

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

25p

15 August 1981 • Vol 42, No 16

REACH FOR THE SKY



The monster ape rampages to his death on top of the Empire State Building.

WELL, it's the smack of firm management. A hard line with hired hands who don't keep their place (and a show of strength for the other big outfit which constantly muscles in on your range). A right thinking man must do what he has to do. The U.S. government has shown that it knows how to deal with its own employees. (It has also announced that it intends to carry on developing 'neutron' bombs.) The 'dryer' members of the British government must be besides themselves with admiration and envy as their hero shows how it should be done.

The details of the American air traffic controllers' strike are simple. Their claim is for 10,000 dollars a year across the board, giving a maximum salary of 54,000 dollars. They also want better conditions, the working week cut from 40 to 32 hours and the right to retire after 20 years with a pension of three quarters of their salary. It is said that the stresses of the job leave you burned out after this

time. It is apparent that these people are not on the poverty line. The strike is more interesting for its implications.

The union, (Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organisation) had made some kind of deal, a total cost of 40 million dollars has been quoted. This was not ratified by the members and the strike went ahead. The government responded immediately. 13,000 controllers (about three quarters of the total) have been sacked, there are fines of 1 million dollars per day for the union and 1,000 dollars a day for individuals; several union leaders were arrested. The union president, Steven Wallaert, was taken away in chains and jailed for 60 days. Another union leader, Robert Poll, is startled by these tactics — he had some kind of 'understanding' with Reagan before the election. Never trust a politician, Robert.

Both sides now try to stress the impact of their moves. The govern-

ment is stern, ('There are fine people out there who do not understand that our position is irreversible'. R. Reagan) Retired and military controllers are brought in. The union says that this adhoc arrangement is unsafe. This is denied by the government, as traffic is only at 75% of normal the skies are in fact safer. There are anecdotal reports of dangerous incidents with, say the union, ten times more 'near misses'. (This is not as dramatic as it sounds. It means two planes less than five miles apart with less than 1,000 feet height difference.) The Canadian air traffic controllers claim to have monitored 'persistent gross errors'. The Federal Aviation Authority describe this as 'bullshit'. Unions in five countries are boycotting flights to America. The British union doesn't think that it can make a decision before Friday.

The point is, of course, government involvement. In this case it couldn't be avoided, as the government is the

employer. There's an oath of allegiance, based on a 1955 law to 'prohibit the employment by the Government of the United States of persons who are disloyal or who believe in the right to strike against the Government of the United States.' It was part of the anti-communist scare of the time, usually known as MacCarthyism, as if he did it all by himself. The American government has been stern with its employees before. For instance, in 1968 a threatened strike was hurriedly called when the army was ordered to seize the railways.

In Britain, refusal to strike is usually voluntary. There are laws about the armed forces and the police. In 1977, when the police were discontent, the Chairman of the Police Federation was quietly taken aside and threatened. Nowadays, of course, their bosses recognise their value. Some other groups have said that they would not take industrial action in return for cost of living index linked wage settle-

ments. For a couple of Tory MPs interviewed on the radio last week this was the main worry. Obviously it would be nice to have these laws, but not if they have to be bought. Of course they might not have to be. With falling membership, unions may agree to almost anything. It would probably be easier for a Labour government. There were all sorts of pacts hovering around last time. Whether the membership will go along is another question, as PATCO in America has found out.

Let's indulge in a spot of speculation. These agreements could be extended, first voluntarily and then legally. First to direct public employees; that would have avoided the recent embarrassment with the Civil Service. Then to people indirectly working for the State, for example in nationalised industries. That would deal with the threatened rail strike and help restrain the miners. Companies with govern-

ment contracts can be leant on. Well, you can see where it all leads. Is it so paranoid?

Of course, in some countries, most people already work for the State. And that is the encouraging part. The workers in Poland show it can be defied. This has been an eye-opener in America. There have been resentful comments about what 'commies' can get away with. (And perhaps ironically, the Libertarian Alliance in London, who hosted Milton Friedman recently, are selling 'Solidarity' badges.) Just a year ago Polish unions were part of State system, designed to keep people in order. Those same workers made them irrelevant. Workers in many countries, on many occasions, have shown a heartening willingness to ignore 'their own leaders'. While this continues there is no reason for depression. When it is taken further there is every reason for elation.

We March to Dublin

Well over 12,000 people marched through Dublin on Saturday, July 25th, in an attempt to mobilise support for the hunger strikers — this being the climax of a four-day march involving people from all parts of the Free State and the North. This demonstration of purpose and determination (which passed peacefully; much to the relief of all authorities, including organisers and stewards), like many such relatively passive manifestations of solidarity, left the people involved with mixed feelings of success and failure, plus many pairs of sore feet. Of course it is a sound enough notion to wish to put pressure on the Dublin government, socially, politically and economically, in order that they begin to make moves towards support of the five demands of the prisoners and to realise the vital connection between the resolution of crisis inside and outside prison walls. And having made that connection sympathetically, to support withdrawal of troops and to the adoption of less intransigent consideration of all related issues.

Now that some people see the scenario of the prisoners' struggle as having moved South, practical measures initiated by the Dublin government are necessary. Measures such as the withdrawal of Irish troops from the border and the boycott of British capital and goods.

The march was strong, vocal, impressive and peaceful. For many taking part (myself included) it was a nece-

ssary and unforgettable experience which gave a real feeling of achievement. It made its impact on the roads of the Free State — slowing traffic; made its voice heard to all that it passed, collected funds, stretched a puffing Gardai quite considerably. It brought the social and commercial life of Dublin to a virtual halt for one day, and gained a lot in terms of propaganda in the Irish and other international media. The last item is all too soon yesterday's news, but it has to be done, nonetheless. It also gave confidence to those who took part to continue the pressure and to think seriously about future plans given such a precedent.

There is a lot to be learnt from an event such as this, and the failures need to be considered as well as the successes involved. The march failed to make sufficient impact in the places where it stopped (the Belfast contingent made significant stops in Dundalk, Dunleer, Drogheda, Balbriggan, Swords) in that not enough preparation went into mobilising industrial support (such as stoppages, pickets, rallies), or into encouraging townspeople to join the march for a day, attend rallies, donate funds, turn out in solidarity along the route, or dream up any other forms of support. Likewise, no contact of any worth seemed to have been made with schools, social and political and welfare organisations. However, it must be noted and remembered that many

people did organise refreshments and accomodation along the way, and in Dublin, but this could have been more efficient and more thought given to forms of nourishment other than tea and sandwiches for large numbers of famished and tired walkers. The organisers have shown that an event such as this can be achieved, but future plans must include more detailed attention to mobilising a continuous support and the the care of marchers' needs in terms of nourishment, accomodation and first aid.

Also, the value of such relatively passive demonstrations has to be examined very carefully. The march round Dublin, whilst it had a certain strong impact, was contained, was policed by its own stewards, and one had the feeling that the government and Gardai were prepared to let all such future sedate and obedient events take place ad infinitum until people got sick of organising them. One wonders exactly how pressurised the government felt, having successfully contained over 12,000 people within the city on one day for a demonstration of that kind. One could be forgiven for imagining that some may have felt peeved, but not exactly threatened, politically. Many people must have felt (as I and others did) that marchers were too severely restricted by stewards and that many frustrations were repressed that will surely re-appear in less predictable time and place. I do not know, at the time of writing, of any passive demonstration of this nature ever resolving any war — which is what this is all about, after all. Can anyone prove anything to the contrary?

Ann.

Leeds

ON Saturday 11th July at 4.30 a.m. three members of Leeds Anarchist Group were lifted by the Anti-Terrorist Squad. Each house was raided by about six armed police, including one with a shotgun. The comrades were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act on warrants made out to Thomas Carr.

They were then taken to a suburban police station, where cells had been arranged for them the previous Wednesday. After being questioned they were released at 2.00 p.m. on the Sunday without being charged with anything.

At the time of their arrests their homes had been searched thoroughly (sniffer dogs were sent in, floorboards were pulled up etc. and metal detectors were used outside). Also, in one comrade's house some papers had been sorted out and photographed (mainly Direct Action Movement and N.E.A.F. Bulletins). This was apparent from the empty film canisters they left behind!!

fairy tale

AT the end of July 500 military police and anti-terror specialists from the West German Federal Criminal Bureau (BKA) stormed a two-storey building in Friedberg, Hesse. As a result two people were arrested and 10,000 marks confiscated. At the same time there was a whole series of other raids in the Frankfurt area and several more arrests were made. Those arrested were described as members of the Schwarzer Block (Black Block).

According to the office of general federal prosecutor, Kurt Rebmann, in Karlsruhe, Schwarzer Block is a new terrorist association along the lines of the RAF, 2 June, (now officially considered defunct), and the Revolutionary Cells (officially considered still active); not identical, but affording support to the Red Army Faction. Said to have been established in May 1980 it is composed of several 'auton-

omist groups with anarchist aims'. It is alleged to have been responsible, among other things, for arson attacks on two US helicopters and on administrative and court buildings in Darmstadt. Said to have 'taken part in all demonstrations in recent months', dressed in black helmets, black jackets, black trousers and black shoes, and carrying black flags, police called them 'particularly radical advocates of violence'.

Bearing in mind their massive proportions, the raids seem to have yielded poor returns; items such as a fire extinguisher, a roll of copper wire and few metres of rope, pamphlets, a few pictures of Frankfurt scenes and so on. The authorities have begun to express some doubt about the true terrorist nature of those arrested. Charges of terrorist association were dropped, although accusations of advocacy of violence and open expression of sympathy for the aims of the RAF remained. One woman charged with an explosives attack in Darmstadt was found to have, somewhat inconsiderately, been in bed at the time, and about to give birth.

The authorities are now saying things like 'the Schwarzer Block does not exist as a closed group' (i.e. a terrorist one). Meanwhile stickers have recently appeared in Frankfurt bearing such messages as 'We're on holiday. Schwarzer Block sends greetings from Majorca.'

Liverpool

THE Police of Liverpool have celebrated the International Year of the Disabled with a demonstration of their skill in driving. A young disabled man was run down and murdered by a policeman driving a van.

As half the nation swooned at the marriage of Charlie and Diana the corpse with broken legs and smashed pelvis symbolised the lengths the British State will go to to keep the people down.

We cannot ignore either event. The British State has a formidable weapon in the monarchy — no revolutionary can afford to forget this. Yet for all the psychological value the

monarchy has in Britain, the vulnerability of this method of ruling has — even with modern adaptations — to be realised.

