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Inside: *PROSTITUTES; ANTIMILITARISM; PRISONS: REVIEW-DAL*

In the following article BRIAN MURPHY describes the outbreak of revolutionary war by the Azanian people on the regime in South Africa.

THE time has now come for anarchists to link up with the active struggle of the Azanian people in South Africa.

Two series of events have signaled a new stage in revolutionary struggle - a struggle which will ultimately cut deep into the network of state and multinational interests, which pose the main obstacle to libertarian socialist progress on all fronts in Britain.

Since 14 April 'coloured' school students have been boycotting classes and are now calling for a boycott of all exams. The action is not just a continuation of spontaneous revolt initiated in Soweto in 1976. It represents a new stage of consciousness which is bringing together sections of South African people who have previously been successfully played off against one another by the Afrikaner regime.

This is the first time in two decades that the coloured community has been involved in a major national protest action on its own against the government. The demands for equality of educational opportunity have been made for all students regardless of how they have been labelled and separated by the dictates of apartheid.

The inequalities are large: the South African government spends £137 on each white school student in a year, £46 on each coloured child, £59 on each Indian child and £13 on every African child in school.

This protest shows that the lessons of Soweto have been well learned. The students organised themselves without leaders. They remained anonymous, refusing to identify themselves. As a result there has been little or no opportunity given to the state to victimise or isolate specific groups and the boycott spread rapidly and efficiently.

BEYOND SOWETO



Faced with well organised resistance prime minister Botha had to use an alternative to brute violence and massacre - he negotiated. The boycott ended on 19 May with a pledge of some money for coloured Indian schools. But the students intend to move on from this victory. Supported by African students in all major cities 9 June has been set as the deadline for some sort of government announcement for

comprehensive changes in the education system. One week later in Soweto - we will see the fourth anniversary of the first Soweto revolt.

In well-oiled tandem with these internal pressures the guerrillas of the African National Congress have struck the first blow in a revolutionary war which has been in preparation for some time, with the destruction of the huge petrol storage tanks

near the town of Sasol where a large national oil from coal scheme is underway. The ANC has struck at the soft underbelly of South African capitalism and its multinational support.

The tanker operation is the result of careful planning. It is proof that the ANC's military training scheme has paid off with the emergence of some brilliant strategists. Destruction of oil reserves at Sasol is meaningful for both practical and psychological reasons. Psychologically the white racist rump will feel the direct pinch of revolutionary action as they pay higher prices at the pump. Eight out of 10 cars in South Africa are held by whites - Africans walk or huddle on overcrowded buses and trains which are already a hated symbol of 'separate development' because they exist only to carry people from their townships to work in white-bossed factories and homes. Practically the Sasol installations were some of the final destinations for oil culled from international markets and provided by the energy multinationals based in Britain and the United States. They stood as a reminder that despite the hollow 'codes' set up by the EEC and the United States or the liberal prattling against 'oil investment' South Africa could support itself by dealing hard with the multinationals while openly scorning fruitless actions by western reformers.

Now the ANC has shaken the very roots of all that blustering confidence and served notice that if anyone had not already realised, the people of Azania are moving to a new stage of coordinated revolutionary action.

The list of British companies who support the South African state, like they support the regime in this country, is long and well documented. It is in the interests of revolution here that support be given to all sectors of the Azanian revolution. Here are some suggestions:

- If you are in a union, get your brothers and sisters to read the *War on Want* book *Where were you, Brother* which describes union complicity in reactionary regimes, including South Africa. Then prepare union action against South African firms, particularly ships carrying South African goods to and from this country.

- If you are interested in the anti-nuclear campaign contact the South West Africa People's organisation and learn about the production of uranium in Namibia and South Africa. Then work to bring your local group into action beside SWAPO and the ANC of South Africa.

'We are all prostitutes'

If there is anybody in the London area who has not heard of the famous 'luncheon-voucher-brothel' case they might well be puzzled by the rash of T-shirts around town now bearing the slogan 'We Are All Prostitutes'.

Worn as a form of protest, the slogan is in line with the action taken in Paris in 1968 after Pompidou had used the phrase 'German Jew' as a racist attempt to discredit the student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit.

It misfired when, the next day, the streets were filled with students carrying banners declaring 'We're all German Jews' - a gesture, to be fair to a royal person, in line with that of the King of Denmark during the German occupation of his country, who appeared, the morning after the Nazis decreed that all Danish Jews should wear a yellow star of David - wearing a large, king-sized yellow star of David on his back.

The prostitution issue hit the headlines when a case came to court describing a police raid on a respectable house in the respectable London suburb of Streatham where male visitors purchased a 'luncheon voucher' which entitled them to food and wine, to see a performance of a blue movie and then to engage the services of their choice from the selection of 13 young prostitutes in the house.

When the police raided the place, according to the press they found a queue of men lining up on the stairs - for the house was no Mahogany Hall or House of the Rising Sun, such as graced New Orleans in its heyday, but a medium-sized villa with only five bedrooms.

The case hit the headlines because the enterprising woman who organised this well-patronised business was prosecuted for running a disorderly house, exercising control over prostitutes and living off immoral earnings. She was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, fined £650 on each of three charges and ordered to pay costs up to £2,000.*

More than the revelations about the business, however, the facts

that made the case so newsworthy were the status of her clients. The *Evening Standard* headline put it together: 'The Peer, the Vicars and Sex for Sale' it screamed.

And its story opened with the words: 'A member of the House of Lords, several vicars and an MP from Northern Ireland were among 53 men police found when they raided a brothel in suburban London'. Several vicars, we note, and cannot help wondering if special religious services were offered by the girls?

The high quality of the clientele was further underlined with: 'Businessmen, managing directors, accountants, barristers and solicitors'.

Dear reader, you are probably ahead of us already and are murmuring 'There were more prostitutes lining up on the stairs than were performing in the bedrooms' - but the social prostitutes who were the respectable clientele did not appear in the dock alongside the Madam - in fact neither did any of the 13 sexual prostitutes who physically sold their services to the respectable gents.

For there are several weird aspects to our laws on prostitution - which is not itself illegal. What is illegal is soliciting - i.e. offering your wares - and living off the immoral earnings of others - i.e. poncing or running a brothel.

Nor is it illegal to buy the services of a prostitute, or to frequent a brothel.

Thus, none of the customers in this case were liable to prosecution, which makes the laws on prostitution unlike any others, for aiding or abetting any kind of felony or misdemeanour, buying stolen goods (knowing them to be stolen), getting yourself involved in a conspiracy to break the law (or even not, as some of us know to our cost) can land you in the dock, just as surely as if you had committed the crime yourself.

What has attracted attention in this case then, is not just the sensational disclosures of the goings-on in Streatham, but the blatant unfairness of the laws. And it is not enough to denounce

* The prison sentence was reduced on appeal to six months - but the fines and costs remain.

it as rampant patriarchy, either, for male prostitutes, whether homosexual or heterosexual, have to tread just the same tightrope as women if this is how they want to earn their livings. Nor, except in fairly rare circumstances, are women—or men—forced to become prostitutes, any more than they are forced to become policemen or policewomen. Indeed, in the Streatham case, several of the girls were amateurs trying to make a bit of extra money for Christmas! (They, incidentally got £8 out of the luncheon voucher's value of £25, a cost breakdown which made one of the barristers on the case - though not on the stairs as far as we know - comment that "The wine couldn't have been much good"!)

Public attention then, has been focussed, as far as we could tell, on this unfairness, rather than on the moral issues, and in letters to the press and in London radio phone-in programmes, the tenor of most comments is that, to make it 'fair', the clients should be prosecuted as well as the madam.

Our attitude, surely, should be that neither the buyers nor the sellers should be prosecuted in what is a simple, voluntary cash transaction.

And if we have some bristling, here, from readers who think such a simplistic attitude is offensive, for prostitution degrades women, then we must point out that it is the buying and selling of persons, male or female, for whatever purpose, that's the essential degradation.

Hence the validity of the slogan 'We are all Prostitutes'. I have never understood why it is so wrong for a woman to sell a small area of her body for a short time - usually for a fairly high rate of pay - and alright for her to sell her whole body, mind or personality for eight hours a day, week in, year out, in some dreary job, or for 24 hours a day 'till death us do

part', in an equally dreary marriage!

Prostitution is traditionally called 'the oldest profession'. So why is that worse than the newer professions? Why is it better for a woman to be in the police force, or the prison service? The armed services, too, are now being opened up for women to have 'higher' positions and even to learn to bear arms and use them - in a word to take their places as state killers alongside macho men on an equal basis. Progress?

All of us who sell ourselves for a living, doing something we don't really want to do, men and women alike, prostitute ourselves one way or another. We sell our skills, or our brains, or our strengths, for a variety of purposes - some creditable, some not. In a market

economy, we all ponce off somebody or other in one way or another, as we fit into the capitalist creed of supply and demand.

