

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

25p

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## TRIGGER-HAPPY YANKEE DOODLE

BEFORE we are accused of racism, or nationalism or any such non-anarchist attitude, may we ask readers to read the following paragraph from last Sunday's *Observer*:

However, even the *New York Times* thought there might be something to be said for 'giving a black eye to Colonel Qadhafi,' and President Reagan evidently had no doubt about the overwhelming support for it among his country's electors.

He pressed the message home on Thursday when he donned his commander-in-chief's cap to board the aircraft carrier *Constellation* 50 miles off the coast of California to watch 'a demonstration of fire-power' by F-14 jets. He later told the cheering crew it had been 'a Yankee Doodle day. . . . Let friend and foe alike know that America has the muscle to back up its words.' He was comparing the F-14 display with what he called the message sent to Libya and 'the enemies of freedom.'

The decision to go ahead with the naval exercise off the Libyan coast was taken by the President himself at a National Security Council meeting in late July.

The 'message' sent to Libya by the United States Airforce was the shooting down of two Libyan planes in the Mediterranean Gulf of Sirte, under circumstances which look very like provo-

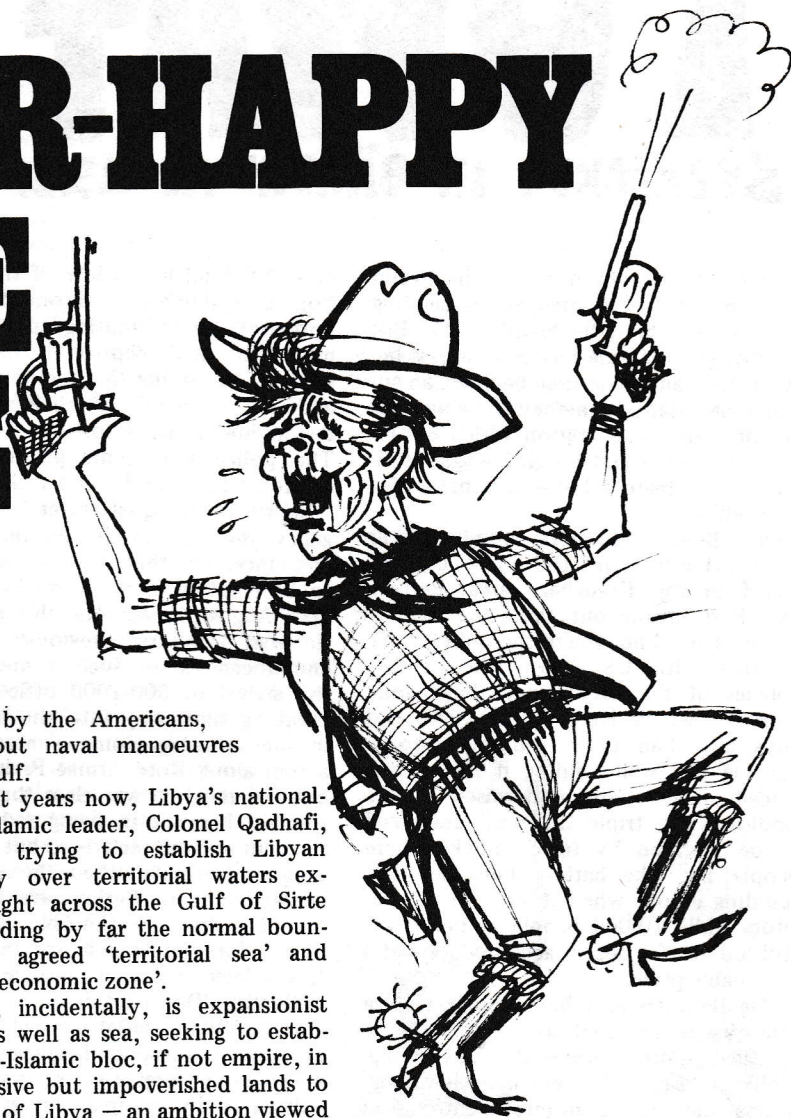
cation — by the Americans, carrying out naval manoeuvres in the Gulf.

For eight years now, Libya's nationalist, pan-Islamic leader, Colonel Qadhafi, has been trying to establish Libyan sovereignty over territorial waters extending right across the Gulf of Sirte and exceeding by far the normal boundaries of agreed 'territorial sea' and 'exclusive economic zone'.

Qadhafi, incidentally, is expansionist on land as well as sea, seeking to establish a pan-Islamic bloc, if not empire, in the extensive but impoverished lands to the south of Libya — an ambition viewed with some concern by the central African states whose boundaries he would then reach (although he *was* very friendly with President Amin of Uganda). Nor is he popular among his fellow Arab leaders, among whom Sadat has referred to him as a 'madman'.

One reason for this could be that he is given to policies like defending the Gulf, 'even if it meant war with the United States or a Third World War'!

So much for the little madman. What about the big one? While President Reagan wants to show off his muscles bashing little Libya (for there seems to be evidence that the Gulf incident was planned at the highest level), could it be that he really wants to stir up conflict around the periphery of Europe in order to bring more pressure on those European leaders reluctant to take up the US offer of neutron bombs?



These weapons, with their 'limited' use as 'tactical' weapons in the 'theatres of war' — oh, what a lovely drama — not only threaten total destruction in those theatres — European, USA for the use of — but also make the idea of nuclear war more acceptable because of their so-called 'limited' use, on military targets.

It does not seem to occur to bold Ronnie and his advisers that, were the terrible Russians defeated in the theatres of war chosen by Reagan, they would not hesitate to launch the big ones against the USA itself, at whatever cost in retaliation.

Someone should tell Reagan that in real life the good guys don't always win. Can't some kindly producer in Hollywood offer him a last role as an aging gunslinger, so that he can live out his fantasies — harmlessly?



An alle Freunde und Genossen/innen in  
Amsterdam, Groningen, London, Liverpool, Kopenhagen, Stockholm,  
Bologna, Madrid, Baskenland, Ost-Berlin, Moskau, Prag, Warschau

Freiburg, Köln, München, Zürich, Basel,  
Paris, Rom, Neapel, Belfast,  
Lode und Rest der Welt

# TUWAT

## SPEKTAKEL IN BÄRLIN AB 25.8.



FOR the 20th anniversary of the Berlin Wall hundreds of journalists are sending back reports about the 'divided city'. But the division that matters now is less between East and West than between an authoritarian state, its money, its police, its violence, and a generation which has rejected its values and is fighting against injustices to create a better alternative for themselves.

The Berlin squatters number over 2,000 living in about 160 houses concentrated in the Kreuzberg area; Berlin's East End, strung out along the wall. A double front line, where the police work together with US Army. The housing policies of the City Senate have done more to wreck Kreuzberg socially and physically than all the bombing, street-fighting and wall-building it had experienced. Houses are modernised so the landlords can triple the rent, are razed to be replaced by tower blocks where people live like battery hens, are left standing empty when it suits the speculators while 10,000 people in Berlin are still looking for decent accommodation at a reasonable price.

The Berliners have had enough. Only a minority is prepared to squat, to live a political gesture, because the risks are big. Unlike in England, there is no law at all against the abuse of property; entering an empty house is a criminal act, and living as a group in one is 'forming a criminal organisation' in the courts' hard-line reading of paragraph 129 of the German constitution. But it is hard to find a Berliner on the streets who does not sympathise with that minority. Which is why prominent individuals — professors at the Free University, priests etc — and organisations like the unions, the Church, Young Democrats, the Students' Union and others support the movement; by staging sleep-ins in threatened houses, by helping with publicity, by giving money for court expenses and the day-to-day costs of renovating and running the houses. Some houses are 'sponsored' by outside groups.

But the movement is, obviously, not just about housing policy; it attacks the whole social and political and economic system. The State and the right-wing press, which in Germany is much more

powerful than here (80% of the circulation is in the hands of one man, Axel Springer) are attempting to isolate the movement and deprive it of popular support by calling the demos and other actions 'terrorism', by labelling the protestors hooligans, terrorists, even fascists. The police use agents provocateurs to create conflicts and incite violent action.

So when the squatters called an emergency meeting to discuss the Senate's announcement that 9 or 10 houses were to be emptied in the 4 weeks from the 20th August, it was clear that a new tactic was necessary. Previously the only announcement of such a measure was the arrival of 500-1000 officers of law breaking their way into the house at 4 in the morning. Some wanted terrorist action along Rote Armee Fraktion lines, but for most it was clear that the way forward lies not in being reduced to a few out-and-out activists, but in mobilising protestors in their thousands. Previous demos in Berlin have had up to 15,000 people, but the only reaction was in the form of truncheons and tear-gas. It was decided to hold a festival, 'TUWAT', in English; 'Do something'.

The TUWAT leaflet has been translated into every European language and must reach every organisation, political and cultural, every group and every individual

who is engaged in protest of any sort against the system, who is fighting for an alternative or simply dissatisfied with what is. Regardless of what they are protesting for, because all are protesting against the same set-up. The German authorities have over-reacted as usual and banned it totally. But it can't be stopped now by confiscating leaflets, arresting people, banning demos, concerts, etc, because it is not a programme of events, it is a call which has gone out to all protestors. You go to Kreuzberg and meet the other tens of thousands, and after that no-one knows. The only certainty is that it won't be a quiet Autumn in Berlin.

### TO GET TO BERLIN:

The cheapest flights if you're rich enough are with Laker (Gatwick). Prins Ferries sail to Hamburg from Harwich for about £25 (less for ISIC holders), hitching from Hamburg's good and takes 4-5 hours max. There's Transalpino too, and hitching all the way will be relatively easy because thousands of people — the kind who give lifts — will be heading that way. You don't need any special visas or anything but I advise you not to try smuggling anything, especially now!





# Peace March 1981

ON Hiroshima day — and just after Mitterand held another nuclear weapons test — Peace March 81 entered Paris. The march, whose main call was for a nuclear-free Europe, was originated by the Norwegian women's peace movement and had left Copenhagen on Midsummer's day. With a core of about 120, who had marched the whole way, and several thousand supporters — mainly from Scandinavia — we swept joyously through Paris, led by Japanese Buddhist monks and carried along by the raucous Fall Out Marching Band's music.