Some short time back, in historical terms, the British monarch was beheaded. There are bourgeois hypocrisies of the correct formalities of marriage which monarchy ignores at its peril. Just for a moment hearts fluttered in the Establishment as a miserable young woman, days before her opulent enslavement, doubted — but knew the trap was set. How could Diana look so sad and collapse in tears with a royal partner as a mate? If that woman had said she had changed her mind and was unwilling to marry Charles what would have happened? Or, what *did* happen?

Drugs should have seen her through, gentle reminders of the fate that would befall such a moment of courage. In any case, comrades, the vulnerability begins to show — what would the sick sycophants of monarchy make of Diana, even now, telling Charles to go to hell? Snowdon took years to organise his dash for freedom, will she take so long to escape from the bore of the century?

Such a beautiful flower is offered to the arrogance of traditional rule. The mockery of a religion espousing, even in the midst of staggering greed, that message of a person who would have been lynched by the assembled throng, coming to bless this sad event, shows up the froth of holy persons for the empty garbage it is. One wonders how many sons of carpenters attended the ceremony in St. Pauls.

There was a frantic air about the media, a sign maybe of increasing desperation. This circus had to 'unite the country' in forgetting reality in a blaze of 'romantic' drivel. It worked pretty well. It was a clever show.

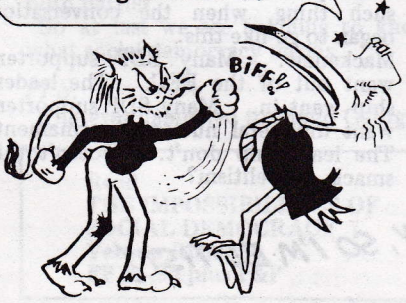
But as Hitler would have approved of the Liverpool police who have taken to heart his teaching on the disposal of disabled people by death so would he view with envy the adulation of the people in the marriage of a symbol of authority.

Rule by a family who, through a process of fucking and procreating, institute themselves as a privileged entity is anathema and will not continue very long.

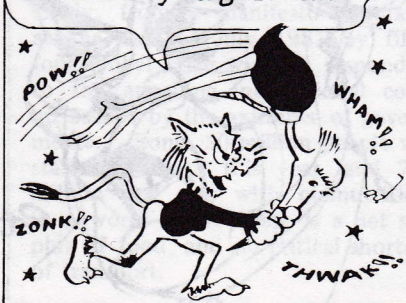
J.W.

WILDCAT

What are you attacking me for??



I'm protesting against the massacre of Samarkand by Genghiz Khan.



Oh good. Just for a moment, I thought you were attacking me for nothing.



**Help us
build a party
that's
in nobody's
pocket
by digging
into your own.**



An invitation to join the Social Democrats

WE illustrate herewith the cover of a leaflet which has been shoved through letterboxes in London (we can't speak for the rest of the country) and which could quite likely be taken to Court successfully on charges of begging, misrepresentation, fraud and probably a few other things we wot not of.

As far as we know, the Social Democratic Party (sic) is not registered as a Charity, yet here it is asking for money for an aim which is not disclosed, a purpose which as yet offers you nothing more than membership of a political party which does not yet exist, a vote for a constitution and a programme which seems to be pre-determined and the right to give money to a political machine created to further the personal ambitions of a handful of politically motivated persons without any Statement of Principles, Aims or Manifesto.

'Trust Us' is the message from a mere handful of known renegades whose careers have been characterised by either backing the wrong horses or feathering their own nests.

Chief among the latter is Mr. Roy Jenkins, who rose to Cabinet rank in the Labour Party, becoming Home Secretary, and whose main claim to fame is that he extended the time prisoners could be kept incommunicado under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He then took a job in Brussels at an enormous tax-free salary, furthering the interests of the great European bureaucracy.

Most popular among the renegades is Shirley Williams, whom everybody is supposed to love, but who unfortunately lost the last election in her relatively safe Labour

constituency because not enough of her constituents loved her enough.

Most disliked among the Gang of Four is undoubtedly Dr. David Owen, erstwhile Foreign Secretary in Jim Callaghans Government, who clung to his undying support for the Shah of Iran long after the people of that benighted country had thrown the vicious dictator overboard. David Owen admired the way the Shah had made his country strong against Communism by torturing his own people and buying lots of planes and tanks from Britain.

Little is known about the fourth of the Famous Four. It is thought his name is William Rodgers or something.

The most famous of our Famous Four is particularly famous at the moment because he has just won a remarkable victory by losing a bye-



OKAY, SO I'M ELITIST!

Centralising the LIB-LAB-CON TRICK (or SDP)

election in a town he had not heard of before - Warrington. Most of us had only heard of Warrington, to be because we like to think of it as Vorrington, because Vodka is made there - which may account for the obvious soft-headedness of its voters, who clearly wanted to register a protest vote against the Tories without giving a vote to the Labour Party. So they voted for Roy Jenkins in their thousands. They must have had the shock of their little lives when he nearly got in.

Our Shirl then got her knickers in a twist because the next bye-election is due to come up in the south London suburb of South Croydon and she rather fancied her chances there, as she is a 'national' figure.

Unhappily, some idiot in the SPD had agreed with the Liberals that, if they supported Jenkins in Vorrington, the Liberals could 'have' South Croydon - with SDP support. The whole nation held its breath (not a pretty sight) until Shirl, being an honest girl, or perhaps outvoted, backed off and let the local Liberal candidate, who had worked on the constituency for yonks, stay in the fight - with SDP support! Hurray!! You may all make like Kermit introducing Rudolph Nureyev Local candidate's name is William Pitt. He will presumably be known as Pitt the Youngest.

Whether the con trick will work and the Liberal-SDP alliance will bring him victory remains to be seen. All we know for sure is that it is going to be the good old mixture as before.

Why? Because wise-guy Owen tends to let the cat out of the bag when he is faced with unrehearsed questions on the Telly. In an idle moment we were watching the goggle-box when he was being interviewed by psephologist Bob Mackenzie. We were the ones to begin goggling, except we are much too sophisticated of course to do any such thing, when the conversation began to go like this:

Mackenzie: Many SDP supporters want out of the EEC. The leadership want in. Many SDP supporters want unilateral nuclear disarmament. The leadership don't. Doesn't this smack of elitism?

Owen: The Common Market is not an open question, neither is nuclear disarmament. The SDP is founded on:

1. EEC membership.
2. Multilateral nuclear disarmament.

The Party can have members who disagree — but these two points are essential factors!

There, you may think, you have it. You may join this 'party', in which the principle of 'One Member, One Vote' is to be enshrined — but at least two essential factors are already decided by the founders. All they want from you is your money, to support *their* path to power.

Inside the leaflet we read:

'...while the two main parties fiddle with outdated philosophies and dogmas, the country burns with indignation*.

'Today the Social Democrats invite you to do something about it.

'Britain needs a new political party and it needs it now.

'But if you want it, you'll have to pay for it.'

On another radio programme, we heard a paid organiser saying 'We must have the party machine first. Without that, the policy is worth nothing!'

Perhaps Owen's final words with Bob Mackenzie are worth signing off with:

'Lloyd George's Liberalism is exactly the sort of left-of-centre radicalism we stand for!'

A new party, Dr. Owen? Who exactly are you trying to con?

PS.

*This is prophetic, being written before the riots.

PS:

Since the above article was written there has been a little trouble in Paradise. Preparing for their grand slam through the country at the next general election and to prevent bickering at by-elections, the Liberal Party and the ghostly SDP are trying to agree on how to decide who fights what.

The SDP leaders (and after all, it seems to consist of only leaders) want to put up 300 candidates and want the share out of seats to be arranged at 'national' level, while the Liberals (so strong on 'community' politics, don't you know) want it to be agreed at local, or at most regional level.

The latter is not apparently acceptable to the SDP leaders, who, while prepared to accept 'local or regional input' (note the computerised language!) seem to be insisting that final decisions must be made at national level and enforced by the leaders of both parties.

So at last we are beginning to know what social democracy means.

PPS:

Whatever happened to Lloyd George?

Read
THE IMPOSSIBILITIES OF
SOCIAL DEMOCRACY
Vernon Richards
FP £1.95 plus P&P

Tiswas Guilty

Apart from fomenting reactionary hysteria amongst the population at large and amplifying the vacuous rhetoric and pompous platitudes of careerist politicians, the media executives have also given 'moderate' coverage to such inane and ridiculous arguments suggesting that the violence on the streets of the inner cities and numerous towns throughout the country is due to the hot and sticky weather of late and/or lead intoxication from petrol fumes which affected the cerebral chemistry of the young people of these areas and sent them temporarily doolally (Liverpoolian term suggesting insanity!). Such banalities were treated with tones of hushed reverence and deep seriousness by the media.

Having been exposed to such utterly ludicrous agonising, it hardly came as a surprise when I was confronted by a recent offering from our guardians of information and rational free-thought which pointed the finger of accusation for the rioting squarely at — wait for it — TISWAS!!! Yes, it's no misprint, Tiswas is responsible for the violence on the streets according to Joy Whitby, National Executive Producer for ITV. Could this mean that Spit, the dog, and Charlie, the monkey, are anarchist agitators, determined to overthrow the state by means of mockery?

Speaking recently in Yorkshire

auntie Joy expressed the ubiquitous concern of the establishment about the 'current atmosphere of rioting and attitudes of anarchy' and commented that, 'the situation necessitates a more responsible attitude on the part of producers of children's programmes'; and of the former ITV show Tiswas in particular stated, 'When it went over the top it promoted a sense of anarchy and irresponsibility which tended to put authority down. It is dangerous and we should be more responsible. We are conscious of a need for a new philosophy.' (?)

Obviously such statements express only the tip of the iceberg and clearly indicate a more general rumbling reaction amongst the higher echelons of the TV network's administrative and executive moguls, who regard very seriously any developments which threaten to unbalance the 'status quo' which they constantly seek to maintain and out of which they do so very well. No doubt further reporting of rioting will be more restricted and censored in the future and the 'new philosophy' of Joy Whitby and friends will be simply an increase in the quantity of shit dished out to the viewing public subtly laced with sublime sentiments extolling the virtues of patriotism, law and order, hard work, duty, deference etc. ad nauseam!

Nobel anarchy ?

'ALTHOUGH the powerful of this earth bear the greatest responsibility (for avoidable famine), they are not alone. If the helpless take their fate into their own hands; if increasing numbers refuse to obey any law other than the fundamental human rights, the most basic of which is the right to life; if the weak organize themselves and use the few but powerful weapons available to them it is certain that an end could be put to this catastrophe of our time'.

The above quotation is not from a classic leaflet by Kropotkin or Malatesta or Charlotte Wilson, but amazingly, from a manifesto circulated at the end of July 1981 by fifty-four Nobel Prize winners, responding to the appalling international cock-up caused by the existence of governments. Some 30 million people will starve to death this year, and 780 million are sick with malnutrition, in a world where there is a net surplus of food, and no critical shortage of transport.