Sex is for loving and for the procreation of children—in that order—OK? And in a free society, sex could be freer than it is now—though I can't remember anybody explaining satisfactorily how unattractive individuals of any sex, who can't find someone to love them, are going to be any better off—unless there are going to be individuals of both sexes willing to give themselves without love—which, substituting 'selling' for 'giving' is what prostitutes do now.

And what, in so many other ways, most of us do now too. We are all prostitutes!

PS

Oxford conference



Dear all,

We've had a good response to our soundings on holding an anarchist conference here in June, so we're going ahead with the necessary arrangements; this note is aimed at giving everyone an idea of what will be happening.

We have arranged to hold the conference at Ruskin College (see map) on Saturday 21st June 1980 (for times see agenda). There will be a creche nearby for anyone bringing children, (turn up at the conference first) and we'll be able to provide food and accommodation (though it'd be a help if we had a fairly accurate idea of the number of people coming and if everyone brought sleeping bags).

The appended timetable is provisional: if people take particular exception to it - we've compiled it from the replies we've been sent on the subject - please write back and tell us.

If there are a lot of objections we'll change it and inform everyone, but we can always change arrangements as we go along on the day. Finally, if you send us £1 per person as a registration fee so we can pay for the hall, printing discussion documents and so on, we would be grateful, otherwise pay at the door (unwaged free).

Oxford Anarchists.

c/o 77c St. Clements Oxford.

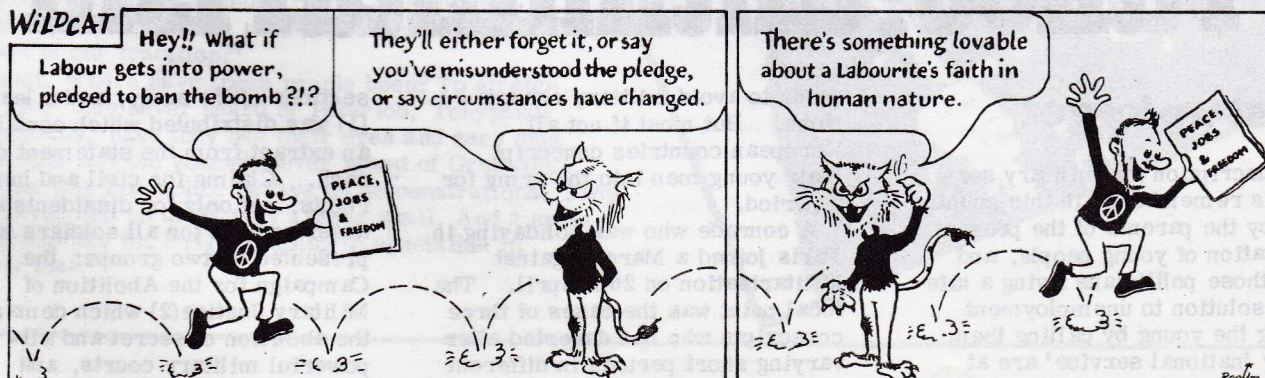
Tel: Oxford 43520

P.S. Please let us know if you want to stay on Friday as well as Saturday.

workshops on :

libertarian education
Ireland
anarcha-feminism
ecology and anarchism
propaganda techniques
violence/non-violence
the libertarian press
nuclear power
men against sexism

WILDCAT



Greece

Prisoners tortured

Following the repression and medieval torture practised by the political, police and prison authorities on all the prisoners, a hunger strike is in progress in Corydalos prison (both women's and men's sections) in Pireus, a strike which is likely to spread to the other 40 prisons in Greece. In the women's section the strike started because the repression there had reached breaking point. The prison staff wanted to take Evangelie Adamakie and Elsa Walter (an Austrian) to the psychiatric hospital by force. This created tension in the prison: Walter attempted to hang herself in her cell while another woman, Frossa Arbanitaki slashed her wrists with a razor and a piece of glass.

The director of the prison ordered that the spilt blood should be removed from the cell, but this proved impossible because the prisoners on strike prevented them. These women, while refusing to return to their cells, issued a list of demands on which they wrote "We are on hunger strike to demand more humane living conditions."

The demands included:

1. That the Public Prosecutor be brought to the prison:
2. That they be permitted to describe to journalists the tortures that they suffer daily:
3. That the well-known torturers Sergente Tsabrou, and the psychiatrist Malatoes be dismissed from the prison:
4. That the conditions of imprisonment and the penal code should be modified. (Sophia Kyritsis is actually ill following massive doses of drugs ordered by Malatoes - she was

sentenced to 5 years in prison.

In reply the prison authorities:

1. Sent the Inspector General of prisons Labrias, who accused them of having launched a hunger strike for political reasons because, he said, the banner which they showed had red lettering.
2. Forbade journalists to come to the prison:
3. Forbade lawyers and relatives to contact the prisoners:
4. Brought in 60 well-armed gendarmes to the centre of the prison where the prisoners were gathered. These men advised the women to return to their cells. The women responded with one voice "NO!" It was then that the gendarmes attacked violently with truncheons. They wounded several women in the head. Some suffered various fractures. In the centre of the prison the blood flowed freely. Finally the gendarmes succeeded in dragging the women to their cells.
5. They tried to isolate the women:
 - a) They transferred Despina Kyrihopoulou, who was known for her subversive activities in prisons, and two other women, to the men's psychiatric hospital.
 - b) They transferred Isabelle Bertrand and two other women (all French) to the Trikala prison in Thessalonica.
 - c) They transferred Efi Kotsou, a militant marxist, to the Larissa prison in Thessalonica (she is held in solitary confinement).
 - d) They transferred Anne Pratsefsky, Augi Platsi and Macridou, a militant of the extreme left, to the Patras prison in West Pelopponesia.

Comrades, we draw your attention to the fact that the hunger strike in the men's section of Corydalos continues.

Our anarchist comrades Philip Kgziksis (sentenced to 9 years) and Bouketsides have been mal-treated. George Zizinis, a militant Marxist of the extreme left is held in total isolation. The militant anarchist Kgriaces Vassiliades has been transferred to the prison on the island of Egine.

Very soon the trial of 14 militants of the extreme left, wrongly accused (without a shred of evidence) of having killed the deputy chief of the Greek riot police, will take place.

Actually in progress at the time of writing is the trial of the policemen Stathoulis and Kyrisis, who are accused of having killed Spzidon Spyzopoulos, aged 26, on May 29th 1978. The two policemen claim that the bullets from their guns did not strike Spyzopoulos, but that on the contrary, it was Spyzopoulos who fell into the path of the bullets leaving their guns. Thus, in their opinion, the death of Spyzopoulos was entirely his own fault.

Comrades, we ask that you do everything you can to achieve the immediate release of all these prisoners. If you can, call on the workers in your country to sabotage Greek tourism, because on the Greek islands where they go to spend their holidays, there are prisons where inmates are regularly tortured.

Groupe Anarchos Syndicaliste, Athens.

France: antimilitarism

Lest we forget

Conscription for military service is remembered in this country only by the parents of the present generation of young people, and even those politicians flying a kite for a solution to unemployment among the young by calling them up for 'national service' are at

pains to avoid military connotations. But most if not all European countries conscript their young men into the army for a period.

A comrade who was holidaying in Paris joined a March Against Militarisation on 26th April. The focal point was the cases of three conscripts who had deserted after varying short periods in different

sections of the army, and a leaflet (1) was distributed which contained an extract from the statement of each. Claims for civil and human rights, not only for dissidents and deserters but for all soldiers were presented by two groups: the Campaign for the Abolition of Military Justice (2) which demanded the abolition of secret and all-powerful military courts, and

Information on soldiers' rights(3) demanding the setting up of trade unions within the armed forces.

Our comrade, who joined the march at its start in the Place des Fêtes and passing the Pere Lachaise cemetery, to where a wreath was taken, presumably to the Communards' Wall, reports no adverse reaction to the march from inhabitants of the areas through which it passed. There were no uniformed police accompanying the march, but a police helicopter was always overhead. There was an interruption caused by an attack en route by a group of "Autonomes" (whom I recall the BBC reporter at the time describing, to his credit, as a 'type of' anarchist group) on the offices of a right-wing political organisation (which our correspondent believed to be Gaullist), and the throwing of sundry missiles into a police station. The anarchist presence (grouped under the slogan 'Down with all armies' - see photo - and a line of black flags) was rather better presented in a concise leaflet from the French Anarchist Federation pointing up the incongruity of protesting against

militarism and voting in a government at the next elections: 'Have you ever seen a state without an army' and 'there is no antimilitarism without destruction of the army'

Remember Larzac?

