the so-called communism from the east, and as a safe profit-making base for international finance. A prerequisite for this was the crushing by the allies of all radical opposition which had survived Hitler; then the implementation of total registration of the population, and of a structuring which would be able to control all means of organised opposition e.g. trade unions. In short it became a capitalist dream, a

model state. With its economic and military growth came an increase in its political influence so that now it dominates affairs in Europe. Its aim is to expand its model state to cover all of Europe, or as Foreign Minister said, internationalise our inner stability. One method is through economic blackmail such as the offering of aid to occupied Ireland on condition that political status be withdrawn.

This does not mean that British capitalists have to be forced to comply; some want the German model, others want it while retaining control, others want to see Britain with an Empire again.

The emergence of armed groups in West Germany, a challenge to the monopoly of power, brought about a response whereby captured guerrillas were by law allowed to be tortured by sensory deprivation, and their defence lawyers criminalised. The West Germans had gathered experiences of counter-insurgency from other countries and refined their practices in order to elicit exactly the right response in the hope of stifling any show of solidarity with the guerrillas. Over the years counter-insurgency measures have been extended to cover all forms of extra-parliamentary opposition. This model of institutional repression has been used in other European countries and has thus created a foothold for the German police pigs in the legal machinery of various states. The state manipulations around our trial were a part of the process of importation here of such a model.

In deciding my response to this I realised that we had failed to fully respond to the initial solidarity which the Persons Unknown Support Group had, as well as to the publicity created by the jury vetting. Further, my political identity would have been strained under the compromises that a court of law imposes on a defendant; how far do you stand by principles with the risk of a long sentence? Also, having served a prison sentence before, I knew how prison attacks one's identity/character, and what political activists have to expect with solitary confinement and control units. I had no wish to take part in this charade, my only political answer was not to appear, to find other ways to oppose the oppressors.

THE SURETY COMPLEX

The superficial liberalism of the bail system is intended to defuse and morally blackmail in the furtherance of the aims of class justice. The capitalists have, in their blind worship of their god, money, equated it with identity and life.

My release on bail, mainly for medical reasons and despite the terrorism against the sureties, was in the eyes of the pigs a defeat. Their safeguard was to hold me ransom for £17,000 and to make economic hostages of two people. The intention was to bind, to appear at their show trial, to deliver myself voluntarily - by moral blackmail - to their corrupt justice.

My failure was that I was unable to make clear to the hostages, despite the obvious escalation by, and intentions of the pigs in our case, that you cannot equate identity or life with money. Also, that by appearing at their show trial I would be allowing myself to become a puppet of their manipulations; it would not have been me taking the action. Those who say my failure was in not appearing, that I "let friends down", are blind to, or don't want to recognise, the methods of the pigs, equally they are thinking along the lines of capitalist ideology, being "objective", not taking a subjective stand in the struggle. Thought should be given to what the show trial means, with its control units for "anarchists and subversives", the threat at the trial and in prison to identity and life. Your energy should be directed against the aims of capitalist judiciary and prisons/control units; in helping the sureties to pay the ransom, and freeing yourselves from the mental chains of capitalist ideology, i.e. your colonisation. TAFF

FREEDOM'S COMMENT

WHEN Taff failed to appear on the first day of the trial at the Old Bailey we commented (FREEDOM 22.9.79) that we regretted his decision but did not condemn it.

This was because, without being in the position ourselves, we found

cont. on p. 7



PRISON NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA

I AM a prisoner in Kirkland Correctional Institute (Prison) which is in Columbia, South Carolina, USA. Kirkland is a maximum security prison ranking second to South Carolina's Central Correction Institute (CCI) in degree of security.

Kirkland has a furniture factory which processes furniture for state use. It seems slavery is not dead in South Carolina. I was on parole for 62 days and put to work as a laborer for a construction company. I was only allowed to go to and from the work. We had some supervised shopping trips but no freedom beyond that. After 62 days of this my parole was rescinded and I was returned to Kirkland and placed in lock-up because I had some tools in my possession.

I wonder if this is how they do things in England.

EDWARD H. McMAHON
4344 Broad River Rd, Columbia,
SC 29210, USA

CALIFORNIA

KAMALLA MILLER is a 26 years-old feminist, anarchist, pacifist, and a co-editor of the American anarchist paper, Bayou La Rose. She is also in prison, charged with kidnapping her daughter.

According to our American comrades, Kamalla and her husband, Arthur, asked her parents to take care of their daughter, Valeena Mariska (Iska), while they were looking for a new job (having been thrown out of work by the recession). When, a few weeks later, they asked for the children back, they were ordered, instead, to report to a custody hearing. This, it appears, dealt mostly with the Millers' lifestyle and political beliefs and activities (Arthur was described in one report as a "fanatical communist IWW organiser"). It was also held against

Kamalla that she is an epileptic. The judge finally ruled that the child should be brought up by the party with the most money, i.e. the parents.

Kamalla became deeply worried about her child's safety - her other child, Jason, died of asphyxiation while in the parents' charge. In 1978, she went to California to take back her daughter and, in 1979, she was arrested.

Comrades are asked to write in protest to: Jerry Brown, Governor, Sacramento, California. Contact address: Kamalla Miller Support, Bayou La Rose, 2115 Esplanade Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70119, Kamalla Miller Support, 3304 Clinton Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55408.

EIRE

A group of concerned people in Ireland have decided to help raise funds in support of a legal action which is being taken by a prisoner here.

Marie Murray is a prisoner serving a life sentence in Limerick prison in the south of Ireland. Through the Irish and Strasbourg courts she is trying to win conjugal rights with her husband Noel Murray who is also serving a life sentence in the Curragh Military Prison.

At present they only have a one hour visit every three or four months.

There are conjugal rights of a certain degree in South American and Scandinavian countries. If Marie Murray's legal case is successful it would change the existing situation for all prisoners in this state.

The costs involved in taking a case of this nature to Strasbourg are very substantial and will cost thousands of pounds (£1000 - £7000). As it is impossible for any prisoner to obtain legal aid for a civil action to procure this type of money on their own we have set up a committee and opened a bank account where money can be sent.

If you wish to support this legal action more information can be obtained from the address below. If you could send any information about conjugal rights in your own country it would help us with our case.

Crossed cheques to W. Gaj and R.D. Stenson, account number 48034381, Bank of Ireland, Lower Baggot St, Dublin 2.

If you wish to send information and literature please send it only to R.D. Stenson, 15 St Aiden Park, Fairview, Dublin 3.

GREECE

THEODORE TSOUVALAKIS has been transferred to Corfu prison after involvement in an attack, when several prisoners were beaten up by guards. He reports that he is being kept in solitary confinement. Comrades can write to him direct: Corfu Prison, Corfu, Greece.

ABOLITIONIST PAPERS

1: THE KITE

FROM the Solitary Confinement Abolition Project (PO Box 758, Station A, Vancouver BC, Canada) comes the excellent libertarian journal The Kite. (The word is prison slang for an illegally-passed message or letter between prisoners or between in- and outside.) The Kite gives advice on how to "sabotage the legal machine" and defend yourself, and notes that more and more defendants are now doing this. Other articles deal with 'developing ties between women inside and the feminist movement', with special control units in Canada and the USA, with prisoners' trade unions and so on, and at the back there is a comprehensive international listing of prisoner groups and anarchist journals which are sent free to prisoners. (This, of course, includes FREEDOM).

The Kite collective consists of three women and four men, all white, from Vancouver.... As individuals and activists we are anti-authoritarian. All of us see prison work as a logical and necessary part of our wider political activities. We are not prison reformists, and intend to abolish more than prisons". They see "visiting prisoners, and their developing outside political contacts, as a basic requirement of prison organising because in this way the secrecy about what's happening inside prisons can be broken". Their contact address is as above.

ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY...

"THE closed shop", declared The Times editorial on 8 December, "is one of the major inhibitions to raising productivity". This writer considered that the new Employment Bill, even with its provision to deal with secondary picketing, would not significantly strengthen the arm of management to impose their control over methods of production.

