

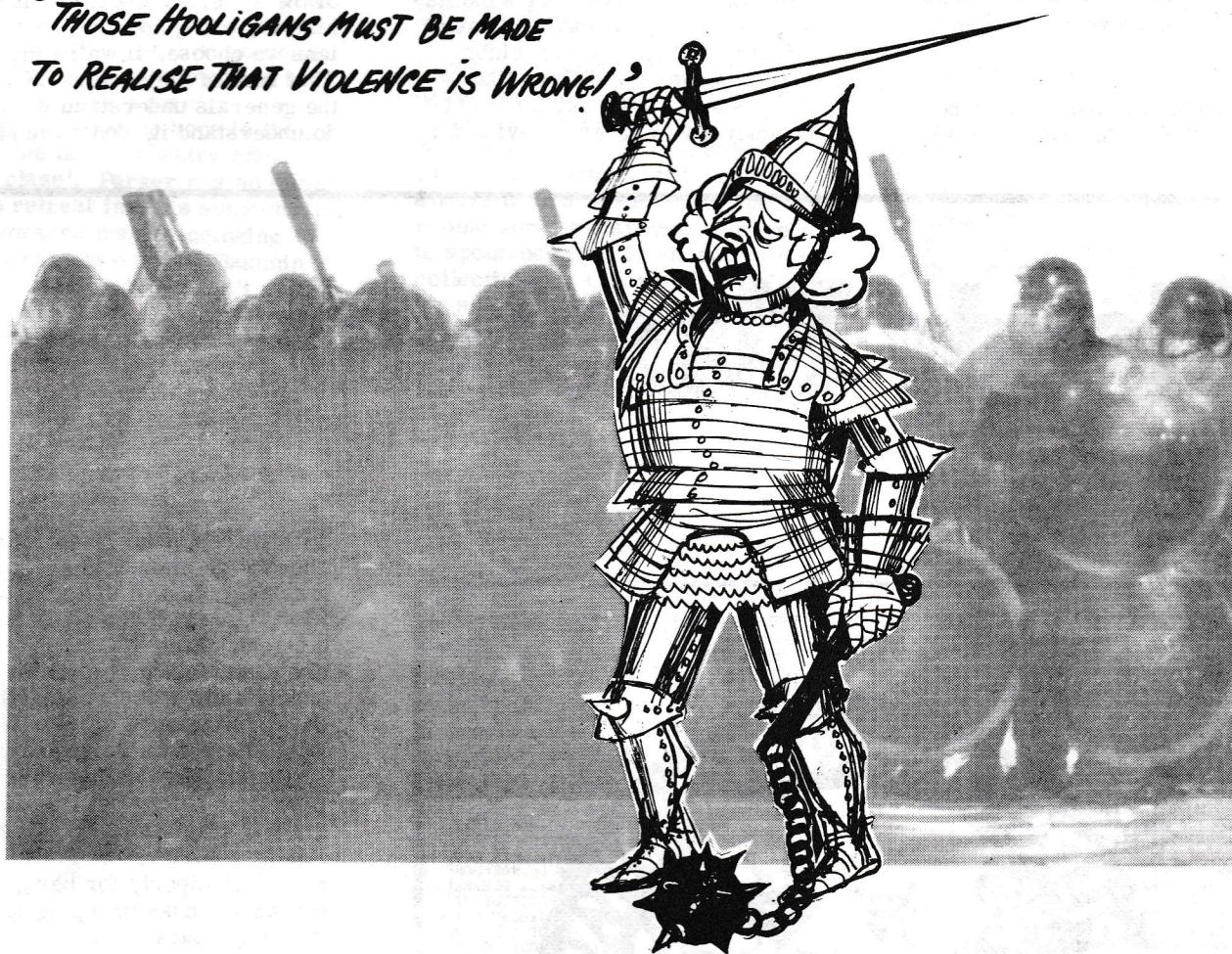
anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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Inside: *CROSS BLASPHEMY; ITALIAN HUNGERSTRIKE; REVIEW-AFGHANISTAN*

*'THOSE HOOLIGANS MUST BE MADE
TO REALISE THAT VIOLENCE IS WRONG!'*



NOTHING upsets a general more than the feeling that his ground-troops have let him down, and nobody is feeling either more like a general or that they have been let down than Margaret Thatcher herself at this moment.

On the very eve of a tremendously important meeting with all the other generals in the absolute summit of the EEC in Venice (don't they always meet in nice places?) Maggie's ears were battered by news that naughty behaviour by some English football fans had sparked off a riot - by the Italian carabinieri.

It seems fairly obvious, from what we could gather, all this way from Turin, that what had been a

fairly routine punch-up among drunken fans (which, left to itself, would have petered out) was handled by the Italian police with a burst of short, sharp and decisive lunacy. Wading into the English fans with batons and boots, they were surprised to find themselves being resisted - a reaction which could have been anticipated since the fans had no chance of getting out of the way.

This brought the second wave of attack from the carabinieri - tear gas which, unlike boots and bodies, cannot be confined to the terraces. It blew on to the pitch, choking the expensive footballers and, horror of horrors, the match was stopped and play held up for five minutes.

Ron Greenwood (the English manager) had one reaction: "Sod the supporters - what about the players? There's 22 valuable players out there and they could have been hurt by that tear gas - it makes me ashamed to be English tonight!"

A sentiment echoed by herself. "I really think these people should behave themselves better in a foreign country. They go there as our representatives and this violent behaviour really is too bad . . ." etc. etc.

We would like to ask Mrs Thatcher (not that she's listening) when any scruffy football fan was asked to be anybody's representative? People who make up the rough

One of Britain's biggest record retailers (HMV) is not so determined to sell Crass' records and has ordered its staff to destroy all copies of these records. The managing director, James Tyrell, decided to withdraw them from sale following a complaint about the lyrics - even though his legal advisers felt that the risk of criminal prosecution for obscenity and/or blasphemy was "slight". "It would only take one lunatic or do-gooder to drag us through the courts", he said, "and I don't have the time for

that". Tyrell also claimed that he doesn't like to impose censorship on records, but said that the small profit that HMV makes on Crass' records (the band's policy is to keep the price as low as possible) would not justify the expense of a possibly lengthy court battle. No doubt if there was more money in it for the company, then the publicity would make it all worth while, as in the case of the famous obscenity trial over the publication of D.H. Lawrence's novel Lady Chatterley's Lover. A. F.

Scientists 'Baffled'

Doctors are admitting to be almost completely baffled by a recently observed condition. Investigations are currently under way to determine whether this condition is actually a disease or in fact some sort of inherent trait. It does not seem to have any sex or race basis but does seem to appear principally amongst the wealthy classes. Some anthropologists have gone so far as to tentatively name a subgroup of the human race - homo capitalist. However members of the medical profession are being far more cautious, being content for the moment to observe the condition. They describe it as "the absence of the normal brain functions from the cerebral cortex in the skull, co-inciding with the appearance of a similar, but not identical, function arising in what we cannot, at the moment, describe as anything other than an organ resembling a human brain. This is found in either the pocket, wallet or bank account of the victim. We have provisionally named the condition *excapita pecunia capitalista* and believe that this condition may be related

to a condition previously observed amongst capitalists known as "big pocket nerve". Both these conditions bring about acute fear and irrational behaviour including outbursts of anger and violent behaviour towards the poor whenever the victim is approached for help, especially financial, by anyone who is not a fellow sufferer.

It seems that sufferers from this unfortunate condition tend to band together in groups where they can feel safe and secure and also re-assure each other that their condition is in fact completely normal - which has tempted some psychologists to suggest that perhaps the condition is merely an advanced form of paranoid schizophrenia - a condition classically marked by certainty of normality in its victims.

However observers are unanimous on the solution to the condition. They say that the complete abolition of money, and especially capital and other forms of wealth and ownership, would completely eradicate the condition. They suggest that the proletariat can immensely help the victims by wide-scale shoplifting, looting and absenteeism, which will prompt the victims to realize the foolishness of their condition and it is to be hoped join in the fun.

Report from Detroit

Just finished your 15 March 1980 issue of **FREEDOM** and the article concerning the attempts to get an anarchist centre together in London.

A group of us in Detroit, Michigan have started a similar sort of club here and have called it the Grinning Duck Club. The club was started in January of this year and so far there have been 93 people who have become members.

But more important to all of us than members at the Duck, is that the club has become fairly (it's getting better all the time) successful at being a centre where things are happening. Apart from being a place where people can get together and have discussions and whatever, there has also been a lot of music poetry, feasts and theatre - there was a theatre show on Easter Weekend entitled: Rock Against Religion and was a big hit - about 300 people showed up to take in the two nights of atheistic anarchy.

Also the Urbane Gorilla has just finished publishing a magazine called "The Modern Citizen," and I'm sending it to you (along with our last publication, "The Daily Barbarian" under separate cover. As with all UG publications, and we hope to continue with this in the future, they are free, but we do ask that people help us with the mailing costs by sending a large self-addressed, stamped envelope (together, both publications weigh about 3½ ounces).