Since the early 1970s the peasant farmers of Larzac have been fighting, morally and physically, against the seizure of agricultural land for the extension of the nearby army establishment. At the height of the spectacular campaign we read a lot about Larzac and there were gatherings of protesters drawn from other regions of France and from other countries. It is, as in most cases of a single group pitting its strength against the might of the state, a losing battle. But the peasant farmers of Larzac have not given up opposing. In April 1973 sixty farmers collectively returned to the army ministry their national service books which

Frenchmen who have performed their military service are required to hold for the many years they are liable for reserve call-up. A further 300 have done likewise in the subsequent years, there have been many prosecutions, so unpopular with the magistrates that no one has been imprisoned and in most cases the minimum penalty has been applied. This form of protest has been taken up in other parts of France, about 1500 people having returned their 'livrets' and a system of counsellors set up nationwide.

Notes

- (1) Groupe Solidarité Déserteurs, B. P. 464, 75065 Paris, Cedex 2
- (2) CAJM, 163 rue de Chevaleret, 75013 Paris.
- (3) I.D.S., B. P. 112, 75825 Paris, Cedex 17.

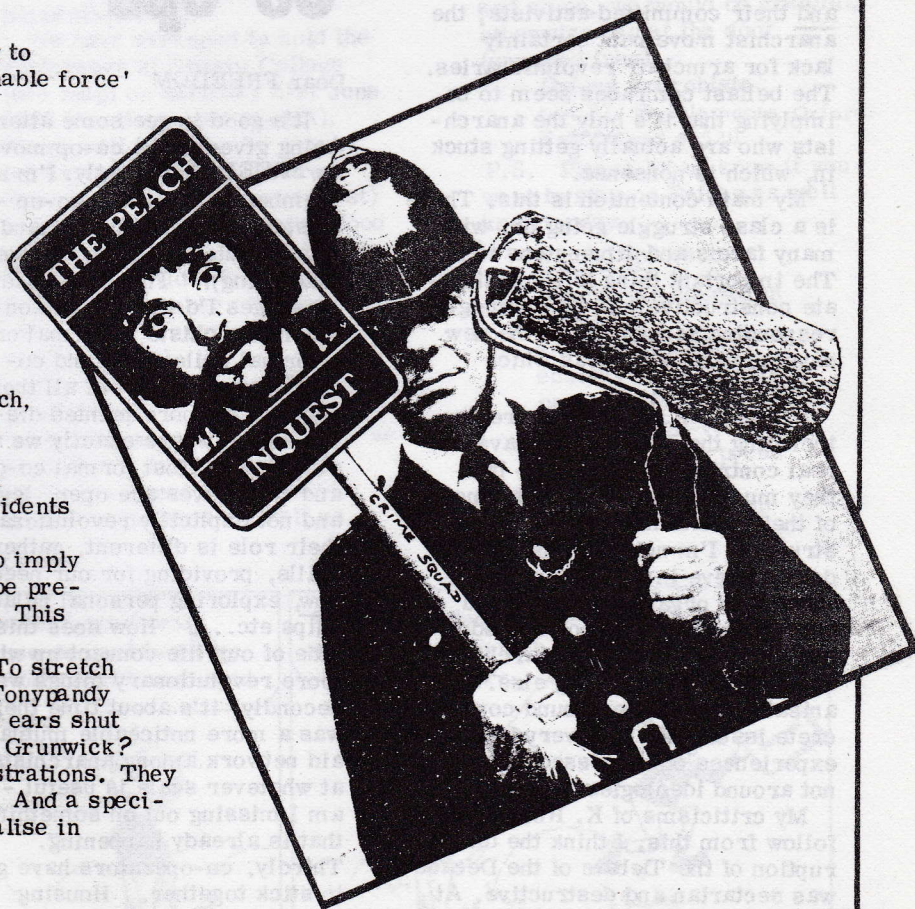
'MISADVENTURE.' This means, according to learned opinion, that the police used 'reasonable force' when they killed Blair Peach.

There was never any evidence presented to suggest that Peach was personally involved in a 'riot', throwing bricks or whatever. The implication is that if you are present in the vicinity of a gathering of which the police disapprove, then you take what you get.

Liberal opinion is horrified at this implication. The leader columns of the Guardian and the Observer plaintively beseech, 'Is it now accepted practice for the police to use their truncheons whenever they wish to disperse a crowd?' '...what action has been taken to ensure that there are no similar incidents on British streets in future?'

'The Coroner's summing-up....seemed to imply that anyone attending a demonstration must be prepared to expect aggressive police measures. This is no part of our tradition.'

Bullshit. Where have these people been? To stretch things, have they never heard of Peterloo, Tonyandy More topically, have they had their eyes and ears shut for, say, the last ten years? Never heard of Grunwick? This is the way that police behave on demonstrations. They always have, and no doubt they always shall. And a specialised group like the SPG are going to specialise in precisely that.



Of, or against, the Left?

Dear comrades

I'm sorry that the Belfast Anarchists were so enraged by my alleged attack on anarchism (their letter in FREEDOM, 24.5.80). Judging from the vehemence of their personal attack upon me, it would seem that I've committed the ultimate crime of actually daring to ask some awkward questions about the nature and role of libertarian politics in Britain (not in Ireland). I have been branded heretic and outcast.

I could respond to the Belfast comrades' arguments one by one, but what's the point? They are clearly so entrenched in their self-righteous anarchist orthodoxy that such a response would be wasted. Their arguments are based upon prejudice and ignorance, for the most part. For instance, it is very silly indeed to launch an attack upon 'cultured socialists' who do nothing but 'sit around ... talking cosy politics and calling themselves the vanguard of the revolution'. This sort of caricature gets us nowhere. Many socialist currents have their armchair revolutionaries, and their committed activists; the anarchist movement certainly lack for armchair revolutionaries. The Belfast comrades seem to be implying that it's only the anarchists who are actually getting stuck in, which is nonsense.

My main contention is this. There is a class struggle going on, with many facets and dimensions to it. The important thing is to participate constructively in that struggle, responding sensitively to the new developments and ideas which emerge from it.

All sorts of socialist currents, including the libertarian, have a real contribution to make - but they must all be judged in terms of their relationship to the broad struggle. I'm not a Leninist. I don't believe in building political parties or organisations around particular ideologies or orthodoxies - and that goes for anarchism as much as for anything else. Organisation should be around concrete issues and the everyday experiences of oppressed people, not around ideologies.

My criticisms of K. Ronstadt follow from this. I think the disruption of the 'Debate of the Decade' was sectarian and destructive. At a time when many socialists are rethinking their strategies, it is

disastrous for the libertarian approach to be represented by a few aggressive hecklers, who seem to direct all their anger against other socialists.

In my previous letter I suggested that a certain political vision lay behind K. Ronstadt's tactics: a vision in which the left is perceived as 'the enemy'. The Belfast comrades seem to be saying that they share this vision. I hope I've made it clear that I don't.

Behind all the arguments, this is the real issue. Are we a part of the left, or are we opposed to it? I believe that those people who declare themselves opposed to it are, in doing so, consigning themselves to sectarian irrelevance. But maybe other readers would like to take the issue up?

Yours

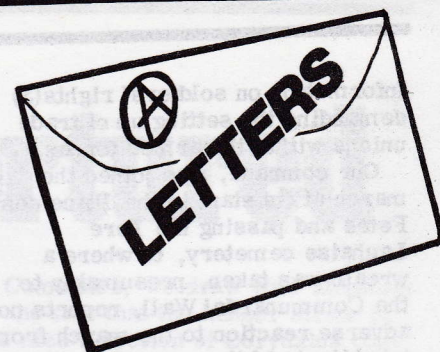
MARTIN SPENCE

Newcastle

Co-ops

Dear FREEDOM

It's good to see some attention being given to the co-op movement in FREEDOM recently. I'm a member of a housing co-op - (just got our first house) and also of a manufacturing co-op (wood-machining). There are a few messages I'd like to pass on to other anarchists in formal or informal collectives and co-operatives. First of all there ought to be more printed discussion of where exactly we are all going. Most formal co-ops and collectives are open, legal and not explicitly revolutionary - their role is different, gathering skills, providing for our needs now, exploring personal relationships etc.... How does this side of our life connect up with the more revolutionary things we do. Secondly, it's about time there was a more noticeable mutual aid network among anarchists - at whatever scale is useful - or am I missing out on something that is already happening. Thirdly, co-operators have got to stick together. Housing co-ops who have got housing association grants will be asked



for higher rents when the state cottons on to this way of raising money. We must be ready to organise against attacks like this.