People waved and shouted support from the streets and bars and for the first time in my life someone came up to me on a demo and gave me money to buy food with — about £3.00! The police kept out of sight (but were ready in coaches in the side streets) and the march itself directed traffic. Despite the march's clear popularity with Parisians, there was no support from any of the left parties or unions, or from French peace groups. In part this was due to poor organisation — there had never really been a French support group, so there was no publicity around Paris — and partly for political reasons. With the Socialists and Communists both committed to an expansion of French nuclear weaponry, disarmament is a touchy issue for the left. A comrade from the Paris anarchist 'Radio Gulliver' free radio station, who was reporting on the march, said that the anarchists were ignoring the event because the demands were too wishy-washy and did not confront militarism as such.

Throughout the march, it seems that the organisers had been very defensive about the politics of disarmament. In Brussels they had tried to stop participants joining an anti-Nato demonstration, and had banned all political slogans and banners. Whilst there was a genuine concern that in Germany the local Communist party — the DKP — might try to swamp the march with their own partisan views, this led to considerable stifling of various dissident viewpoints on politics or on organisation. The pre-

appointed March Council dominated all decision-making and saw the meetings of all marchers as 'advisory'. For many of the long-distance marchers therefore, the arrival in Paris couldn't have come soon enough!

After brilliant sunshine the march ended in pouring rain. I heard only one speaker — E P Thompson, who roundly condemned Mitterand's resumption of nuclear testing and said he hoped future peace marches would be able to take place across the Iron Curtain as a start in building a European-wide peace movement. An East-West peace movement would be difficult as ultimately or immediately it would have to challenge the Soviet ruling bureaucracy. At the moment the old men of the Kremlin are reacting to the Western peace movement with sympathy — Brezhnev had sent a message of support to the peace march, for example. Fortunately the END group released a statement condemning Soviet militarism. The last thing we need is the hand of friendship/kiss of death (call it what you will) from the SS20 bunch. With CND signs being seen on Polish marches, the Soviets may well back off themselves, of course.

From talking to the long-distance marchers it seems that the march was effective in encouraging isolated peace workers and did have an effect on the communities it passed through; and of course the personal friendships built up over the weeks were important. In my

few days in Paris I made useful contact with other peace workers (as well as meeting some Swedish syndicalists and Spanish CNTers who came to join the — previously banned — anarchist flag).

After the march there were three days of festivity. An informal peace festival in the 'Eco-Vie', an ecological centre, a more organised festival in the Paris Hippodrome and a formal session or two (which last I skipped). Many of the marchers fasted from Hiroshima day to the time of the Nagasaki bombing. The more organised parts of the festivals were a little dull — and the scene of march paraphernalia — tee shirts, badges, etc, doubling and trebling in price! The Fall Out Marching Band stole the show — in the streets outside 'Eco-Vie' with an impromptu dance which local Vietnamese and Turkish residents joined in. That, to me, is what peace campaigning is all about!

ROSS BRADSHAW

## Maggie snub

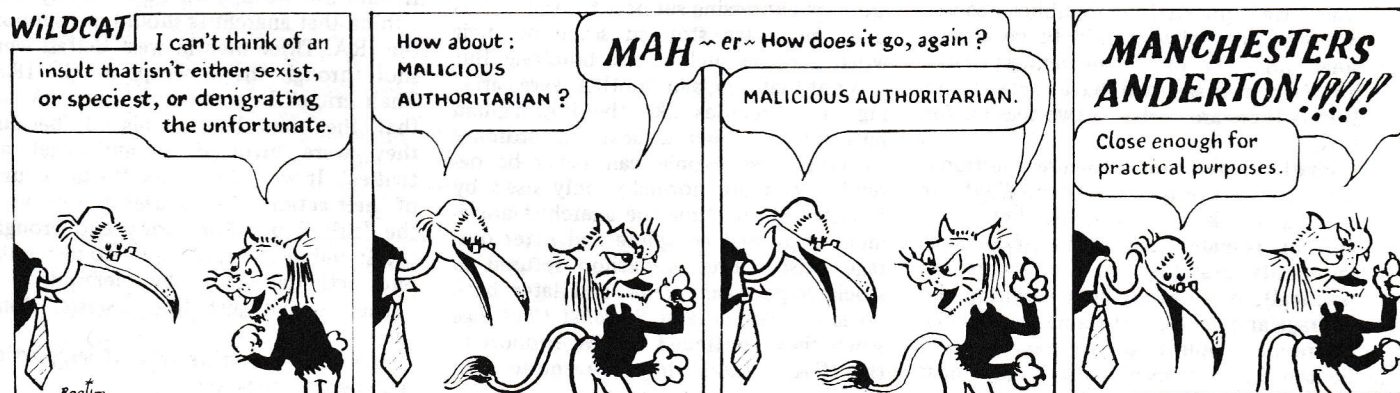
OWEN CARRON, the victorious Anti-H-Block candidate in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone byelection, has made a request to see Mrs Thatcher urgently to discuss the hunger strikers' demands — although he is refusing to take up his seat in the Commons.

Maggie has refused to meet him, but may offer him an underling from the Northern Ireland Office.

Seems to us that if Maggie doesn't encourage full use of constitutional methods, she can hardly complain if Irish Nationalists continue on the way they are going.

## Role Models

THE survey industry continues remorselessly to cast light on aspects of our society. A team of market consultants has asked 2,000 people aged between 16 and 20 'who would you most like to swap lives with?' Favoured role models are, in order, by sex, the Princess of Wales, Princess Caroline of Monaco, Elizabeth Taylor, Miss World, Kate Bush, Debbie Harry, Margaret Thatcher and Joan Collins or, alternatively, John Travolta, Mick Jagger, Roger Moore, Prince Charles, Shakin' Stevens, Kevin Keegan, Adam Ant and Bryan Ferry.





# Birmingham Anarchist Centre

THERE is a sizeable libertarian presence in and around Birmingham, but until now there has been no focus for anarchist activity here; nowhere that libertarians could meet regularly, or find support in an emergency.

The Syndicalist movement that grew up in the period 1910 — 1920 in Britain was based firmly upon the labour halls and workers' clubs. During the Spanish Revolution of 1936 the libertarian workers rushed to their union halls when they heard of the fascist's revolt, thus forming a recognisable force. We seek to gather all those who understand and sympathise with our views into one force, not necessarily one organisation, but with one aim. Drawing on the experience of the old International Libertarian Centre/Centro Iberico — which demonstrated the great advantages of having a 'walk-in' centre — and the new Autonomy Centre in London, a group of us have launched a similar project. Some of us have experience of the old Centro Iberico, and are in regular contact with the comrades of the Autonomy Centre. By establishing an anarchist centre in Birmingham we hope to encourage the growth of a network of anarchist clubs around the country which would put the libertarian movement on a firm bedrock, cutting across the sectarian divide of paper organisations, and mark-

ing a return to the traditional libertarian idea of a decentralised club movement, based firmly in the local community. In order to establish a sense of historical continuity and local identity we have adopted the name of the Christopher Davis Appreciation Society.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING.....

As a stepping stone to obtaining our own premises we are organising a series of socials, meetings, benefit concerts, and other fund-raising events.

In order to put the project on a practical footing, we have decided to organise ourselves as a political club. Annual membership (1 October 1981 — 1 October 1982) is open to all who agree with our aims, and costs £10 waged, £5 unwaged (easy terms are available for anyone on the dole who can't afford to pay £5 in one lump sum). We are in the process of opening a bank account into which subscriptions, donations and other money raised can be paid (details of this will be circulated later).

The fund-raising events are intended not only to raise money for the centre, but to serve as a means of sustaining interest and keeping people in regular contact until we actually have premises. The London Autonomy Centre received

a lot of support from such bands as CRASS, POISON GIRLS and UB 40. We already have offers of help from some bands and are in the process of approaching others (these will cater for more than one musical taste: folk, new-wave, pop, etc). Meetings will try to stimulate both interest in the centre and also serve as a springboard to local activity. Besides guest speakers, we can also promise videos (THE ANGRY BRIGADE, PERSONS UNKNOWN, etc) and films (THE WOBBLES, etc). Once we have permanent premises we want to use them not only as a place for libertarian activists to meet and socialise, but also as a focal point for activity in the local community.

All this project needs to succeed is your support and participation.

Join the Anarchy Club now!

Send money, ideas for raising money, or just more money!

Come to our meetings (every Friday, 7.30, upstairs in the White Lion, Horse Fair, B1).

The Anarchy Club needs you!

The Christopher Davis Appreciation Society,  
c/o The Peace Centre,  
18, Moor Street,  
Ringway,  
BIRMINGHAM, B4.

## 'Poison Pen' on Ireland

RECENTLY Ireland has been very much in the news because of the hunger strike. It has also been much discussed within the anarchist movement — in FREEDOM, the papers and pamphlets from the Belfast group, in Canterbury's *Alternative Communication* and within the pages of *Poison Pen*. We have also discussed it at length within the group.

Some anarchists recently have been saying that since we are opposed to the British state, its armed forces and its policy of imperialism in Ireland, we must therefore support the IRA.

There have always been some anarchists who have supported the republican cause; however, they always used to be a very small minority of the movement. This, however, now seems to have changed and I think there are probably two reasons for this.

Firstly there is the immense emotional support for the hunger strike. Whatever one may think of the demands themselves (and I personally am against ever demanding political status — all prisoners are political), one cannot help admiring the courage and determination of the strikers. There are people who have been arrested by the RUC (probably one of the most vicious police forces in Europe) backed

by an army which they consider to be one of occupation; they have been tried in courts without juries, where the only evidence needed for a conviction is a signed confession and where the judges despise and hate the community from which the prisoners come.

In prison they have been treated brutally by guards who have nothing but contempt for them and their politics. And now they are prepared to die painful and lonely deaths in a last protest. I can well understand why some people's gut reaction is to give support to the IRA.

The second reason that more anarchists are now expressing support for the IRA is that they have stopped some of their worst excesses such as pub bombing. But it is not that long ago the IRA were carrying out atrocities like the Birmingham pub bombs. Such attacks on ordinary working class people can never be defended and are normally only used by fascists. At the time the anarchist movement expressed complete and utter outrage. Rising Free bookshop refused to stock *Republican News* and later both *Socialist Worker* and *Socialist Challenge* when they continued to give support to the IRA. I think they were quite right to do so.