Inia Teotihuacan
(Urbane Gorilla)



Torness

October Action Breaches the Peace

On May 14th eight people were due to appear in court charged with Breach of the Peace following direct action at Torness Nuclear Power Station site.

There was a picket of the court consisting of about 15 people plus local press and T.V. Quite a bit of leafletting and flyposting had been done in Haddington where the cases were to be heard, many thanks to those involved!

All eight people had entered a plea of not guilty, but in the event only one case - Pete Evans' was heard. The others were adjourned till July 9th. Pete was represented by a solicitor but gave evidence, as did three others of the accused as defence witnesses. We had the opportunity in court to make statements about the nature of the action and our reasons for it, but there were very few press people to hear this and no members of the public. Most of the case was taken up with the issue of whether Pete was chained to the scaffolding or not, - the police produced a chain which they claimed to have cut from him - it was probably left around one of the gates to the site. The magistrates did not appear to be listening in any case, but they decided that the police version of events was the true one - un-

necessarily, as they could have found Pete guilty anyway. He was fined £15. Although the fine is quite small it's worth knowing that the same magistrates had that morning fined a man £5 for assaulting 'his' wife.

One positive thing to emerge from the case was a statement by a security guard (he is no longer working at Torness) saying that the October Action was clear and organised and caused no alarm as it probably had the support of the vast majority of local people.

Although we all still believe that we acted to prevent a breach of the peace, there seems little point in wasting further energy trying to convince magistrates of this, rather than using it for further direct and other forms of action. Therefore the remaining seven people have changed their pleas to guilty. The chances are that we will not have to appear again, and the probable fines are less than the cost of going to Scotland to fight the case - such is justice!

Well, thank you everyone who has sent donations or bought posters and badges. It has been very encouraging to have support from all over the country. If you want to carry on supporting us there is now a new edition of the 'Nuclear Power Breaches the Peace' badge.

Black and White on Green
25p each from October Action
Defence Fund
18 Bishop Rd.,
Bishopston,
Bristol 7.

25% discount for bulk orders.

Julia

agriculture as in Britain.

With the recession of industry, increasing unemployment and urban overcrowding, to take drastic steps to denude the countryside further will only add to the problems of capitalist Europe and increase the mountains of 'secondary produced agricultural products'.

THE MOUNTAIN THAT ROBS THE POOR OF THE WORLD.

Before the Second World War surplus food was dumped and people taking food from the tips were prosecuted. Now the food is stored, perhaps to be used to exercise political pressure, though some of it lands up in hospitals as 'intervention butter'.

Although peasant agriculture is expensive in labour it can have a high productivity in terms of land use and in energy and material resource use. Industrial agriculture produces less calories than it consumes, and presents all sorts of ecological and environmental hazards. Modern agriculture produces food very expensively which is why people who need it are not able to buy it. It uses grain, protein from oil seeds, and from the overfished oceans and thus robs the Third World of much needed food.

Unbalanced European agriculture continues the difficulties bequeathed to the Third World by the colonial era in which balanced native agricultures, in which there was some semblance of self-sufficiency, were replaced by cash monocropping dominated by European companies.

FOOD OR COMMODITIES.

Industrial agriculture aims to have a system whereby the product is adjusted to the needs of marketing and production. This is having certain consequences:

- 1: Food has additives and is processed to make it keep and travel;
- 2: Varieties are reduced to meet the needs of mass production;
- 3: Packaging adds to costs;
- 4: Administration and advertising become an enormous part of the cost of food;
- 5: Waste disposal at both ends of the cycle become a huge social cost.

What is certain is that given the social, financial and economic

CONTINUED OVER

THE ECONOMICS OF WASTE

The European Common Market was conceived when so-called industrial growth was going to march on, producing more and more for a market that was going to consume more and more. Now the limits of the physical world are becoming more obvious.

Consequently the stresses of the community are becoming impossible to deal with without change, and the Common Agricultural Policy is a shambles, sitting on mountains of excess produce. From an industrial point of view

British agriculture is very efficient and highly mechanised throughout. The labour intensive peasant agriculture of many parts of Europe - particularly France - carry sufficient electoral weight to influence their governments.

Britain in this sense is the odd man out. Completely urbanized and industrialised, there is no peasantry left. No doubt as the other members of the EEC are also dominated by urban industrial ideas they would also like to see the same highly mechanised

The Economics of Waste (cont.)

attitudes of the EEC, the pressure is on to industrialise European Agriculture further. Opposed to that are the peasants' concepts of independence and resistance to changing their life style. There is also the well known concern in many European countries about the variety and freshness of food and willingness to pay the price for it.

Britain liquidated its peasantry ruthlessly and more effectively than Stalin because Britain's access to cheap food was world-wide in the heyday of Empire. Britain is hellbent on using the oil to prop an ailing economic system, but huge multinationals that effectively govern the EEC are not going to change the balance between agriculture and industry necessary for society to survive. While a market economy is operating, unemployment is bound to rise as technology is

aimed at increasing power and profits instead of sharing the benefits.

Expenditure on arms will take up the slack, as will expenditure on nuclear power to some extent. These two activities may well in the end solve the unemployment problem and many others too - with one big bang.

FIELDS, FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Industrialised agriculture is not an acceptable solution to the Third World Problem. The harmonious working of these vital elements in human life, controlled by the people doing it and aware of the need for an intelligent use of resources within small communities allowing wide variation is the only answer to the drive towards war and the suicidal exploitation of man and resources.

Alan Albon

and doing all they can do to publicise the case. The anarchists in Bologna arranged a conference on the 11 May and have produced a wall poster (which appeared in Umanità Nova) which begins: 35 years after the liberation from nazi fascism there is still violence against, and political persecution of, those anarchists who wish to affirm the freedom of thought and speech.

So far, action has been limited to the sending of letters and petitions to the Italian authorities asking for the repeal of the law and for support for Alessandro, as well as demonstrations.

If these tactics fail the teachers of Bologna are planning other actions, and with the support that is growing for the fight against the state's right to impose a feudal allegiance on its "servants", one would hope that sooner rather than later the 'bath of fealty' to the laws of the state will be repealed, and our comrade Alessandro will win his fight against authority. This will be a victory for all of us.

More info from: Editrice D Cas. Post 17120 Milano, Italy.

Alessandro Galli, La Roulotte Di Fronte Alla Scuola Zanotti, Via Calori, Bologna.

Protest letters to: Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione, Roma, Italy. Stefano

Starvation or Suppression

For a month now, an anarchist teacher, Alessandro Galli, has been on a hunger strike outside the gates of his school. He is taking this action in response to a threat, by the school authorities, of immediate sacking unless he swears an oath of fealty to the laws of the state, as all teachers in Italy are forced to do.

The statute books of the Italian state still contain many fascist laws even though it is 35 years since the overthrow of Mussolini. All public servants risk immediate sacking if they refuse to take the oath, some elder public servants have in fact sworn allegiance to a monarchy, a fascist dictatorship, and a republic during their lifetimes. The exceptions to this ruling are the university professors who, since 1945, have been exempt on the grounds that this would be in contradiction to their right to teach whatsoever they wish. Primary and secondary school teachers (such as Alessandro Galli) have no choice. Everyone, therefore has swallowed their pride so as to remain in work, unemployment runs high in Italy, and none has been willing to sacrifice a livelihood for a principle. For the committed

anarchist Alessandro, there was no question of accepting, and humbling himself before, the fascist laws of Italy, and he has made a stand against them.

In 1976, when he first refused to take the oath, he was sacked and spent a long time unemployed. He was then taken back by the school for a probationary period, but now he has been threatened with the sack again if he continues to refuse. This time Alessandro Galli decided to fight back and draw attention to this situation. On May 12, staying in a caravan, covered with posters, outside the school gates, he began a hunger strike, which as far as we know, continues.

His action has won the support of many other teachers in Bologna, (where he was teaching), and the various unions to which they belong (CGIL, CISL, UIL), as well as 'The National Conference of Fully Employed, Casual, and Unemployed School Workers'. These groups have sent letters and telegrams in support of abolishing the 'oath of fealty' to the minister responsible in Rome. Meanwhile, the teachers of the Marconi Institute of Technology in Bologna are circulating a petition

GRAFFITI CORNER

This introduces what we hope will become a regular spot for any interesting graffiti that you may care to send in (preferably original and not lifted from a recent paper back).

WE DON'T WANT TO
OVERTHROW THE
GOVERNMENT—
WE WANT TO CREATE
A SITUATION WHERE
IT GETS LOST

Anarchism is Anarchism

What a pain Martin Spence is. Twenty odd years of FREEDOM reading I seem to have read dozens of letters from whingers like him - people who, for some inexplicable reason, are attracted to anarchist ideas (?) but can't seem to stand anarchists and the way that some of them behave. Before Spence the most recent example was someone writing on behalf of DAM, I think, but the gist was the same ... if only anarchists weren't anarchists but socialists ... solidarity class struggle ... constructive participation ... blah, blah.