The Bill falls far short of the demands of many CBI employers who, at their autumn conference, were demanding the immediate abolition of the closed shop and insisting that the unions be made legally accountable for their agreements. What these people and The Times editor are after is legislation which will allow managers to alter the system and methods of production on the shopfloor.

These people look longingly at the East German productivity figures, according to recent figures from the Dresdner Bank twice that of the British. Managers must manage, they would claim, and the bill for them should have had a direct economic impact, curtailing the power of the shopfloor workers.

Once bitten, twice shy, has clearly been the Government's attitude. This bill is designed to avoid a head-on clash with the unions.

Only the clauses dealing with secondary picketing and secondary blacking should seriously worry us. The clauses 3 and 4 of the bill, which give a person the right not to be unreasonably excluded or expelled from a trade union may be positively beneficial to some militants in certain unions.

Basically the Times is right to argue that: 'Where there is a closed shop, the people working in that shop can normally control the technology that is employed and the conditions under which that technology is worked'. In other words the closed shop, together with a system of shopfloor customs and artful practices built up over generations, both curbs and contains the power of managements to impose less human conditions on their workforce.

No doubt the fact that workers want to preserve some elements of humanity on the shopfloor or resist redundancy for themselves or their workmates, entirely escapes The Times editor.

The view of most liberal economists and those who see labour as just so many productive units, is that the behaviour of British workers is irrational. Irrational because it does not fit the liberal economist's view of what is rational.

Would it be more rational if the British workers were more German, and the atmosphere in our factories was one of fear and competition?

Certainly the picture painted in the reports of the FAU (the German anarcho-syndicalist organisation) is a depressing one; with the German unions presented as little more than a branch of management and little opportunity to effectively formulate complaints from rank and file workers.

All attempts to impose foreign models of management and industrial relations on British workers have flopped. Throughout the 1960s and 70s attempts at legislation, incorporation and confrontation on labour relations and pay by governments has either met with disaster for its political perpetrators or, like the present bill, it shows up the impotence of government.

While the Times is right to see the closed shop as the source of our shopfloor strength, it is utterly unrealistic and blind to recent history when it suggests that it can be controlled or seriously modified by the passing of laws.

British syndicalism, the shopfloor variety, as practiced by union members and workers in their everyday working lives for generations, is not a delicate plant.

Will then the effect of the Employment Bill be merely cosmetic? No!

While the bill will make little impact upon shopfloor organisation it will, through its restriction of secondary picketing, hit at solidarity action in some disputes. The actions of strikers in the current strike of steelworkers could have been inhibited if the Employment Bill were now law.

Clearly the bill demonstrates the present weakness of government to make a serious onslaught on the shopfloor. Rank and file resistance, though it lacks a social conscience or deep moral concern, is much too well developed.

Our job as anarcho-syndicalists is to work within and identify with

our local shopfloor organisations and to generally back any rank and file or trade union resistance to the bill. Also any group or organisation which claims to be Syndicalist with a capital 'S', should now be analysing how the proposed picketing legislation can best be combated and what support can be offered. In this, as in all our actions, we should seek to introduce a social consciousness and a libertarian basis to the struggle.

B. B.

COMMENT ON TAFF'S STATEMENT

cont. from p. 4

it difficult to condemn a bid for freedom by someone who might have got a 20-year sentence and who had been chronically ill since his arrest.

We must, however, take issue with the statement on 'The Surety Complex' (above) which was later circulated, and which bases his action on an analysis of 'the superficial liberalism of the bail system' which is 'intended to defuse and - morally blackmail in the furtherance of class justice'.

We thought at the time - but refrained from printed criticism while the trial was going on - and we continue to think that his jumping bail made nonsense of the efforts of his defence counsel and friends in fighting for bail, and was a betrayal of the trust and good faith of the two women who put up sureties to the value of over £17000.

Not only have these two trusting friends been made to forfeit several thousands of pounds each, which it seems that they could ill afford (one having to jeopardise her house to pay the money) but when one anarchist skips bail it could make it much harder for others to get it in future. We also feel that we must criticise the way Taff's comrades are urged to direct their energies towards 'helping the sureties to pay the ransom and freeing yourselves from the mental chains of capitalist ideology'. For while certainly those of us who feel some responsibility for the good of the movement might well be moved to try to offset the harm done to the sureties, it is hardly for Taff to demand it.

POWER IN THE ANC

Dear comrades

I'd like to take up some of the points made by Ecology and Anarchism in their piece on 'ANC hierarchy' (FREEDOM 19.1.80).

E&A's attitude towards the Anti-Nuclear Campaign seems to be highly mechanical and determinist. They declare that the motives and intentions of individuals are irrelevant, as the essential function of the ANC is to 'recuperate the anti-nuclear movement'. This is an interesting theory, but nowhere do they explain exactly how and why this recuperation will occur. If individual intentions are as meaningless as they suggest, then the underlying recuperative tendency must be pretty strong, which means in turn that it must have pretty deep roots. Where, then, are we to find these roots? I think that E&A are going to have to put a more precise argument together before they gain a wide audience.

My own knowledge of the ANC leads me to exactly the opposite conclusion from E&A. At the moment it lacks a clear organisational structure and a clear way of reaching decisions, and this means that far too much power is in the hands of strategically-placed individuals. The need now is to establish whether the ANC is going to be another London-run campaign, occasionally mobilising demo-fodder for a ritual rally or whether it will provide a service to, and links between, autonomous local and regional anti-nuclear groups. The issue has not yet been decided.

Of course, I'm not a disinterested observer. I'm on the Interim Steering Committee, and I'm doing what I can to develop the ANC in north-east England. My experience so far is that the launching of the national campaign has provided a real boost to the anti-nuclear movement in this area, encouraging a degree of cooperation which never existed before. There is the chance to build a strong regional movement here, so that even if the ANC does become highly centralised we will be able to resist being coopted (or 'recuperated').

There's a more general lesson in this, I think, which has to do with the contradictions of all forms

Letters

of organisation. I've written before in FREEDOM, with reference to the Torness occupation last May, about the ways in which the slogan of 'libertarian autonomy' can become an excuse for a new sort of elitism. Similarly with a body like the ANC: even if it is a national, centralised organisation, it can nevertheless provide the means for a greater degree of local unity and autonomy. Things aren't as black and white as some comrades like to think. The contract between 'centralisation' and 'decentralisation' isn't an absolute, but must be analysed anew in each specific context.

I'd be the last one to give blanket approval to the ANC. That would be silly - but no sillier than E&A's blanket condemnation.

Yours

MARTIN SPENCE
Newcastle

PEOPLE'S COURTS?

Dear comrades

You state in your introduction to Ronan's account of the Persons Unknown trial that "despite valid reservations ... we should put our weight behind the jury system as long as people continue to be brought to trial."

Among information libertarians might like to bear in mind on this matter is an account by someone who has been on several juries which appeared in The Abolitionist (no. 4, 35p + 15p post, available from RAP, 182 Upper St, London N1*). This gives a very different impression to the one conveyed by the juror whose letter you reprint from The Guardian.

The principles of both juries and the rule of law are, of course, the very reverse of anarchism. Readers could reflect that the rule of law, with the Official Secrets Act, protects assaults on prisoners (among many other things) and that black citizens have had distinctly illiberal treatment from some juries. Supporting juries can be interpreted as supporting and assisting the veneer of respectability under which the hierarchic society we live in disposes of those defined as criminal by the ruling elite. Voting in elections would seem to be a similar type of compromise with the system, one which anarchists have always vigorously opposed.

In essence your approach to this matter is aliberal one rather than a revolutionary one. The latter approaches the matter by suggesting the establishment of people's courts and wishes to deal with problems by recognising collective responsibilities.

It is a pity that a struggling libertarian socialist group like Radical Alternatives to Prison has been virtually ignored by anarchists; recently FREEDOM has been sent press releases on RAP's general conference (given half a page by Newsline) and RAP has publicly supported the calls for a public inquiry into the events which took place at Wormwood Scrubs on 31 August this year. RAP's approaches to Robert Kilroy-Silk have resulted in turn in the obtaining of evidence on the formation in February 1978 of the prison's SPG, the Mufti Squad.