Events which occurred in Northern Ireland last week show quite clearly why I think that anarchists should not support the IRA. Three men in west Belfast were shot through the kneecaps by the IRA. Their crime? In a statement the IRA said that they had been punished 'because they were involved in anti-social activities'. It went on to say 'In the course of their actions they abused the name of the Irish Republican Army and brought the Republican movement into disrepute. Such activities will not be tolerated.'

They sound just like fascists, don't they?

How can anarchists talk of supporting such people, such acts?



One of the things that anarchists are most strongly opposed to is militarism. Not necessarily violence as such: people have a right to defend themselves, and we support the people of Brixton, Toxteth and Bogside who have acted so well in defending themselves against state aggression. But militarism is something different: it is organising people into hierarchic groups on a permanent professional basis for the sole reason of committing acts of violence. It is also always linked to nationalism and patriotism and quite often religion as well — none of which anarchists can support.

Surely no-one can believe that the IRA is any less militaristic than the British army — they have their own chains of command, their order-givers and order-takers, the generals and privates. They are certainly just as nationalistic as the British army and see themselves as good patriots. They claim that they are fighting a war. And so they are.

In wars the workers kill each other and each others' families because they do not see that they are being used as tools by the state. The reason they do not see it is that the state blinds them with shit like nationalism and religion.

In Northern Ireland there are two working-class communities who see themselves as being at war with each other. Both communities are oppressed and exploited by British capitalism. While the Protestants are better off than the Catholics, they are also considerably worse off than any working class community on mainland Britain. Many Catholics, being heartily fed up with the discrimination and harassment they have received ever since the creation of Northern Ireland would like to join the Republic. But that too is a repressive capitalist country — would they really be that much better off?

The working class of the whole of Ireland have a common interest in uniting to overthrow both the capitalisms which exploit and rape that unhappy island. But they are blinded by the lies of the jingoistic purveyors of hate on both sides of this war.

And to those who say that the IRA are fighting for a socialist transformation of the whole of Ireland, all I can say is that I do not trust people who call themselves socialists yet use tactics such as sectarian killing, torture and indiscriminate bomb attacks to achieve their aims.

As anarchists we are opposed to British militarism and imperialism, so what we ought to do is build a militant libertarian campaign against them in our local areas, not glorify an authoritarian nationalist movement like the IRA.

Anarchists who disagree should remember the stance the movement took up during the Vietnam war — 'we support neither Washington nor Hanoi, but the oppressed people of S E Asia.'

STEVE

# Contempt for the Law

BY the time you read this, the new law on Contempt will apply. It is, in the words of MPs 'draconian, illiberal and unnecessary..' Clause 8, which bars any discussion of what is discussed by a jury 'in the course of their deliberations in any legal proceedings', has been described by no less a person than the Attorney General as a 'bastard clause'.

Juries are unpopular with the legal establishment. They have been known to bring in verdicts which upset judges or the police. In 1975, Robert Mark, (then Metropolitan Police Commissioner and now well known tyre salesman) said that jurors 'know little of the law, are occasionally stupid, prejudiced, barely literate and often incapable of applying the law as public opinion is led to suppose.'

We are partly to blame for this mistrust. Jurors during the 'Persons Unknown' trial of 1979 had the impudence to resent being screened and vetted. They gave a not-guilty verdict (after up to eighteen

months maximum security imprisonment on 'remand' for the defendants). For their pains they were held back and harangued by the judge, who said that the evidence 'would not have confused a child'.

Many judicial figures have expressed displeasure at the wilfulness of juries. Many offences have been removed to magistrates' courts for 'summary' trial. The enshrined influence of the jury has steadily been eroded, from majority verdicts to vetting. No doubt the process would be more efficient without this lay interference. Anyone who has observed such 'summary' justice will appreciate this.

It would be inappropriate for anarchists to support any part of the judicial process. But given a choice between trial by an established, legal functionary or by a more or less random, occasionally stupid, childish set of people, I know which I'd prefer.

## 'Riots' Pamphlet

THE latest developments on the streets of Britain have shown firstly that the working class has not forgotten its ancient and most trusted mode of protest and secondly that the class struggle has entered a more intense and vicious stage. The riots have posed questions few revolutionaries have tried to confront.

What we are suggesting is that a pamphlet is produced covering three main areas:

1. Eye witness accounts and discussion of riots from individual areas. Local anarchist groups could get this information.
2. Discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the riots; the fears of those who are not committed to violence, or of those into violence too. Possibilities: no-go areas? Riot tactics and strategy, can they be improved?
3. Riots and revolution. Where do we go from here? How to beat state repression. How do we avoid isolation of rioters from the rest of the working class — can we? Why is it so quiet in the workplaces?

This is an appeal to all revolutionaries to do a bit of thinking and research to help unify the struggles. Please send contributions to the following address:

L A P  
Box R V  
59 Cookridge St.  
Leeds  
LS2 3AN

Anonymity is highly recommended, pseudonyms essential, but concrete material most necessary.

## IN BRIEF

THE British government is still being embarrassed by the Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The latest incident is over the practice of tapping telephones. All governments do it, but most have laws to regulate it. Commentators have proved unreassured by government statements that a spirit of fair play suffuses the enterprise and that very little tapping goes on anyway. The presence of a building in Chelsea, with a staff budget of £1.3 million reinforced the doubts. Even Lord Diplock's report was not sufficient. Now a legal team, under the Attorney-General, has gone to Strasbourg to persuade the commission that Britain is meeting its requirement of 'adequate and effective guarantees against abuse.' Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, comments; 'The public should trust the secret decisions made by Ministers and civil servants.'

COMMITTEES are beginning to estimate costs for the Pope's visit to Britain next year. The five hour visit to Manchester has been costed at £700,000, most of it for police wages. About half of this will be met locally, the rest by a government grant.

A MEMBER of the FREEDOM collective has received a follow-up letter noting that he has failed to complete his census form. The letter carries a reminder about the possible fine (up to £50) and asks if he could 'see his way clear' (sic) to filling in a form. Has anyone else had a follow-up?



# LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LET

## JENSEN & IQ 1.

Dear FREEDOM,

Pace Alice Scrive, Jensen's work is sloppy: he equated IQ with intelligence; failed to define it; confused structure with function; claimed to have used Burt's studies of twins and when asked to reproduce that evidence in 1972, stated, 'alas, nothing remained of Burt's possessions ... unfortunately, the original data are lost and all that remains are the results of statistical analyses' — and we know now just how valid they were.

No one would waste time on the non-question of whether 'intelligence' is supposed to be determined by hereditary or environmental factors, were it not that Piaget has been ousted in most of the colleges I visited during the last twelve years. Such a move suits those who have fostered the educational retreat we know so well, and now fast becoming a rout.

'There are intelligence genes, which are found in populations in different proportions, somewhat like the distribution of blood groups. The number of intelligence genes seems lower, overall, in the black population than in the white' (Jensen 1969). Blacks not dimmer, Ms Scrive?

What a revolutionary discovery! How odd that noone else seems able to confirm it!

MICHAEL DUANE

London

## JENSEN & IQ 2.

Dear comrades,

Pat Isiorho (15.8.81) makes the same error as I did in my review of Tony Gibson's book on Eysenck (6.6.81, corrected by Tony Gibson 20.6.81), when he says Eysenck and Jensen base their research on the classic data of Sir Cyril Burt.

Our error is explicable if not excusable; we judge by first impressions. In his famous 1969 paper, Jensen clearly sees Burt as the most important single source of empirical findings on the heritability of intelligence. He says

'The most satisfactory attempt to estimate the separate variance components is the work of Sir Cyril Burt, based on large samples of many kinships drawn mostly from the school populations of London.' and a little further on

'The conceptually simplest estimate of heritability is, of course, the correlation between identical twins reared apart .... The Burt study is the most interesting for four reasons: (a) .. the largest sample; (b) IQ distribution .. very close to the general population;

(c) all twin pairs were separated within the first 6 months; (d) most important, the separated twins were spread over the entire range of socio-economic levels.'

But there is a table of 51 estimates of heritability, at least 33 of which are independent of Burt. Jensen uses the average of these estimates, 0.80. If the Burt studies were excluded the remaining average would be about 0.76, making no difference to the conclusion.

There is, by the way, a well tried formula for deciding the heritability within a population of organisms, of any characteristic which can be quantified; it was worked out at Rothamsted Agricultural Experimental Station in 1918. As Anne Scrive points out, the distribution of IQ in a human population can be consistently and elegantly explained as a heritable characteristic, while any explanation in terms of environment alone is contradictory.

Differences between populations, on the other hand, are difficult to attribute to genetics. If the heritability of height in wheat, for example, is 0.95, and if the average height of wheat in a plot at Rothamsted is twice that in another plot, then to conclude that the genes for height were different in the different plots would be a laughable mistake. Heritability of a genetically complex feature only appertains in a defined, randomly distributed population.

As plausible effectors of intelligence differences between populations, one might advance all sorts of systematic differences in their environments; diet, emotional stress in babies, maternal smoking, atmospheric lead. But the exercise is unnecessary; there are differences in the environments of hill dwellers and lowland dwellers, Catholic and Protestant, rich and poor, and it is reasonable to hold the environment responsible for observed phenotype differences, without identifying a particular aspect of the environment.

Of course, if some particular feature of the environment is alleged to be effective, the allegation should be investigated. Jensen investigated the link between IQ and lack of opportunity, and says the discrepancy between blacks and whites 'cannot be completely or directly attributed to discrimination or inequalities in education'. He cannot extrapolate from this that the discrepancy is not attributable to some other environmental difference, nor does he. His concern is that the possibility of a genetic difference should not be overlooked.

'It seems not unreasonable, in view of the fact that intelligence variation has a large genetic component, to hypothesize that genetic factors may play a part in this picture. But such an hypothesis is anathema to many social scientists!'

Whether one concurs depends on how one interprets the phrase 'not unreason-

able'. Plausible? Yes, the hypothesis is plausible. Scientifically useful? No, it is untestable. Politic? Certainly not — unless of course one actually intends to help make racism seem scientifically respectable.