It ought not to be amazing that members of the world's intellectual elite are aware of the obvious, but in fact it seems a totally new development for a large group of well-heeled establishment persons to recognize that the poor themselves can and should do something about poverty. The usual well-meaning doctrine is exemplified in responses to the riots in English cities; that Something Should Be Done, but the oppressed should not take the law into their own hands.

The prizewinners recommend as a tactic 'non-violent actions exemplified by Gandhi, adopting and imposing objectives which are limited and suitable'; but tactics are secondary to attitudes. If increasing numbers of the poor decide to give up legality, patriotism, fatalism and other notions designed to keep them in their place, and to act in their own interest, they will doubtless work out for themselves which tactics are most effective.

D.R.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LET

UNDERSTANDING
TECHNOLOGY

Dear Comrades,

While Dave Morris' review of *Technology - Its Results and Uses* (Review, 18 July) covers a lot of ground and raises many issues for discussion, making many valid criticisms of the present situation, I feel the general picture of the anarchist society that he indicates as his ideal would, rightly, not win great popular support.

The good and bad present and potential uses of modern tools and machines are too interwoven to extricate in any 16-page review, and the value of each would need to be assessed individually for each particular application, but the picture implied by Dave's review is of a society in which most of the babies had been thrown out with the bathwater.

If anarchism is ever to gain mass support, then the view projected of an anarchist society must be one that most people could accept as desirable, and most people want the benefits that modern technology makes possible.

We need to look at our present situation in terms of the potential it offers if anti-social, authoritarian influences could be eliminated. Try to imagine a miraculous achievement if this; how this might come about is quite another matter — vital, but outside the scope of this debate.

In the 'developed' countries — and this is rapidly coming to mean virtually throughout the world — productive capacity has grossly exceeded effective demand. On the one hand, there remain many real needs to be met, but against this there are, as well as vast armies of unemployed, enormous resources to be redeployed from 'redundant' ends: policing, military uses, etc. as well as advertising and packaging aimed at boosting consumption of unwanted, inessential and even harmful products, as well as the enormous waste involved in the policies of designing for obsolescence and limited life. If wanted goods were designed for durability and easy maintenance, this would effect an enormous economy in energy and materials, without any reduction in available useful goods.

We are barely at the beginning of the application of microtechnology. If/when this were applied to its full potential, it would transform the picture of industry. Dave's strictures about the soullessness of production line assembly work become an anachronism. Yes, certainly, we want an abundance of small workshops to meet individuals' individual needs, both for creative activities and for their products, but we should not jettison wholesale the potential benefits of high technology — both can flourish together, and microtechnology and the communications revo-

lution which is also beginning to make vast conurbations unnecessary for this, while authoritarian hierarchies never were, and in the future will be even less, necessary for this sort of production.

As has been reiterated ad nauseam, no blueprint for an anarchist society can logically be produced; but sensible redeployment and development of modern technological potential, directed to meet human social needs holds great stabilising potential for a libertarian society, if/when it is achieved, by freeing people from needless toil and giving them the leisure to sort out their relationships and aims in life, free of physical want.

The signs are, at least on present knowledge, that labour-intensive farming is ecologically sounder than high-technology 'agri-business', but even here each aspect should be examined without prejudice; without assuming that, e.g., horses are necessarily and always preferable to tractors! Apart from conservative use of resources and development of more efficient methods and renewable power sources, an important change needed to relieve pressure on the environment, which Dave omits, is the reversal of the present population explosion. This I believe could more easily be achieved and humanely in a free society of informed, responsible people.

BRIAN LESLIE.

Tunbridge Wells.

AIN'T JUST YANKS

Fellow Anarchists,

'Right-wing anarchism' or 'Anarcho-capitalism' is only an American phenomenon I am continually told, but I disagree From the Alternative shop in Covent Garden, London to the Richard Branson of Virgin Records and Malcolm McClaren (who together brought you Anarchy in the U.K. and the Great Rock & Roll Swindle) there are hustlers of what used to be called 'hip capitalism' in the past. The same Laissez-faire, tax-dodging rock stars, film-makers, 'independent' record companies (Rough Trade is a good example, now a multi-national with shops in Amsterdam and San Francisco providing 'alternative' commodities to the alternative market consumers at an alternative profit) are not so far from say, Brian Crozier (conservative Libertarian and member of the Institute for the Study of Conflict) whose book of last year, *The Minimum State* (a la Chile keep the military, judiciary, police and denationalise all the local industries such as the Health Service!) extends the programme of Milton Friedman and other Free market/monetarist shits.

Meanwhile, the cynical and passive nihilist/trendy market is booming with

Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Can't Pay, Won't Pay! at the theatre and Broken Glass, Time Bandits on the screen and grab watcha can pirates like Adam and the Ants on the radio and tv pop shows. True there is no Libertarian Party like the USA (yet) but there is a Libertarian Alliance ('700 members') as well as a maze of Tory Economic Leagues and Freedom Associations who combined with the Ecology Party and Liberal Party Libertarians, Rate Payers and shop-keepers federations spew on about the liberty of the individual when the 'closed shop' of the trade union, or the latest unemployed and youth riots threaten their privileges.

So comrades let's not pretend it's only American, it's multi-national. And, let's not hope that markets like hippie or punk 'anarchy' will go away, like so many wish the influence of the Labour Party will wane ya gotta resist if you want to see change.

Smash the State and the Spectacular commodity economy!

Syndicalist Peasant on tour.

EXPLAINING
INTELLIGENCE

Dear FREEDOM,

I'm afraid Michael Duane's letter shows that he doesn't understand much about either biology or philosophy. If he really thinks that a philosophical arbiter drawn from medieval theology (Occam's Razor) is a suitable yardstick to use in modern times, when we have discovered over and over again that things are vastly more complex than they seem at first sight, I must remind him that the concept of intelligence is not of recent invention. It was known, certainly, as far back as Plato's times; and Plato, too, recognised that intelligent parents may have dim children and vice versa. The reason for this may be explained elegantly by one comprehensive non-contradictory theory, heredity: whereas the main characteristic of the proliferation of environmental reasons advanced for variations in human intelligence is that their effect is not consistent. Here we find a professional man with a child as thick as two short planks; and there a child of 1 in a thousand standard IQ who was brought up in a slum area in a house without a bathroom. Yes, of course, environmentalists can explain these things; but not without inconsistency and contradiction. And environmental influences can be proved beyond all reasonable doubt, in many cases, but through case-history, not by generalisations. By all means let us do so, but don't have the effrontery to quote Occam's Razor in such a context. Occam, if applied correctly, supports heredity.

It is an old and dishonourable polemical trick to argue by contradicting statements the opponent has never made. It is disappointing to see it used in an anarchist journal, since to

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LET

my mind the main hope we have of convincing people that the anarchist cause is a good one is to be demonstrably honest and honourable. Anarchism appeals to me as the only ideology in which morality is more important than expediency. But morality means honesty in argument, as well as more obvious activities.

Examples: Jensen did not say (and I am sure Mr. Duane knows this) that 'Negroes are dimmer than whites'. Talking about the 'sloppiness' of Jensen's work is ridiculous — the greater part of Jensen's work is the interpretation of the results of tests carried out by other people, for various reasons quite unconnected with Jensen. The results of such tests have never been disputed; any theorist may use them; the argument lies in the interpretation. For instance Jencks, using substantially the same records, came up with a different result, although only a different proportion, not a basic contradiction.

The use of intelligence tests in British education did not arise to prevent grammar schools and universities wasting their time educating ordinary people. It arose to enable the most intelligent of the sons and daughters of ordinary people to go to grammar schools and universities (which hitherto had been reserved for the rich) by means of scholarships. The 1944 Education Act was intended to give more 'ordinary' people a chance, by preventing the middle class buying education for their kids at the expense of brighter, poorer ones. The intention was good, even if the result was disappointing. And of course the children didn't fit miraculously into the places every year. Nobody ever said they did. Again, Mr. Duane is fighting enemies that don't exist.

As for Mr. Duane's understanding of biological theory, and particularly genetics; well, one cannot blame him too much, I think. In my opinion it is a bad defect of biological teaching that children who learn the minimum of biological science are usually taught only the simplest principles of Mendelian theory, dealing with discontinuous variation, and emerge thinking that they understand genetics. The vast majority of heritable human characteristics show continuous variation; and unless one understands this in relation to the ordinary physical characteristics of all plants and animals, including human beings, it is easy to think (especially if prejudiced) that the statistical methods used in studying IQ have been invented specially for that purpose. They haven't; so anyone who wishes to attack work on the inheritance of IQ by discrediting the methods of statistical analysis will, if successful, destroy also about eighty years' accepted ecological work and theory which among other things provides much of the foundation for conservation, 'natural' methods of pest and disease control, and protection of the environment.

Yours sincerely,
ANNE SCRIVE.

INTELLIGENCE AND RACE

Dear FREEDOM,

I was very interested to read the letter by Michael Duane in FREEDOM July 18th. Colour is an important feature in the stereotyping of today's immigrants and British born blacks. Scientific respectability was sought for many of the stereotypes by postulating theories about differences in the intelligence of the races. Much anti-black literature poses as scientific analysis; included in this of course are the work of both Jensen and Eysenck. All available research is against this position and studies in Britain of carefully matched groups of different ethnic origins revealed no innate defects in any ethnic group. Intelligence is not fixed at birth but changed by circumstances. Weiner of the London School of Hygiene demonstrated how physiological responses were primarily a matter of conditioning and genetic potential was basically the same in all ethnic groups. The media however chose to highlight the unsupported stereotyped prejudices of two researchers whose research certainly was not objective or value free. A brief look at their political and other affiliations will be sufficient to show the subjective nature of their research. Jensen and Eysenck ignore the environmental and attitudinal evidence and in addition Eysenck claims to be an objective scientist in spite of the prejudices which can be inferred from his associates in the journal Mankind Quarterly which specialises in racial differences and boasts the infamous Professor Gregor as one time assistant editor, in spite of the fact that he contributed to Mosley's broad sheets ... Since many of the articles from Mankind Quarterly are reprinted in the NF magazine Spearhead, it could be asked how objective is the work and research conclusions of either Eysenck or Jensen — they are value loaded. Eysenck has written a book called ironically The Uses and Abuses of Psychology — he should know.