Further, FREEDOM has ignored RAP's appeal recently for support in a critical financial situation which threatens the continuance of the organisation. In the past year FREEDOM has been sent two issues of the Abolitionist, Stan Cohen's 'Crime and Punishment' and several press statements. Only RAP's submission to the May Inquiry into the prison services was covered by you.

This seems poor treatment for a libertarian organisation covering an area of vital importance like prison. It does not reflect the attitude of students at the University of Warwick whose student union unanimously agreed to affiliate to RAP recently and who formed a 35-strong RAP group at the university, during a very successful Prisoners Week.

I know only too well of the lingers on the edge of the libertarian movement whose sole contribution is to criticise and destroy all activities of other libertarians, so could I end by praising FREEDOM for its coverage of the Persons Unknown trial and for producing a journal carrying many articles of significance and great interest. Unfortunately the cartoon by Donald Room in the current issue does not assist FREEDOM's position - has any anarchist ever exploded a bomb just to attract attention. If so, when and where?

Yours

J.W.

London N1.

We shall comment on the points brought up by JW in our next issue

FREEDOM CONTACTS

Groups

ABERDEEN libertarian group, c/o 163 King Street, Aberdeen.
ABERYSTWYTH, David Fletcher, 59 Cambrian St., Aberystwyth.
BELFAST anarchist collective, Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast 1.
BIRMINGHAM anarchists/anarcha feminists meet Sundays. Contact Alison at Peace Centre, 18 Moore St., Ringway, B'ham 4 (tel. 021 643 0996).
BRIGHTON. Libertarian Socialist group, c/o Students Union, Palmer House, Univ. of Sussex, Palmer, Brighton.
BRISTOL. City: 4 British Road, Bristol BS3 3BW.
Students: Libertarian Society, Students Union, Queen's Road, Bristol.
CAMBRIDGE anarchists, Box A, 41 Fitzroy St., Cambridge.
CANTERBURY Alternative Research Group. Wally Barnes, Eliot College, University of Kent, Canterbury.
CARDIFF write c/o One-O-Eight Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Rd.
COVENTRY: John England, Students' Union, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry.
DERBY. Contact Andrew Huckerby 49 Westleigh Avenue, Derby SE3 3BY (tel. 368678).
DUBLIN: A.B.C. Collective, 7 Ballsbridge Ave., Dublin, Eire.
EAST ANGLIAN Libertarians, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex.
EDINBURGH anarchists meet 8 pm Mondays at First of May Bookshop, 45 Niddry St., Edinburgh.
EXETER anarchist collective c/o Community Assn., Devonshire House, Stocker Rd., Exeter.
GLASGOW anarchist group: John Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45.
HASTINGS anarchist group c/o Solstice, 127 Bohemia Rd., St. Leonards on Sea. Tel. 0424 429537
HULL Libertarian Collective, 23 Aukland Ave., Hull, W. Humberside.
LEAMINGTON & Warwick c/o 42 Bath St., Leamington Spa.
LEEDS - new address awaited.
L O N D O N
 Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Av., (tel. 359 4794 before 7 pm).
 Freedom Collective, 84B Whitechapel High St. E1 (247 9249)
 Hackney anarchists: Contact Dave on 249 7042.
 Kingston anarchists, 13 Denmark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames (549 2564).
 London Workers' Group, Box W, 182 Upper St., N.1. (249 7042) meetings Tuesdays 8pm at Metropolitan pub, 95 Farringdon Rd. (Farringdon tube).

Love V. Power, Box 779, Peace News London Office, 5 Celedonian Rd., N.1.
 West London anarchists, 7 Penard Rd., W.12.

MALVERN & Worcester area, Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrage, Malvern, Worcs.
MANCHESTER - see NW Federation
MID SUSSEX & South Coast anarchists, c/o Resources Centre, North Rd., Brighton, E. Sussex.
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE. Black Jake, c/o 115 Westgate Rd., Newcastle NE1 4AG.
NORWICH anarchists, c/o Free-wheel Community Books, 56 St. Benedicts St., Norwich.
NOTTINGHAM c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St. (tel. 582506) or 15 Scotholme Av., Hyson Green (tel. 708302).
OLDHAM. Nigel Broadbent, 14 Westminster Rd., Failsworth, Manchester.
OXFORD anarchist group c/o Danny Simpson, Exeter College.
 Anarchist Workers Group ditto.
 Anarcho-Feminists c/o Teresa Thornhill, 34 Divinity Rd. So
 Solidarity c/o 34 Cowley Rd.
PAISLEY (College) anarchist group, c/o Students Union, Hunter St. Paisley, Renfrewsh.
READING Anarchists c/o Ms. Shevek, Clubs Office, Student Union, Whiteknights, Reading.
RHONDA & MID-GLAMORGAN
 Henning Anderson, 'Smiths Arms'
 Treherbert, Mid-Glamorgan, Wales
SHEFFIELD anarchists: c/o 4 Havelock Square, Sheffield S10 2FQ.
SHEFFIELD Libertarian Society: P.O. Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE.
SWANSEA: Don Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Dunvant, Swansea.
SWINDON area: Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon.
WESTON-SUPER-MARE: Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Road.

national

NORTH WEST Anarchist Federation c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Rd. Manchester M1 7DU. Groups include Burnley anarchist group, 5 Hollin Hill, Burnley, Lancs.
 Lancaster anarchist group, 41 Main Rd., Galgate, Lancaster.
 Manchester anarchist group)
 Syndicalist Workers group)
 both c/o Grass Roots as above.
 Contacts in other areas.
MIDLANDS Federation: groups include Birmingham, Coventry, Derby, Leamington/Warwick, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield.
NORTH EAST Anarchist Federation. Secretariat: HLC, 23 Aukland Av., Hull, W. Humberside.

THAMES VALLEY anarchist federation - contact Oxford or Reading group.

DIRECT ACTION Movement, 28 Lucknow Drive, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts. Groups in various places incl. London, Manchester, Leeds.

'SOLIDARITY' libertarian communist organisation (publ. 'Solidarity for Social Revolution') c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6. Groups & members in many towns.

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST Association, organisation of class struggle anarchists (publ. 'Bread and Roses'), Box 2, 136 Kingsland High St., London, E8.

Meetings

ANTI-SEXIST Men's Conference Feb 15-17th at Bristol Waldorf School, Park Place, Bristol 8. Details; registration from Richard Field, 41 Milford St., Bristol 3 (tel. 632732).

The Polytechnic of North London @ Society are running a series of speakers and films over the next 6 months. All events will be taking place at the PNL Kentish Town building in Prince of Wales Rd., NW5. For details ring 607 2789 and ask for Jon Simcock c/o Kentish Town students union office.

DESIRE FULFILLED

THANKS to the anonymous friend from Gwynedd for sending me Anarchy 38 —Ross.

NORWICH. Freewheel Community Bookshop; 56, St. Benedicts Street
 We stock pamphlets/badges/books on Anarchism, Socialism, Feminism, anti-imperialism, pacifism, ecology, non-sexist-childrens books, radical fiction. 10-6 Mon-Sat (late eve. Fri)

ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN CALENDER 1980

Large Format Illustrated
 (from Australia)
 £2.00 (+25p. post) from **FREEDOM**

BOOKSHOP-Please Note
 As Jim will be away in New Zealand for the whole of February, mail orders will be somewhat delayed.

Freedom Press

IN ANGEL ALLEY
 84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.
 LONDON E.1

EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION

by **ELISEE RECLUS**

The bulk of this Review is devoted to Elisee Reclus. We reprint (From the seventh edition—which explains the battered type!) his pamphlet *Evolution and Revolution* of 1880. To round this out we add shortened excerpts from two new books dealing with his life and work.

These are *The Anarchist Way to Socialism* by Marie Fleming (Croom Helm), from which we include an abridged preface, and *Elisee Reclus, Historian of Nature*, by Gary S. Dunbar (Archon), from which we have edited the chapter "Legacy".

(Both these books are available from FREEDOM at £10.95 and £8.95 respectively.)