DONALD ROOUM

## RIOTING IN SCOTLAND

Dear FREEDOM,

There has I believe been some comment on the absence of rioting in Scotland. There were in fact a few incidents in the so-called deprived areas of Edinburgh; Pilton and Craigmillar for instance. These involved mainly young children who attempted to set up barricades and threw stones at passing cars and taxis. Scotland has a bad reputation for urban violence involving young gangs and vicious stabbings, particularly in Glasgow. Jimmy Boyle's autobiography, *A Sense of Freedom*, will give some idea of what is involved. In these deprived areas shops and pubs have for many years been protected with metal shutters. The causes of urban violence are no doubt to be found mainly in poverty, ignorance and brutalised childhood, the products of capitalist social exploitation in most cases. Some of the 'rioters' involved in the recent disturbances in England may be muggers and petty thieves who would be quite happy to take on the life-style of the rich if this were possible. However it is also highly likely that percentage of the 'rioters' were social revolutionaries not necessarily interested in obtaining material possessions from shop windows but demonstrating their anger at the exploitation and brutality of the British Military Police State. The somewhat incoherent violence that has existed on the streets for many years cannot be a blueprint for any social revolution and the IRA and Trotskyite red armies cannot be held up as examples of genuine social change either. Libertarians must bear in mind the goal of our revolution — a peaceful society of mutual co-operation based on the absence of violence and co-ercion. Organised military training involving marching drills, orders, officers etc is totally incompatible with anarchism.

The police and the army cannot however be fully blamed for what is happening. Like skin-heads and the Hitler youth they are prey to propaganda. Amongst the socially deprived the NF can recruit as easily, if not more so, than an anarchist utopian. It's easy to hate a foreign culture. So easy in fact that governments can obtain the money for nuclear weapons without any difficulty. In Britain today there are plenty of psychologically damaged and demented people quite happy to see Moscow obliterated by a



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nuclear bomb. Though we cannot condone the horrors of clockwork orange street violence we can see only too clearly that the biggest potential mass murderers are still the members of political parties and governments, military scientists, 'royal' families and industrial monopolists.

Peace and freedom,  
A M ANDERSON

Edinburgh

## WELL FED PRISONERS

Dear FREEDOM,

We Oral Abortions read Dave Morris' article on Technology in Vol. 42, No. 14 of FREEDOM, and we agreed with what was written, and that if the ideas were put into practice then a free society would follow.

However we then stopped dreaming, as we suggest he does. There is no way that there will ever be 'an anarchist society throughout the world', as there are too many people in the world who are violent, power greedy, sexist and other disgusting things. Even the average person would not want his/her life pattern changed, as s/he is quite content to let the government rule his/her life and just to exist as a 'well-fed prisoner'. Only the anarchists and other intelligent people, who realise the danger of living as most people do today, and the possibility of an anarchist society existing, would not be against his ideas.

But because the world cannot be one big anarchist society it does not mean that we cannot make lots of little ones, all over the world, which can grow and grow until they are large enough to be able to put as many of these ideas as possible into practice.

Of course, it would be easy for us all ('us' being us anarchists) to live in an anarchy separate from the rest of the society, but that would not stop the ruin of the world. We must therefore act now by growing large enough to have sufficient public support to dispose of all forms of government, and undesirable technology.

We must stop dreaming and act before it is too late.

Grow, Act and Survive,  
ORAL ABORTIONS

## UNCHOKED ALF REPLY

Dear FREEDOM,

A belated, but nevertheless necessary, reply to Philip Sansom ('Don't choke, ALF' FREEDOM, 20th June).

1. The Animal Liberation Front does not equate ordinary animal husbandry with factory farming. There are ethical arguments against the rearing and killing of animals for food even when this is not done in factory farm conditions — but factory farming is far worse (and receives greater priority in ALF activities) because of the much greater suffering and deprivation that it involves.

2. The fact that some animals kill and eat other animals is not a justification for the killing of other animals for food by human beings any more than the fact that some animals have very hierarchical structures in their societies (eg pecking orders) is a justification for hierarchies in ours. Although we human beings are quite definitely animals ourselves (and the ALF does not seek in any way to deny this) we differ from other animals in the sense that, in general, we have the ability to choose whether or not to slaughter other animals to fill our bellies. Seeing as we can choose a way of life which does not involve the killing of other animals for food it seems only right that we should make that choice.

3. Even if it could be proved that animal experimentation has contributed to the curing of certain diseases in humans this would still not provide justification for such tests. To cause suffering to one group of creatures because there is a chance that perhaps this might lead to the alleviation of suffering in another group at some time in the future can never be justifiable. It has been said that useful medical discoveries were made by the Nazi's experiments on the Jews, but this surely does not justify such experiments. Animals used in laboratories differ from human beings in many ways (and some of these differences make most animal experiments scientifically invalid anyway) but there is one area in which there is important similarity — the fact that such animals can and do suffer. We have no more right to carry out experiments on other sentient animals than an alien race of vastly superior intellect would have to experiment on us.

Yours sincerely,  
RONNIE LEE

London

## SPIRITUAL NOT MATERIAL

FREEDOM,

No Radical rebellion, whether it be to the left or the right, or even to an anarchist society, could be realised at this present time. Events will have to take their course.

With the downfall of democratic Socialism showing in this and many other countries, a new form of society will be sought and achieved by the population.

The revolution outlined by Malatesta could not come to pass. It would rely on equality and lack of oppression. The society we live in today has corrupted too many to allow this form of equality and freedom to exist.

The only form of Anarchy that can exist today is the individual form, ie not attained through a revolution, anarchy in its simplest form.

This is the formation of one's own society — completely detached and self sufficient. Progress can be maintained spiritually and mentally rather than materialistically. This can be the only way Anarchists can find true freedom, true equality and true peace today. The revolution that many of us hope for can only be attained if the whole population want to live in peace and liberty. Only until the masses can see their own downfall will our Anarchist revolution take place.

So in that sense the ideals of Anarchists all over the country should be expressed to the very full.

People will really have to know that liberty, equality, peace and progress really can exist.

MATTHEW STEVEN IVES

Hatfield



'I wish the Holy Father would empty his bladder before giving the blessing.'

## Subscribe



# FREEDOMCONTACTS

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LONDON E1 Phone 01-247 9249

### NATIONAL

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David Fletcher, 59 Cambrian St.

**BARRY**  
Terry Phillips, 16 Robert St, Barry, South Glamorgan.

**BELFAST**  
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Libertarian Socialist group, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.

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Write c/o One-O-Eight Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Rd.

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**HASTINGS**  
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Libertarian Collective, 70 Perth St, Hull HU5 3NZ.

**KEELE**  
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**LAMPETER**  
Anarchist Group, c/o Adian James, SDUC, Lampeter, Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.

**LIVERPOOL**  
Anarchist Group, c/o Hywel Ellis, Students Union, Liverpool University.

**LEAMINGTON**  
and Warwick, c/o 42 Bath St, Leamington Spa.

**LEICESTER**  
Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross St, (tel 21896), and Libertarian Education, 6 Beaconsfield Rd, (tel 552085).

**LONDON**  
Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Avenue N5 (01-359 4794 before 7 pm) Meets each Thursday at Little @ Press, C1 Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, Wapping E1. (22a bus or Wapping tube). Anarcha United Mystics meet each Thursday at 8 pm, Halfway House Pub, opposite Camden Town tube. Autonomy Centre, 01 Warehouse, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, E1. Freedom Collective, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High St, E1. (01-247 9249). Aldgate East tube, near Whitechapel Art Gallery. Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh St, WC1. Meet Thursdays 7 pm. Kingston Anarchists, 13 Denmark St, Kingston upon Thames, (01-549 2564). London Workers Group, meets Tuesdays 8 pm at Metropolitan Pub, 75 Farringdon Rd, EC1. Middlesex Poly Anarchists, Students Union, Trent Park Site, Cockfosters Rd, Barnet, Herts. 121 Bookshop and meeting place, 121 Railton Rd, Herne Hill, SE24. Xtra! Structureless Tyranny, 182 Upper St, N1.

**MALVERN**  
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**NORWICH**  
Anarchists, Student group and town group and Freewheel Community Bookshop Collective, all c/o Freewheel, 56 St Benedicts St, Norwich, Norfolk.

**NOTTINGHAM**  
c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St, (tel 582506), or 15 Scotholme Ave, Hyson Green (tel 708 302)

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Nigel Broadbent, 14 Westminster Rd, Failsworth.

**OXFORD**  
Anarchist Group and Solidarity, c/o 34 Cowley Rd.

**PAISLEY**  
Anarchist Group are unfortunately contactable through the Students Union, Hunter St, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

**PLYMOUTH**  
Anarchists, 115 St Pancras Ave, Pennycross.

**PORTSMOUTH**  
area anarchist group, c/o Garry Richardson, 25 Beresford Close, Waterlooville, Hants, or Duncan Lamb, Nirvana, Chichester Yacht Basin, Birsham, West Sussex.

**RHONDDA**  
and MidGlamorgan, Henning Andersen, 'Smiths Arms', Treherbert, MidGlamorgan.

**SHEFFIELD**  
Anarchists, c/o 4 Havelock Square, Sheffield S10 2FQ. Libertarian Society, Post Office Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE.

**SOUTH WALES**  
DAM, c/o Smiths Arms, Baglan Rd, Treherbert, MidGlamorgan, South Wales. Write for anarcho-syndicalist contacts in Treherbert, Rhondda, Pontypridd, Penarth, Barry and Cardiff areas.

**SWANSEA**  
Black Dragon, Box 5, c/o Neges

Bookshop, 31 Alexandra Rd, Swansea SA1 5DQ. Meet 8 pm Mondays at the Mountain Dew Inn, Swansea. Baby-sitting can be arranged.

**SUSSEX**  
anarchist group, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Brighton.

**SUNDERLAND**  
anarchists/DAM, c/o 183 Durham Rd, Sunderland SR3 4BX.

**SWINDON**  
area, Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon.

**TAYSIDE**  
Anarchist Group, 3L 188 Strathmartine Rd, Dundee.

**TORBAY**  
Anarchists/Federation, This Hedown, Milton St, Brixham, Devon TQ5 9NQ.

**WAKEFIELD**  
Anarchist and Peace Group, c/o E Fazackerley, 36 Bowan St, Agbrigg, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

### MEETINGS

MEETING in Sheffield, Sat/Sun, 4th/5th September to compile a composite 'Anarchists against Nukes (Power/Bombs)' as a follow-up to Oxford Conference (see FREEDOM No 14). Suggestions; leaflets; information and accommodation — contact Anarchist Commune, 4 Havelock Square, Sheffield S10 2FQ.

### DESIRES

WILL Geoff Minshall contact Andrew Huckerby again. I don't have your address.