Also I've been in touch locally with parts of the 'traditional' co-op movement lately - even going to (shriek!) Co-op Party meeting to see what goes on. The Co-op movement is the idealistic part of the traditional labour movement, full of amazing characters. The completeness of its crushing under the combined weight of the power seeking Labour Party and the bureaucracy of its elected managers has startled even me. Some people actually travel miles to a co-op supermarket - that's (mistaken) idealism! Bristol and Bath District Co-op Society had 8,000 employees and ran a farm, pub etc. when taken over by the infamous CWS (or is it CRS) in 1965. The reason given for the takeover was that it would save jobs. Now there are 4,000 people employed by the co-op in the district. Seeing how some of the friendliest and sincerest socialists I've met have had their organisations taken over and destroyed through a creeping centralisation process that individuals have opposed but a majority never stood up against together has made me see how important it is to stick to what we feel is right and not be co-opted into unnecessary things by 'friendly' outside organisers.

I'd be glad to hear from anyone else involved in fairly formal co-ops or collectives. There may be many ways we can help each other. We need more direct contact between members of different co-ops. Maybe we should get a more organised (i.e. more effective) anarchist mutual aid network going or something - any ideas.

DAVE DANN

Bristol

Disarming

Dear FREEDOM

I am writing to point out some errors in the World Disarmament article by Lynne Jones (10 May).

Elizabeth Sugden should be Elizabeth Sigmund, writer of Rage against the Dying.

Stanley Keeble is the organiser of the Peace Tax Campaign, not Bruce Kent who is General Secretary of CND.

The Peace Tax Campaign is Quaker originated, and is a natural and logical extension of many Quakers' stance as C.O.S.. The idea of the campaign is not to withhold that part of one's tax which goes towards defence spending, impossible under PAYE, but to have that part of one's tax which goes on defence diverted towards a special Peace Tax Fund, which is to be used for specific peace making purposes.

Stanley Keeble can be contacted by writing to him at Little Nanteague, Allet, Truro, Cornwall.

The campaign is at the M.P. lobbying stage at present, relying on those interested to lobby their respective M.P.s and publicise the campaign in their area.

I am just starting a registration campaign in the Croydon NW constituency - anyone who wishes to register from that constituency, or rather that's what I think I'm doing.

SIMON STEWART

Egoism

Dear Editors

Acting individually A. Plier (24 May 1980) sets out to knock nails into an imaginary windmill. As Mary Whitehouse reacts to the letters F.U.C.K. Plier jumps at the letters E.G.O. For Whitehouse public hair is sufficient for hysteria, for Plier an individual causes apoplexy.

It is known how Leninists and Marxists are totally humourless people who use this or that crisis to impose discipline on the ranks and to eliminate 'bourgeois individualism', but one wonders when supposedly libertarian sympathisers use similar tactics. Not only is the phrase 'bourgeois individualism' totally bogus and an insult to working people, it ignores such individuals as Joe Hill and Durrutti and the Stirnerite syndicalists of post-war Glasgow. The bourgeoisie are,

in fact, a conformist bunch - just the type of people A. Plier would find marching behind his banner. As anarchists are unlikely to confuse Plier's quasi-Marxist crap with any form of libertarianism, the bourgeoisie are the only ones likely to be receptive to Plier's discipline.

To confuse my piece 'Snuffin' to do with me' with Sid Parker's views is strange to say the least. All I ask is that those who believe in altruism are honest enough to examine motives. Stirner is outstanding in doing this and it is completely false to see a recognition of true self-interest as similar to Pontius Pilate washing his hands. All those things I listed are not my responsibility because I do not vote or support the status quo. Pilate was part of the status quo and pretended he wasn't.

It might be poetic licence to claim I spend every minute of every day fighting injustice, but reference to spending some proportion of my time congratulating myself was simply an attempt at humour. In any case congratulating oneself can be a part of fighting injustice. You see reality, you assess correct decisions (eg. not voting) and strengthen the path to a just solution.

ETHEL GEORGE OUSPENSKY

Only anarchists

Dear FREEDOM,

Firstly FREEDOM is to be congratulated on giving over the Review Section to another group or individual. Let's hope the idea gets more adventurous and we can (say) see some of the excellent work coming from the USA's West Coast. (Last Gasp Comix - you should really plug work like that, FREEDOM.)

But 'Violence against Women' - Oh my god! I've tried, I've honestly tried to finish the article, but in all honesty I've better things to do. For me any semblance of credibility was destroyed by the barely diluted hatred against men that seeped out between each line. WHY?

The section on 'Marriage' I found the most saddening. I myself am prevented from marriage on medical grounds but I just cannot accept that this writing is a fair commentary on the vast multitudes of married couples that dwell in the Council caves around these parts.

The whole concept of feminism is a long humourless side issue that Anarchists who have the simple

ability to differentiate between appearance and reality will not be slow to discard, have a private giggle and move on to more pressing matters.

I have no interest in women, wives, husbands, politicians, dagoes, gays, bus inspectors, Ancient Goddesses, C of E's, Trade Union leaders, Judges, poor people, ... only Anarchists.

DOREEN FRAMPTON
Padiham, Lancs.

REPORT

Melbourne bookshop

ALTHOUGH there have been anarchist groups in Melbourne, Australia, since 1884, it was not until earlier this year that the first anarchist bookshop opened.

The place is known as the 'Chummy Fleming Bookshop'. Although the shop is now run by the Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society, which is an anarcho-communist group, we stock all types of anti-authoritarian literature: syndicalism, yippie/hippie stuff, situationist and feminist publications, anarchistic fiction and ecology/conservation publications. Our range of literature still needs to be expanded a lot but we have nearly doubled our stock of books, posters and magazines since we opened in February and recently started a Spanish language section.

Our opening party on February 15 attracted over 60 people. The shop has not been that crowded since; still we are getting ideas across to large numbers of people.

If any FREEDOM readers should visit Melbourne, pay us a visit. We are open five days a week, Tuesdays to Saturdays.

(Note: Who was Chummy Fleming? Chummy Fleming was born in England in 1863. He emigrated to Melbourne in the early 1880s, and from then until his death in 1950 was the most prominent activist among the Australian anarchists. Chummy was notable for his sense of humour, modesty, the variety of his political activities, and for being ahead of his time in his views).

GARRY HILL

Chummy Fleming Bookshop
Shop 26, Regent Arcade, 210 Toorak Road, South Yarra, Aus.

For more details on 'Chummy' Fleming, see Paul Avrich's article in FREEDOM's Review, vol. 38, no. 14 (23 July 1977).

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New South Wales

Black Ram, PO Box 238,
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Jura Books Collective, 417
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Sydney Libertarians, PO Box 24,
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Queensland

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Self-Management Organisation,
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Victoria

La Trobe Libertarian Social-
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ersity, Bundoora, Vic.3083.
Monash Anarchist Society, c/o
Monash University, Clayton,
3168 Melbourne.
Libertarian Workers for a Self
Managed Society, PO Box 20,
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Libertarian Resource Centre

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Federal Republic of Germany

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Berlin: Anarkistisches Bund
(publ. of 'anarkistische
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c/o Libertad Verlag, Postfach
153, 1000 Berlin 44.

East Westfalen: (Anarchistische
Föderation Ostwestfalen-Lippe):
Wolfgang Fabisch, c/o Wohnge-
meinschaft Schwarzwurzel,
Wöhrener Str. 136,
4970 Bad Oeynhausen 2.

Hamburg: Initiative Freie Arb-
eiter Union: FAU, Repsoldstr.
49, Hochpaterre links,
2000 Hamburg 1.
'Gewaltfreie Aktion' groups
throughout FRG, associated w.
WRI. For info. write Karl-
Heinz Sang, Methfesselstr. 69,
2000 HAMBURG 19.

France

Federation anarchiste franç-
aise, 3 rue Ternaux,
75011 Paris. (Groups through-
out France).

Union Anarchiste 9 rue de P'Ange
53000 Clermont Ferrand France

Italy

Gruppo Hem Day, c/o Giovanni
Trapani, Via A. Tittoni 5,
00153 Roma.

The Netherlands

De Vrije Socialist,
Postbus 411, Utrecht.

SCANDINAVIA

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cafe, Mejlsgade 48,
8000 Aarhus.

Copenhagen: Anarkist Syndical-
ist Bogcafe, Studiestræde 18,
1455 Copenhagen.

Rainbow Anarchists of the Free
City of Christians, c/o Allan
Anarchos, Tinghuset, Fristaden
Christiana, 1407K Copenhagen.

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BEYOND THE TUNNEL

The following article, sent to us by a prisoner in the USA, originally appeared in an Anarchist Black Dragon pamphlet entitled *Black Wings*. In this article the prisoner argues that what has come to be known as 'prison struggle' has lost sight of the goal of actual liberation from prison and that those involved in 'supporting' prisoners should be thinking in terms of something rather more than prison reform, or indeed the 'abolish all prisons!' of anarchist rhetoric.