THESE two words, Evolution and Revolution, closely resemble one another, and yet they are constantly used in their social and political sense as though their meaning were absolutely antagonistic. The word Evolution, synonymous with gradual and continuous development in morals and ideas, is brought forward in certain circles as though it were the antithesis of that fearful word, Revolution, which implies changes more or less sudden in their action, and entailing some sort of catastrophe. And yet is it possible that a transformation can take place in ideas without bringing about some abrupt displacements in the equilibrium of life? Must not revolution necessarily follow evolution, as action follows the desire to act? They are fundamentally one and the same thing, differing only according to the time of their appearance. If, on the one hand, we believe in the normal progress of ideas, and, on the other, expect opposition, then, of necessity, we believe in external shocks which change the form of society.

It is this which I am about to try to explain, not availing myself of abstract terms, but appealing to the observation and experience of every one, and employing only such arguments as are in common use. No doubt I am one of

the persons known as "dreadful revolutionists;" for long years I have belonged to the legally infamous society which calls itself "The International Working Mens' Association," whose very name entails upon all who assume membership the treatment of malefactors; finally, I am amongst those who served that "execrable" Commune, "the detestation of all respectable men." But however ferocious I may be, I shall know how to place myself outside, or rather above my party, and to study the present evolution and approaching revolution of the human race without passion or personal bias. As we are amongst those whom the world attacks, we have a right to demand to be amongst those whom it hears.

To begin with, we must clearly establish the fact, that if the word evolution is willingly accepted by the very persons who look upon revolutionists with horror, it is because they do not fully realise what the term implies, for they would not have the thing at any price. They speak well of progress in general, but they resent progress in any particular direction. They consider that existing society, bad as it is, and as they themselves acknowledge it to be, is worth preserving; it is enough for them that it realises their

own ideal of wealth, power, or comfort. As there are rich and poor, rulers and subjects, masters and servants, Cæsars to command the combat, and gladiators to go forth and die, prudent men have only to place themselves on the side of the rich and powerful, and to pay court to Cæsar. Our beautiful society affords them bread, money, place, and honour; what have they to complain of? They persuade themselves without any difficulty that every one is as well satisfied as they. In the eyes of a man who has just dined all the world is well fed. Toying with his tooth-pick, he contemplates placidly the miseries of the "vile multitude" of slaves. All is well; perdition to the starveling whose moan disturbs his digestion! If society has from his cradle provided for the wants and whims of the egotist, he can at all events hope to win a place there by intrigue and flattery, by hard work, or the favour of destiny. What does moral evolution matter to him? To evolve a fortune is his one ambition!

But if the word evolution serves but to conceal a lie in the mouths of those who most willingly pronounce it, it is a reality for revolutionists; it is they who are the true evolutionists.

Escaping from all formulas, which for them have lost their meaning, they seek for truth outside the teaching of the schools; they criticise all that rulers call order, all that teachers call morality; they grow, they develop, they live, and seek to communicate their life. What they have learned they proclaim; what they know they desire to practise. The existing state of things seems to them iniquitous, and they wish to modify it in accordance with a new ideal of justice. It does not suffice them to have freed their own minds, they wish to emancipate those of others also, to liberate society from all servitude. Logical in their evolution, they desire what their mind has conceived, and act upon their desire.

Some years ago the official and courtly world of Europe was much in the habit of repeating that Socialism had quite died out. A man who was extremely capable in little matters and incapable in great ones, an absurdly vain *parvenu*, who hated the people because he had risen from amongst them, officially boasted that he had given Socialism its death-blow. He believed that he had exterminated it in Paris, buried it in the graves of Père La Chaise. It is in New Caledonia at the Antipodes, thought he, that the miserable remnant of what was once the Socialist party is to be found. All his worthy friends in Europe hastened to repeat the words of Monsieur Thiers, and everywhere they were a song of triumph. As for the German Socialists, have we not the Master of Masters to keep an eye upon them, the man at whose frown Europe trembles? And the Russian Nihilists! Who and what are those wretches? Strange monsters, savages sprung from Huns and Bashkirs, about whom the men of the civilised West have no need to concern themselves!

Nevertheless the joy caused by the disappearance of Socialism was of short duration. I do not know what unpleasant consciousness first revealed to the Conservatives that some Socialists remained, and that they were not so dead as the sinister old man had pretended. But now no one can have any doubts as to their resurrection. Do not French workmen at every meeting pronounce unanimously in favour of that appropriation of the land and factories, which is already regarded as the point of departure for the new economic era? Is not England ringing with the cry, "Nationalisation of the Land," and do not the great landowners expect expropriation at the hands of the people? Do not political parties seek to court Irish votes by promises of the confiscation of the soil, by pledging themselves beforehand to an outrage upon the thrice sacred rights of property? And in the United States have we not seen the workers masters for a week of all the railways of Indiana, and of part of those on the Atlantic sea-board? If they had understood the situation, might not a great revolution have been accomplished almost without a blow? And do

not men, who are acquainted with Russia, know that the peasants, one and all, claim the soil, the whole of the soil, and wish to expel their lords? Thus the evolution is taking place. Socialism, or in other words, the army of individuals who desire to change social conditions, has resumed its march. The moving mass is pressing on, and now no government dare ignore its serried ranks. On the contrary, the powers that be exaggerate its numbers, and attempt to contend with it by absurd legislation and irritating interference. Fear is an evil counsellor.

No doubt it may sometimes happen that all is perfectly quiet. On the morrow of a massacre few men dare put themselves in the way of the bullets. When a word, a gesture are punished with imprisonment, the men who have courage to expose themselves to the danger are few and far between. Those are rare who quietly accept the part of victim in a cause, the triumph of which is as yet distant and even doubtful. Everyone is not so heroic as the Russian Nihilists, who compose manifestos in the very lair of their foes, and paste them on a wall between two sentries. One should be very devoted oneself to find fault with those who do not declare themselves Socialists, when their work, that is to say the life of those dear to them, depends on the avowal. But if all the oppressed have not the temperament of heroes, they feel their sufferings none the less, and large numbers amongst them are taking their own interests into serious consideration. In many a town where there is not one organised Socialist group, all the workers without exception are already more or less consciously Socialists; instinctively they applaud a comrade who speaks to them of a social state in which all the products of labour shall be in the hands of the labourer. This instinct contains the germ of the future Revolution; for from day to day it becomes more precise, transformed into distincter consciousness. What the worker vaguely felt yesterday, he knows to-day, and each new experience teaches him to know it better. And are not the peasants, who cannot raise enough to keep body and soul together from their morsel of ground, and the yet more numerous class who do not possess a clod of their own, are not all these beginning to comprehend that the soil ought to belong to the men who cultivate it? They have always instinctively felt this, now they know it, and are preparing to assert their claim in plain language.

This is the state of things; what will be the issue? Will not the evolution which is taking place in the minds of the workers, *i.e.* of the great masses, necessarily bring about a revolution; unless, indeed, the defenders of privilege yield with a good grace to the pressure from below? But history teaches us that they will do nothing of the sort. At first sight it would appear so natural that a good understanding should be established amongst men without a struggle. There is room for us all on the broad bosom of the earth; it is rich enough to enable us all to live in comfort. It can yield sufficient harvests to provide all with food; it produces enough fibrous plants to supply all with clothing; it contains enough stone and clay for all to have houses. There is a place for each of the brethren at the banquet of life. Such is the simple economic fact.