IRISH Comrade seeking relief from 'the troubles'. requires temporary accommodation in the London area while establishing himself over here. Contact via Jim at Freedom Bookshop.

I AM trying to publish some information on repression in Cuba and was wondering if any readers could supply me with information. I understand that before the Revolution there was a tremendously strong, indeed dominant Libertarian element in the Cuban Labour movement and hoped that there might be some one who knows of an exile group here or perhaps in the US who have published something recently. A few months ago Black Flag ran an appeal from the Cuban Libertarian Movement. Unfortunately I did not buy it and would be grateful to anyone who could supply me with a copy for which I will pay (a photocopy of the appeal alone would be fine). If anyone can help me I would be very grateful, will acknowledge all letters and return any material on request. — Edmund McArthur, 13 Wellington, Ealing, London W5 4UJ.

AT a recent exploratory anarcho-syndicalist conference held in New York City and sponsored by the Libertarian Workers Group, a decision was made to initiate Libertarian Aid to Latin America (LALA). The project is envisaged as an attempt to mobilize support

for the struggles of anarcho-syndicalist and other libertarian currents in Latin America, material and otherwise. The principal medium for this objective will be a newsletter reporting developments of interest to libertarian revolutionaries internationally.

We are seeking to draw upon all information sources available, however we are particularly looking towards the libertarian press to provide relevant news. This letter is an appeal to you to do what you can to help us in this respect. We would also welcome any other forms of support including publicity.

It is our hope to have the first issue of the newsletter available by early autumn. The Libertarian Workers Group will undertake the tasks of publication. Their address is P O Box 692, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N Y 10113, USA.

We hope to hear from you soon.

### AUTONOMY CENTRE EVENTS

#### EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

Thursday 3rd: A Distribution (all help welcome)  
Friday 4th: Film 'The War Game' 50p members, £1 non-members  
Saturday 5th: 'Drop in' Day  
Thursday 10th: A Distribution  
Friday 11th: Gareth Pierce (solicitor) speaks on McMahon case (all you wanted to know about supergrasses)  
Saturday 12th: Film 'Pleasure at Her Majesties' John Clees etc  
Members £1, non-members £1.50

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*'My political opinions lean more and more to anarchy... The most improper job of any man, even saints, is bossing other men. There is only one bright spot and that is the growing habit of disgruntled men of dynamiting factories and power stations. I hope that, encouraged now as patriotism, may remain a habit...'*

JRR Tolkien  
(In a letter to his son)

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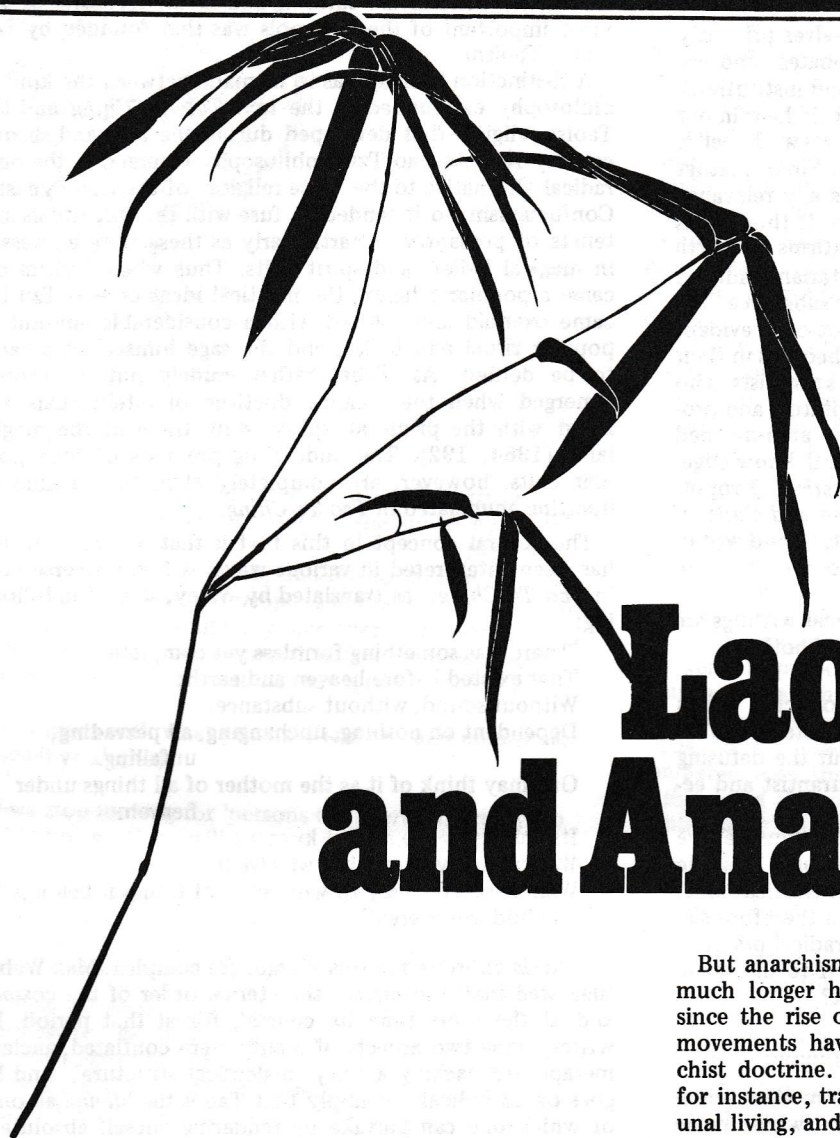
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# **Anarchist Review** **Freedom**

22 August 1981. Vol 42, No 17



## **Lao Tzu and Anarchism**

THERE can be little doubt that anarchism, as a social and political *movement* was primarily a radical response to industrial or monopoly capitalism. It thus developed towards the latter part of the nineteenth century. In harmony with the liberals, the anarchists spoke out against the growing centralization; and came to articulate a coherent philosophy which rejected the institutions of coercive government. But along with the socialists, anarchist writers and political activists also came to express an opposition to capitalism. Recently there has been a profusion of academics — posing as anarchists — who advocate a kind of laissez-faire capitalism; but as David Wieck has argued (1978) such theories lie outside the mainstream of anarchism and represent a variant of bourgeois ideology. But anarchism is not simply a mixture of liberalism and socialism (this finds its embodiment in social democracy or state capitalism); rather it articulates a programme that strives for the realization of both freedom and equality. As Bakunin put it; 'Liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice; socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality' (Dolgoff 1973).

But anarchism as a social *perspective* is deemed to have a much longer history, for it has been suggested that ever since the rise of state systems various kinds of dissenting movements have implicitly or indirectly implied an anarchist doctrine. Rexroth's (1975) study of 'communalism', for instance, traces the history and development of communal living, and the various attempts to establish an organic community with non-coercive relationships. The study includes brief accounts of the Essenes, Eckhart, the peasant revolt, Winstanley and the early communes in America, and although Euro-centric, certainly implies that throughout the post-neolithic period there has been an ever-present libertarian tradition. And there are, of course, numerous studies of millennial cults and utopian writings suggestive that anarchism has indeed a long history.

What has always intrigued me, in this context, is the frequency with which the name of Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher, is encountered in general accounts of anarchism. Herbert Read's discussion of mutual aid and power makes several references to Lao Tzu, and Russell's popular account '*Roads to Freedom*' has the quotation;

'Production without possession  
Action without self-assertion  
Development without domination'

on its title page. George Woodcock, in his introduction to the '*Anarchist Reader*', mentions that thirty years ago anarchists were fond of quoting this Taoist sage. But it is not only anarchist writers who have made this connection: students of comparative religion have also done so. Ninian Smart, for instance, in his important survey (1971) of religion, suggests that Taoism was a form of anarchism. Is this



interpretation valid? And why has Lao Tzu always been viewed as a mystic (which he indeed was) rather than as a naturalistic philosopher whose precepts implied a rejection of all coercive institutions? It has always struck me as rather strange that humanists have tended to salute and pay homage to Confucius rather than Lao Tzu.

.....

There are many people who, seeing themselves primarily as political activists, eschew theoretical debates, and see little relevance in discussions of past events and institutions. They see such activities as academic trivia, little help in our present struggles for a better world. This view, I feel is mistaken, and unhelpful for various reasons. Firstly, rather than divorcing theory from praxis, it denies any relevance to intellectual thought in informing practice. It thus leaves the field open to bourgeois idealists, and confirms the myth put out by Marxist scholars, that the libertarian tradition has no intellectual thinkers of any worth or substance. Yet in surveying the anarchist literature it is not only evident that many anarchist writers are significant theorists in their own right, but even the writings of those anarchists who are thought primarily to be revolutionary agitators and propagandists — Bakunin, Goldman, Malatesta — are informed and infused with philosophical and historical knowledge. Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and Rocker's *Nationalism and Culture* are all examples of writings which take a critical and world-historical perspective — and which aim to counter, in theory, the dominant statist ethos.

Secondly, and allied to this, such theoretical writings are necessary as a counterbalance and a critique of both

a) the 'managerial radicalism' of which Bookchin writes (1980) — and this has involved not only the attempt to incorporate libertarian texts into academia, but the defusing of radical tenets by a Marxism that is obscurantist and eclectic, and

b) the pervasive capitalist ideology which has us believe that the present socio-economic order is the only possible social reality. Theoretical discussions and historical treatises, whether on Plato or utopian cults, are therefore significant for both informing and motivating radical practice. So I make no apologies for addressing myself to the seemingly obscure issue; was Lao Tzu an anarchist?

.....