A more serious criticism is that both Eysenck and Jensen are using suspect data, since they base their research on the classic data of Sir Cyril Burt, much of which has been proven to have been fabricated. Jensen can be refuted by another line of argument — there is a gross oversimplification of heredity and environment. The argument of Jensen and company is also well refuted by studies on identical twins which show that intelligence as measured by intelligence tests is certainly influenced by environment, for identical twins reared in different environments do not resemble each other as closely as those reared in similar ones. It appears however that it's almost impossible to separate the effects of environment from heredity factors.

Further supportive evidence comes from Halsey in his study of last year —

his findings suggest that up to eleven IQ points can be attributed to social class in the case of upper and middle class pupils, therefore Jensen's conclusion that if a trait is under genetic control differences between colours of that trait must be due to genetic factors is completely refuted.

Finally the measures of IQ measure only the skills valued by society and not intelligence and they are therefore culturally biased. Thus the stereotype is as usual a mere exaggeration of the effects of environment usually imposed upon blacks by a white society. In spite of all the available information to the contrary the insistent views of certain individuals are likely to be used to increase tensions between racial groups by alleging that the differences between the ethnic groups goes deeper than cultural or economic considerations.

Yours sincerely,
PAT ISIORHO.

Nuneaton.

New England Anarchists

Greetings!

Enjoying the paper very much, as has usually been the case.

We have a new administration — the worst ever (like Thatcher's, I guess). Up with the corporations and the military, down with the poor, the minorities, the environment — I hope it is intelligent enough to avoid a nuclear war — which vice-president Bush, while campaigning, said we could win 'because there would be more left of us than of them' — rough quote. Monstrous!

We have a new New England Anarchist Conference; 200 attended the initial session, 100 the second, on a bitter cold weekend. We also have an Anarchist Communist Federation here and in Canada, that is probably small but quite dedicated.

Best wishes to you
ROGER HALL

Bridgewater, Ma., USA

IN BRIEF

BRITAIN'S strike record has plummeted to its lowest level since 1942. In the first half of this year there were 666 strikes, losing 2,576,000 working days. The comparable figures for the same period last year were 857 stoppages, costing 11 million days.

THE West German government intends to make it a criminal offence to deny that mass killings of Jews occurred under the Nazis.

FREEDOMCONTACTS

FREEDOM PRESS
in Angel Alley
84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET
LONDON E1 Phone 01-247 9249

International

AUSTRALIA

Australian Capital Territory
Research & Resources Centre for
Libertarian Politics and Alt-
ernative Life-Styles, 7/355
Northmore Ave., Lyneham,
A.C.T. 2602.

New South Wales

Black Ram, PO Box 238, Dar-
linghurst, NSW 2010.

Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists,
Jura Books Collective,
417 King Street, Newtown,
NSW 2042.

Queensland

Libertarian Socialist Organi-
sation, PO Box 268, Mount
Gravatt, Central 4122.
Self-Management Organisation,
PO Box 332, North Quay.

Victoria

La Trobe Libertarian Social-
ists, c/o SRM, La Trobe Univer-
sity, Bundoora, Vic. 3083.
Monash Anarchist Society, c/o
Monash University, Clayton,
3168 Melbourne.
Libertarian Workers for a Self
Managed Society, PO Box 20,
Parkville 3052.

TREASON, Box 37, Brunswick East,
Victoria, 3057

Chummy Fleming Bookshop, 26 Reg-
ent Arcade, 210 Toorak Road, South
Yarra (Libertarian Workers shop).

Western Australia

Freedom Collective, PO Box 14,
Mount Hawthorn 6016.
Libertarian Resource Centre,
PO Box 203, Fremantle 6160.

Tasmania

c/o 34 Kennedy Street,
Launceston 7250.

NEW ZEALAND

PO Box 2042, Auckland.
PO Box 22, 607 Christchurch.
Daybreak Bookshop, PO Box
5424, Dunedin.

CANADA

Open Road, Box 6135, Station
G; Vancouver B.C.
Wintergreen/AR, Post Office Box
1294, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 4G8
Black Cat Press, Post Office Box
11261, Edmonton Alberta.

U. S. A.

Arizona

Malicious Hooligans (anti-
nuclear), 1110 W 2nd Street,
Tempe, AZ 85281.

California

Autonomia, PO Box 1751 San
Francisco, CA 94101.
Libertarian Anarchist Coffee-
house, meets last Sunday each
month at Cafe Commons, 3161
Mission St., San Francisco.

Missouri

Columbia Anarchist League,
PO Box 380, Columbia,
Missouri 65201.

New York

Libertarian Book Club, Box
842, GPO New York, NY 10012.
SRAF/Freespace Alternative U,
339 Lafayette St., New York
City, NY 10012.

Texas

Houston SRAF, South Post Oak
Station, PO Box 35253,
Houston TX 77035.

Minnesota

Soil of Liberty, Box 7056 Pow-
derhorn Station, Minneapolis,
Minn. 55407.

WESTERN EUROPE

Federal Republic of Germany

Schwarzer Gockler (Black Cockerel),
c/o A Muller, Postfach 4528, 7500
Karlsruhe.
Graswurzel (grass roots) c/o W Hertle
Grozerschippsee 28, 21 Hamburg 90.
Schwarzer Faden (Black Thread)
Obere Wiebermarktstr 3, 741 Reutlinge
Libertad Verlag, 6br Schmuck, Post-
fach 153, 1000 Berlin 44.

AUSTRIA

Liberté, Postfach 86, 1033 Wien.
Monte Verita, Neustiftgasse 33,
1070 Wien.

FRANCE

Federation anarchiste francaise,
3 Ternaux, 75011, Paris (Groups
throughout France)

Union Anarchiste, 9 rue de
l'Ange, 63000 Clermont Ferrand

ITALY

Autogestione, Casella Postale
17127, 1-20100 Milano.

Grupp Hem Day, Giovanni Trapani,
CP6130, Roma-Prati.

Belgium

Revolutionair Anarchisties Kollektief
(RAK) Oudborg 47 9000 Gent.

Holland

De Vrije Postbus 6103 Groningen.
Anarchistiese Boekhandel Slager-
zicht (Anarchist Bookshop) Folk-
ingestraat 10 Groningen.

Denmark

Aarhus: Regnbuen Anarkist Bog-
cafe, Mejlgaade 48,
8000 Aarhus.
Rainbow Anarchists of the Free
City of Christiana, c/o Allan
Anarchos, Tinghuset, Fristaden
Christiana, 1407 Copenhagen.

Norway

ANORG, Høxtvedtv. 31B,
1431 As. (Publish 'Folke-
bladet' 4 times a year.)

Sweden

Syndikalist Forum, Tenstiernas
Gata 51, 11631 Stockholm.
Syndikalistiskt Forum (anarcho-

synd. Bookhop), Husagatans 5,
41302 Gothenburg (tel. 031-
132504).

FINLAND

Anarkistiryhmä, c/o Terttu
Pesonen, Neljas Linja 14 D 83,
00530 Helsinki 53.

Meetings

NATIONAL MEETING to discuss the
riots, to be held in London over the
weekend 5th-6th September. People
interested must write first for details
from Box R, c/o FREEDOM. SAE
necessary.

AUTONOMY CENTRE DEBATE'

'Nationalism in Ireland is a potentially
revolutionary force'. 7.30pm Friday
21st August at, 01 Warehouse, Met-
ropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, Lon-
don, E1. Tel 481 3537. Opening
hours are: Thursday from 7pm,
Friday and Saturday from 2pm.

ALDGATE PRESS

FOR those readers bewildered by the
sudden deterioration in FREEDOM's
print quality, we now give our excuses.

The last issue was in fact printed by
'Aldgate Press', its premises deep in
the bowels of the earth beneath
FREEDOM BOOKSHOP.

Thanks to the generous donations of
certain comrades who, along with all
of us, desired to see FREEDOM
PRESS with its own working print-
shop again, we have been able to
start up a printers/typesetters.
Given time and effort we at the
printshop hope to produce as good,
if not better issues of FREEDOM and
hope that the typesetting in this issue
is appreciated!

We'd also like to take this opportu-
nity to thank Ian for all the years of
work he put in for us.

Aldgate Press address is, would you
believe,

84b Whitechapel High St.,
London E1.

Tel: 01-242-3015

So if you need any printing or type-
setting done.....

Subscribe

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Inland.....£8.00
Overseas Surface.....£8.00
Overseas Airmail
Europe.....£9.00
The Americas.....US\$25.00
Canada.....C\$28.00
Australasia.....£10.50
Prisoners free.

Printed and typeset by Aldgate Press, in Angel alley, 84b Whitechapel High St., London E1. Tel 247-3015
Distributed in Britain by A Distribution, 01 Warehouse, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London E1.

DEATH OF THE WALRUS

'Theory is for the critic of the audience'

*'The idea is not to comfort people,
not to make them feel better,
but to make them feel worse'..*

IT is said that the end of alienation is only reached by the path of alienation itself. On the morning of December 9th 1980 I was particularly struck by the rapture in the eyes of newspaper readers, by their concentrated frowns, their inquisitive peeking. They were all reading about the same thing. About Lennon's death. Everyone was riveted. Me, I felt nothing, nothing at all. Whatever it was that these people were sharing I was not sharing it with them.

Lennon's death is an episode that headlines the relationship between appearance and reality in a society where the illusion of community is preferred to the critique of the kind of society that needs such illusions. How many would rather dream than to know why they sleep?

Lennon's death provided millions of people with a rare opportunity. It gave them the chance to share a sense of togetherness they don't usually have. Private grief isolates, collective grief binds people together. Everybody shared their experiences on the day the news broke. There was shock and surprise; disbelief and fascination; a sense of loss and a desire to communicate; there was discussion and estimation, and judgement and adoration. Most people reacted identically and simultaneously. In a society where normal human relationships are characterized by feelings of alienation and separation the chance to join in a wave of emotion is both a straw grasped by the lonesome and the drowning of the individual self.

Lennon's death is an episode whose subject is neither victim, nor widow, nor killer. It is the great lamenting public. A subject that reduced the victim to an object because they could never know him as a person.

Most people made a peculiar discovery when the shock of Lennon's death sank in. They discovered a feeling of loss and a sense of sadness. And the reason they felt this is that gradually over the last two decades people have convinced themselves that Lennon really was what his image said he was: a good guy, a genius, a friend. Their wholehearted emotional response was accorded to an image, a thing, a hollow representation of reality. I mean, how many people actually knew Lennon? How many had ever met him? Or talked with him face to face? Most people knew Lennon only through his public image. To them he was a voice on a record, a photo on a poster, a tiny figure on a floodlit stage. Only this, yet so much more. Look, while he was alive he was just one of many heroes that strut the boards of modern music. Yet the moment he was shot his loss became the most important experience in the world, that which everyone was talking about. While he was in retirement few people missed him; the minute he was dead everyone felt they'd lost him.