This article was originally to have encompassed a description of what life is like at Prison but having given that idea some thought I decided that nothing could be more boring or idiotic to write about. Anyone with a fair amount of sensitivity and independent intellect, along with a minimum of data, is well aware of the conditions in prison (I presume that the Dragon has a low percentage of robot mentalities perusing each issue). However, what is the relative importance of conditions within prison? The material circumstances - food, clothing, housing, the hired help, etc. - which every prisoner must contend with are to a large degree illusory, if not essentially meaningless.

Perhaps that is too broad a statement but, in the context of having one's liberty usurped by the state, are prison conditions really of consequence? While it is certainly difficult to ignore harsh living conditions anywhere, it seems particularly inappropriate to endeavor to make prison a more comfortable place to live. The "best" prison is no better than the worst. The repression suffered by prisoners is not determined by the extent of abuses or, conversely, the number of privileges and amenities which are permitted but, rather, that there exists an institution of power, an authority, that legitimizes the violence which serves to create and perpetuate all prisons and condones the behavior of its functionaries towards prisoners. The hired help may severely torment, ignore or even give some sort of a play to prisoners but regardless of the exact treatment afforded prisoners the primary offence is that prisons continue to thrive and thus the primary task of anarchists (using the term somewhat loosely) is to undermine or circumvent the exercise of such authority. I guess that sounds pretty simple but to maintain that perspective is to go significantly beyond the tunnel vision which prisoners themselves, even those of revolutionary inclination, ordinarily adhere to.

By "tunnel vision" I mean a narrow outlook of prisoners, specifically an acceptance of incarceration and, at best, a design towards improving life on the inside for all who are likewise situated. It is far more often the case that, having accepted prison, a given prisoner or group of prisoners will do whatever can be done to make their bid more bearable regardless of how such efforts affect other prisoners. To all readers who are in captivity: Need I catalogue the seemingly endless exhibitions of greed, cruelty and stupidity as manifested by the majority of our fellow captives? The foremost effect of such tunnel vision, however, is that it greatly reinforces the prison system because the game is played (and in that context must be) entirely in accord with the state's rules and objectives.

A terrifically devastating consequence, or perhaps as a parallel form, of tunnel vision is that many prisoners consider themselves and are considered by some of us to be absolved from responsibility from whatever anti-social acts they may have committed. More cogently, because prisoners are victims of an unjust judicial system and subjected to the inherent deprivations of prison their actions - past, present, future; to whatever extreme - are therefore justifiable, though no conclusion could be more erroneous. I cannot emphasize enough how totally unrealistic and self-defeating it is for anarchists to regard most prisoners as budding revolutionaries and prison as a clandestine guerilla training ground. The theme of revolution, with all its trimmings, is being mercilessly exploited by opportunist prisoners for material gain. A popular fallacy is that prisoners represent the vanguard of the revolution but the overwhelming majority of prisoners, if given the opportunity, would perform the same role as the hired help in any prison. That is not to say they would exclusively or necessarily be employed in a prison system but that whatever position they elect to pursue within society their actions will prove entirely supportive of the very powers, institutions and values which we are inexorably opposed to.

The above discussion was not intended to establish that only a select minority of prisoners possess a "true and correct revolutionary awareness" (smile folks), rather, to demonstrate the inefficacy of uncritical support of all prisoners. The most unfortunate consequence of such superficiality is that the "prison struggle", both in terms of direct action undertaken to advance same and the declarations of those who are ostensibly opposed to the established order, is virtually synonymous with the notion of improving a particular prison or prisons in general. Aside from the fact that what usually passes as "support" is only symbolic in nature, the "prison struggle" seems to have utterly forsaken the objective of actual liberation from prison, i.e., prior to a release date established by the state.

It is somewhat disconcerting that in our fine anarchist papers the topic of extra-judicial release from captivity is virtually never mentioned yet said papers are replete with reportage and invocations concerning "prisoner support work". Before the rhetorical bulwarks are erected I hasten to add that I am not targeting those persons who produce anarchist papers as bearing exclusive responsibility for neglecting this issue. To continue then, what form of "support" could possibly be more meaningful to a prisoner than that which might lead to his/her deliverance? The fact that escape is not mentioned in our papers is not, as some might opine, that the printed media is not an appropriate format to discuss such a subject but, rather, because (to say the least) most "prisoner support work" does not entail such activity. Obviously I speak not of publishing details of specific projects or even general tactics but of the promulgation and promotion of extra-judicial proceedings as both viable and essential in our common struggle.

continued over

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BEYOND THE TUNNEL

I recognize that, ironically, in respect to prisoners, anarchists practice or tolerate a de facto negation of the individual by sacrificing the well-being of individual prisoners on behalf of "the greater struggle". My choice of words may be a bit crude but I do not believe myself to be mistaken in asserting that among anarchists there is an implicit if not in fact explicit current of thought which dictates that any action which is not intended to further the goals (?) of that heterogeneous blob, "the prison struggle", albeit often through a specific prisoner, is somehow an act of selfishness or - gasp! - counterrevolution. Prisoners need not apologize for striving to be free. (FE take note: No 'explanation' is necessary as to why we should support our dear brother, Carl Harp, in his particular situation.)

I know of no prison which is escape-proof, however, in most instances outside support is required in order to effect or facilitate liberation. Not everyone is capable of actively participating in an armed incursion against a specific prison but there are any number of supportive roles which must be filled to ensure the successful extrication of our sisters and brothers. Of course, not every extra-judicial release will require an armed encounter; indeed,

what is to prevent some of our people from getting jobs as prison guards and thus allow prisoners to depart from a given dump simply by opening doors or converting a guard tower into a play-rocket (or whatever) or firing a gun far wide of the mark? After all, the fortress-like facade of any prison is intended solely to convince/brainwash those inside that they cannot possibly escape but such "awesome" structures should hardly pose as an insurmountable obstacle to people on the outside. How is it that anarchists can see right through most of the absurdities which the powers that be pass off as civilisation, normalcy, morality, success, and on and on, yet many of our number are apparently mesmerized by the illusion of invulnerability which prisons exude? I am puzzled as to the whereabouts of a creature called Courage.

I hope I haven't created the impression that the sole task of anarchists, in relation to prisons, is to free anarchist prisoners. On the contrary, I would, for example, like to also free the judge who sentenced me to eternity but, at least this time around, I wanted to avoid discussing ideal or theoretical anarchism.

To close, then, and truly not wishing to castigate those who mean well, the call to "abolish all prisons" rings a bit hollow to those of us who endure the madness of captivity. Perhaps the above will provoke more than written responses.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANARCHY (February 18-24, 1980)

Portland, situated as it is in Oregon on the North Western side of the United States, would seem to be a remote place for an international gathering, - even for Americans. Moreover the guide book description hardly suggests that it would provide a likely venue for radicals of any sort, least of all anarchists - "A certain weight of self-satisfaction is part of the Portland style: Oregonians in general have a 'Garden of Eden' complex about their state. They like it the way it is and they fear that any change will be for the worse." (1)

However, the recent International Symposium on Anarchism in February this year was held at Portland, bringing together droves of anarchists and anarchist sympathisers, mainly from the States but also from South America and Europe. Headlines in the local press announced that Anarchy had been let loose on the campus of a local respectable private college, but Portland society did not seem unduly disturbed by it all and the authorities even if they had been alerted kept a low profile. Some of the proceedings were televised - it would appear that the Symposium evoked interest and curiosity rather than outrage. The only person who seemed to develop any anxieties about the affair was the college president who, half way through the proceedings, called off the official reception to be held at his home at the end of the week.

The programme of the Symposium was an incredibly ambitious one involving as it did a whole week of events devoted to the literary and artistic aspects of Anarchism as well as the political and social ones. Some idea of the scope of the programme can be given by the fact that it ranged from the learned discourse of the distinguished Bakuninist scholar Arthur Lehning (2) to an informal discussion of anarchistic literature involving among others the science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin, from a political harangue by the old militant Sam Dolgoff (3) to a performance of the anarchist music of Maurice Lemaître and John Cage.

The fact that such an elaborate programme had been planned meant that initially there was too much activity on

the platform with not enough opportunity for discussion from the floor. Participants however quickly put an end to this situation, and after the first day, whilst speakers were for the most part given a fair hearing, neither long rambling discourses nor narrowly academic discussions were tolerated. Undoubtedly this led to tense moments and to heated exchanges, whilst some speakers had to endure particularly savage attacks during discussion times. Arthur Mendal's endeavours to attribute the revolutionary violence of Anarchism to the sexual inadequacies of Bakunin (4) were mercilessly demolished, whilst Geoffrey Gneuh's attempt to present the Christian Anarchist position (5) was engulfed in a volley of invective against the Catholic church. Nevertheless, through it all a spirit of solidarity developed among participants enabling a genuinely constructive dialogue to take place; - there was a real feeling of being part of a living movement where unity could thrive in diversity.