Who then was Lao Tzu? Well, according to modern scholarship, it is rather doubtful if such a person (whose name means 'old philosopher'), (Legge 1962; 35) ever existed. Rather it is thought that the classic text *Tao Te Ching* (attributed to Lao Tzu) may have been compiled by various authors, and that it assumed its present form around the third century BC. Tradition however has it that Lao Tzu was a retired archivist, and was an older contemporary of Confucius (551 — 479 BC). The book thus represents in essence a mode of thought that was in evidence during a critical period in Chinese history. Referred to by historians as the age of the 'warring states' (circa 506 — 221 BC) it was a period of great socio-economic change. The development of iron smelting, the digging of canals (by forced labour) and the intensification of agriculture through irrigation and the ox-drawn plough were all instrumental in leading to the establishment of an hydraulic society (cf Wittfogel 1957). Such changes were associated with the development of a market economy, and the promotion of artisan production, increased trade, metallic coinage, and the alienation of land — thus creating a landless proletariat (Toynbee 1976; 214). A concomitant of these fundamental changes, in this kind of feudal society, was increasing political instability and social unrest, instability that was aggravated by frequent incursions of nomadic pastoralists from the steppe. It was a time according to the Chinese scholar Arthur Waley (1977; 70-72) when

there was a 'state of chaos' and 'profound disillusionment' among the populace, particularly amongst the ruling intelligentsia. The literature of the time is full of references to hermits and religious recluses, and to 'wandering' philosophers who 'infested' every court, offering advice to the rulers on how best to combat the general disorder and malaise. Thus the period of the 'warring states' was also the age of the 'hundred schools' of philosophy, a period of intense intellectual turmoil and creativity. One of the most important of these schools was that founded by Lao Tzu — Taoism.

A distinction initially has to be made between the kind of philosophy expounded in the text *Tao Te Ching* and the Taoist religion that developed during the first and second century AD. As Lao Tzu's philosophy emerged as the only radical alternative to the 'state religion' of the Han dynasty, Confucianism, so it tended to fuse with the cult-rituals and tenets of peasantry — particularly as these were expressed in magical beliefs and spirit cults. Thus when Taoism became a popular religion, the mystical ideas of Lao Tzu became overlaid and infused with a considerable amount of popular ritual and belief, and the sage himself even came to be deified. As Weber rather crudely put it: Taoism 'emerged when the escapist doctrine of intellectuals was fused with the primeval, this-worldly trade of the magicians' (1964; 192). The underlying premises of such popular cults, however, are completely alien to the kind of doctrine enunciated in *Tao Te Ching*.

The central concept in this text is that of Tao — which has been interpreted in various ways. A famous verse (25) in *Tao Te Ching*, as translated by Waley, states the following:

'There was something formless yet complete,  
That existed before heaven and earth;  
Without sound, without substance,  
Dependent on nothing, unchanging, all pervading,  
unfailing.

One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven.

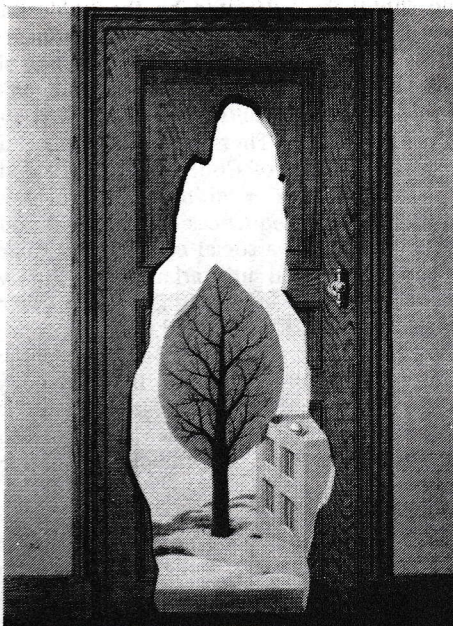
Its true name we do not know;  
Way is the by-name that we give it.

Were I forced to say to what class of things it belongs  
I should call it great'.

The ideas expressed in this extract are complex. Max Weber suggested that Tao meant 'the eternal order of the cosmos and at the same time its course', for at that period, he writes, these two aspects of reality were conflated, ancient metaphysics lacking a truly 'dialectical structure'. And he goes on to indicate or imply that Tao is the 'divine all-one' of which one can partake by rendering oneself absolutely void of worldly interests until release from all activity is attained (wu wei) (1964; 182). Lao Tzu is thus seen as a thorough-going mystic in search of 'salvation', and Taoism is equated with other mystical religions. The catholic writer and Trappist monk Thomas Merton (1975) also tended to understand Tao as something 'beyond all existent things' and to suggest that Taoism — specifically that of Chuang Tzu — was essentially religious and mystical and akin to Christian mysticism. John Blofeld likewise sees Tao as a 'nameless truth', the 'ultimate' which is the goal of all mystics, and he writes that the 'one who, living in accord with nature's rhythms, may be drawn at last to seek union with the Sublime Tao (known to other mystics as the God-head, Sunyata or Nirvana)' (1973; 14) — is a Taoist.

In this kind of interpretation Tao is viewed in essentially religious terms, and is equated with the Christian 'god' and the Buddhist notion of the 'mysterious void'. In a sense, as Cooper remarks, whereas other religions have their mystical aspect or adherents, Taoism is mysticism (1972; 9). I would not wish to dispute the suggestion that Lao Tzu was a mystical writer (he undoubtedly was). What worries me about the kind of interpretation offered by Weber and Blofeld is that it misleadingly conflates the 'ultimate' realities of quite distinct religious systems, and thus obscures the naturalistic bent of Lao Tzu's thought. The





nirvana of Buddhism, the Christian concept of deity and notion of Tao can in no sense be equated (other than the fact that they are perceived as distinct from phenomenal reality). Take the various phrases that have been used to indicate the nature of Tao:

— Blofeld himself uses the term 'nature's rhythms' to express the reality with which a person should seek accordance.

— Legge, although unhappy about Balfour's translation of Tao as 'natura naturans', 'the way of nature', and though, interestingly, also of the opinion that Lao Tzu may have been 'groping after god', nonetheless feels that a suitable rendering of the concept Tao may be 'the spontaneously operating cause of all movement in the phenomena of the universe' (1962; 15)

— Waley renders its meaning as the 'unchanging unity underlying shifting plurality, and at the same time the impetus giving rise to every form of life and motion' (1977; 51)

— Day summarizes it a 'a great unseen reality working within the material universe' and suggests that the idea is not incompatible with the ideas of modern science (1962; 27)

It is therefore perfectly possible to interpret the concept of Tao in naturalistic terms. Indeed many writers have done so. Smart notes that the Taoism expressed in Lao Tzu's book has often been viewed as 'naturalistic quietism' (1971; 211), but, given his own interests, opts for the alternative mode of interpretation, focussing only on those elements of *Tao Te Ching* which appeal to those religiously inclined. One writer of particular interest in this context is the late Alan Watts. In an earlier work on Zen Buddhism (1957) he argues against a naturalistic interpretation of Tao, other than in terms of *natura naturans* (nature creating), and as with the writers quoted above, equates Taoism with Vedanta and Buddhism as a 'way of liberation'. Yet in a later study (1975) he suggests that Tao is 'the course, the flow... or the process of nature', and hence subtitles his study *Tao* as 'the watercourse way'. And he goes on to write that in the Taoist world-view 'The principle is that if everything is allowed to go its own way the harmony of the universe will be established, since every process in the world can 'do its own thing' only in relation to all others. The political analogy is Kropotkin's anarchism' (1975; 43)

If Tao is interpreted as an organic totality, 'the order and course of nature' (as Watts puts it), (44), then Lao Tzu is a kind of nature mystic in the tradition of Spinoza and Jefferies rather than in the religious tradition of Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, Sankara, Buddha or the Sufi mystics. And there are various reasons for thinking this

Firstly, the doctrines of Lao Tzu are fundamentally antithetical to all general conceptions of 'religion'. In no sense

can Tao be interpreted as 'god' in the sense of the creator of the world. Tao, moreover, as Cooper and others have observed, is totally impersonal. Indeed, as many scholars have stressed, there is hardly a Chinese word that can be translated as 'god' for even the concept T'ien is impersonal, and is best understood as heaven or the 'abode of ancestors'. As with Buddhism and Confucianism the text *Tao Te Ching* implies a strictly non-theistic cosmology. But more than this, it lacks any reference to a divinity or to a spiritual realm, or to a set of rules to follow, or to rituals to perform. Taoism, as Cooper writes, is primarily a cosmic religion, entailing the 'study of the universe and the place and function of man and all creatures and phenomena in it' (1972; 10). Lao Tzu's philosophy therefore is not a religion but a kind of 'nature mysticism'. Howard Smith put it succinctly when he said that Taoists 'took refuge in an extreme form of naturalism. Yet in their search for the perfect harmony with the Tao they entered.... what was (in) the nature of a religious quest' (1968. 73). Watts reiterates this when he suggests that if we try to place the ideas of Taoism into the categories of Western thought, then what we have is a 'naturalistic pantheism' (1975; 54).

Secondly, in no sense can Lao Tzu's thoughts be seen as an 'escape', as an 'ascetic quest for salvation' (Weber 1964; 177), or as a 'way of liberation', as these ideas are normally understood in discussions of mysticism. *Tao Te Ching* is not concerned with renunciation, and to view the concept wu-wei as 'doing nothing' or 'non-action' is highly misleading. Lao Tzu's whole philosophy is one of life-affirmation, and indeed one writer has translated Tao as the 'stream of life consciousness' (Mears 1922; 6). Nothing could be further from the Buddhist notion of the void. There is an interesting legend about the founders of the 'three religions' of China (as recorded by Cooper) which suggests that they stood one day around a jar of vinegar, the symbol of life itself. In turn they each tasted the substance. Confucius, it is said, pronounced it sour, Buddha found it bitter, while Lao Tzu considered it sweet (1972; 16). The interest that Taoists had in herbalism and alchemy and in the quest for *physical* immortality — the search for the elixir of life (longevity) — suggests that Lao Tzu was concerned with *this-worldly* activities and aspirations. The concept of wu-wei is important to understand in this context. It did not suggest immortality or life after death, nor did it demand withdrawal from normal activity or that one should empty oneself of all desires. Even less did it suggest inertia, laissez faire, laziness or mere passivity — as Watts (75) rightly argues. Quietism, it seems to me, is inappropriate as a term for Lao Tzu's philosophy. Rather the attitude of mind and the activity that Taoism implies is one of life-affirmation and the seeking of harmony with Tao — the ordering principle of the cosmos. As Waley writes; 'To be in harmony with, not in rebellion against the fundamental laws of the universe is the first step, then, on the way to Tao' (55). In essence, then, wu-wei consists of 'leaving all men, creatures and things to order themselves spontaneously in accordance with natural harmony, and of not perturbing the order of the Tao' — as Kaltenmark aptly puts it (1965; 60). Thus for Lao Tzu the 'way' does not involve resignation, nor the renunciation of the world (as with Christian or Hindu mystics) but the attempt to spontaneously order one's life according to the natural processes of the world. As we shall see, many important radical, social attitudes stem from this principle.