The experience of Lennon's loss is at one and the same time the expression of a real need and the perversion of that need. The desire for community is one that is always created by society. Under capitalism it's the only need that cannot be fulfilled. The stronger the desire, the more powerful the self-deception. Where the production and consumption of commodities fills all of social space there is room only for illusions. We want so much to share experience that all we end up having in common is the illusion of shared experience.

All the drama of a spectacular death both distracts the people in the street from their misery and restates that misery. The sad feel sorry only for themselves. Modern conditions of life are so bad, so empty, so banal, that everyone jumps at the chance to react to a drama. Even if their sole contact with the event is as bloodless and shallow as the newspaper that brought home the tidings. Real grief is cathartic. Grief accorded to an image can only be unfulfilling.



*'I weep for you', the Walrus said:
'I deeply sympathise.'
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size
Holding his pocket handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.*

CONTAGION

The tearful crowds that gathered outside the Lennon home soon after the shooting offered up their emotions at the altar of their idol. The insignificant suck significance from the ritual of mourning. They appropriate the 'historic' moment for themselves. 'I get a sense of growing old', said one mourner. Like sheep they all start singing. His songs. A contagion of senility passes across them. How could anyone sprinkle the pavement with tears for the election to glory of a star whose sole reason for existing was to get fans to buy commodities and hum along to tunes? At least these worshippers were on the spot. For the rest, grief was purely spectacular.

The spectacle is at the heart of a heartless world and in the soul of soulless conditions. Where the commodity has achieved total occupation of all social life there reigns the spectacle. Separation is its alpha and omega. It is the soma of the people. And it insists on its pound of flesh. The unliveable demands to be lived. For the spectacle is not just something that is passively consumed; it must needs be acted out. When the spectacle solicits an emotional response conformity becomes a social imperative. Since all we have in common is our desire to be together and our misery at failing to be together what seems to be a sharing of experience is actually the imposition of experience.

Everything is said about the spectacle except what it fundamentally is: the manipulation of the emotions of the individual by those of the collectivity.

I don't give a shit about John Lennon. The death on the other side of the planet of a bloke I've never met is too commonplace to move me. I feel no sadness, no shock at this departure. The stream of my consciousness remains untroubled by the realization that an era has departed with him. On the other hand, I do think it bizarre that people accord emotions to an image. By coming together in the experience of grief for a person in the shape of a star people create an inhuman, a counterfeit form of community. One that only exists through mediation.

In our capitalist society, as in any society, people are brought together by the common essence of their species. Under capital however, what is immediately experienced is not this common essence but all the things that separate people. So although the qualities of the common essence are experienced as real they pertain to something other than humanity. They are projected onto a super being. In the past this was god. Nowadays it's a star, a person as distant as the sun yet as close as your ear. When Lennon pointed out that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus he was just stating the obvious.

Part of the spectacle is the decisive modernization of religion. Gone are all the local gods and unitary myths and in their stead strides a global power and a general alienation. What is permitted is so much less than what is possible. The spectacle is religion made banal and banality made sacred. Its creed is the price-tag, its hymns are cultural, and its cathedral is urbanism.

LIVING AGAIN

In the past, people wept at the death of gods and kings because their passing brought changes that affected everyone. Nowadays they bemoan the death of the man behind the image. When you buy a record you not only buy a recording of someone but you also buy the way they choose to represent themselves to you. The fan needs to know that there's a real live person behind the commodity. A human who guarantees the authenticity of the product; a person to make credible the incredible, to make public their privacy, to dominate your life in the guise of revealing theirs. But once the reality has been rubbed out all you're left with are the bare objects, the records and books and posters. Not that this sudden unmasking puts anybody off. Oh no, nostalgia jumps in to take the place of authenticity. An instant swap. And record sales leap. In the topsy-turvy world of the spectacle, to die is to live again.

All those who reckoned that Lennon's death was almost as shocking as Kennedy's erred on the side of caution. It was

more so. Precisely because it was less expected. Because it was unprecedented. Americans have been looking forward to the assassination of another Kennedy for years. No one expected the murder of a Beatle. Yet in this anaesthetized society the unexpected is necessary. It's the trigger that fires the emotions. Political killing is too tame; the people need a stronger dish.

Random death in the city street is strong meat indeed. The meaningless death and motiveless mugging are dreaded by one and all. Police spokesman Ed Burns: 'We do not have any acceptable motive..... Only god knows why he did it.' Previously, rock stars burnt themselves out in a blaze of drugs and sex and wild living. This gave spectators a choice of reactions. From vicarious appreciation through imitation to moral condemnation. In Lennon's case the reaction was unanimous. Despite everything the star comes across as vulnerable, as a victim. Just like you and me.

In our society the sudden demise of a man of fame and money, the one in a million with the chance to really live, to survive without working and have anything they desire (or so it appears) is seen as a tragic waste. Yet isn't it galling to think that people who habitually write off so much of their time and potential as a loss and do nothing about it should recognize the loss of something they barely knew was happening: the colonization of their minds and desires by a culture built on commodities.

In the deathly hush that follows the rise of capital, its dominion over our daily lives and its animosity to any real form of community one point is clear: the greater the silence the more records sold.

DEATH WARRANT

The news of Lennon's death dominated the media completely. In the gaze of the news machines the mundane becomes portentous and the human banal. The victim signs an album cover - it becomes his 'death warrant'. His last words were poignant - they made them into headlines. Soon after the shooting television stations reshuffled their programmes to screen tributes and archival footage. They had a captive audience - and viewers had a good excuse to stay glued to their sets.

The media people realize that an idol's death is positively their last chance to project his image. Indeed the heat of the competition to interpret his career should have stimulated their imaginations. Instead, because they understood so little, they had nothing to say. Caught with their pants down, the best they could do was to fart banalities.

The more articulate the readership, the worse the reporting. The best the commentators could do was to bray about the end of an era. Lennon's death matters. So it must be 'historic'. In so far as people's memories are soaked in music and evoked by music the death of the musician means the end of a groove in their own personal history. Unable to see the death that is their own they elevate the episode to 'historic' status. The one thing that everyone appreciates about death, namely its finality, turns into an imperative: He's dead, it's too late, now look at what has been. Thus no one escapes nostalgia. The necessarily retrospective interest in the life of the victim becomes transposed onto the lives of the spectators while nostalgic sentiment justifies the current emptiness of life by fond remembrance of the opportunities and choices of the past. Today becomes an exile from opportunity. Today, the very moment when one can grasp one's history is turned into the moment of untruth when the bemused stare sees only what once was. When The Times declares that Lennon's death 'commits to history the decade that so utterly changed British society' it is obvious how safe our rulers think such sentiments are.

In the artificial community of spectacular grief each individual is called on to make a judgement. And each makes the same one. Okay, so Lennon's dead. It's a tragedy. A historic moment. Safe cliché, safe sadness. Why not sleep until the next sensation?

Then after the mumblings and the exclamations of the mass media come the plodding pall bearers, the considered opinions and weighty judgements of the weekly magazines and the monthly reviews. These scribblers of mediocrity had at least the advantage of time over the preceding hacks. It made no difference. Convincing proof that the most ridiculous trivialities spring fully fledged into minds carefully prepared by years of

journalism. Unable to think, they resorted to necrocuisine. Each worm just had to have its bite and Lennon's corpse was pulled this way and that in a horrible tug of war as Lefties and Liberals tried to claim him for themselves. They all wanted Lennon to be their hero. Since these vile grubs had once dressed up his living body they assumed they could now possess his death mask.

It is obvious that the Lennon phenomenon is a very remarkable one. His unholy alliance with the music business did succeed in creating legions of fans who never knew him personally yet who felt his death intimately. Not, after all, such a common experience.

Pop music is both the most obvious and the most insidious form of the colonization of everyday life. How often do people say 'I can't get this stupid tune out of my head.'? Music delineates one social space where the commodity contemplates itself in a world of its own manufacture. The proud boast of the Jesuits as to their ability to bring up fanatical religionists pales besides capital's ability to train up slave consumers, people willing to buy what they think a product represents as well as what it actually is. And it's music that catches them young. That sense of loss experienced by Lennon fans does after all have a grain of lucidity: you didn't realize just how far the Beatles had been crammed into your skull until one of them was wiped off the earth.

Lennon grew up in the fifties. He grew up cocky and discontented. At fifteen he first heard Elvis and his subjective rebellion discovered its objective expression. So he got into rock & roll. At that time there was enough genuine revolt in rock & roll to obscure the inherent tendency of the music business to recuperate, nullify, and return this revolt to the consumer in the shape of an image, a representation of reality. At first the Beatles were one of the best live bands ever. There was enough that was raw and harsh and earthy about the Liverpool clubs and Hamburg dives to make rock music seem the vehicle for expressing revolt against authority, conformity and blandness. Then their manager invented Beatlemania, the first and most fatal compromise with their real desires: 'We began to sell out when we let Brian Epstein manage us. He put us into uniforms - suits, and we would go on and smile and do twenty-minute acts of our hits.... By the time we got to London all the rough edges were being knocked off us. I knew what we were doing, and I knew the game. So I let it happen. We were selling out all right, right from the moment we began to get really big.' Lennon's first mistake was to put fame and fortune before personal satisfaction.

By the mid-sixties a society that was changing by making everything seem possible needed a vanguard for whom everything was possible. Enter the Beatles. Never before in history had any group of people such freedom from constraint. Never before was anyone so famous yet so lonely. Freed from the hassles of survival they quickly became trapped by the very image that guaranteed their success. As anti-authoritarian wit became fashionable Lennon's subjective attitude discovered the objective conditions for it to flourish. At the same time, the logic of popularity brought with it censorship. Lennon in particular was not allowed to say anything that might tarnish their image as lovable mop-tops. Never before had anyone been loved by so many people whilst being so isolated from society.

PIED PIPER

The Beatles escaped pop culture by getting into the drug scene. In order to get out of one kind of image they rushed into another. Lennon became one of the Pied Pipers of acid. The result was a confused and divided public. This was exacerbated when Yoko replaced the Beatles as Lennon's love object. The Two Virgins turned on John's past public image and destroyed it. This itself was a public performance. Then they got into avant garde art. Only to encourage widespread hatred. Since Yoko's advent meant the end of the Beatles Lennon was free to become the Clown Prince of Peace. By 1971 they'd had enough of being misunderstood by their British public. So they fucked off to New York.