Martin Spence asks "are we a part of the left, or are we opposed to it?" Well, first off who is "we"? I certainly don't feel any sense of "we" with him or any other of the periodic reformers whose aim seems to be to bring anarchists neatly into line behind a well laundered red flag proclaiming 'Discipline and Responsibility'. Secondly, if Spence has to ask if anarchism is part of the left he deserves the answer that Fats Waller gave when asked what swing was ... "if you has to ask mister you ain't got it".

I'm not a believer in endless historical analysis as a prerequisite of political understanding and action but it's clear to me that anarchism in Britain has had nothing in common with socialism since

the beginning of the century, ie. roundabout the death of William Morris. Morris inspired many an anarchist, including myself, but his ideas would get a warmer reception in the European 'green' parties than they would amongst 'the left' these days.

In my lifetime it is socialism that seems to me to have become increasingly irrelevant - occasional flirtations with libertarian notions notwithstanding.

No. You've got it wrong Spencey old cock - anarchism is anarchism and socialism is socialism. You'd be better off trying to bring some decent responsible persons like the young libs into the socialist fold - they're ever so constructive and love a 'concrete issue' like I love fish and chips.

Jeff Cloves

St Albans, Herts

ps. In fairness Morris must have inspired more people to be socialists than anarchists and he wrote an essay (still in print) called Socialism and Anarchism which defined his position and explained why he wasn't an anarchist. This essay was published in 1839 at the time the Socialist League was splitting into anarchist and socialist factions.



to think they are so damned superior because they are involved in "the struggle". They strike haughty poses and dismiss all individualists as self-centred, bourgeois, reactionaries - but what does A. Plier et al hope to achieve by all this struggling. What have they ever achieved. And what precisely does this great crusade entail that makes them so special. - the endless reshuffling of groups and federations. The endless organisation of meetings, "events" perhaps even a picnic! - and he has the cheek to condemn the likes of myself as bourgeois.

Yours sincerely,
A.J. Hawkins

2

Freedom,

The article by S.E. Parker - 'Anarchism and the Proletarian Myth' (Vol. 41, No. 8.) is a further example of the current nasty trend towards bourgeois individualism hiding under the cloak of anarchism. (A letter from A. Plier in the same issue reveals the 'Libertarian Alliance' to be a squalid bunch of freemarket 'anarchists')

But my main point here is to contest Parker's cynical characterisation of the working masses as an unthinking mob interested only in higher wages and a leader to bow down to. He dismisses the more notable episodes of working class history in a few lines, yet the development of the class struggle up to the present day is filled with too many mass and individual acts of resistance for the creators of this history to be written off as boot-licking sufferers.

Parker berates the 'proletarian mythicists' for not examining the role of proletarians in maintaining the status quo. This criticism would carry more weight if he himself were to look at the concrete psycho-social, military-

Individualism or socialism?

1

Dear Freedom,

I sincerely hope that this publication, despite the communist bias of the editorial staff, always will be a platform for all the many theories of anarchism and not simply become yet another mouth-piece of the communist wing as A. Plier seems to think it should. (Letters 24th May).

One could argue that anarchism, in its purest sense, is in fact individualist in nature - however not wishing to goad A. Plier into wasting any more of his/her precious time and energy arguing when he/she could be out struggling

somewhere, I will say no more on the subject. Neither will I comment on the main body of the letter in question as I'm sure Mr. Parker, and E.G.O. for that matter, are quite capable of speaking for themselves. What I do object to, as an individualist, is to be branded as bourgeois by some twittering socialist.

My anarchism, albeit philosophical, relates more to the problem of coping with day to day life than any of the vague waffle about social revolution, class struggle etc. spouted by A. Plier and others of that ilk who seem

political, economic system of oppression that works against the formation of a mass revolutionary (let alone 'anarchistic') consciousness. Any serious analysis of the whys and wherefores of revolution must concern itself with these factors. Instead, our individualist 'comrade' scorns the proletariat for its 'servility' - the historical context of which he appears unable to comprehend. 'Servility' as such would seem to be the defining characteristic of the proletariat - will he go on to claim it as having something to do with 'human nature'.

Since he sees no hope in the activities of the working class, 'as a class', Parker has no option but to retreat into his subjectivity. The workers may be cringing yes men/women but by Bakunin Mr. Parker certainly isn't. The revolution is going on here and now in his own 'creation' of a conscious egoism, his development of 'self-sovereignty' or 'self-owning individualism'. If 'history' means anything it is that development of humanity is based on the collective struggles of individuals towards a properly social existence. But not for S.E. Parker - he'd much rather glorify his alienation from the world and call his romantic atomisation 'anarchism'. And - no doubt - 'revolutionary' as an extra added bonus. I suppose this narcissism must be rather comforting to someone who isolates himself from the grinding struggles of the mass of humanity down below in the real world. However, we of the lower depths cannot afford such indulgence. Of what use is it to us. We know from continual and never-ending direct experience that class society confronts us at every moment of our lives. And that every act of resistance is a contribution to the development of the class struggle.

Mr. Parker doesn't require 'the future realisation of some ideal society' for his 'anarchism'. So his 'anarchism' does not have as an aim the total overthrow of capital and state. A fine theory this nonsense. Only through collective struggle, and the institution of a collective process of production can the conditions be created for a genuine individualism. Until the productive process is a fully social, non-exploitative activity any talk of 'self-sovereignty' is a narcissistic fart under the bedclothes, a

bourgeois indulgence. It contributes much more to the maintenance of the present system than the 'servility' of the proletariat.

I remain, Sir, your
Obedient Servant,
A. Proletarian.

3

Dear Friends,

Congratulations to S.E. Parker (Freedom Review, April 28) for exploding the sacred myth of the inherently revolutionary masses/workers. One of the greatest problems of anarchist theory has always been a tendency to give people some metaphysical drive to spontaneous and self-sacrificing collectivity. One result of this for anarchists can be dogmatism, and thus isolation, caused by confidence that they have the political theory and practice which is just what people need to express this universal and innate tendency. Another, perhaps worse, is that when anarchists realize the emptiness of this myth, they fall into a disillusioned and cynical individualism. Which is exactly what S.E. Parker seems to have done.

But the recognition that these innate tendencies do not exist does not necessarily mean hopelessness or egocentrism. It simply means an end to all myths of the inevitability of revolution, however comforting they are, and forces you to base your political activity on the attempts by people to satisfy their day-to-day needs. For it is not an inborn tendency to rebellion which makes people make revolutions but the realization that only by taking power themselves can they satisfy their needs and desires i.e. people make revolutions because they can't see any other way to get what they want. (If there's an easier way, I'm all for it!)

The task thus becomes to show that anarchism can satisfy peoples' needs, by working with people (who may not be anarchists!) in their attempts to change their lives. Or, in Martin Spence's words of the same issue, 'we want a creative libertarian contribution which demonstrates its validity through practice.'

This, of course, is very difficult. It requires a lot of hard work, self-examination, and a lot of that creativity which

S.E. Parker believes doesn't exist (because he sees that it is not innate and/or that fear, ignorance and authoritarian character-structures also exist.) It is a lot more difficult than mouthing revolutionary slogans or, the other side of the same coin, a (similar) retreat into isolation.

Both what S.E. Parker criticises and what he advocates are built on the assumption that people must have an inner drive towards revolution in order to make one. The 'revolutionary masses' line is used to justify rushing about heroically, whilst the 'reactionary masses' line is used to justify sitting on your arse. Strangely

enough, quite a lot of people become anarchists because they believe their problems, together with other people's can (or could, in the past) only be solved in a revolutionary anarchist way, in Russia, 1917, in Spain, 1936, or in Britain, 1980.

Let us leave the future prediction to religions like dogmatic marxism, and do away with myth-making - either about the inevitability or the impossibility of revolution. There are political struggles all around us. The justification for revolutionary anarchism can only come through our present-day practice. This seems to me to be the most obvious area where "individualistic egoism" is found lacking.

Salud,
Chris Nicol.