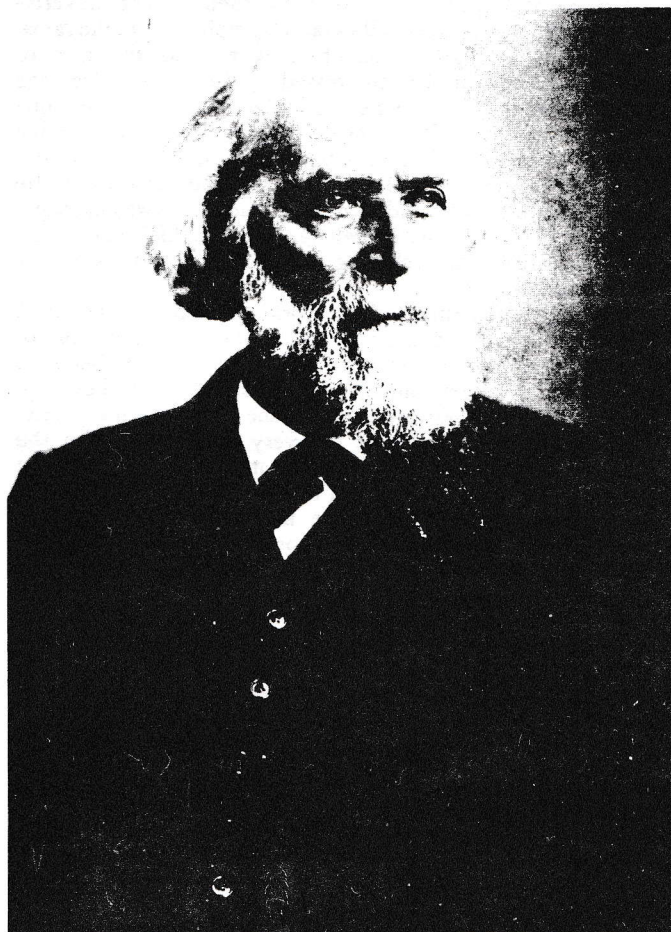
What does it matter? say some. The rich will squander at their pleasure as much of this wealth as suits them; the middle-men, speculators and brokers of every description will manipulate the rest; the armies will destroy a great deal, and the mass of the people will have the scraps that remain. "The poor we shall have always with us," say the contented, quoting a remark which, according to them, fell from the lips of a God. We do not care whether their God wished some to be miserable or not. We will re-create the world on a different pattern! "No, there shall be no more poor! As all men need to be housed and clothed and warmed and fed, let all have what is necessary, and none be cold or hungry!" The terrible Socialists have no need of a God to inspire these words; they are human, that is enough.

Thus two opposing societies exist amongst men. They are intermingled, variously allied here and there by the people who do not know their own minds, and advance only to retreat; but viewed from above, and taking no account of uncertain and indifferent individuals who are swayed hither and thither by fate like waves of the sea, it is certain that the actual world is divided into two camps, those who desire to maintain poverty, *i.e.* hunger for others, and those who demand comforts for all. The forces in these two camps seem at first sight very unequal. The supporters of existing society have boundless estates, incomes counted by hundreds of thousands, all the powers of the State, with its armies of officials, soldiers, policemen, magistrates, and a whole arsenal of laws and ordinances. And what can the Socialists, the artificers of the new society, oppose to all this organised force? Does it seem that they can do nothing? Without money or troops they would indeed succumb, if they did not represent the evolution of ideas and of morality. They are nothing, but they have the progress of human thought on their side. They are borne along on the stream of the times.

The external form of society must alter in correspondence with the impelling force within; there is no better established historical fact. The sap makes the tree and gives it leaves and flowers; the blood makes the man; the ideas make the society. And yet there is not a conservative who does not lament that ideas and morality, and all that goes to make up the deeper life of man, have been modified since "the good old times." Is it not a necessary result of the inner working of men's minds that social forms must change and a proportionate revolution take place?

Let each ascertain from his own recollections the changes in the methods of thought and action which have happened since the middle of this century. Let us take, for example, the one capital fact of the diminution of observance and respect. Go amongst great personages: what have they to complain of? That they are treated like other men. They no longer take precedence; people neglect to salute them; less distinguished persons permit themselves to possess handsomer furniture or finer horses; the wives of less wealthy men go more sumptuously attired. And what is the complaint of the ordinary man or woman of the middle-class? There are no more servants to be had, the spirit of obedience is lost. Now the maid pretends to understand cooking better than her mistress; she does not piously remain in one situation, only too grateful for the hospitality accorded her; she changes her place in consequence of the smallest disagreeable observation, or to gain two shillings more wages. There are even countries where she asks her mistress for a character in exchange for her own.

It is true, respect is departing; not the just respect which attaches to an upright and devoted man, but that despicable and shameful respect which follows wealth and office; that slavish respect which gathers a crowd of loafers when a king passes, and makes the lackeys and horses of a great man objects of admiration. And not only is respect departing, but those who lay most claim to the consideration of the rest, are the first to compromise their superhuman character. In former days Asiatic sovereigns understood the art of causing themselves to be adored. Their palaces were seen from afar; their statues were erected everywhere; their edicts were read; but they never showed themselves. The most familiar never addressed them but upon their knees; from time to time a half-lifted veil parted to disclose them as if by a lightning flash, and then as suddenly enfolded them once more, leaving consternation in the hearts of all beholders. In those days respect was profound enough to result in stupifaction: a dumb messenger brought a silken cord to the condemned, and that sufficed, even a gesture would have been superfluous. And now we see sovereigns taking boxes by telegraph at the theatre to witness the performance of *Orphée aux Enfers* or *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, that is to say, taking part in the derision of all which used to be held most worthy of



Elisee Reclus. Photo taken in Brussels, probably about 1900.

respect—divinity and royalty! Which is the true regicide, the man who kills a sovereign, doing him the honour to take him as the representative of a whole society, or the monarch, who mocks at himself by laughing at the Grand Duchess or General Boum? He teaches us at least that political power is a worm-eaten institution. It has retained its form, but the universal respect which gave it worth has disappeared. It is nothing but an external scaffolding, the edifice itself has ceased to exist.

Does not the spread of an education, which gives the same conception of things to all, contribute to our progress towards equality? If instruction were only to be obtained at school, governments might still hope to hold the minds of men enslaved; but it is outside the school that most knowledge is gained. It is picked up in the street, in the workshop, before the booths of a fair, at the theatre, in railway carriages, on steam boats, by gazing at new landscapes, by visiting foreign towns. Almost every one travels now, either as a luxury or a necessity. Not a meeting but people who have seen Russia, Australia, or America may be found in it, and if travellers who have changed continents are so frequently met with, there is, one may say, no one who has not moved about sufficiently to have observed the contrast between town and country, mountain and plain, earth and sea. The rich travel more than the poor, it is true; but they generally travel aimlessly; when they change countries they do not change surroundings, they are always in a sense at home; the luxuries and enjoyments of hotel life do not permit them to appreciate the essential differences between country and country, people and people. The poor man, who comes into collision with the difficulties of life without guide or *cicerone*, is best qualified to observe

and remember. And does not the great school of the outer world exhibit the prodigies of human industry equally to rich and poor, to those who have called these marvels into existence and those who profit by them? The poverty-stricken outcast can see railways, telegraphs, hydraulic rams, perforators, self-lighting matches, as well as the man of power, and he is no less impressed by them. Privilege has disappeared in the enjoyment of some of these grand conquests of science. When he is conducting his locomotive through space, doubling or slackening speed at his pleasure, does the engine-driver believe himself the inferior of the sovereign shut up behind him in a gilded railway-carriage, and trembling with the knowledge that his life depends on a jet of steam, the shifting of a lever, or a bomb of dynamite?

The sight of nature and the works of man, and practical life, these form the college in which the true education of contemporary society is obtained. Schools, properly so called, are relatively much less important; yet they, too, have undergone their evolution in the direction of equality. There was a time, and that not very far distant, when the whole of education consisted in mere formulas, mystic phrases, and texts from sacred books. Go into the Musselman school opened beside the mosque. There you will see children spending whole hours in spelling or reciting verses from the Koran. Go into a school kept by Christian priests, Protestant or Catholic; and you will hear silly hymns and absurd recitations. But even in these schools the pressure from below has caused this dull routine to be varied with a new sort of instruction; instead of nothing but formulas the teachers now explain facts, point out analogies and trace the action of laws. Whatever the commentaries with which the instructor accompanies his lessons, the figures remain none the less incorruptible. Which education will prevail? That according to which two and two make four, and nothing is created out of nothing; or the old education according to which everything comes from nothing, and three persons make only one?