The experience of public adoration and public hatred gave Lennon a partial critique of pop stardom: 'One had to completely humiliate oneself to be what the Beatles were, and

that's what I resent. I didn't know, I didn't foresee. It happened bit by bit, gradually, until this complete craziness is surrounding you, and you're doing exactly what you don't want to do with people you can't stand - the people you hated when you were ten.' Lennon had tried to use the spectacle to communicate his ideas but only succeeded in getting his fingers burnt. What he and the thought of the times had in common was that they were critical of society without being critical enough. No one can understand the society of the spectacle unless they are determined to fight it.

So what did Lennon and the Beatles represent? What of our own past died with him? The promise, the hopes, the excitement of the sixties, adolescent grievance and political idealism, the revolt against authority and boredom, the search for truth, the desire for freedom, the longing for mystical experience... Perhaps. One thing is sure. John Lennon was many different things to different people at different times for different reasons. To the degree that you identify your personal history with his public history, to that degree will you feel his loss. Look to thyself!

BROKEN IMAGES

What made Lennon such a superstar was that he had enough intelligence and cynicism to communicate his intelligence and cynicism to the public. What made him attractive was his honesty and cleverness. Because he really was honest and clever he was able both to understand what was happening and to use the very qualities that made such understanding possible for the construction of his image. Hence he also appeared both honest and simple, cynical and intelligent.

The Lennons spent the seventies posing at art, trying out therapy, playing politics and role-swapping. A couple of bad records and some pretentious political propagandizing helped Lennon once again break with his outworn image. But the superstar remained isolated: 'The king is always killed by his courtiers, not by his enemies. The king is overfed, overdrugged, overindulged, anything to keep the king tied to his throne. Most people in that position never wake up. They either die mentally or physically or both.' New York and Yoko soon woke Lennon up. He began to use his qualities to make his image human. To make the unreal realistic. Every stunt and every hype was now geared to communicate his growing humanity.

Lennon was more than just another star. He was an ultra superstar. Most stars settle for being super, the ultra wants to be human again. Since being a star necessarily means that people don't believe in you, can't take you completely literally, know that you're an image and an actor, they manage to maintain a certain crucial distance. In most cases this distance is vital because without it the whole imposture would stand revealed. Only the ultra dares to try and bridge this gap. After years of hard slog Lennon managed to carve out a free space for himself. Only to find that this real freedom confirmed his separation from the rest of our unfree society. His hotel was another prison. From it he aspired to full credibility. He wanted to communicate, to make friends, but all he could do was to propagate strangers.

The genuine community is the place where private needs become visible. Lennon's belief in music as the popular means of self-expression, as a means of real communication, made him make his private life public by singing about it. This kind of publicity of privacy helped people imagine that they what he was really like and helped him imagine he was communicating directly. He appeared to have bridged the gap of separation. In reality, the opposite was true. For although the content of his music was personal the form in which it was conveyed remained spectacular and therefore alien. Because his communication was unilateral and because it was his subjectivity that dominated all that happened was an increase in separation. The fake community is a place where the visible needs of the few colonize the invisible public, who are glimpsed only when they pay at the cashdesks.

If Lennon ever had socialist ideas they were in complete contradiction to what he did in practice. The practical effect of the form in which he communicated his ideas was often the very opposite of those ideas. The net result of his activities was perfection of the art of selling art. And to boost his income. The working class hero who makes it sells the idea of 'making

it' in this sick society.

The Lennons were astute business people as well as charity revolutionaries. They understood about money making and they knew very well about their role in the production and distribution of dreams and images. Since their critique of the spectacle was partial not total they spread ideas like Peace and Love in such a way that ensured that they were more often consumed rather than acted upon. Idealistic slogans are easy to sell because they appeal to millions who want social change without the trouble of struggling for it. For them, the end of separation and loneliness can be achieved simply by buying a record player. Being surrounded by voices chanting All You Need Is Love or Give Peace A Chance becomes the surrogate that prevents you from experiencing peace or love.

MARTYRED IDOL

Having successfully smashed his previous self images Lennon was able to savour some of the real freedom available to the rich anti-hero. So he retired to enjoy his good fortune. And to start a family. Eventually however the lure of the lime-light proved to strong. He wanted public vengeance on the scoffers of the early seventies. So he mobilized all the usual media manipulations to launch his new album. At the start of the eighties he pip pip and toot tooted his way to make a comeback and get his come-uppance.

Spectacular death tends to throw up an obligation for us to think that the dead person was a great person. Remember how difficult it was to criticize Churchill when he snuffed it? Or Kennedy? Yet how is it possible to respect a guy naive enough to think World Peace could simply be wished into existence? How is it possible to be impressed by a guy who wasted so much of his time and energy in creating images of himself for sale to an audience of gullible consumers? Yoko Ono summed up the utter vacuity of the whole business in a statement issued soon after the shooting: 'John loved and prayed for the human race. Please do the same for him. Nice advice from the waterbaby who dishes out charity money to the wives and widows of New York cops. Meanwhile, the idol becomes transformed into a martyr. Saint John of the Commodity! As record sales rocket religion creeps in to ease the transaction, to lull the senses.

No one voice in the babble dares to prick the bubble. No one says what a pop star actually is. Pop stars are people who exist not for themselves but for others. To whom they always appear as images. They thrive in this society because they are star commodities and they help sell a whole culture. As celebrities they show off various types of life style. They are valued in terms of the quantity of their spectators and the quality of their imitators. They are agents of the spectacle and their social effect is to reinforce as well as to distract people from the miseries and alienations of capitalism. Modern music creates slaves with smiles on their faces. Harold Wilson was being disarmingly candid when he pointed out that Lennon was given the MBE for 'getting the kids of the streets'. Make no mistakes: music is an open prison. The pop star is a cop star.

'If you stay in this business long enough it will get you in the end'. As so often happened Lennon said better than he knew. The irony of his extraordinary death arose from the victims active contribution to his killer's motiveless motivation.

SPILLING INK

It is said that Mark Chapman is insane. He appears to have believed that he was John Lennon. This is everywhere regarded as an aberration. Yet isn't the entire music business, the whole of modern culture, built on precisely this kind of identification? Doesn't the fan so much want to be a star? And isn't it exactly this need and the fantasies it inspires that lies at the root of the sense of loss felt by millions of fans? Chapman simply took things to extremes. He shot down the albatross because he believed he could fly. Lennons fame took years to fabricate, Chapman's was instantaneous. Not content to consume Lennon at a distance, he wanted to be him. Those who take the spectacle literally smash its literal illusions.

Lennon was shot by a member of his own society. That society that never took his dream of World Peace seriously spawned a man who took its illusions for real. The difference between Lennon's acorn and Chapman's bullet is that between the idealistic and the practical. Lennon had imagination but no

method, Chapman was practical but stupid. Lennon's aim was vague and fuzzy, Chapman's we know about.

The international community that discovered itself in the wake of Lennon's death was both a real community and the illusion of one. It was real in so far as real emotions, needs and reactions were shared, felt and talked about in common. It was illusory in that it was temporary and it was temporary because it had no social basis. Or rather, its social base was one which precludes genuine community. Capitalism creates separation and spectacle every single day; just occasionally it dishes up a counterfeit community. In their certainty that everyone shared the shock of Lennon's death people manufactured a delusion. Life seemed suddenly to have changed. The next minute/hour/day they realized that life was as alienated as usual. Nothing had changed.

After the blood comes the spilling of ink. No one who interpreted the episode, whether they wrote for the Sun or Marxism Today, could afford to reach the clearest and firmest point of view. They were not harsh enough about Lennon just as Lennon was not harsh enough on himself. All chose merely to reform the spectacle. The same social system that used Lennon's talents also uses their's. And for one purpose: to perpetuate itself by inverting the truth. This single fact makes all the obituaries profane.

My contempt for the heartless experience of spectacular mourning is at once a demand for the re-creation of real community and face to face experience. Are the times really so bad that people's innermost needs are engaged by the shameful show of spectacular death? To tear away the veil of mystification is to expose the moment of truth in this episode. Persuading people to give up their illusions about their conditions is the same as urging them to fight those conditions that require illusion. People should strive to seek their true reality, to abandon the consumption of appearances and the worship of non-persons who seem so personable. People must learn to bury Lennon not to praise him. It is not just a question of 'Imagine no possessions' but one of imagining and living without mass-produced music. The songs of capitalism must one day be drowned in the roar of its enemies, those who desire to live not merely to consume. In order to make the world dance one must first turn off the music.

"I like the Walrus best," said Alice: "because he was a little sorry for the poor oysters."

"He ate more than the Carpenter, though," said Tweedledee.

Lewis Carroll: Through The Looking Glass - when Lennon sang 'I am the Walrus' he was sadly unaware that in Carroll's allegory the Walrus was capitalism and the oysters slave consumers.

Published originally by B M Mattoid. ANTI-COPYRIGHT

Typists note :

However, in the song Glass Onion Lennon sings:

'And heres another clue for you all the Walrus was Paul'



Sweet are the uses of adversity



AT this time when unemployment is spreading like a plague through the land and threatens even those who may have considered themselves to be immunised against this artificial horror-film virus, manufactured and cultured with venomous intention in the test tubes of the Thatcher laboratories, it may be useful for me to cast my mind back to the dark days of the thirties when the Tories of that period vomited forth a similar pestilence upon the hapless and dispossessed; and likewise, with condescending and humiliating sadism, they revealed their petty minds in the irresponsible and nauseating abuse of that all too valuable and precious plaything in their grasp, the might of ruling power. I well remember how in those days they contrived with Machiavellian chicanery to entice the eager leaders of the Labour Party into their cunning stratagems with the result that the names Macdonald, Snowden and Jimmy Thomas will remain forever as synonyms of deception and perjury. The Tragedy is not that there will always be these Janus-faced performers ready and willing to dance on the political stage--the present day's platform is already well cluttered with them--but that the people who are cajoled into attending these impersonations can still be ensnared into the fair-ground to be bamboozled by the bright lights of the merry-go-rounds and deceived by the thimble-riggers and counterfeiters who profit from their credulity. It was in the memorable year of 1935 that the Silver Jubilee of George V provided the luminations for the hurdy-gurdies and now in 1981, that the old device has become necessary again they have conjured up a royal wedding complete with the well-trained puppets and traditionally uniformed town-criers to attract the multitude.

The working-class streets of the thirties were decorated with the banners and bunting with which we are again familiar and the result of all this gerry-mandering was that the General Election of that same year returned a Tory government with an increased majority. Let me repeat the word 'increased' because this, let us not forget, was during that which has come to be regarded as the 'worst depression,' the period which we look back upon as the classic high level of unemployment when indeed the hunger marches were in very truly hunger marches.