Atico
Barcelona

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c/o 163 King Street, Aberdeen
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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, Birmingham 4
(tel. 021 643 0996)
BRIGHTON Libertarian Socialist
group, c/o Students Union,
Falmer House, Univ. of Sussex,
Falmer, 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
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dens, Saffron Walden, Essex.
EXETER anarchist collective
c/o Community Assn., Devonshire
House, Stocker Rd., Exeter.
GLASGOW anarchist group. John
Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue,
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HASTINGS anarchist group c/o
Solstice, 127 Bohemia Rd.,
St. Leonards on Sea, Sussex
(tel. 0424 429537)
HULL Libertarian Collective,
23 Auckland Ave., Hull, West
Humberside.
KEELE anarchist group, c/o
Students Union, The University,
Keele, Staffs. Weekly discus-
sion meetings every Tuesday at
8pm in the Students Union
NON-STUDENTS MOST WELCOME.
LAMPETER anarchist group c/o
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peter, Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.
LEAMINGTON & WARWICK, c/o 42
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LEEDS. Dave Brown, 30 Park Row,
Knaresborough (near Harrogate)
N. Yorkshire.
LEICESTER. Blackthorn Books,
74 Highcross St. (tel. Leic.
21896) and Libertarian Educa-
tion, 6 Beaconsfield Rd. (tel
Leic. 552085).
L O N D O N
Anarchist Feminists, Box 33,
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Islington, N.1.
Anarchy Collective, 37a Gros-
venor Ave., N.5. (tel. 359
4794 before 7 pm)

Freedom Collective, 84B White-
chapel High St. (Angel Alley)
E.1. (tel. 247 9249).
Hackney anarchists: Contact
Dave on 249 7042.
Kingston anarchists, 13 Den-
mark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames
(tel. 549 2564).
London Workers' Group, Box W,
182 Upper St., N.1. (249 7042),
meets Tuesdays 8 pm at Metro-
politan pub, 75 Farringdon Rd.
Love V. Power, Box 779, Peace
News London Office, 5 Caledo-
nian Road, N.1.
West London anarchists, 7 Pen-
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wheel Community Books, 56
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Heathcote St. (tel. 582506) or
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OLDHAM. Nigel Broadbent, 14
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Anarchist Workers group ditto.
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Solidarity c/o 34 Cowley Rd.
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READING anarchists c/o Ms.
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SHEFFIELD anarchists c/o 4
Havelock Square, Sheffield
S10 2FQ.
Libertarian Society: PO Box
168, Sheffield S11 8SE
SWANSEA. Don Williams, 24 Derl-
wyn, Dunvant, Swansea
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Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon
WESTON-super-Mare, Martyn Red-
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c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E.6.
Groups & members in many towns

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST Association
of class struggle anarchists
(publ. 'Bread and Roses'), Box
2, 136 Kingsland High St.,
London E.8.

POSTAL WORKERS Network, write
Box PW, 182 Upper St., Isling-
ton, London N.1.

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Afghanistan - world crisis?



This article was written by GARRY HILL, a member of the Libertarian Workers in Australia. It does not necessarily reflect the policy of the group.

BACKGROUND

UNTIL the mid-1970s Afghanistan was a feudal fossil, the twentieth century had only a slight influence on political and social life and even this did not begin until the late 1940s when the USA, seeing Afghanistan's strategic importance in the Cold War began to create a sphere of influence there.

In itself, Afghanistan is of little value. Foreign investments are minimal. As far as is known it has no valuable natural resources. Its population is only 14 to 18 million but, strategically few nations have as much importance. Afghanistan shapes borders and trade routes with four of the world's most powerful and unpredictable countries. China, Russia, India and Iran - as well as Pakistan, which resembles Afghanistan, itself in strategic importance. If any of these nations were able to control Afghanistan they would have control of many land routes between the Middle East and the Orient. They would be a step closer to dominating the Indian sub-continent to the south or Iran and the Persian Gulf to the west. If invading from the south they would be at the USSR's hyper-sensitive southern borders, facing the restless Islamic tribes, who have more in common with the neighbouring Islamic tribes in Iran and Afghanistan than with their Marxist Leninist rulers thousands of miles away in Moscow.

Capitalist fury over the invasion of Afghanistan is more than just the loss of another country like Angola; it is fear of what the next step will be. The loss of a pawn is bad enough, but the loss of a crucial pawn which could lose more valuable pieces is a disaster. The Russians are now within 350 miles of the Arabian Sea. If they reach it they will have naval domination of the Indian Ocean. It is unlikely they will invade Pakistan and risk war with India or possibly a World War Three. Pakistan is a restless, disaffected nation. They may sponsor a local revolution that will produce a puppet state that gives them access and helps build naval bases; they might make a deal with Pakistan's right wing dictator, General Zia, letting him stay in power if he does what they want. Zia is certainly considering this option. In a recent interview with Time magazine, Zia stressed that if the USA did not come to his aid in a manner he thought adequate, he would make a deal with the USSR.

Afghanistan could also be a stepping stone to Iran. Khomeini is disliked in Moscow and any revolution on Russia's borders is unwelcome, particularly one which announces that it is as hostile to Communism as capitalism. The Islamic Iranian revolution, like that in Afghanistan, could affect restive Moslems across the USSR border and weaken USSR influence in the Middle East by competing with it.

THE INVASION

Russia has been interested in Afghanistan since the 1840s but was worried about a conflict with Britain (also interested). In 1919 Trotsky, as Red Army commander, suggested an invasion that would go on to take India as well. In 1941 Hitler suggested a deepening of the Pact of Steel: the USSR could

have the Indian subcontinent if they attacked the British. Hitler and Stalin, however, fell out over who got the Turkish Straits to the Mediterranean.

From the end of WW2 until 1973 Afghanistan was in the capitalist camp - so much so that it was one of the few Islamic countries not to rabidly oppose Israel. But in 1973 the old monarchy was overthrown and replaced by the rule of Mohammed Daud. At first pro-USSR, by 1976 Daud had switched sides.

In April 1978 he tried to suppress the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). He failed and the PDPA launched a revolution which overthrew and killed Daud, won in Kabul and gradually extended itself to the other cities. This marked the beginning of the Civil War which would escalate throughout 1979. To its upholders the PDPA is a genuine revolutionary party. They claim it is abolishing the old landlordism and redistributing land to the peasantry, bringing in equality for women, literacy and education and an anti-USA foreign policy.

To its critics the PDPA are Soviet puppets, as self-seeking as any other ruling body Afghanistan has had, hated by the majority of the populace and propped up by Soviet aid.

What is definite about the PDPA is that it is unquestioningly pro-Soviet and that it is a feuding faction-ridden party, ruled and manipulated by warring cliques - warring as a word to be taken literally. Daud's successor, Taraki, jailed and murdered large numbers of the 'Flag' wing of the party. The 'Flag', leader Amin, escaped and in April 1979 murdered Taraki, seized power himself and suppressed his PDPA opponents more ruthlessly than even Taraki or Daud had. The PDPA in government was rapidly losing any support or tolerance that it had had from the general population. Its rule rested more and more on the Soviet-equipped army. Even in the army support was generally half-hearted. Despite the fact the army had tanks, light and heavy artillery, aircraft, trucks and helicopters they were losing to guerrillas usually armed with 3.0.3. rifles from the world wars; mortars, grenades and machine guns were

rare. As for anti-tank guns and aircraft they did not even know how to operate them until early 1980.

Desertions from the army to the rebels escalated until, by September 1979, whole regiments were changing sides and it was obvious PDPA rule was nearly over. Then, on 27 December the USSR sent 75,000 troops in, murdered Amin and replaced him with their current stooge, Karmal. In an effort to placate their worried Islamic allies in Africa and the Middle East and to reduce support for the rebels, Karmal has stressed the PDPA is not anti-Islamic and has incorporated some well known Moslems into his government. Desertions to the rebels have levelled off and the Soviet forces control most roads and cities, if only tenuously.

Things are not all bad for the rebels either. They now have Pakistan as a shelter and training base and are receiving more modern weapons and training in how to use these. The rebels are fanatically dedicated to their cause. They are warlike and tough and know the terrain, which tends to minimise Soviet technological superiority. The tanks that crushed the Hungarian and Czechoslovak revolutions so effectively will be useless outside the cities and the lowlands and valleys. The Russians should take a lesson from the last major invasion of Afghanistan in the 1840s. Launched by the British from India the 20,000 strong expedition managed to capture and occupy Kabul because their army was larger and had more modern weapons but they found they could not conquer the whole country and had to retreat. In the retreat the Afghans and Parthians attacked. The entire expedition was destroyed - apart from about 100 taken prisoners only one survivor reached British territory again.

For Russia offensive wars have nearly always led to either revolution or increased dissidence and discontent at home. The two exceptions are the invasion of Poland in 1863-4 and the Russo-Turkish war of the 1870s. The wars that dragged on the 1904-5 war with Japan and the first world war led to revolution when it was obvious that Russia could not win. Even the quick victories in Hungary, 1956, East Germany, 1953, and Czechoslovakia, 1968, saw widespread discontent, an increase in the size and scope of the dissident movements and disobedience with the army. All the ingredients are there. An unpopular war, the poor living standards of most Russians, the mind-deadening, individual-bellittling style of Soviet life, the restlessness of many of the young people, the increasing contact with the West: all these ingredients could mix together to make a revolution. This is assuming that the Afghanistan crisis does not turn into a major war or even a world war three.