The elementary school, it is true, is not all: it is not enough to catch a glimpse of science, one should be able to apply it in every direction. Therefore Socialistic evolution renders it necessary that school should be a permanent institution for all men. After receiving "general enlightenment" in a primary school, each ought to be able to develop to the full such intellectual capacity as he may possess, in a life which he has freely chosen. Meanwhile let not the worker despair. Every great conquest of science ends by becoming public property. Professional scientists are obliged to go through long ages of research and hypothesis, they are obliged to struggle in the midst of error and falsehood; but when the truth is gained at length, often in spite of them, thanks to some despised revolutionists, it shines forth clear and simple in all its brilliance. All understand it without an effort: it seems as if it had always been known. Formerly learned men fancied that the sky was a round dome, a metal roof—or better still—a series of vaults, three, seven, nine, even thirteen, each with its procession of stars, its distinct laws, its special *regime* and its troops of angels and archangels to guard it! But since these tiers of heavens, piled one upon the other, mentioned in the Bible and Talmud, have been demolished, there is not a child who does not know that round the earth is infinite and unconfined space. He hardly can be said to learn this. It is a truth which henceforward forms a part of the universal inheritance.

It is the same with all great acquisitions, especially in morals and political economy. There was a time when the great majority of men were born and lived as slaves, and had no other ideal than a change of servitude. It never entered their heads that "one man is as good as another." Now they have learnt it, and understand that the virtual equality bestowed by evolution must be changed into real

equality, thanks to a revolution. Instructed by life, the workers comprehend certain economic laws much better than even professional economists. Is there a single workman who remains indifferent to the question of progressive or proportional taxation, and who does not know that all taxes fall on the poorest in the long run? Is there a single workman who does not know the terrible fatality of the "iron law," which condemns him to receive nothing but a miserable pittance, just the wages that will prevent his dying of hunger during his work? Bitter experience has caused him to know quite enough of this inevitable law of political economy.

Thus, whatever be the source of information, all profit by it, and the worker not less than the rest. Whether a discovery is made by a *bourgeois*, a noble, or a plebeian, whether the learned man is Bernard Palissy, Lord Bacon, or Baron Humboldt, the whole world will turn his researches to account. Certainly the privileged classes would have liked to retain the benefits of science for themselves, and leave ignorance to the people, but henceforth their selfish desire cannot be fulfilled. They find themselves in the case of the magician in "The Thousand and One Nights," who unsealed a vase in which a genius had been shut up asleep for ten thousand years. They would like to drive him back into his retreat, to fasten him down under a triple seal, but they have lost the words of the charm, and the genius is free for ever.

This freedom of the human will is now asserting itself in every direction; it is preparing no small and partial revolutions, but one universal Revolution. It is throughout society as a whole, and every branch of its activity, that changes are making ready. Conservatives are not in the least mistaken when they speak in general terms of Revolutionists as enemies of religion, the family and property. Yes; Socialists do reject the authority of dogma and the intervention of the supernatural in nature, and, in this sense, however earnest their striving for the realisation of their ideal, they are the enemies of religion. Yes; they do desire the suppression of the marriage market; they desire that unions should be free, depending only on mutual affection and respect for self and for the dignity of others, and, in this sense, however loving and devoted to those whose lives are associated with theirs, they are certainly the enemies of the legal family. Yes; they do desire to put an end to the monopoly of land and capital, and to restore them to all, and, in this sense, however glad they may be to secure to every one the enjoyment of the fruits of the earth, they are the enemies of property.

Thus the current of evolution, the incoming tide, is bearing us onward towards a future radically different from existing conditions, and it is vain to attempt to oppose obstacles to destiny. Religion, by far the most solid of all dikes, has lost its strength: cracking on every side, it leaks and totters, and cannot fail to be sooner or later overthrown.

It is certain that contemporary evolution is taking place wholly outside Christianity. There was a time when the word Christian, like Catholic, had a universal signification, and was actually applied to a world of brethren, sharing, to a certain extent, the same customs, the same ideas, and a civilisation of the same nature. But are not the pretensions of Christianity to be considered in our day as synonymous with civilisation, absolutely unjustifiable? And when it is said of England or Russia that their armies are about to carry Christianity and civilisation into distant regions, is not the irony of the expression obvious to every one? The garment of Christianity does not cover all the peoples who by right of culture and industry form a part of contemporary civilisation. The Parsees of Bombay, the Brahmins of Benares eagerly welcome our science, but they are coldly polite to the Christian Missionaries. The Japanese, though so prompt in imitating us, take care not to accept our religion. As for the Chinese, they are much too cunning and wary to allow themselves to be converted. "We have no need of your priests," says an English poem

written by a Chinese, "We have no need of your priests. We have too many ourselves, both long-haired and shaven. What we need is your arms and your science, to fight you and expel you from our land, as the wind drives forth the withered leaves!"

Thus Christianity does not nominally cover half the civilised world, and even where it is supposed to be paramount, it must be sought out; it is much more a form than a reality, and amongst those who are apparently the most zealous, it is nothing but an ignoble hypocrisy. Putting aside all whose Christianity consists merely in the sprinkling of baptism or inscription on the parish register, how many individuals are there whose daily life corresponds with the dogmas they profess, and whose ideas are always, as they should be, those of another world? Christians rendered honourable by their perfect sincerity may be sought without marked success even in "Protestant Rome," a city, nevertheless, of mighty traditions. At Geneva as at Oxford, as at all religious centres, and everywhere else, the principal preoccupations are non-ecclesiastical; they lean towards politics, or, more often still, towards business. The principal representatives of so-called Christian society are Jews, "the epoch's kings." And amongst those who devote their lives to higher pursuits—science, art, poetry—how many, unless forced to do so, occupy themselves with theology? Enter the University of Geneva. At all the courses of lectures—medicine, natural history, mathematics, even jurisprudence—you will find voluntary listeners; at every one except at those upon theology. The Christian religion is like a snow-wreath melting in the sun: traces are visible here and there, but beneath the streaks of dirty white the earth shows, already clear of rime.

The religion which is thus becoming detached, like a garment, from European civilisation, was extremely convenient for the explanation of misery, injustice, and social inequality. It had one solution for everything—miracles. A Supreme will had pre-ordained all things. Injustice was an apparent evil, but it was preparing good things to come. "God giveth sustenance to the young birds. He prepareth eternal blessedness for the afflicted. Their misery below is but the harbinger of felicity on high!" These things were ceaselessly repeated to the oppressed as long as they believed them; but now such arguments have lost all credence, and are no longer met with, except in the petty literature of religious tracts.

What is to be done to replace the departing religion? As the worker believes no longer in miracles, can he perhaps be induced to believe in lies? And so learned economists, academicians, merchants, and financiers have contrived to introduce into science the bold proposition that property and prosperity are always the reward of labour! It would be scarcely decent to discuss such an assertion. When they pretend that labour is the origin of fortune, economists know perfectly well that they are not speaking the truth. They know as well as the Socialists that wealth is not the product of personal labour, but of the labour of others: they are not ignorant that the runs of luck on the Exchange and the speculations which create great fortunes have no more connection with labour than the exploits of brigands in the forests; they dare not pretend that the individual who has five thousand pounds a day, just what is required to support one hundred thousand persons like himself, is distinguished from other men by an intelligence one hundred thousand times above the average. It would be scandalous to discuss this sham origin of social inequality. It would be to be a dupe, almost an accomplice, to waste time over such hypocritical reasoning.

But arguments of another kind are brought forward, which have at least the merit of not being based upon a lie. The right of the strongest is now evoked against social claims. Darwin's theory, which has lately made its appearance in the scientific world, is believed to tell against us. And it is, in fact, the right of the strongest which triumphs when fortune is monopolised. He who is materially the fittest, the most wily, the most favoured by birth, education, and

friends; he who is best armed, and confronted by the feeblest foe, has the greatest chance of success; he is able better than the rest to erect a citadel, from the summit of which he may look down on his unfortunate brethren. Thus is determined the rude struggle of conflicting egoisms. Formerly this blood-and-fire theory was not openly avowed; it would have appeared too violent, and honied words were preferable. But the discoveries of science relative to the struggle between species for existence and the survival of the fittest, have permitted the advocates of force to withdraw from their mode of expression all that seemed too insolent. "See, they say, "it is an inevitable law! Thus decrees the fate of mankind!"