It is difficult to pick out particular sessions to illustrate this, but I think most people were both stimulated and encouraged by the following discussions. There was a particularly lively debate on Anarchism and Feminism during which feminists showed that both at the theoretical and practical level they were making real constructive efforts to develop an anarchist way of life. There was an impressive discussion between a large assembly of anarchists and anarchist sympathisers, inspired by the lecture of the radical educationalist Joel Spring, (6) on ways of combating the destructive influence exercised on the thinking of the individual by the blandness of American State education. There was a soul searching examination of modern cooperative projects, both at the producer and consumer level, in response to Len Krimerman's paper on past experiences and future strategies. (7) There were various important discussions of the practical attempts to develop anarchist communities in the early twentieth century: - "Cecilia" the sensitive film about the Italian anarchist community in Brazil evoked an exchange of ideas on the value of the experiment as an attempt to adapt

traditional family life to that of an anarchist society; the papers of Martha Ackelsberg (8) and Burnett Bollotin (9) stimulated a constructive examination of both the achievements and problems of Spanish anarchists in the Spanish civil war. Finally there was the exciting debate on the relevance of Chomsky's ideas to the theoretical concepts of Anarchism, arising out of Carlos Otero's paper on Chomsky's theory of individuals and society. (10)

But of course outside the more formal sessions there were the meetings of affinity groups and personal contacts between individuals, and it was these which probably did more than anything to promote creative discussion and to establish ties of friendship and solidarity. It seems to me that here was an occasion when the unreal distinction between theorist and activist, academic and militant, which has been a persistent feature of the anarchist movement since Bakunin's denunciation of the arrogant leadership of men of science, was broken down. The fact that radical movements have so often given undue importance to their thinkers thereby tending to extinguish rather than promote popular creativity should not prevent us recognising the contribution of theorists and scholars. As anarchists we need to be to some extent both theorists and activists, but where one comrade may have more insight into practical action another may have a clearer grasp of intellectual concepts. We therefore need to learn from each other. And I think this is what was happening at Portland.

In consequence the Symposium, I believe, marked a modest step forward in the effort to develop the theory and action of Anarchism as a creative force in the modern world. We urgently need to do this, for undoubtedly so many ordinary people, today more than ever before, are sick and tired of parliamentary politics, of the national state and international capitalism. We cannot get our message across by continually reiterating negative statements and responses to the state and authority. As Marianne Enkell of the C.I.R.A. in Geneva insisted in her keynote speech on the international rejuvenation of Anarchism, we have to offer real positive suggestions about the nature of an anarchist society in the contemporary world. Anarchists simply cannot afford to go on repeating the brilliant but in some ways essentially dated vision of Bakunin, Kropotkin or Malatesta, anymore than they can be satisfied with revolutionary action which simply consists of disrupting the meetings and demonstrations of other movements. We need to take the insights both from the theory and the practice of the past and develop them in the context of the problems of modern society. This means we have to make new proposals about how communities might organise themselves on anarchist lines, not with a view to providing a blueprint for the future but a rich variety of meaningful suggestions to inspire the thinking and action of ordinary people yearning for freedom. It is to be hoped that the Symposium at Portland will be one of the first of many occasions when anarchists will really get together at an international level to do just that.

On the last day of the Symposium there was a first showing of a documentary film, "The Free Voice of Labour - The Jewish Anarchists". Perhaps this sympathetic film which marks the closing down of the old Jewish anarchist journal *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* started in 1890 provided the keynote for the contemporary anarchist movement - the idea that we use the inspiration of the past to develop our message for today!

Caroline Cahn.

Notes:

- (1) Beautiful Portland - Robin Will (1979) p. 5
- (2) Anarchism and Marxism
- (3) Anarcho-Syndicalism and the Self-Management Movement
- (4) Bakunin's Politics: The Role of Violence and Leninist Organisation

- (5) Anarchism and Religion - Are they Compatible?
- (6) Institutional Transformation: Despotism of the Mind
- (7) Anarchism: a sharing of Past Experiences and Future Strategies
- (8) The Practice of Anarchist Revolution: The Position of Women in Spanish Collectives
- (9) Anarchist Dilemmas in the Spanish Civil War.
- (10) Chomsky's Theory of Man and Society.

What to do?

In Britain, just now, there is a feeling of helpless defeatism among that conglomerate: the alternative left. Although we know Government is simply an arm of the permanent state it is clear that the Thatcherite Government is making oppression much easier for the authoritarian society.

Authority is doing very well and apart from such spontaneous outbreaks as occurred in Bristol recently there has been continual bad news for us. The day of action was nobbled by the media and the gullibility of working people at the crass propaganda was something of a shock. Certainly the TUC are not the people who would willingly lead a revolt of the masses but clearly the strength of feeling in Britain as regards Government policies is not very formidable.

The State and the Government will not be slow to recognise they can press far harder before there is any danger of concerted opposition. The Labour Party is no answer since the controllers of that organisation only wish to make capitalism work more efficiently. The chances of some Bennite takeover are unlikely given the set up of that party and the manipulations of the media. Benn is the only politician with the strength to pose any alternative strategy, and his record in office lends weight to the view that even in the unlikely event of his obtaining power in the Labour Party, he would, in power, be sounding off but doing little.

For the alienated minority in Britain there is not any reasonable answer outside revolution. This is an alternative which people react against with countless arguments, most of them very sensible ones. Revolution always leads to a worse tyranny etc. The idea of planning to take up arms against the state is one that is viewed as both laughable and dangerous. Laughable because the State has far superior fire-power, dangerous because death from violence is a probability.

Thus frustration and fear. Frustration because there seems to be no way in which to achieve a significant change; fear because the tendency towards revolution results in repression by the State.

How can we use this situation to further our ends? There are advantages in the current Government policies for anyone wishing to demonstrate the inhumanity of the State: our rulers clearly do not care about the problems of the weak and afflicted. This results in the anger of people who have a feeling for their fellow humans. This anger needs to be channeled constructively into a multitude of groups attempting to work with significant minorities. These groups are all under attack and starved of adequate funds. It is depressing work but it is vital to keep them going just now, we thus pull in our horns and prepare for the tough struggle to survive.

Although there are counter arguments about the 'inevitable' fate of revolution it seems pretty clear to this writer that no openly revolutionary group in Britain is both a factor to be viewed seriously and libertarian. The 'Trot' groups are supposedly revolutionary but are certainly not libertarian. The Communist Party is a sick joke, and all the Maoist etc. splinters are rhetorical constructs of boredom.

In similar situations people have turned to individualism or fascism. Others have given up, accepted defeat and tried to make the most of whatever crumbs of comfort still exist.

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A Supralapsarianism of

There is always that need on the part of the creative artist to move into the realms of irrational fantasy be they poet, painter or bar-room story teller but their fellow men and women, in every age, demand that inspired lunacy must always be shown to be no more than an adult rip-off of their own bleak and logical world. And the artists on their part have always come to terms with the world's demands. The medieval painters said this is heaven and hell and from then every painter from Bosch to Breugnel declared that it was all systems go go go man and the priest and the praying peasant got all the painted soft porn in all fifty seven positions that the local bishop would sign a chit for. When the Victorian industrial middle class denied God from the security of their suburban bank books there was still the need for fantasy and Page Three erotica and with the Pre-Raphaelites to give it moral values there was bondage, bloodless carnage, and armoured angels by the painted square foot, dragons and all those unfortunate nude women roped to trees and fighting off hell's spawn and Dutch elm disease.

The wealthy Victorian buyers could or would argue that they were respectable Jesus freaks buying art for its moral content for, as with the films of the late Cecil B. De Mille, fantasy and erotica need a religious and a moral basis to hawk them to the populace for their mass distribution.