GLOBAL WAR

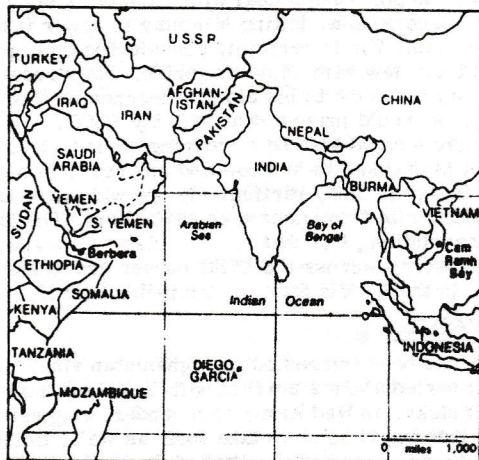
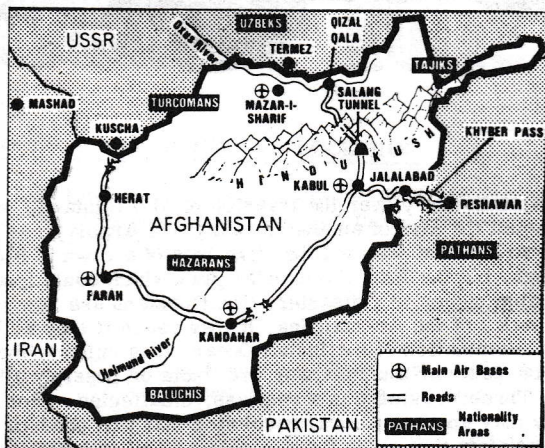
Afghanistan is only the latest crisis that has brought us 'to the verge of World War Three', as the journalists put it. In 1979 alone we had two other crises that nearly triggered global war. In January/February there was the Vietnam-China crisis and in November the hostage crisis in Tehran began. As they follow each other and the economic situation deteriorates these clashes become more significant. In the early mid-70s there were a whole range of wars, coups and revolutions where the USSR supported one side and the USA another.

Starting with Vietnam, Israel and Czechoslovakia in the sixties those conflicts became more common, from the Bangladesh issue and the Laos incursion in 1970 to the Nicaraguan revolution of 1978-9. In Angola American and Cuban advisers and troops fought against each other, yet no one talked of world war. Except for the Yom Kippur War in 1973, none of the confrontations led to serious talk of world war. Now, in 1979, we have had three separate crises and politicians openly talking of the need for war preparations. World War 3 is a favourite topic with magazines and papers. Novels and military games on the idea abound. Older people remark on the atmosphere being much the same as in the late 1930s. The web of political alliances is becoming increasingly that of nations gearing for a massive war.

Why has this occurred?

THE EAST-WEST CONFLICT

At the end of World War 2 the fascist nations were conquered and the old European colonial powers were in



decline. With China immersed in civil war until 1949 this left the USSR and the USA as the world's superpowers. Hostile by ideology and conflicting self-interest the two nations began a new type of colonialism. The late 1940s saw the beginning of the break up of the old empires. Portugal, the first European imperialist power and now the last, saw its empire break up in 1974. Independence for the world's former colonies, however, had problems. They did not have the technology, wealth or education of the West. These were prerequisites for survival in the twentieth century and to get them the new nationalistic governments had to do deals with one or other of the superpowers. The superpowers in return got favoured trading deals, tax concessions for investment, and military and naval bases and voting support for their motions in the United Nations. So leading anti-imperialists like Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Nehru of India became willing props of capitalism's new imperialism. Instead of colonial administrators and gunboat diplomacy there emerged presidents and prime ministers who had been former revolutionaries - administrators not from Europe but probably trained there before going home. Instead of gunboats and troops from Europe there were now localised armies modelled on European lines, equipped by the West and used for the same purpose - to uphold capitalism.

Russia did the same. Always an expansionist power it turned much of Eastern Europe into colonies in 1945. It was only with the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution and under the further threat of massive revolution in 1956 that this exploitation was relaxed. But such relaxation would only go so far. Apart from Eastern Europe the USSR won more satellites (as distinct from colonies) in North Korea, Finland, Cuba, Vietnam, Angola and Ethiopia. The USSR has been expanding its influence in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Indian Ocean. The USA also expands and competes in the same areas, so conflict occurs. Sometimes these are diplomatic conflicts such as the long struggle to get Egypt as an ally, a conflict which the US has won. With others it is military, as in Korea, Vietnam and Angola, with one side or the other using allied troops rather than see Russian and American soldiers fighting a possible 'verge of WW3' situation.

Until now this struggle for world domination has gone on for 35 years without the threat of 'WW3' coming three times in 11 months. Why now?

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

In 1971 the world went off the gold standard; the world's currencies no longer had a fixed value. From 1944 to 1971 the US dollar was worth \$35.00 for an ounce of gold, that is gold was the basic value with dollars related to it. But by the late 1960s inflation and prosperity had increased the amount of paper money, while gold barely increased; the world's supplies were drying up. In August 1971 this discrepancy was admitted; the basic value of an American dollar was open to economic forces and its value dropped as the price of gold soared. With less purchasing power people spent less, fewer were employed and a downturn spiral began; less spending less employment, more unemployed less business confidence, less business confidence less spending. This economic crisis was worsened by the oil price rises and embargos in late 1973. The Islamic countries had in the main been former colonies, then were developing nations. Now they wanted to be equals, trading on an equal basis. The days when the capitalist oil companies could dictate the price they would pay were over. When the price of a vital necessity like oil rises all prices rise. The cost of running a business increases beyond the level where profits are made; the business shuts, more are unemployed and there will be few jobs for a workforce. The ranks of the disaffected, bitter unemployed increase.

With a depression on and with all the ex-colonies tending to put up prices the American way of life is vanishing. To preserve what they have the USA must regain their position in world dominance. The defeat in Vietnam, the Watergate scandal, the widespread unrest in America between 1964 and 1972 and the realisation that America is propped up by its exploitation of its allies have led to a loss of confidence in America. Few allies will now risk Russia's enmity by riding too openly

with the USA. America will have to fight its own battles, probably against Russia's satellites first. But can Russia afford to lose any of these to the US? Can the US, once entangled in a war, now afford the loss of confidence and of allies its defeats will bring on? To regain its previous position the US must either win by diplomacy or go to war. Diplomacy implies threats of war and/or embargos. It is widely believed that after the Vietnam debacle the US will not go into a third world war, but large sections of the American people have become hysterically pro-war, desperate to forget the Vietnam defeat and their economic and social insecurities. Carter's liberal capitalist approach only got him the lowest ever poll recording in America's history. But as he becomes more hawkish his polls soar. Personal political advantage, the clashes of self-interest, sheer survival for capitalism - any of these factors, let alone a combination of them, could lead either to a resurgence of small Third World conflicts or to WW3. For the US they would have more advantage now, before the economic crisis worsens, while unpredictable China is one side, while the Islamic nations are divided and before any more 'developing nations' develop into too independent would-be world powers.

The accelerating decline of capitalism and the increasing tendency to conflict does not necessarily mean that world war will definitely result, but it seems from the events that have already occurred that revolution, depression and conflict will shape the world in years to come even more strongly than they already have in this century.

THE LEFT REACTION

Throughout the world most left groups have lined up behind either Russia, America or China in the conflicts since the Vietnam-China war of early 1979.

The Moscow line parties have predictably lined up with the USSR as a reflex action. Obedience to the USSR is such a basic part of their lines that large scale defections are unlikely.

The Peking line and Maoist groups have had more trouble. After all, they have to follow China into aligning with the capitalist USA against the USSR which at least claims to be Marxist-Leninist. In Australia the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) and its aligned groups, mainly the Worker/Student Alliance now support Fraser because China does. Demonstrations now invite 'all anti-Soviet people'. ASIC, Australia's political spying government agency, is now 'considered dialectically' as having its good side - it spies on pro-Soviet groups. To quote a Maoist leaflet on Fraser, 'Whatever Fraser's motives in opposing the Afghan invasion, he is correct and should be supported on this issue'. Fraser is then compared to Churchill who, though he represented English imperialism, was progressive because he opposed the bigger menace, 'Hitler/Germany'.

When Fraser came to power in 1975, and up till about 1978, to disagree with the Maoist line that Fraser was a fascist, even by so much as to claim he was a right wing extremist rather than a fascist, was to be also labelled fascist. Now not to support Fraser is to be fascist.

Their groups only reflect the swinging policies of China. Always an isolationist power and invaded and colonised several times, China fears expansionist powers more than anything else. Hence its fear of imperialism rather than capitalism. As Russia's expansionist policies threaten China more than those of the USA, China sides with the lesser of the two evils. As an isolationist power China is a heroic example to some anti-imperialists, but on three occasions since 1949 China has launched expansionist invasions - those against South Korea in 1951, against Tibet in 1959 and against Vietnam in 1979.

While the Vietnamese and Korean invasions were in reply to expansionist policies against China's interest the invasion of Tibet was sheer expansionism that has much in common with Russia's takeover attempt in Afghanistan. There is growing evidence that China is trying to buy influence and get embroiled in the network of anti-Soviet alliances and will become expansionist if this is necessary to China's interest.