We ought to congratulate ourselves that the question is thus simplified, for it is so much the nearer to its solution. Force reigns, say the advocates of social inequality! Yes, it is force which reigns! proclaims modern industry louder and louder in its brutal perfection. But may not the speech of economists and traders be taken up by revolutionists? The law of the strongest will not always and necessarily operate for the benefit of commerce. "Might surpasses right," said Bismarck, quoting from many others; but it is possible to make ready for the day when might will be at the service of right. If it is true that ideas of solidarity are spreading; if it is true that the conquests of science end by penetrating the lowest strata; if it is true that truth is becoming common property; if evolution towards justice is taking place, will not the workers, who have at once the right and the might, make use of both to bring about a revolution for the benefit of all? What can isolated individuals, however strong in money, intelligence and cunning, do against associated masses?

In no modern revolution have the privileged classes been known to fight their own battles. They always depend on armies of the poor, whom they have taught what is called loyalty to the flag, and trained to what is called "the maintenance of order." Five millions of men, without counting the superior and inferior police, are employed in Europe in this work. But these armies may become disorganised, they may call to mind the nearness of their own past and future relations with the mass of the people, and the hand which guides them may grow unsteady. Being in great part drawn from the proletariat, they may become to bourgeois society what the barbarians in the pay of the Empire became to that of Rome—an element of dissolution. History abounds in examples of the frenzy which seizes upon those in power. When the miserable and disinherited of the earth shall unite in their own interest, trade with trade, nation with nation, race with race; when they shall fully awake to their sufferings and their purpose, doubt not that an occasion will assuredly present itself for the employment of their might in the service of right; and powerful as may be the Master of those days, he will be weak before the starving masses leagued against him. To the great evolution now taking place will succeed the long expected, the great revolution.

It will be salvation, and there is none other. For if capital retains force on its side, we shall all be the slaves of its machinery, mere bands connecting iron cogs with steel and iron shafts. If new spoils, managed by partners only responsible to their cash books, are ceaselessly added to the savings already amassed in bankers' coffers, then it will be vain to cry for pity, no one will hear your complaints. The tiger may renounce his victim, but bankers' books pronounce judgments without appeal. From the terrible mechanism whose merciless work is recorded in the figures on its silent pages, men and nations come forth ground to powder. If capital carries the day, it will be time to weep for our golden age; in that hour we may look behind us and see like a dying light, love and joy and hope—all the earth has held of sweet and good. Humanity will have ceased to live.

As for us, whom men call "the modern barbarians," our desire is justice for all. Villains that we are, we claim for all that shall be born, bread, liberty, and progress.

The anarchist way to socialism

By Marie Fleming

ELISEE RECLUS was an important figure in European anarchist circles from the 1870s, the time when the anarchists began to be distinguished from the wider socialist movement. In the late nineteenth century he contributed to the radical direction which the anarchist movement assumed and consistently supported the adoption of increasingly extreme measures. Unwavering in his hostility to the bourgeois state and party-political action, he relentlessly upheld the principle of propaganda by the deed, even when it was used to justify the terrorism which plunged Europe into a virtual state of panic in the early 1890s. The anarchist historian Max Nettlau wrote a biography of Reclus in 1928, but admitted that it represented only a first stage in coming to terms with the subject. Since the publication of Nettlau's work, much new material has come to light, in particular police files and unpublished correspondence. Reclus' contribution to the development of late nineteenth century European anarchism has, however, still received little attention from scholars.

Not only was Reclus known as a committed anarchist. He achieved worldwide acclaim as an early proponent of the scientific study of human geography. As author of the monumental nineteen-volume *La Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* (The New Universal Geography), he was the somewhat reluctant recipient of gold medals from both the Paris Geographical Society (1892) and the Royal Geographical Society of London (1894). His interest in geography can be traced to 1851, the very year in which he first put forth his social and political thought and his theories of geography became ever more closely inter-related, until they achieved a final synthesis in his posthumously published *L'Homme et la Terre* - (Man and the Earth), the six-volume conclusion to *La Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*. He considered that, while the general nature of the data in his geographical and his social-political studies might vary, its generic quality remained the same. Nor was there any significant distinction between the methods of analysis employed in each. The links between the two areas of enquiry deserve close attention. It is worth noting his remark to the Dutch socialist, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis: "Yes, I am a geographer, but above all I am an anarchist".

Reclus was particularly close to developments within the European anarchist movement which lasted from the late 1870s to 1894. His moral and financial support was of critical importance for *Le Révolté*, the anarchist paper founded by Peter Kropotkin (1879 to 1887) and he exercised a considerable influence over its contents and administration; the same was true for *La Révolte* (1885 to 1894). The value of such activity is not to be under-estimated. Because European anarchists came to reject all formal organisational ties, newspapers assumed many of the functions normally performed by an organisational structure; in particular, they provided the forum for discussions on theory and practice, giving continuity to an otherwise disparate movement. *Le Révolté* and *La Révolte* enjoyed a central place among anarchist papers. In the beginning, from 1879, the former carried sober, well-written pieces which helped to sustain the nascent movement. Even when anarchism later gained in momentum and more flamboyant (though generally short-lived) papers came into existence, *La Révolte* was able to carry on the tradition of its predecessor and continued to be most highly regarded. It expired only with the collapse of the movement in 1894.

As writer of a variety of pamphlets and numerous articles, Reclus' influence extended to many parts of the world; his works appeared in a number of languages, French, English, Russian, Dutch, Hungarian, Italian and Spanish. He achieved particular success with the well-conceived and persuasively written pamphlets *Evolution et Révolution* and *A Mon Frère, le Paysan* (To my Brother, the Peasant). As a respected figure in the world of journalism outside anarchist circles, he wrote prolifically on all kinds of contemporary developments. While he was recognised as an able scholar and a keen social critic, many of his 'non-anarchist' colleagues, however, tended to see his politics as evidence of a curious personality trait which did not generally find expression in his scholarly work. They were mistaken, of course, but such an assessment meant that he was able to reach many people who were largely unaware of the ways in which his anarchist views informed his scholarship. Late in life, as a teacher of geography at the New University in Brussels, he drew the attention of a wide number of eager young people. He ennobled their cause, many anarchists said, with his powerful mind and clear thinking.

The outstanding characteristic of Reclus as seen by his comrades was his success in living up to the principles of the anarchism which he espoused. Kropotkin was not alone when he stated that the man was an anarchist "to the deepest recesses of his mind, to the smallest fibre of his being". "For me", wrote Max Nettlau, "he represented a true realisation of anarchy". "Elisée Reclus", said Johann Most, "I count as one of the greatest inspirers since I became an anarchist". Reclus was a person who came to justify violence and terrorism, while at the same time managing to impress all who met him with the generosity, the kindness and the sense of toleration of a saint. His humility was legion; one after another of his friends have testified their astonishment that the renowned geographer and anarchist theorist should be able to conduct himself with such a lack of pride and affectation. Elisée Reclus had "the strength of character, the power of endurance and the vision of a Prophet of old", wrote one admirer (Anne Cobden-Sanderson, eds). He "remained to the last as direct and straightforward as a child, saying exactly what he thought, and living up to it" was another observation (William C. Owen - eds). Throughout his long life and increasingly so towards the end of it, Reclus, by his very existence, made it more 'reasonable' to believe that anarchism could become a reality. For many anarchists, he had become incorruptible, living proof of human perfectibility. Not even Kropotkin came anywhere near achieving such a position.

While Elisée Reclus's methods and geographical concepts have aged, he is still read today as a witness of an era and of a generation of geographers of whom he was one of the greatest. His descriptions are vivid and exact; his theories remain in great part valid... His work is, furthermore, in France, the latest geographical encyclopedia, the last "Géographie universelle" written by a single author, with, consequently, a unity of thought and method, which make it a vigorous synthesis of the geographical knowledge of a century ago.

—Professor Aime Perpillou, 1971.