Thirdly, although Lao Tzu had a cyclic and static conception of the 'ultimate reality' Tao, the text is also suggestive of a dialectical approach to reality, as Weber perceptively noted, and as some of the quotations above indicate. Tao is the way, the process of nature, and is expressed in the imagery of spontaneity and growth. It is something that exists by and through itself, as a self-generating entity or principle. There is no dualism here between god and nature or between a world of flux and an underlying, unchanging world of 'forms' or 'spirit'. But rather between the natural



world as manifested, and its principle of 'impetus' or movement. There is undoubtedly a great affinity between the ideas expressed in *Tao Te Ching* and Spinoza's philosophy, particularly his distinction between *natura naturata* (nature as found) and *natura naturans* (nature creating). The latter concept, as Watts implied, has a meaning very similar to that of Tao. Equally interesting, the associated concept *Te*, usually translated (without, it may be noted, any moral or religious connotations) as 'power' or 'virtue' means in essence that aspect of Tao that is manifested in natural phenomena. As Watts defines it '*Te* is the realisation or expression of the Tao in actual living' (1975; 107). Cooper is more exact; 'it is the inward quality in man and all creatures, a potentiality and latent natural power arising from and dependent on Tao' (1972; 20). The English term 'nature' in fact reflects a similar double meaning, referring both to the totality of the natural world as well as to the 'internal source' of some entity's behaviour (cf Collingwood 1945; 43-48). *Te* (virtue) is therefore a naturalistic concept, and there are no hints in *Tao Te Ching* of any animistic or shamanistic connotations.

Fourthly, the recent researches of Joseph Needham have stressed that Taoism, as a kind of naturalistic approach that emphasized the unity and spontaneity of the operations of nature, was instrumental in the development of science in China. It was the 'only system of mysticism the world has ever seen that was not profoundly anti-scientific' (Ronan 1978; 85). At a time when phenomena were most frequently explained in terms of spirits, the naturalism expressed by the Taoists, Needham suggests, was distinctly unusual, and he even remarks on the dialectical quality of the Taoist writings, for in seeing change as eternal and reality as a process, they had much in common with Hegel. And as indicated above, Needham interprets *wu-wei* not as implying inaction, but as 'action contrary to nature'. It implies that plants grow best without interference from *wo/man*, and that people thrive best without interference from the state. *Wu-wei* is not inactivity or quietism but the idea that one acts in 'harmony with nature' (op cit 98). Coupled with an acceptance of manual labour, a disinclination to make ethical judgements of a humanistic kind, and the adoption of an empirical outlook towards the natural world — all these lead Needham to suggest that Taoist philosophy, though certainly religious and poetic, was also proto-scientific.

What were the implications of this kind of nature mysticism in terms of social and political attitudes? For it is only after considering these that we can make a valid assessment as to whether Lao Tzu can be rightly adjudged an anarchist. I will discuss such attitudes under three headings.

### 1: MORALITY AND KNOWLEDGE

The central concern of Confucius (who apparently was an itinerant teacher anxious to find employment from any state-ruler) was to re-establish a state of harmony by advocating the pre-existing 'way of heaven' (*T'ien*). To counter the prevailing political disintegration he propounded what was essentially a social and ethical doctrine. As with Taoism it was profoundly practical and 'this-worldly'. Whereas many mystics from Buddha and Plato to the Hare Krishna cult have seen salvation as entailing a separation of the individual from a 'matter-corrupted world' the Confucian tendency was one of life-affirmation. The 'spirit' of Chinese philosophy as Fung Yu-Lan rightly suggested was at the same time extremely spiritual or mystical and extremely realistic (1962; 3). Both Lao Tzu and Confucius shared this 'spirit'. But this is about the only thing that they did have in common.

Confucian thought is aristocratic and feudal, and focusses around a number of central and inter-related virtues which

he stressed should be cultivated by the noble man (*chun tzu*). There is the notion of *jen*, human kindness or benevolence. This is the emphasis that human action should be sympathetic, and that all transactions should be unselfish and unconditional, and beneficial to social well-being. This ruled out profit seeking. There is thus a strong humanistic tendency in the writings of Confucius. An allied virtue was that of *yi*, righteousness — 'doing a thing because it was right regardless of consequences' (Day 1962; 35). Again this virtue is set within a social context and ruled out action for purely personal utilitarian ends. But what was 'righteous' was defined in relation to two other virtues. The first is *hsiao* or piety; it implied the acceptance and the respect for five hierarchical relationships; subject/ruler, child/parent, younger/older sibling, wife/husband, younger/older friend. The second was the observance of traditional ritual *li*, particularly the ceremonies focussed around the ancestral cults, which were of fundamental importance to Confucius.

Although it is fair to say that the teachings of Confucius are primarily ethical, he was by no means a secular humanist. There is evidence to suggest that he thought himself divinely inspired (Blakney 1955; 17) — although he was certainly a scholar rather than a prophet — and looked upon heaven as a kind of quasi-deity. But more important, the cult of ancestors was intrinsic to his philosophy, and was indeed 'the only form of religion encouraged by Confucius'. There is the famous epigram 'Respect the heavenly and earthly spirits and keep them at a distance' — by means of course of proper ritual observances and moral propriety (cf Day 1962; 36-46).

By the correct performance of ritual, and the cultivation of righteousness, human feeling and piety, wisdom (*chih*) could be attained, and social and spiritual harmony restored, the latter being identified with a past golden — but feudal — age. This was the Confucian answer to the political crisis.

It can be seen that although Confucianism was a rationalism of order and peace (as Weber noted) (1964; 169) it advocated a society along feudal lines, and saw religion as having an important function in maintaining social order. Its morality was defined in terms of this order, and it lacked any scientific attitude or focus on the natural world.

Lao Tzu's nature mysticism was the exact antithesis to Confucian philosophy; it implied a different focus, a different ethic and a different social ideal.

All the main tenets of Confucian philosophy and morality were condemned by Lao Tzu. The performance of ritual and the observance of piety were viewed simply as a means of maintaining social divisions and hierarchy (Kaltenmark 1965; 52). The appeal to righteousness, social justice and human kindness is treated with scepticism, for social values are seen as relative and prejudiced. There is indeed in *Tao Te Ching* a fundamental stress on the relativity of all attributes and values. For Lao Tzu, ethical values cannot be derived from social knowledge, nor by following humanistic criteria; and in this context, he takes, like Spinoza, a wholly naturalistic standpoint. If all things are relative, on what foundation can we base our ethical norms? The answer to this follows logically from Lao Tzu's philosophy, and is beautifully illustrated in the verbal confrontation between the two 'sages', as recorded by Chuang Tzu.

Legend has it that Confucius went one day to visit Lao Tzu at his library (no less), taking along some of his own writings. Confucius started to expound to Lao Tzu his abstract on the 'classical' writings, but Lao Tzu interrupted and asked him to give the substance of his ideas more briefly. Confucius replied that they were about goodness and duty. 'Do you consider these virtues to constitute the nature of man?' asked Lao Tzu. 'Yes', replied Confucius, 'if a gentleman is not good he will not thrive; if he is not righteous he may as well not have been born.' 'But what do you mean by these?' Lao Tzu insisted. 'To be in one's inmost heart in kindly sympathy with all things; to love all men; and to allow no selfish thoughts — this is the nature of goodness and duty,' said Confucius. 'Ah!' exclaimed Lao





Tzu, 'to love all men. Is this not vague and exaggerated? To seek to allow no selfish thoughts — isn't that selfishness? If you wish men to follow their natural ways why not think of heaven and earth; which certainly pursue their invariant course; think of the sun and moon, and the stars, and the birds and beasts, and trees. You can guide your steps more adequately by following the way of nature', continued Lao Tzu 'instead of vehemently putting forward your goodness and duty as if you were beating a drum.' (Waley 1939; 13-14, Legge 1962; 339-340).

The contrast between these two philosophers is striking, and somewhat paradoxical. Confucius is described as an ethical humanist, yet his whole way of thinking is religious and spiritual; Lao Tzu, in contrast, is thought of as a mystic, whereas, as I have indicated above, he is a thoroughgoing naturalistic philosopher. Confucius is considered a practical thinker whose undialectical reflections are focussed only on social and moral issues — indeed he has been described as 'no intellectual' and as lacking any originality. (Blakney 1955; 19) Yet, ironically, he placed a high value on traditional learning. Lao Tzu, on the other hand, whose writings express some profundity and a complex metaphysics, condemns not only the presumptions of moralists, but virtually all literacy and book-learning. Confucius is the custodian of a feudal tradition; Lao Tzu as a nature-mystic comes close to dismissing all discursive knowledge as a futile, if not a harmful, pre-occupation.

'Those who know do not speak  
Those who speak do not know' (56)

'Banish wisdom, discard knowledge

And the people will be benefitted a hundredfold' (19) are but two epigrams that reflect this attitude. But as with the concept wu-wei and his ethical theory, Lao Tzu's attitude towards learning must be seen within the context of Tao; it is knowledge that is not in harmony with the workings of nature that is to be depreciated, not all thought. Nevertheless, Lao Tzu is about the only philosopher who has ever lived who did not see a virtue in knowledge. His attitude towards human desires and passions follows a similar pattern; it is neither one of renunciation nor of egoistic striving, but having in oneself 'no contraries'. The essence of Lao Tzu's moral theory therefore is contained in the famous verse (67) which reads:

'I have three precious things which I prize and hold fast:  
the first is gentleness; the second is frugality; and the third is the refusal to be foremost of all things under heaven.

For with gentleness I can be brave; with frugality I can give

freely; in refusing to be foremost I become the vessel of highest honour.'

Waley, who clearly sees *Tao Te Ching* for what it is — a political tract — interprets these rules as, a) the abstention from aggressive war and capital punishment, b) the absolute simplicity of living, and c) refusal to assert active authority (Waley 1977; 225) — attitudes consonant with certain kinds of anarchism.

## 2: ATTITUDE TO WAR AND NATURE

There can be no doubt that Taoist philosophy, as Blofeld suggests (1973; 15) implied an opposition to every sort of threat, coercion, punishment or violence. Mears described Lao Tzu as a 'Prophet of peace' (1922; 15). Yet, as Waley points out, although there is no specific condemnation of war in the Taoist writings as a whole, as it is assumed that violence of any kind is contrary to the spirit of Tao, *Tao Te Ching* takes a determined stand against war and militarism. An often quoted verse (30) reads:

'Those who would help  
the ruler of men  
By means of Tao  
Will oppose all conquest by force of arms  
For this tactic is likely to recoil.  
For where armies have marched  
There do thorns and brambles grow  
In the aftermath of great armies  
Years of hunger and evil ensue.'