For revolutionaries following China offers no alternatives. None of the other Marxist-Leninist or social democratic parties have taken a reasonable stance. The Trotsky cult,

Spartacist League and the orthodox Trotskyists, the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) the publishers of *Direct Action* are the only major left groups outside the traditional Moscow-liners to support the invasion: they see it as historically progressive. The Healyite Trotskyists, the Socialist Labour League (SLL), publishers of *Workers News*, are siding with the Islamic revolutionaries, Gaddafi and Khomeini: they have clearly stated their opposition to the Russian invasion, but mainly because "it gives capitalist an excuse to 'warmonger'". The Communist Party of Australia (CPA), publishers of *Tribune*, have a line similar to the SLL, although they do not have the Khomeini-Gaddafi connections. Both groups emphasise the capitalists' preparation for war while downplaying Russia's. The International Socialists (publishers of the *Battler*) take a more balanced view, criticising both the USA and the USSR but, like the Maoists, they wish for a victory of the anti-Russian rebels. These rebels are Islamic fanatics who wish for a return to the old Islamic society. A hierarchical class divided society where poverty, sexual repression, superstition, oppression of women and children, landlordism, censorship and religion dominate society. The leaders of these rebel groups are financed by the CIA and tend to be warlords, wealthy capitalists or religious leaders. As the *Battler* said, "A victory for the rebels won't advance Socialism or hurt Capitalism". Yet why support them. This they don't make clear.

The Australian Labour Party (ALP) and the other social democratic parties are opposing the Russian invasion but in terms that are clearly pro-capitalist. They oppose some of the more rabid war-mongering and some of them say they hope for peaceful solutions. But the social democrats are lining up with a capitalist, moderate to pro-war stance. They are even trying for a 'dual policy' with Fraser's Liberal Party.

THE ANARCHIST VIEWS

Some anarchist and libertarian groups have taken a line of 'a plague on both your houses'. Others are involved with peace groups. This is not counter-revolutionary as the others are but do these lines go far enough? Peace will be fragile and more like a truce as long as the superpowers exist. 'A plague on both your houses' is a true slogan but a negative one; furthermore, like the peace campaigns, it does not solve the cause of the conflict. What will? Only the simultaneous overthrow of the capitalist system of the West and of the Marxist-Leninist governments and, also, the Islamic parties, will end this type of situation.

Who will do this?

Such an event can only be made by a movement that puts people before the interests of government or ideology. The absurdity of believing that one group of people are superior to another because they are born on the other side of an artificial boundary or because they speak a different language,

will have to go; a movement that would oppose the rule of these three forms of authoritarianism will have to be anti-government. Could such a movement emerge in the Middle East? At this point, with the authoritarian structures still strong it seems unlikely, but these structures are crumbling and out of date. Workers' councils have emerged in Iran, new left and anarchist groups are now operating in Iran and in Russia. And of course in other parts of the world libertarian socialist ideas have much more influence. Despite the current odds against an internationalist revolution that will sweep away the old hierarchies and replace them with a libertarian society, this is the only line that does not lead to supporting one hierarchy against another or encouraging workers to kill each other for the advantage of politicians and bosses. In 1914, against the vast majority of European Marxists, Lenin, Luxemburg and the majority of the bolsheviks put forward an internationalist revolutionary line while the others worked out which side in World War One was more historically progressive and divided, going to different capitalist governments. Without any hope of success in 1914, Marxists, anarchists and socialists stood by the so-called ultra-left revolutionary principles. It took nearly three years of unimaginable slaughter and suffering before the belief in capitalism crumbled and a socialist revolution against war and government came about in Europe. By 1919 the world was embroiled in revolution, more than at any other time before or since; this was only five years after world revolution had seemed a hopeless dream. These revolutions were crushed and Lenin and the bolsheviks betrayed the Russian Revolution, establishing hierarchical state socialism rather than aiding in the establishment of a libertarian society.

Revolutionary internationalism was first suggested by P-J Proudhon, the French anarchist, who failed to practice these ideas. Bakunin put these ideas forward in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, as a first step towards achieving a stateless, free society. Karl Liebknecht, senior, in 1893 put forward the first part of Bakunin's ideas. Lenin followed in his footsteps 20 years later. His failure to smash state power led to a return to the old hierarchy, dressed in revolutionary rhetoric.

Nearly 70 years later we are again facing a similar crisis and the same choice. Bakunin's ideas provide an answer that is ethical, and goes beyond negative, 'no war' ideas. Revolutionary internationalism is a way of overthrowing hierarchies. Unless we want to see hierarchies rising out of the old, libertarian socialism must be the aim of such a revolution.

Front illustration after Robert Brown. This and map from pamphlet "Afghanistan"-collected reports by David Kline. (Call Publications 50p from FREEDOM BOOKSHOP.)

Quite interesting to start with but then degenerates into CP(ML) jargon. Suggests that USA and China should have 'limited' intervention against Soviet 'hegemony'

Decorating the Bandwagon

From its wealth and its wisdom the director and cast of the National Gallery call upon one particular painter to assemble those paintings that have influenced the style or the subject matter of the painter under the hammer somewhat, it appears to me, in the pre history manner of the ill applauded sacrifice of the flower decked virgins. I would hold that it is the Parkinson's Law of Paint, for to claim that one is working under or over the influence of the Great Masters of the past must presuppose that one's own work could and can be judged against the work of Titian, Rembrandt, Luini or Michelangelo and when some happy hack receives the official envelope and letter from the National Gallery saying that s/he (ed.) has been nominated 'Artist Eye' for the year and must name those paintings, for public viewing, that has illustrated their path to historical oblivion then there must be a frantic scampering around the walls of the State's galleries and a thumbing of the reference books for visual name dropping, and that is where Parkinson's Law of Paint must operate in

an effort to fill wall space and the catalogue of whose paint bespattered hem's one should claim to have kissed on the way to one's seat in the temple of the immortals. In those drear days of the 1930s I would walk the few miles from the Labour Exchange to the residential riverside to stand on the cobbled pathway and peer through the window of a small private gallery, that in all those journeys I never had the courage to enter, at a gentle and naive painting by Christopher Wood of dancing peasants.

It was that single painting by the dead Kit Wood and an illustration of leaping horses by Marc of the German der Blaue Reiter that triggered of my inevitable love of the arts for it is a single speech, a single poem, painting or book that awakens our desires. Wood and Marc both died violent deaths but the mass ranks of orthodox genius for me follow on. The gallery is gone, Kit Wood killed himself, and I am ancient and without sin, and only the waters of the river are the same, timeless in a changing world. My point is this, that if one backs every horse on the card

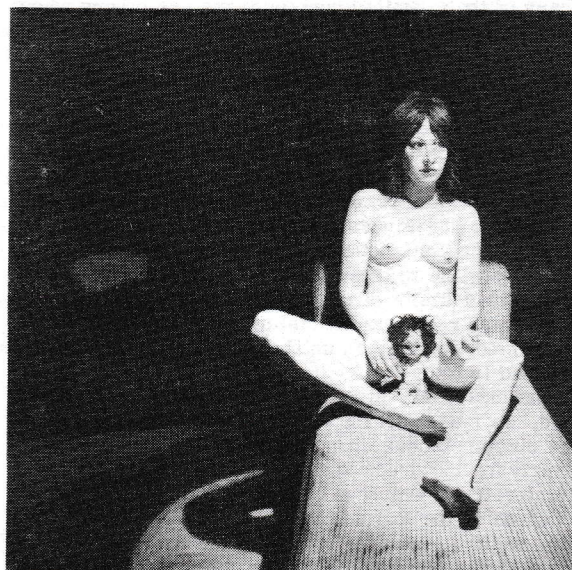
and in every race at the meeting; then it must follow that one backs every winner but in the end one must be the loser for one's choice becomes meaningless. For the year 1980 R. B. Kitaj has selected paintings for his Artist's Eye, and not one or two or three paintings that he could claim have had a great and profound influence on him as an artist but thirty five and they overflow the room within the National Gallery. One gorges too well at a feast that serves up everything from Duccio to Raphael, Botticelli to Degas and the overloaded table sickens the appetite and dulls the taste for the pleasure of pure water s. Kitaj is a 48 year old American artist who made his mark in London in the late fifties with a number of large canvasses with political/anarchist subject matters. His work was exhibited at the Marlborough Gallery and the main stream critics applauded them though I, then and now, had a poor opinion of them, for it was a period of up dated Victoriana when every painting told a story, be it the sweaty Australian paintings of the great outback luo, the kitchen sink school or Kitaj's decorative revolutionary polemics in paint. It was during his revolutionary/anarchist subject matter period that Kitaj would visit the Freedom bookshop in Maxwell Road and he was supplied with a number of historical anarchist leaflets of the long dead Ur ancients within the movement and Kitaj, in the manner of the Italian Communist Party painter, incorporated them within his polemical paintings. There was nought wrong in this, but the subjects were all safely dead and the owners of the plush gallery, the well heeled middle class who bought the paintings and the critics of the national press neither knew nor cared who Cuddons or Makhno were. How do I know? Because the critics of anational magazine and a top peoples newspaper sought me out to ask "For Christ's sake who's Cuddons and Makhno?" and I informed them with information that in the matter of Cuddon I gratefully owe to Jack Robinson who ran the anarchist bookshop. I think that it is sad that in a period when on two occasions demonstrators have been beaten to death on the streets of London, by, it is alleged, the strong arm of the law, the painter's brush is not there to place it on aesthetic record. As one looks at Kitaj's choice of Lucas Cranach the Elder or Goya's 'Don Andres del Peral', one has the right to wonder what happened to the inspiration and the artist's eye that chose the subject matter of those ancient and honourable anarchists and why all that revolutionary fervour is missing from the National Gallery walls. But I bow shyly to Michael Levey the Director, smile at Sarah Jane Checkland the Press Officer, reseal my empty wine glass and ease my way past the neatly bearded R. B. Kitaj, fearful that he might know me on an ancient sighting and that we would have to conform to the mores of the day by shaking hands or adopting a sparring pose and he is 48 and I carry an Old Age Pension book over my heart.