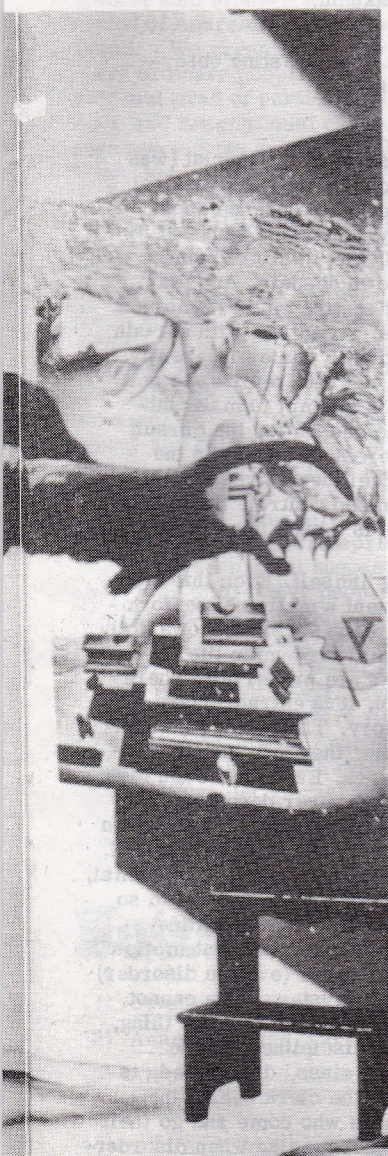
Always the need to rationalise childish innocence. Within the Brighton Museum out of sight and sound of the nude bathing is an exhibition of 19th century 'Fairies' paintings and here are the girls all starkers peeping through dew-wept grass or flying flying flying and to prove the point that one got what one paid for the catalogue to the exhibition quotes the Elizabethan fairy, Little Pricke, sighing in the Maydes Metamorphosis that "When I feele a girle asleep/Underneathe her frock I peepe/There to sport, and there I play/Then I byte her like a flea ...". Lewis Carroll poured out all his heart-aching sexual desires for little girls in his school children's required reading *Alice in Wonderland* and again that classic erotic fantasy is only acceptable as juvenilia for to quote the friendly neighbourhood wine bidder in Ward's pub, "I only drink for medicinal purposes". In a world that no longer believes in God or fairies and the better type of filthy post-cards are illegal, the visual artists found their outlet in the illustrations and covers for the American science fiction and horror pulp magazines. Artists such as Paul, Dold, Ensh, Timmins and others found their rationale in Wellsian science fiction as the medieval artists did with religious fictions and in that context Smith could illustrate a machine raping a woman, Finlay rape by creatures from outer space or Luros' rape theme by vegetables. It is all rather shy-making and



Surrealism

worthy of mention that two 1951 science fantasy covers were by M s R.M. Bull, a brilliant illustrator wherein as with the painted worlds of Bosch and Breughel we have the regurgitated realms of fantasy captive women, horror-eyed men and plenty of phallic symbols. The adult must always find a rationale for irresponsible behaviour. The surrealist movement has given much pleasure to many spectators of the visual arts, and like abstract painting it formed a delightful cover-up for many a minor painter, while the pseudo-intelligentsia, be they for or against, fought many a mouthy battle.

As a movement it came into being in Paris in 1924 with Andre Breton in the role of the revolutionary Big Daddy and in the main it was a literary movement with all those lovely manifestoes, groups in, groups out, and for the rational, Freud with his flow of dreams, the unconscious mind and the suppressed sexual basis of all unrealised human actions and desires and with that in the can the world of erotic fantasy moved into the adult world. Like abstract painting it could not be faulted for if you did not like it or accept it then you did not understand it. The surrealists accepted the Dadaist of the Zurich movement built around such men as Arp but they could not accept the Dadaist anarchistic rejection of the historical authority of the arts and as cafe communists pro-



duced their enjoyable revolutionary tracts and paintwise had a ball of a time. I would argue that the basic premise of surrealism is the placing of completely unrelated mundane objects within the cage of the same picture frame, printed page or on the same confine stage or sculptor's base for it is this forced association of unrelated objects, as in dreams, that forces the awakened dreamer or the sleeping viewer to provide that rational explanation for this mental irritant. Contrary to the theoreticians it did not liberate the artist for erotic fantasy was always on the canvas but what it did was to provide the academic artists with an aesthetic front for such minor work. It gave countless pleasure to many a painter and viewer, made marvellous coloured reproduction as did the Victorian Christmas coloured supplements of snow, Father Christmas and the angels or little girl lost with her nose-kissing doggy, had Freud and Jung, and their couches, raised to stained glass window status and as a revolutionary movement sold their ammunition to the enemy and never produced a single martyr or traitor. With but one exception and that man is, cry the ancient mini masters pointing quivering arthritic fingers, Salvador Dali. There within the Tate Gallery is this major exhibition of the drawings and paintings of Salvador Dali by slow train from the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. The wealthy and the dispossessed roaming the rooms of the Tate told me that 'they did it much better in Paris' 'for paintings were sunk into the walls' but I dispute this for the Tate has made a better job of the hanging for a painting is a painting is a painting to misquote the late surrealist M s Gert Stein and fancy frames and coy hangings simply reduce the value of the work. I have accepted years of pleasure and envy when viewing the reproductions and the rare viewing of the original works and Dali was always worth the journey to the Tate to view the few paintings of his that they had yet after months of eager waiting for this exhibition I personally found it sadly disappointing. A good draughtsman but like Ernst, Magritte, Chirico and others so much crude slap-happy brush work. Maybe I expected too much. In painting after painting it is no more than a stage setting, for like the painter Brangwyn the subject matter is painted onto a flat backcloth. Again Dali is too free and lazy with his use of white paint. It is a fault that painters such as Paul Wunderlick at the Redfern Gallery do with the air gun in this year of our Lord 1980. The lazy flow of the brush or the gun to give uncontrolled highlights. Canaletto did this with his tiny figures turning it into a cliché but Dali runs his large brush down side after side to avoid, one assumes, the toning down of light and shadows. It is a small point my masters. As with Magritte and Oliver Hardy, Dali is a master of the double take. Many a painting on this first viewing is smaller than one imagined and the Mae West 'lips' sofa fails to sit up to its reproduction photographs. Dali was no juvenile genius for his early work is just bad and I am sorry that the well-produced catalogue failed to reproduce them but in the 1920s he could fashion a pastiche Braque, Miro, Picasso or a Chirico worthy of a Tom Keatings and the point is that sadly without the bandwagon of the surrealist movement I would hold that Dali would have remained no more than a member of that vast army of good second rate painters. I sat and shuddered in the ancient Food Office of the early National Film Institute, God we were heroes in those days etc, at the eye-slashing sequence in the film Un Chien Andalou and the toe sucking, was it L'Age d'Or?, and choose to believe that I was the only one within that Tate exhibition who remembered that Dali's 'The Temptation of Saint Anthony', now the pride and prize of the Musees Royaux des Beaux Arts de Belgique, Brussels, was shown in a basement on London's Oxford Street in the late 1940s as part of a film company competition. Or that when the Institute of Contemporary Arts was housed in P.G. Wodehouse's Dover Street and I asked Sir why Dali who was in London was not asked to speak at the ICA I was told, in effect, that he was not that important so no crawling lads from the Top Brass of the world of State Establishment Art. Dali was and is the only surrealist for like the Rolling Stones and Sid Vicious he lives out his public image in his private lives.

They all gave pleasure and Dali more than his fair share to the sum total of human happiness and in that he harmed no one so I wish the old clown well but hand on my heart mate you are no Leonardo. But then neither was the late David Smith, among the many greatest American sculptors. The Serpentine

Surrealism

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Gallery in Kensington Gardens Dingly Dell is exhibiting a number of Smith's drawings and they are fashionable slapsy brush daubing in the manner of the late Franz Kline. Kasmin the lad with the well tailored Italian suit is exhibiting his share of the late David Smith's slap-happy doodles in his Bond Street Gallery but apart from the Arts Council wine and walking web-footed through the Kensington Garden supergrass one must (?) be honest and state tombwise that David is no Dali.

So many claims are made by hard faced dealers and bureaucratic State exhibition organisers about the work of unfortunate artists and these unfortunates in their brief moment of glory simply cannot fulfil those claims. So it is with the Pier and Ocean exhibition at the Hayward. It is labelled as Construction in the Art of the 70s a word first dreamed up by Tatlin in Russia in 1913 but his 1 200 foot high bird cage was never built but it existed. The sad work at the Hayward is gentle lunacy that does not call for appreciation or an answer but for sympathy. Roman Opalka has spent 12 years painting tiny numbers on his canvasses and he has now reached the 2 500 000 number and he is making it his life work and THEY mock me for doing the Pools. Bas Jan Adler filmed himself falling off a roof into a canal, with his bicycle, and chair, and the video goes round and round as he falls and falls repeat repeat and as he disappeared in 1976 I will assume that in an unexpurgated edition of the film he did not come out of the canal with his chair and bicycle. Do we mock, and if so who are we mocking? Ourselves? The art establishment or the unfortunate contributors? But as ever to the plush world of the Royal Academy press conference for the 'World's Finest Antiques Fair' and dealers can offer stuff for sale even up to 1930. I asked my question how to arrive at 1930 aesthetic values and I lay back in my chair in the crowded room waiting for the wine. Above my head was the huge white and gold ceiling of the General Assembly Room whose great centre piece is a painting by the 18th century Venetian painter Sebastiano Ricci and I swore that with each soft eddy of warm air the entire ceiling went up and down and the longer I watched I knew that that ceiling was floating up and down above my head. As the conference broke up I quietly tugged Sir Hugh Casson aside to tell him that the ceiling was floating up and down with the slight breeze and he smiled and said "yes I know"; the whole of Ricci's huge daub is nearly floating in space. Trump that Salvador Dali.