Such is the purpose and service of all these royal gymkhanas for the preservation of the State. One must remember the words of Bagehot about the function of the monarchy. These words were written in 1867 before the Education Act of 1870 when presumably the working-class were not sufficiently literate to be able to read them or even if they could the *Fortnightly* in which they were published would have been too expensive for them to buy. 'The English constitution' said Bagehot 'in its palpable form is this--the mass of the people yield obedience to a select few--and when you see this select few you perceive that though not of the lowest class, nor of an unrespectable class, they are yet of a heavy sensible class--the last people in the world to whom, if they were drawn up in a row, an immense nation would ever give an exclusive preference. In fact the mass of the English people yield a deference rather to something else than to their rulers. They defer to what we may call the THEATRICAL SHOW of society . . . The apparent rulers of the English nation are like the most imposing personages of a splendid procession: it is by them the mob are influenced; it is they whom the spectators cheer. The real rulers are secreted in second rate carriages; no one cares for them or asks about them, but they are obeyed implicitly and unconsciously by reason of the splendour of those who eclipsed and preceded them.'

Nowadays, of course, with the full blast of the media in our ears it is no longer true that no one asks about these real rulers. We are never allowed to get them out of our minds. In fact the whole purpose of their continuous public appearances is in order that they can wallow in what they consider to be the envy of the spectators. They have almost usurped the established role of the monarchy--indeed, were this the Middle Ages, I'm certain that the present Queen would not feel safe upon her throne with Mrs Thatcher around.

It is no use for people like Willie Hamilton to cry out about the cost of running the monarchy and to say that we could very well manage without it and, at the same time for him

to sit among the elect in the House of Commons. His position in Parliament is very much dependent upon the mythology created by royalty. Indeed without the royalty we would find ourselves with a President--a pale imitation of a monarch but nevertheless the nearest they can get to a monarch--an apology, one might say, for those naughty forefathers who kicked out their kings at a time when the word democracy had a touch of revolution in it. It is only the ghost of Tom Paine and the tradition of the Declaration of Independence that prevents Reagan from wearing a crown. It is interesting to note that General de Gaulle very nearly managed to re-establish the throne of the Bourbons and his follower D'Estaing came from the old aristocracy while Stalin (of imperishable memory) certainly took over the Tsardom in all but the name and headgear.

So it is necessary for us to read between the lines and study the small print (if that is the right way to put it) because when the fanfare and the trumpets have finished their blowing and the heralds their proclamations and the Archbishop in all his array has succeeded in concentrating our attention on the Prince and his Lady we must not forget that behind them will emerge inevitably Mrs Thatcher and her cronies with the State's official and faceless planners with their programme for the next General Election. It is enough to remember that in 1935 the Tories dug themselves firmly in and led us up to the only solution that they know: the World War. There was no money for the unemployed in the thirties but it soon became available for the manufacture of munitions and the preparations for the carnage.

It will not be until the whole of the fairground itself is emptied of all its gew-gaws and the frill and furbelows and tinsels cast away and the stage with its proscenium and footlights are all pulled down that we shall be able to take our dazzled eyes away from the place where once it was and look around and recognize one another, perhaps for the first time, and realise the truth of who we are.

Unemployment for me in the thirties meant seventeen shillings per week on the Means Test, sixpence of which I paid into Wal Hannington's National Unemployed Workers Movement, more than was requested. This was because I earned another illicit seventeen shillings from having a good morning's round with the Daily Worker, recently established and since this was comparable and often more than a Lancashire cotton worker was able to take home for a full week's work I considered myself to be not too hard hit. Looking back upon it I am inclined to say that I was sitting pretty. I was a free agent. I was not enslaved within the capitalist machine and, most important, this was my kind of university. I could study and follow my own bent and break through into the forbidden and uncharted territories carefully planted with notices of taboo. I could not only regard the external fabric of the state with a critical eye but began to understand why it is that the established universities as part of the State are there to maintain it. (I must interject here another item into my personal picture of the thirties which reflects a now almost forgotten aspect of the misery of that time and that was the spectre of tuberculosis. That deadly but friendly little bacillus kept me in a sanatorium for three years and gave me plenty of time to stop and think.) Time to think. Time to discover that one is a human being with all that signifies. Time to realise that there is an indefinable possibility in life which is much more than can be obtained by selling oneself as a piece of machinery for payment in a purpose which is divisive and destructive.

It is that time to think that could well be the death knell of the authoritarian state. If there is anything to be said for the idea that every society nourishes within itself the seeds of its own decay this is where we shall find it. What will happen if the unemployed, not that they have the time, begin to think for themselves? And if their minds begin to wander along paths which are different from the established and acceptable grooves channelled out so rigidly by the state? Sport and the casting of a blind eye on hooligan destructiveness will not always serve to pacify, especially if you are not fulfilled as a participant but only a spectator. There is no doubt that, in order to save the state, there will be desperate measures to get the production line working again and to train the emerging youthful generations like circus horses to carry their money-earning routines. Maybe we may witness again that fearful

spectacle which the Hitler Nazis carried out--the public burning of the books in the market place.

It is worth while to take a closer look at the human possibilities which could emerge in a positive way from the growth of the number of unemployed. They are no longer quite so subservient and dependent as they were in the thirties. They may hit upon the discovery that there are human relations which are real and unhampered by interference from external influences; that people need not be separated by all the artificial impositions foisted upon them by a divided society; that rank and status, title, wealth, property and power and all the other alienating obstructions need not be there because unemployment is unemployment and when you are all in the same boat together the masks fall off and real faces appear. Falsity, snobbery and pretentiousness stand revealed and not only does one see the sham face of society but one also has the chance to see oneself.

I was interested to read the point made by Michael Duane in his letter to FREEDOM (July 18 1981) in which he says 'A Yorkshire miner summed up for me his conclusions about the purpose of education for himself and his mates: "They have to keep us bloody stupid, else we wouldn't go down pit!"'

It is true, of course, that one of the established methods of preventing individual thinking is to produce what Jack London called the Work Beast. In the old days when work in the factories started at 6 o'clock in the morning, Saturdays included, and when children worked half-time in the cotton mills, also starting alternate weeks at 6 a.m. and having to keep awake in the afternoon at school, there wasn't much opportunity for learning or pensive rumination. And that was not so very long ago because I know a few half-timers who are still surviving. One thing they did understand, however stupidified or not--and not all were stupidified--and that was to have it quite clear in their minds that they were oppressed and stifled and prevented from finding full expression for themselves. And, of course, it is always easier to give up the fight when the odds are all stacked up against you. But, and this is the significant but, I have known miners who have, given the opportunity to get out of the pit, chosen to go back to work among their comrades because that was the place where they found people with warm hearts, the selflessness and the honesty. Similarly, it was reported, and I have good reason to believe this, that during the first world war soldiers who came home on leave from the horror of the trenches, became so sickened by the hypocrisy of life in England that they were only too glad to get back among their real friends in the Flanders mud where the shams and the pretence and the fakery did not exist.

I do not disagree with Michael Duane but I would say that it is not in the assessments of intelligence that our problems will be solved. It is the purpose and the use to which intelligence is put that creates the doubt. After all there will be many people with very high IQs who have sat in the seats of the privileged in St Pauls Cathedral and have been bemused by the performance. We have to look much deeper into the workings of the human mind under the influence of a divided society which is manipulated by a power structure to understand how far we can be deceived. It must not be forgotten that the greatest and the most progressive force for change in the last few decades has come from the miners and the reactionaries in our governments have invariably been educated at Oxford or Cambridge.

What is evident here is the strange and contradictory mentality which typifies our society - a division which only the word schizophrenia can describe. It is no wonder that one in ten of our population have at some time or another been patients in mental institutions. We are in a position where language itself becomes a means of misinterpretation, a device to separate rather than to communicate, a code to be understood only by the privileged and which in the individual cloaks with the mask of Judas the possible visions of true human affinities. Intelligence if it is worthy of the name is a creative force and that means that it is a force for change. Life is movement. There is a concealed lie put out by the BBC in their programmes 'Brain of Britain' and 'Mastermind'. The assumption is that the participants come within the category of intelligent and that they probably do have high IQs. But that kind of brain activity is not creative. Computers can be manufactured which would do the job better.

So what with stupefying one section of the peoples minds by the slavery of overwork on routine tasks and computerising others in the so-called scientific technological paradise in which we delude ourselves that we flourish it is not at all remarkable that clever and intelligent people who were chosen as children and told they had passed their 11+plus can now without much thought outside their job manufacture atomic bombs and set up the hellish factories for germ warfare not to mention all the other uses that advanced technology can be turned towards. The other lot, the elite themselves, their position is predetermined. They are doomed by their privilege of property and possession to stay put or lose their substance. It was Bertrand Russell, I think, who said that it is only the aristocracy that have time to think and of course he was in the know in that field, but I think he was speaking only for himself. Although I must include Kropotkin, Bakunin and Tolstoy who were in a similar position with time to think, but they were in an environment which was already on the brink of change. A situation similar to that in which the thinking unemployed now find themselves, myself and the OAPs included.

Let me consider further this gobbledegook language and its capacity for the presentation of false values in what R H Tawney named our Aquisitive Society. I well remember, also in the Thirties, trying to discover if I could make any sense out of the accepted method which controls our relationships, that is, the way people think in our totally commercialised world. I decided to draw up a Balance Sheet and a Profit and Loss account of my existence to see what progress I was making if it could be possible for me to build up some kind of capital account. The problem was that since I had no money I had to use a different standard of measurement and the only available and non-exchangeable commodity was time.