But for the Town and his mini skirted frau (ed. mini skirted mann) it is the Summer Exhibition with Pimms handing out the free beer and the Pimms and again as always the worst ever exhibition. Yet it is not really important for it is fun time for the cultural middle class masses and this exhibition does what it has always had to do and that is to reflect middle class cultural mass taste in these islands. Anthony Green, now climbing to glory as an R.A., is now in running for the regulation Picture of the Year, and one wishes him well for his paintings give pleasure. A magnificent small sculpture of a plump girl astride a bidet is a lovely humorous piece of erotica at over £1000 each for a limited edition of ten, and two brilliant female nude paintings, hung above the line, by Madeline Liverick. The representation of the nude over thousands of years of repetition has become for most artists a cliché, but Madeline Liverick in her painting 'Study in Isolation No. 3' (not reproduced) has managed by the use of light on the human body Oh Caravaggio Oh Kitaj to give a fresh interpretation. On the press day we of the beer drinking fourth estate were called upon to vote for the three best works for various prizes and having, small groupwise, condemned Hamilton Fraser's cloying echo of de Stael (suicide 1955) and the 'Running Girl', watched as the smiling Sir Hugh Casson trotted in with the cheques for these two works.

I explained to Hugh what a ghastly choice it was but he smiled and asked me who I voted for and I voted for Madeline Liverick's light and shadows on a reclining naked body, William Mundy's brilliant watercolour of a basket of apples, again in semi shadows, and Hazelwood's lovely little collage like unto the best of Klee and no more than the size of two open hands. History will defend my choice and condemn the votes of the philistines, meanwhile over to Pimms's. Within the Royal Academy in a large gallery above the howling mob fighting to pay their way into the Summer Exhibition of this year (it's awful but it's awfully enjoyable) is an exhibition of the painting of the American artist Andrew Wyeth. Like Russell Flint, he uses water colour over a large area and he uses it brilliantly. His subject matter is familiar in the work of Norman Rockwell who did the covers for the Saturday Evening Post, and while many can, with justice, dismiss them as the cloying sentimentality of middle America's Peck's Bad Boy, Mum's apple pie white protestant flag honouring middle class values, hopes and bitter disillusion, they are principles held by people who seek, and fail, to love in harmony with their fellow Americans.

It is a closed society and many American painters reflect it and it is a society that I would never wish to live in but one should not, must not, reject Wyeth's brilliant handling of his material and his artist's eye for his subject matter. Disagree with the subject matter but honour an extremely good painter. Marina Vaizey, referred to by some cad in the hack trade as 'crazy Vaizey', has written that Wyeth's 'very popularity has aroused the suspicions of the intellectuals', and if it is true, Marina, then their opinions are valueless for subject matter is always suspect. Suspect the opinions of those who applaud or condemn the subject matter, for despite Churchill, Truman, Hitler and Stalin only the work of the artist, poet or writer matters, for to misquote the late Sam Goldwyn, Messages I leave for Western Union. But the Town and his panting frau (ed. panting maas) must leap and jump to the British Museum and to Colleen and the sherry for it is an exhibition of the Olympic Games. I admire the British Museum for mounting this exhibition, but not the swine who stole my poster within the Wyeth exhibition... ah but, said the gallery owner of Bond Street's Editions Graphiques, 'you believe in sharing the wealth, so why are you complaining?', for it is a splendid coffee table type layout of the beginning and continuation of the first Olympic Games. Yet out of all this sorry and slightly boring display of International hatred only old Sir Dennis Follows would, I argue, command a full measure of respect for he has not only defied his own government but those who form his own daily social background for I doubt that when at evensong he takes his dog for a walk there is one neighbour to bid him well, so attend and view the Ancient Olympic Games within the British Museum with the picture of old Sir Dennis in your Artist's Eye.

Arthur Moyses



Study in Isolation(2) - Madeline Liverick

GETTING OUT OF THE MUD

AN atmosphere of gloom and disillusionment seems to have accumulated over the pages of *FREEDOM* in recent months. This is discernable mostly in the tone rather than the definition, but it was made more explicit by Jeff Robinson in "What is the Alternative" (15th March, No. 5.) It would seem that only doom and disaster lie ahead.

"The present whirl of consumerism and self-indulgence will go on and on," he says conclusively, "They fail to see that it is their tawdry version of what constitutes a good time will inevitably bring the bad time. Whether survivors of what will be the worst catastrophe in history will think and behave any differently only time can tell." While objectively Jeff's augury may have much truth in it I feel that I am impelled to add to this dismal prophecy the old funereal epitaph 'Sic transit gloria mundi' not only because it has been said so many times before in the last five hundred years but also in the hope that in another five hundred years some one may be around to quote the old cliché of Thomas a Kempis once again. And similarly (possibly in this paper!) find it rejected.

It is true that we are (or "they", to use Jeff's word) floundering about haplessly in the mud like the frogs in the bottom of the well in Herbert Read's story, but while they, the frogs, may accept their role passively, wilfully refusing to look upwards to the light, it is surely not for us to join them in their Stygian burrowings. After all is said and done, if there is an alternative, then are we not convinced that the clues to its discovery will be unravelled only by our zealous and inspired struggles along the arduous uphill paths towards the freedom we desire? Other experiments in finite alternatives have taken us labouring round and round the cesspool but left us still firmly planted in the bog. Now however, we are faced with a more urgent problem. We are not only stuck in the mud but the mud itself is surging with increasing speed towards the ultimate abyss of limbo. The answer is to let it go and good riddance to it. Our business is to get out of it in good time and take a real civilisation with us.

The name of this mud is the Economy.

While for so many this may constitute the outward boundary of their limited horizon there are others whose very awareness confusedly turns them into agents for its continued promotion. These are the people (Arthur Koestler, for instance) who have put it out that there is a permanent kink in human psychology that is leading us inevitably to self-destruction. It is another example of that commonplace and feeble leaning towards fatalism which turns passivity into a dangerous principle; the well-known childish excuse which is always presented when inertia and laziness deny the effort and it is easier to dodge the column. Not only is it very difficult and indeed impossible to find a solution within the narrowly circumscribed limits of the tangible and decaying sunless muddle which restricts all vision but it ensures that we remain immersed therein until decomposition and rot are established in toto.

In the meantime, since mental initiative is to be avoided, we must wait for the outside world to work its chancy circumstances upon us and hold out our hands pleadingly for the drugs and dope which will be duly administered and which we trust, will do the job for us. This indeed is the logical end of such reasoning and the solution which in practice it serves the best interests of the State to recommend. Obviously therefore such a resort to established gimmickry of this kind is not for us

and it is not for me to infer that I have at last discovered the magic potion which will transform all human ailments from a state of misery into an everlasting paradise of contentment. The thought in itself marks the first stage of mental paralysis and the inculcation of its hypnotic impotence is the prerogative of all authoritarian rulers. It is headlined daily in the advertisement promoted organs of the media and I would be a candidate for the ranks of the patronising power-seeking politicians of all assortments whose rabid and hypocritical function, by precisely the assumption of omniscience, is not only to keep us well entombed beneath the mud, but by a mixture of persuasion, pseudo-education, mellifluous cajolery and brute force, to instruct us how to remain employed in the production of more and more of this contaminating sludge in which to bury ourselves and ensure that any antiseptic detergent will be prohibited because disinfectants and germicides, according to the credo of those who live by the manufacture of pollution, operate against the sacred rights of this kind of production and can only be described by the fear-impregnated word of anarchy.

It is not enough to recognise the economy as so much mud but to realise its remarkable ability to mesmerise and manipulate its subjects into a state of negative dependence. Its function is that of a psychotic Gorgon's head which petrifies the movements of the mind. This of course, is the true root of Toryism: a determined state of cerebral constipation.

Let us look at the matter more specifically. It would seem that the chores of human existence have become the whole purpose of life. The animal phase of development, once the basis for human advancement, has now reappeared on the surface devoid of the spiritual superstructure with which we were differentiated, but festooned and decorated instead by the expendable trinkets necessary to maintain the economy and the hunting and gathering period has returned, this time with a technological wardrobe, but still captive within the primitive tradition of shortage and want. Especially is this so when promoted by a power structure which values the perpetuation of this heritage as its main support. And since privilege loses its distinction when all enjoy prosperity, toil we must because life is on the payment by production line, even though we now destroy the results of our labour. We work not to make progress but to keep us where we are. Change, to an inflexible mind is inconceivable, so destruction disguised as production continues blindly towards its ultimate end of self-destruction. (And Jeff will agree) We build canals and railways and scrap them. Why do we build the Concord. Why rockets to the moon. Why the arms industry. Well may people ask. How long, how long will this go on. It is well known that the earth's resources are limited and that pollution must be checked.