Elisee Reclus

HISTORIAN OF NATURE

By Gary S Dunbar

As one of that mighty band of French socialist writers of the nineteenth century, Elisee Reclus has had a general, though immeasurable influence on the political activists of the modern era. He might well have been mentioned by Edmund Wilson in that host of writers, mostly French, who propelled Lenin towards the Finland Station in 1917. I do not know whether Lenin actually read any of Reclus's works, which had achieved wide popularity in Czarist Russia, but it is said that Stalin had derived his basic notions about environmental influences from Reclus. The young Chinese intellectuals who were prominent in Paris after 1905 were avid readers of Reclus and Kropotkin, and Mao Tse-Tung himself was profoundly influenced by anarchism, although he was frustrated in his hope of going to Paris. Reclus's fame as an anarchist has perhaps been even more enduring in Latin America than elsewhere, and his name has been specifically invoked in the political education of the Mexican revolutionaries, the Flores Margon brothers, who in turn influenced Emiliano Zapata. The famous Spanish writer Vicente Blasco Ibanez was instrumental in the publication and wide Iberian and Latin American dissemination of several of Reclus's works, including a six-volume *Novisima geografia universal* (Valencia and Madrid, 1906-1907).

Although there are few people alive who actually knew Elisee Reclus, and not many more who can claim to have read a large portion of his works - there seems to be a renewed interest in his life and writings, just as there is in his friends Patrick Geddes, Peter Kropotkin, and Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis..... In a short story by the Italian writer Italo Calvino, there is a passage, "In the evening my father reads aloud some books of Elisee Reclus," but the English translation reads, "In the evening my father reads out loud from Kropotkin." The translators must have been aware that the works of Reclus and Kropotkin were similar but that the latter name would be more familiar to readers of English.

.....Although Reclus's method and style may be *demodé*, his works are still cited for descriptions of places as they appeared a century ago. Indeed, Charles Fisher has indicated that the *NGU* might be increasingly valuable to historians and historical geographers for its wealth of detail for the late nineteenth century, "which is in danger of becoming the forgotten period between historical and contemporary geography." Even Reclus's contemporaries criticised his works for their deficiency in analytical rigour, but all praised his literary style and the warmth of his sentiments. In an obituary the Italian geographer Olinto Marinelli wrote an accurate assessment of Reclus's geography that remains valid today:

"One can disagree with him; his ideas can be called utopian; but none can escape from feeling a great attraction for his writings and a great sympathy for their author....."

.....No matter how grand it is, Reclus's work remains closed within itself; it can be imitated not perfected; it can stimulate admirers of geography but not form new geographers. He did not leave true students. He did not indicate new roads to travel. Art is neither taught nor learned; and his work is more a work of art than of science."

Even though Reclus's art cannot be taught or passed on directly to students, his life can be an inspiration to them. In 1916 another Italian geographer, Luigi Filippo de Magistris, said that Elisee Reclus will be appreciated more and more as time goes on, because people will not appreciate the scientist who shuts himself up in his laboratory so much as the one who brings the world into his work. The popular "discovery" of ecology and the new social geography in recent years has given a special cachet to radical or activist geographers. In

raising the call for a more "relevant" geography, they are not entirely innovative, because the anarchist geographers were saying essentially the same things a century ago. This reminder is not meant to deprecate the earnestness of the present-day geographers who want to be social activists but merely to ask them to explore their intellectual heritage. Andre Meynier has asked why Elisee Reclus is not better known today, and he suggests that three factors might be responsible for Reclus's fading reputation: his "Marxist" (sic) ideas, his long years of exile, and his easygoing but undemanding writing style. Reclus was not, of course, a Marxist, although he shared many of Marx's basic ideas. In any event, his advanced political opinions did not appear to harm his reputation with his largely bourgeois readership, in his own or succeeding generations. Reclus's years of true exile, 1872-1879, were highly productive, although Meynier was correct in saying that he could not have had the same influence as a Parisian professor while operating from a base in Switzerland or later from Brussels. Reclus's writing, said Meynier, had the tone of a pleasant conversation and lacked the didactic or structured style that the French, being cartesians, seem to prefer. Meynier credits Reclus with creating a favourable atmosphere for geography but not with a commanding role in directing the course of its evolution.

Beatrice Giblin has said that Elisee Reclus has been "erased" from the history of geography in France because people were afraid of his anarchism and because he was not in the mainstream of the new university-centred geography. The latter explanation would be more admissible than the former, but, even more basically, I do not accept the initial premise that Reclus has been erased. Obviously, his fame diminished after his death, but that was due simply to the passage of time and not to conspiracy. How many of Reclus's contemporaries are now better known? French geographers have not forgotten Reclus. They seem to have placed his life in proper perspective, neither unduly glorifying nor denigrating him. There is no reason to suspect that Reclus's has been suppressed out of fear. I agree with Giblin's view that Elisee Reclus's geography was a "dangerous" science because he showed that the earth can support everyone and because he pointed out past errors in the management of people and resources. But geographers--and all other scholars--must always be "dangerous" or "subversive," in the sense that Paul Sears has called ecology "the subversive science," because -it is precisely their task to examine all policies critically, with an eye toward their improvement. Scholars are expected to expand the world-view of their countrymen, who have less time for intellectual activities. To do otherwise would be unpatriotic or truly subversive, in that we would be subverting out educational mission.

Outside France, Reclus's geography has fared better in Britain than elsewhere, partly because the French style of geography has traditionally found a warm reception there and partly because Patrick Geddes was successful in introducing Reclus's writings to British geographers. Geddes also recommended Reclus's writings to his American disciple Lewis Mumford, but, although Mumford's interests are quite close to those of Reclus, he has not cited him extensively. Furthermore, Mumford does not have close ties with American geographers, although he is much admired by them. American links, in the past at least, have been more with Germany than with France or even Great Britain. But now, on both sides of the Atlantic, Reclus's geography may find greater favor as geographers are groping toward a more "humane" geography. They could seem no better mentor than Elisee Reclus.

SELF-HELP IN BERLIN

WITH great interest I've been reading the article about Centaur (FREEDOM 1 December 1979). Once again it showed me the problems 'alternative' and 'left wing' projects have with money and the state.

It's now one year since we in West Berlin - where I live - tried a completely new solution to this problem, which I would like to briefly explain. (Historically speaking it's not really new but it's at least new within the present alternative scene).

Having lived in a country which practices the 'Berufsverbot' (state prevention of certain people following their profession because of their political beliefs) a few people thought about some kind of insurance for people affected by the 'Berufsverbot'.

They planned to found an association whose members would pay a monthly amount into a fund. This fund would provide for the living costs of people who are without money because of the Berufsverbot.

This basic premise has remained but become enlarged as a 'fund for political and alternative projects'. The success was greater than we expected it to be. While we estimated about 400 paying members in West Berlin we now have almost 4000 who pay about £4000 a month. The contribution per member varies from £1 to £12 or more. There are even a few members paying £50!

About 30 projects of various types have been supported so far. The members vote in favour of a certain kind of project which they want to support with their money.

The different categories are:

- neighbourhood and town projects
- cooperatives
- citizen protests
- political committees
- ecological projects
- feminist projects
- press/media projects
- bookshops, printers, publishers

- legal aid
- teaching and scientific projects
- social therapeutic projects
- political theatre and music groups
- others

An independent body chosen by the members decides which applicants should receive money from the fund. This body, called 'Beirat', according to the German union regulations, consists of three parts. One third are members who applied for the post at the members' assembly. One third are delegates of different projects, also chosen by the members, and the last third are members drawn by lot.

That's briefly the construction of 'Netzwerk'. All of it sounds easy and fair but in fact we have had to face a lot of problems which are connected with the very nature of money. ('Money is dirty' we say in German). But there was a lot of criticism of 'Netzwerk' and of the alternative scene itself during the first months.

However, I think we did quite well - so far. Our till is transparent. Everybody can follow the flow of the money. The members are informed by a bi-monthly circular magazine and most of the work, performed by about 30 persons, is voluntary.

A lot of new ideas, possibilities and needs arise from this construction. So we have had to set about the 'decentralisation' of 'Netzwerk'. About 1500 members in other German cities are starting their own local networks.

We started only recently to establish some sort of 'alternative information exchange bourse' and every new step we take causes a lot of criticism and problems, but we still go on. If anybody comes to Berlin or wants more information, we are contactable at the address below.

Selbsthilfe Netzwerk e V.

Suarezstrasse 31

1000 Berlin 19 (Tel: 323 1551 or 321 72 48)

INA L'ORANGE