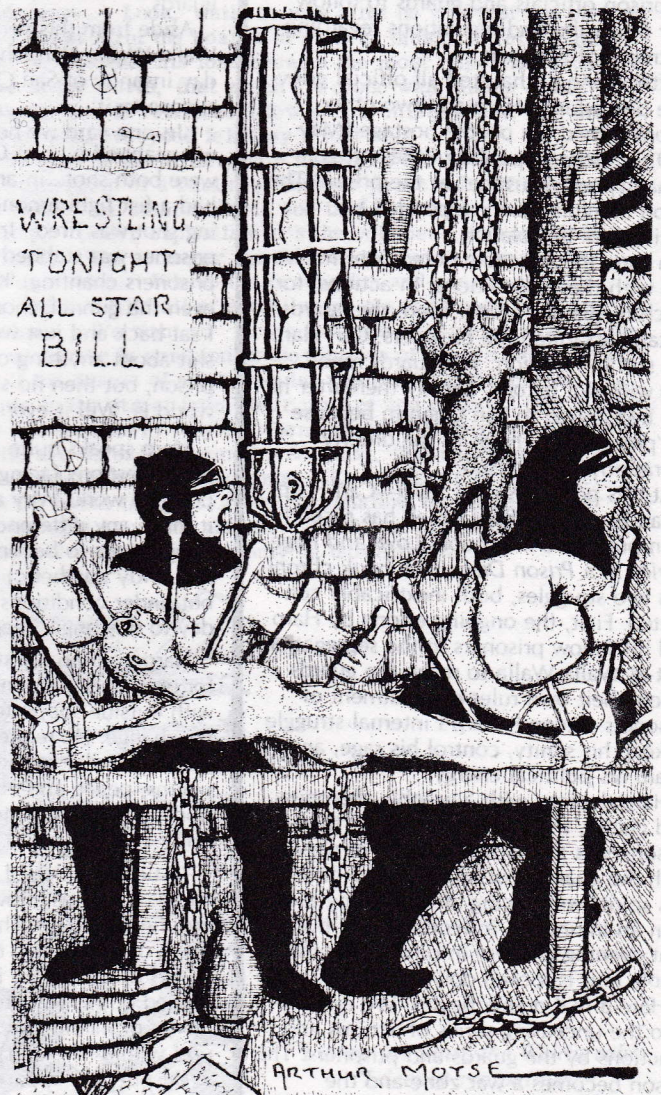
This was how I worked it out. All the debits were the chores the necessary routine jobs that one has to do in order that one can reach the free time which would enable progress to be made. I did the heavy cleaning jobs which we would now call the hoovering and also the shopping and sundry household repairs and so forth. My wife did the cooking and the washing. I had to set down also as debits such essential items as having a bath, getting my hair cut and such like. It was astonishing even though I was employed how little free time I had left to transfer to my capital account because, remember, I was not able to order others to do my chores for me - and really as I saw it, had I been able to do so, what a cock-eyed and distorted view of the world I would rapidly develop. Besides, since money did not exist in my tiny and closely-knit domestic world corruption could not enter. It seemed to me, in this process of translating commercialism into rational humanism that indeed the method was very significant. There was progress in it. Methodism after all made the Industrial Revolution and the Protestant ethic, as Max Weber made so clear, has now run riot all over the world and is continuing its lemming-like race to the cliff edge of eventual destruction. The progress is there all right and the movement is there but the net result in the capitalist term is the profit calculated in figures; figures which in this period of inflation mean less and less and figures which when necessary can be just crossed out or written off as we have seen with the steel industry and British Leyland; figures which nevertheless represent the changing properties of material possessions which nowadays mean the increasing production of waste - a progress and a creativity which Marx called Surplus Value. It is a progress like the progress of a treadmill or like the well known process of digging a hole for the purpose of filling it up again. It represents the maintenance of the status quo in commercial terms.

Different from me in my little domestic Time calculation our society is like a big mansion full of servants all working very hard doing the chores with no other end in view. There is nothing else but chores and we must keep on doing chores for the sake of keeping on doing chores. Big industry does in a big way what I in my small way did around the house but the profit of my free time is not there in the big mansion. It is only the unemployed who will recognise that profit. It seemed to me that the only pure profit is that intangible quality which remains to be stored in the intellectual, spiritual, conscious-awareness capital account. Here is the real human capital, the measure of progress. And only here will we find the basis of the true revolution.

The word profit made me look up the words of St. Mark which have some relevance in this matter: 'For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul,' and further: 'Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Out of curiosity I turned up the modern translation made in 1961 and found the word soul was left out. Perhaps they admit that we have really lost it. This is the new translation: 'What does a man gain by winning the whole world at the cost of his true self?' This reminded me of Shakespeare in Pollonius advice to his son Laertes: 'This above all. To thine own self be true; and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.'

Well, well, it is this falsity that would destroy us and it is for decent, honest human relations that we must fight. With all the ballyhoo and the deliberate excitation by lavish displays of extravagance and opulence in the carnivals of state occasions together with the inborn and habitual trickery used by the politicians it looks like an uphill fight. It has always looked like an uphill fight. But the sham did deceive us all completely in the thirties and nowadays the forces of progress are much stronger. There bluff is being called and they're aware of it. They are retreating behind the shields of their increasing police forces. They are afraid. But mostly they are afraid of the truth.

THEO YEATS



"And Sue said to me, 'But Richard how can someone as sensitive as you and a practicing humanitarian take this job?' And I said, 'Sue love, I genuinely believe that by doing so I can alleviate some of the worst excesses of the system .'"

Love and Rage: Entries in a Prison Diary

by Clifford Olin

Imagine yourself charged with first degree murder and assault. The police had questioned you about the case but you refused to turn state's evidence. The state had blown their case against the guilty party but they needed to assuage the public so you've been chosen as the sacrificial lamb. The trial unfolds before your eyes. You watch as the state presents its case: an old fashioned frame job. The jury returns a guilty verdict. The sentence: two consecutive life terms. You are twenty four years old.

This was the plight of Carl Harp when, in 1973, a jury found him guilty in the "Bellevue Sniper" case. His reaction was to declare himself a political prisoner (1974) and begin engaging in a series of actions (within the Washington State Prison at Walla Walla) designed to force the prison officials and guards to follow their own rules and regulations regarding treatment of prisoners.

After having exhausted all official grievance procedures, Harp and two other prisoners held ten people hostage (May 1979) in order to publicize the "gross inhumanity and injustice" at the prison. The prison administration responded by placing him in isolation.

In June the prisoners rioted over frustration with these conditions. In actions, for which twelve were later fired, the guards brutally assaulted the prisoners. Carl Harp was still in isolation. The guards raped him with riot batons. Shortly thereafter he was transferred to San Quentin because he "presented a threat to the orderly operation of the prison."

At this point—August 1979—Carl Harp began keeping a diary which has recently been published in a book: *Love and Rage, Entries in a Prison Diary*. The book chronicles two struggles, both inextricably connected. First, the ongoing efforts by Harp and his fellow prisoners in the segregation unit at Walla Walla to make the guards follow their own rules on treatment of prisoners. Second, Harp's internal struggle to keep his sanity, control his rage, and retain his political energy.

Harp depicts, with a graphic sharpness and clarity, the highs and lows of the prisoners as they wage a battle of nerves with the guards. For instance, the prisoner's spirits were flying after learning they'd won an injunction in federal court but that evening all were informed that the whole unit is locked down.

Here a real drama begins. We are drawn into the unceasing series of actions and reactions by the guards and prisoners. The prison becomes a war zone and the reasonableness of the prisoners' demands simply amplifies the grimness of Harp's description of the unit two days into the lockdown:

"...Whole unit locked down—no yard, showers, phone calls, visits, medication,

etc. Still no reason given...this is the weekend, so we are at their mercy, as they well know...on A and B tiers they are bombing the guards with shit and piss. One prisoner here on D tier bombed them good. All tiers have water, shit, piss, garbage and food on them. Death row today set the garbage in front of their cells on fire. Last night one guard closed all the solid doors on A tier, and then shut off their lights leaving them in total darkness..."

Disgusting? Revolting? Exactly, and precisely Harp's point, that prisoners are forced into taking such actions to achieve any change. The guards responded by attempting to discredit and divide the prisoners; offering privileges to one tier and not another, or staging events, like serving a hot meal (instead of sack lunches) to the prisoners while the local press take pictures, to gain "public support for the guards."

Aside from this very real drama in Walla Walla, Harp shows us the day to day insanity of San Quentin and his response to it:

"In one yard we heard a white prisoner was stabbed by two Chicanos, the latter were both shot...in another yard Blacks had a fist fight among themselves, a warning shot was fired...In the yard where the prisoner was stabbed we heard other prisoners chanting, 'Kill! Kill!' Everybody, even the gunrail, thought that was funny. I sat back and just wondered why I give a shit about anything or anyone—sick place prison, but then no sicker than the whole world is. Will it ever change?"

Harp speaks quite clearly to the inevitable questions facing anybody involved in political work: Why am I doing this? Will it make any difference? He confronts the temptations to become cynical (and consequently apathetic) that face everyone, but under conditions so extreme that our day to day anger seems trivial.

Harp continually stresses the necessity for unity, both among the prisoners, and with outside supporters, as a prerequisite for change. He relates tactics used by the guards (similar to those used to break unions, peace and environmental coalitions, and so forth) to undermine this unity:

"B-tier was moved to C-tier and fed hot meals. Yard was allowed and some prisoners took it...The whole unit came down on those who took yard...If C-tier breaks down we are isolated and will be singled out as leaders plus give the pigs plenty of media play on our lack of support within (the unit)..."

Despite this apparent resolve, Harp makes clear that his sanity is threatened during a lock up situation, indeed at all times:

"...Sometimes I swear I have no idea what I am doing or even trying to do...a prisoner down the tier nussed out...

smashing everything in his cell, and screeching at the top of his lungs, 'Let me out! Let me out!' I sit here wondering if I will ever do what he has done—it kind of scares me to think about it...screaming, sometimes, you think is your only relief, but inside you know you might not stop once you start."

Harp, understandably, holds mountains of rage for a society to which he supposedly still owes a debt, and to the guards and prison officials who've physically and mentally assaulted him. But he uses this rage in an effort to change the world he inhabits and to seek his own freedom. As he puts it, "My rage is some kind of energy, and my love, my only comfort."

Harp offers insights into the prison system garnered and formulated from his experience: sometimes serio-comic—"In prison they fuck up fried eggs, so you can imagine what they do to people." And often giving a perspective seldom heard, as in this statement on the economics of prisons:

"...the Penal System has nothing to do with justice—it is about business, and a very good one at that. The merchandise is human beings who are considered undesirable...these human beings are used as pawns and fed on by thousands—most especially bureaucrats and politicians... The Penal System is one of the most stable parts of the economy..."

One constantly hears about how much it costs to keep one prisoner per year in the Penal System, but what one never hears about is how much one prisoners is worth to the State."

However, *Love and Rage*... is far from being a humorless diatribe against the evil capitalists. Unlike some books of the prison writings genre, Harp's book is leavened with mildly comic asides—he's a human being and a "pawn of the bureaucrats."

For instance, in the midst of the lockdown (hence no showers) Harp writes: "Took a bird bath today, which was a trip. One stands in the toilet and pours water over himself." Or after eight days on a personal and ineffective hunger strike. "I have begun eating again. No sense to that tactic and the bananas were looking too good."

Carl Harp tells us how he sees the world from the perspective of an innocent and now irrevocably radicalized prisoner. We can draw inspiration for our own struggle by reading about, and sharing, the love and rage that sustain him.

The book is available through Pulp Press, 572 Beatty Street, Vancouver, Canada V6B 2T3. All profits go towards Harp's and a general prisoner defense fund.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM 'FREEDOM'
BOOKSHOP. REVIEW TAKEN FROM
'COOPER POINT JOURNAL'