This knowledge alone is the recognition that we are humans and not helpless dinosaurs who perish because they are not able to adjust to a changed environment. But this environment in which we now live we have made ourselves. We were not always passive. Animals have a biological survival device which is evident, for instance, in giraffes growing long necks, polar bears growing thick white coats and so on as David Attenborough has recently been publicising. We humans however have a survival device which is a thinking brain. We don't change to suit the environment so much as change the environment to suit us. And so must we now admit that this environment which we, in our conquest of nature, made to suit

ourselves, has now become our conqueror. Just how much, we must ask, have inertia and negative resignation, in this technological saturnalia, reduced us to the level of mechanised brutes with computers for minds and fitted us out for a predestined extinction. It is in this bleak notion that we can unearth the fallacy of those who would have it that there is a fatal kink in human psychology. This too is a man made kink, invented by established psychologists in their cringing service to the power structure of the state.

The mud therefore, is not just the economy as an exterior mass of putrefaction which is to be accepted as inevitable and permanent. It is its mirror-like reflection in those unchanging mass-produced minds which compliantly seek authority.

Here then is our problem. What kinds of ways are currently on the agenda as suggestions for solution. Sheila Rowbotham, in "Beyond the Fragments" wonders where our consciousness comes from and refers to Lenin in "What is to be Done." She is thinking of class consciousness and quotes from Carmen Claudin Urondo in "Lenin and the Cultural Revolution." It is worth while having a proper look at Lenin's book again in this connection. These are his words; "...we shall quote the following profoundly true and important utterance by Karl Kautsky on the new programme of the Austrian Social Democratic Party The vehicles of science are not the proletariat, but the bourgeois intelligentsia (K.K.'s italics); It was out of the heads of this stratum that modern socialism originated and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians, who in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle....." Lenin makes it quite clear that what he is talking about is ideology because he goes on "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers in the process of their movement then the only choice is either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course". Lenin's case is that left to themselves the workers will develop no more than a Trade Union consciousness. And that of course will safely bring us back to square one along with the Economy - which Lenin also, in the consciousness sense, tilts his lance against.

Now it would seem to me that Sheila and her colleagues in the pursuit of socialism and women's liberation are falling into the trap which Lenin found before them and which led, like the T.U. consciousness so much condemned, not out of the mud, as events have proved, but right back into it.

What they are both talking about is not consciousness but ideology. We are back with B.F. Skinner and the Behaviourists and Eysenck and Koestler and his drugs and the kink in human psychology. The assumption is that we are just passive, inert wooden objects waiting to be plastered over by whatever ideological concoction the superior minds of the intellectual authoritarians wish to daub us with. And the general picture which emerges from Beyond the Fragments is the effort to find an answer out of the remains of the old political methods conjured up for feminist ends.

One more point. Lenin, in his attack on the blind revolts produced by 'spontaneity' stated that "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." This was in the context of a discussion about the Russian Social-Democrats. One could re-write this therefore, as follows: "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary party." Leave off the word 'party' and one might agree. Therein are all the dangers that authority and hierarchy have already imposed upon us.

I would say that it would be more to the point for Sheila not so much to wonder where we get our consciousness from as to cast a critical and analytical eye on the forces that are obsessed with the idea of preventing the bright sprite of human consciousness from unfolding and developing and growing to the fulness of achievement. It is the mind manipulators we must get after and it is for Sheila and her colleagues, I suggest, to question whether they are not dithering on the edge of joining them.

I remember in my childhood days in the North of

England the arrival of a new headmaster in the district who made the announcement that he was concerned that education should be provided in order that children should grow up to be able to lead a full life and not in order that they should get a good job. And I remember the storm of protest from the local potentates that followed.

Margaret Mead's description of the Arapesh group of New Guinea (quoted in FREEDOM n.10. Violence against Women) reveals a consciousness free from the pressures of our authoritarian and economy-controlled society. Where, one must ask, did these stone-age people get their remarkably socialist-like consciousness from. According to Lenin there is no possibility of an independent ideology and there were neither bourgeois nor socialist intellectuals around to manage their cogitative cerebrations. It is also very significant that they are free from the violence which besets our advanced civilization. (One may also consider in this connection The Continuum Concept by Jean Liedloff.) I would say that if Socialism means anything at all it means real human relations, relations not hampered or interfered with from any outside source.

Noam Chomsky in his research into linguistics produced something of a shock in the academic world by showing that we are not completely empty vessels to be filled by whatever the outside world wishes to pour into us. It is in fact this quality that makes us human beings with a special ability different from animals. Even animals, however, as Konrad Lorenz has proved, become aggressive and disturbed and tend towards violence when kept in cages. We are imprisoned in a different way. The human mind is alive and cannot be patterned out like that of a mechanised robot for ever. It must discover new paths; it must grow. Or else.....

Civilization, in a desert situation, overcame the problem of shortage and want. But it imposed a necessary method of control and organisation: an ants' nest method with hierarchical structures and, like the ants' nest, its purpose was to maintain the body corporate. Nowadays we are left with the performance fantasy of organisation and control only. The body corporate is no one's responsibility and the problem of shortage and want has been overcome. Its perpetuation, however, by artificial means is the last weapon of the power greedy from whom we all suffer.

Not quite the last weapon. We are at the stage where violence, willy-nilly, is on the agenda. They are afraid. And their danger is in their unimaginative mediocrity. The last few decades have witnessed an upsurge of irreverence and contempt for authority and established values never seen before. Except, maybe, when the authority of ancient Rome began to crumble. The whole world is on the move. The attempts to strengthen and sustain by violent means the bonds which bind us are producing violent reactions. We do not live in a perfect world. But we are not to blame for that. If life could develop freely and smoothly its process of unfolding is a natural and continuous overcoming of difficulties and the casting away of sanctuaries which have begun to act as a constraint on expansion. One's first really violent act was getting out of the womb. The chicken must break the shell of the egg or die. I think we are moving towards the birth pangs of a new society. It is not a time to be passive. P. Murtagh's sins of omission could be fatal.

Activity, however, can mean no more than the frustrated and frenzied banging of one's head on the closed door of the prison or otherwise, the desperate beating up of one's fellow prisoners or, indeed, negotiating with the warders and having long discussions and setting up elected committees to discover the best ways of helping to run the prison. Activity in ignorance is the berserk expression of defeat. It also reveals the fake intellectualism of the submissive. We do not need any of these imbecile and obsequious expedients.

To return to Herbert Read's story of the frogs in the bottom of the well, it is time for us to look up to the light and the singing bird way up there and to show that there is a way to find fulfilment in the sunshine and to join hands with the hopeful and find a zest for a new life in the struggle to be rid of the mud and the slime.

FRED YATES

ANARCHISM AND DEMOCRACY

Traditionally, anarchists have rejected the concept of democracy. Democracy has too much to do with "politics" to be of any use to us. It smacks of an acceptable window-dressing for the evils of the liberal, as well as the totalitarian state. Thus we toss it aside and are called anti-democrats.

It is my contention that this rejection of democracy is based on a false view of the word, and that once we come to terms with its true meaning, then anarchism will be seen to represent its purest form.

Like sunshine, the State and Winston Churchill, democracy stands beyond reproach in the literature of politics. Consequently, every country in the world seeks to claim that it is more democratic than all the rest. With the plethora of political systems, all representing various degrees of repression, it is hardly surprising that democracy has lost its meaning - if every state in the world is democratic, then what is democracy.

By far the most prevalent view of democracy is that which sees it as a system of government. From this perspective, a country is democratic if it has periodic elections to enable people freely to decide who is to hold them in thrall over a given period of time. The characteristics of democracy, then, are one, voting, and two, the resultant occasional changeover of political elites. Democracy is reduced to a mere mechanism, a mere method. It is certainly true that these two characteristics are enough for most people in Britain to call this country democratic.

Yet there is a second strand of democratic thought, going back far farther than the first, which denies that

democracy has anything to do with government, but has more to do with an entire way of life. At the basis of this unusual concept lies Aristotle's oft-quoted remark that "man is a political animal". This does not merely mean that man is a social animal, but that man can only fulfil himself through political participation - by participating in the life of his community. Obviously this concept is miles removed from the "democracy" we are told we live in today.

To put it another way, democracy means, literally, "rule by the people". In its purest form, then, democracy means rule by all of the people all of the time - in other words, democracy involves NO RULE AT ALL. Democracy has nothing to do with government.

Thus democracy and anarchism become one, for anarchism seeks to put people in control of their lives, seeing participation as the vital ingredient in the development of a full "humanness".

Certain necessities follow from this vision of full participation. Most importantly, the size of the democratic polity must be such as to enable face-to-face contact between its members. Thus such a democracy eradicates people's alienation from people in encouraging a recognition of inter-dependence; it forges a link between the individual and community and it raises the potential of the individual (every individual) to new heights.

Most people have some idea of democracy - it can be a useful introduction to anarchism. We must show what it really means and what it entails - democracy is a revolutionary concept. We must not abandon it.

ANDY DOBSON

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