Arthur Moyses.

What to do?

Continued from page 11

Art, literature, music, sex, drugs, beckon the creative, thoughtful people who are likely to be libertarian. To the political activist 'the hero, or heroine' who saves us all seems to be an attraction - 'all the rest have failed so maybe the strong leader will help' - . No anarchist is going to bother with this, but pleasure seeking or self-indulgence is a very common means of escape. Maintaining some sort of integrity, doing things not likely to great harm..... The field is small and under pressure but survival of physical and mental health is just feasible.

Yet a consumer orientated society attracts us towards self-indulgence. Perhaps it is the best option. But is it going to lead to significant changes towards a libertarian society?

The plain fact is that we have every reason to feel downhearted. We are living through days when resistance is getting harder and the State is getting stronger. We feel the type of despair that can lead to totally unpredictable behaviour because people cease to care for anything. This is manifest in Punk culture. It is possibly more accurate to depict our situation as being driven crazy because of caring too much. The cool cats react by not getting steamed up about anything, but if life is being extinguished surely we must fight back or see our energies destroyed.

J.W.

BOY BAKUNIN?

Here is another literary piece, from Saul Bellow's book *Mr Sammler's Planet* which in general is a plea for intellectualism, criticising modern consumerism and modern radicalism which Bellow seems to see as the same thing - despite frequent reverent references to Marx and the one below ~~to~~ Bakunin. Bellow sees the problem as a fetish for explaining everything and understanding nothing. He also manages, by the way, to refer to New York street life as anarchy on two separate occasions.

"... Regularly now for generations, prosperous families brought forth their anarchistic sons - these boy Bakunins, geniuses of liberty, arsonists, demolishers of prisons, property and palaces. Bakunin had loved fire so. Wallace worked in water, a different medium."

The Wallace in question had just flooded his father's luxury home by bursting a water pipe in the attic that he was convinced contained large quantities of banknotes acquired by his father doing illicit abortions for the Mafia. He intended to use the money to finance his own money-making venture. Clearly a boy Bakunin.

However Mr Bellow does manage an interesting observation at another point in the book...

"... No use being the sensitive observer, the tourist (was there any land stable enough to tour?), the philosophical Rambler out on Broadway, inspecting the phenomenon. The phenomenon had in some way achieved a sense of its own interest and observability. It was aware of being a scene of perversity, it knew its own despair. And fear. The terror of it. Here you might see the soul of America at grips with historical problems, struggling with certain impossibilities, experiencing violently states inherently static. Being realized but trying itself to realize, to act. Attempting to make interest. This attempt to make interest was, for Mr Sammler, one reason for the pursuit of madness. Madness makes interest. Madness is the attempted liberty of people who feel themselves overwhelmed by giant forces of organized control. Seeking the magic of extremes. Madness is a base form of the religious life.

But wait - Sammler cautioning himself. Even this madness is also to a considerable extent a matter of performance, of enactment. Underneath there persists, powerfully too, a thick sense of what is normal for human life. Duties are observed. Attachments are preserved. There is work. People show up for jobs. It is extraordinary. They come on the bus to the factory. They open the shop. They sweep, they wrap, they wash, they fix, they tend, they count, they mind the computers. Each day, each night. And however rebellious at heart, however despairing, terrified, or worn bare, come to their tasks. Up and down in the elevator, sitting down to the desk, behind the wheel, tending machinery. For such a volatile and restless animal, such a high-strung, curious animal, an ape subject to so many diseases, to anguish, boredom, such discipline, such drill, such strength for regularity, such assumption of responsibility, such regard for order (even in disorder) is a great mystery too. Oh, it is a mystery. One cannot mistake this for thorough madness, therefore. One thing, though, the disciplined hate the undisciplined, to the point of murder. Thus the working class, disciplined, is a great reservoir of hatred. Thus the clerk behind the wicket finds it hard to forgive those who come and go their apparent freedom. And the bureaucrat, glad when disorderly men are killed. All of them, killed."

The right to manage

At the root of shopfloor power at British Leyland, according to the Daily Telegraph editor, is the practice of 'mutuality'. "This", says the Telegraph leader on April 19th, "gives the shop stewards a right of veto on staffing levels and job timings on specific tasks."

Indeed it is the 92-page document on working practices at B. L., rather than pay, which is at the bottom of the recent disputes.

This change of procedure is aimed at introducing a continental styled system and undermining job control by workers.

It sets out a program of moving workers from job to job as management sees fit, up to now they have had to get the OK from the stewards. Flexibility is to be brought in so that tradesmen can cover for each other and do each others jobs to some extent. Customs and practices like stand-by pay for meal breaks are to be done away with. Overtime is no longer to be on a departmental 'one in, all in' basis but to be offered perhaps as a reward to blue-eyed boys, and most important the shop stewards are to lose their right of veto over the content and speed of the line.

Job Control

A mate of mine in the Labour Party who works for the Labour Research Department, boasted that he uses a kind of supermarket approach in his collection of data. In short he gathers only those facts which he sees as supporting his case.

Thus in comparing workers' wages and conditions in Britain with those of our Common Market partners, he examines only the surface features like maternity leave, pay, holidays, and other easily measurable factors, and ignores things like degrees of freedom at work, job control and shopfloor organisation.

The argument for this being that the figures for pay and more formal conditions of work are readily available, while things like job control and a more easy going environment at work are not. Also it was claimed that to focus on these less formal features may

undermine the case for improving pay and fringe benefits, because of the probability that British workers are better off in the area of job control which produces a more human work environment.

The academic flaws in this approach don't worry me as much as some of the other implications. After all anyone who has been anywhere near a Marxist intellectual must know that this process of shopwindow research-gathering the goodies - has been turned into a fine art. The problem with the approach here is that it focuses on less vital areas at work - the perks and the more ephemeral aspects - at the expense of controlling how the job is done and how work is carried out.

A shorter working week, pay, holidays, paid maternity leave, better training, health and safety, are all important to workers, but they are rather shortlived rewards. Inflation, overtime, productivity schemes, work mobility and flexibility can soon knock holes in such transitory gains.

Job control and shop floor syndicalism are much more fundamental to the life of the worker in car plant, mine, mill or factory.

It is shop floor control by workers and their stewards upon which the shortlived fringe benefits, pay, and other benefits hinge. Edwardes and other bosses realize this, and are willing to bargain disposables like pay and even hours and holidays, which inflation and overtime will take care of in order to get for themselves the right to manage together with the less humanitarian conditions of work that this will bring.

My Labour Party friend is wrong in my view to underplay shop floor control, both because it is vital and needs articulating, and because the bosses are sure to introduce it as a bargaining device as Edwardes has done. They will argue, as Mrs. Thatcher has, that a higher standard of living and continental working conditions may be bought in exchange for the abandonment of British "outdated working methods".

The Myth of Syndicalism

The syndicalists, while recognising the importance of ephemeral issues like pay, holidays, hours and special leave, will not, like my Labour Party friend, do deals with job control and shop floor practices. Equally, the car workers, who have continued to screw on wheels, have, as Hugh Beynon (1) says, "...worked on the line, and struggled to control it. They have fought the supervisors and the watch of the time study men. They have developed shop steward committees in the plants and combine committees to link them."

Consequently, because it conflicts with the British tradition of job control, the chances of Edwardes getting his scheme through in practice seem remote. The most likely outcome now is a series of shop floor skirmishes over the issue of the 'right to manage'.

Job control is central to the syndicalist case. If it can be shown that job control and shop floor organisation is a symptom of a desire for workers' control, then the syndicalists could claim that they are the rightful heirs of the traditions of the British labour movement, and that Socialism, Communism and Anarchism are merely foreign imports.

Some sympathetic writers like Bob Holton have argued that a proto-syndicalist mentality, "emphasises the primary importance of direct action over parliamentary pressure as a means of settling grievances, the desirability of industrial solidarity between workers in different industries, and ... the need for rank and file control over industrial policy", often existed amongst British workers at the turn of the century (2).

Similar claims could be made today.

But today's card carrying syndicalists have still failed to demonstrate that there is a connection between job control or proto-syndicalism and a more significant desire for social change on the part of workers. Perhaps the recent decision at the Leeds conference of the Direct Action Movement to stop

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the right to manage

Continued from p. 15

talking so much about aims and principles and grand plans, and start to examine specific industries with a view to practical action may make for some improvements.

- (1) Hugh Beynon - Working for Ford.
- (2) Bob Holton - British Syndicalism.

B. B.

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