And the following verse (31) is along the same lines:

'Weapons, however beautiful, are instruments of evil  
omens,

hateful, it may be said, to all creatures...

A man of peace will not possess them, nor use them,  
except

under compulsion. Calm and repose are what he values.  
For to consider force desirable is to delight in the slaughter of men. And he who delights in the slaughter of men cannot succeed in ruling his kingdom.'

Again, it is important to observe that this stress on non-violence is entirely consistent with Lao Tzu's philosophical premises and the ideal of wu-wei. Thus the imagery expressed in *Tao Te Ching* is focussed around such ideas as femininity, the granary, the valley, water and the uncarved block. A significant verse (28) reads:

'Know masculinity, yet prefer femininity;  
you will be the ravine of the world.  
Know fame, yet prefer ignominy;  
you will be the valley of the world.  
And being such a valley  
You will have all the power to get contentment,  
And be able to return to the simplicity of the uncarved  
block.

Once the uncarved block is carved it forms utensils....

The greatest craftsman does the least chiselling.'

This exaltation of feminine qualities, as Kaltenmark stresses (59) went against all conventional Chinese thinking, for in the hierarchy of feudal values, masculine values (Yang) tended to have primacy. There is the suggestion that this symbolism may have been derived from an earlier matrilineal system, but it seems more consistent with the general attitude implied by wu-wei; simplicity, harmony, tranquillity, non-violence, intuition, and conformity through yielding to natural processes. Such an attitude implied and even stressed an ecological and reverential attitude towards the natural world. This is brought out lucidly by Seyyed Hossein Nasr in his study *Man and Nature* (1976; 83-87), although as a religious philosopher Nasr makes similar assumptions to those of Blofeld, and interprets Tao as a transcendental realm ethically superior to 'Being', thus denying the pantheistic or naturalistic dimension to Lao Tzu's thought. But the epigram quoted by Nasr 'All things under heaven are the products of Being, but Being itself is the product of non-Being' (40) hardly makes sense in theistic or Buddhist terms, especially when set against verses like 'Being and non-Being grow out of one another' (2) and 'the



ways of men are conditioned by those of earth, the ways of earth by those of heaven, the ways of heaven by those of Tao, and the ways of Tao conforms to its own nature'. Tao, the nameless, is best understood, as I have stressed above, in terms of an imminent power within and behind the natural world, not as god or the void. Nasr virtually says that Tao is the order of nature, but as an Islamic scholar recoils from such an admission! Nevertheless he cogently outlines the essence of Taoist thought which insists that to be at one with nature means accepting its norms and its rhythms rather than seeking to dominate or overcome it. Although Lao Tzu has a cosmological attitude towards nature (cf my essay 1981) he is much closer to contemporary ecological thought than perhaps any other mystic or philosopher. Although Black Elk (and tribal cults generally) may have expressed a feeling of oneness towards nature, and in their ritual symbolism implied an ecological attitude, nevertheless this harmony was expressed in spiritual concepts. Lao Tzu, in contrast, is a nature mystic not an animist. But because he articulates tribal values, he differs fundamentally from all other mystics — whether Hindu, Christian, Islamic or Buddhist — whose thoughts imply hierarchy, a devaluation of the phenomenal world (in favour of a transcendental realm beyond the natural cosmos) (cf Bellah 1964), and essentially *unecological* attitudes. When St. John of the Cross — a typical mystic — suggested that we should 'strive to enter into complete detachment and emptiness and poverty, with respect to everything that is in the world' he shows affinities to Buddhist thought, but it is quite different from the naturalism of Lao Tzu, whose philosophy advocates living in *harmony* with the natural world. Lao Tzu's essential thoughts express neither an opposition nor a rejection of empirical reality. The belief in the goodness of human nature (taken as self evident by Lao Tzu) and the lack of active antagonism to the world is seen by Weber as central to Taoist thought (187); making it an inappropriate ethic for capitalist development in China.

### 3: GOVERNMENT

As a naturalistic philosopher, and in terms of his ethical theory and attitude towards war and nature, Lao Tzu can certainly be considered to hold views that are consonant with anarchism. It comes, then, as no surprise that when one examines the politics of *Tao Te Ching* the overall impression that one comes away with is that Lao Tzu was an anarchist. This is the impression of one oriental scholar:

'The philosophy of the *Tao Te Ching* is perhaps one of the most revolutionary that has ever been formulated. Interpreted literally ... it represents an attack upon everything that has gone to make up what is called civilisation. Lao Tzu tells us to 'let things alone'. He tells governments in particular to let things alone; in short, he sees nothing but evil in the idea of government.' (Tomlin 1968; 254)

What is the basis for such an assessment?

Before addressing ourselves to this question however it is perhaps important to note the perspective from which *Tao Te Ching* is written. It is indeed a political tract first and foremost, rather than a philosophical treatise, or a work of mysticism — even though expressed in mystical aphorisms. But what political scientist has ever faced directly the issues that Lao Tzu poses? But it is not written as a radical polemic. Quite the contrary. *Tao Te Ching* is essentially a text by a scholar giving advice to a ruler on how best to govern and keep order within the kingdom. Lao Tzu is addressing himself to the same 'problematic' as Confucius: how best to cope with the general disorder, the conflict, and the 'state of chaos' that existed at the time of the 'warring states'. And as Weber noted (op cit 185), as an archivist he belongs to the same stratum as Confucius — the literati — and thus took certain things for granted. One of these was the positive value of government. But the logic of his philosophy leads him ironically to conclusions that are fundamentally anti-statist.

Waley informatively puts the doctrines of *Tao Te Ching* in the context of the other main schools of thought of the period. As we have noted already, Lao Tzu is highly critical of the central tenets of Confucianism, and there is a sustained polemic running through *Tao Te Ching* against the notions of morality and piety. But the text is equally critical of hedonistic doctrines which stressed that the 'art of ruling' was to give free play to the processes of 'life-nurturing' (Yang Sheng), namely the promotion of individual happiness and sensual pleasure. It was the doctrinal counterpart to Confucianism: the individual, not society, is given primacy; the satisfaction of desires and not the following of a moral code is esteemed; the superiority of life over death (ancestors) is advocated. According to the Hedonists it was the duty of the ruler to create the conditions conducive to individual well-being in the above sense. Lao Tzu in a way completely bypasses these alternatives; but with regard to the last opposition — the rival claims of life (hedonism) and death (Confucianism) — Waley interestingly quotes the classic story of Chuang Tzu (Chapter 18) who mourned little at the death of his beloved wife. As Waley notes (1977; 53-54) for the Taoists such debates and oppositions were meaningless.

But as Waley also argues, Lao Tzu echoes the doctrines of the realists in condemning both the school of Confucius and of Yang Chu — from whom the Hedonists derived their essential ideas. *Tao Te Ching* in its early chapters condemns book learning, sentimentality, morality — both social and in terms of individual conscience and desires, and appears to follow the realists in its general trend of thought. The realists, or Legalists, saw no need for such abstract principles 'as morality and benevolence, nor for the consecration of particular emotions such as pity or love' (71), and they were equally distrustful of emotions and tradition. Their answer to the 'problematic' was to draw up a code of state laws, applicable to all citizens from the king to the peasant, and to have these laws rigidly enforced under the dire threat of heavy penalties for violations (Day 1962; 75-79). Seemingly the Legalists were even more repressive and pro-state than either the Hedonists or the Confucianists. Understandably, Lao Tzu was even more critical of realism: to such an extent that, as Waley remarks, he did not seem to his contemporaries either safe or sane. Passages in *Tao Te Ching* with its doctrine of non-violence, undermine the very cornerstone of realistic domestic policies by declaring war, capital punishment and imprisonment as untenable. But more than this; it denied any relevance to the state. The majority of the aphorisms in the second half of *Tao Te Ching* are formulas for good government; but the only kind of government or order that Lao Tzu seems to consider valid is simply *no* government. Here are some typical statements.

'Without law or compulsion, men would dwell in harmony' (32)

'A state can be governed only if rules are enforced,  
Battles can be won only with craftiness.  
But the adherence of all under heaven can only be  
gained by letting-alone.

How do I know this is so?

By these facts.

The more prohibitions there are

The more poverty there is among the people

The more implements that are used

The more benighted will the whole land become

The more cunning craftsmen there are

The more pernicious contrivances will be invented

The more laws are promulgated

the more thieves and bandits there will be.

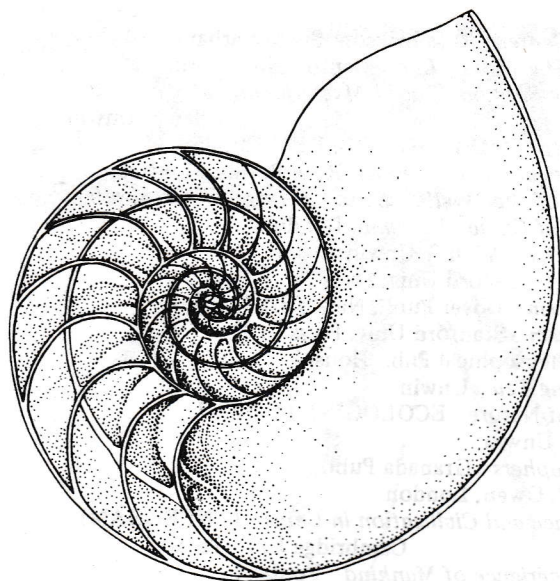
Therefore the sage has said

So long as I 'do nothing' the people will themselves be transformed

So long as I love quietitude, the people will of themselves go straight

So long as I act only by inactivity the people will themselves become prosperous,





So long as I have no wants the people will return themselves to the state of the 'uncarved block' (57)

In essence Lao Tzu is saying that left to themselves, without state interference, the people will live in harmony. This 'state' implies one of simplicity, and there are several aphorisms critical of unnecessary wealth and acquisitiveness.

'To be content with what one has is to be rich' (33)

'Be content with what you have and are, and no one can despoil you' (44)

'If we stop looking for 'persons of superior morality' to put in power, there will be no more jealousies among the people.

If we cease to set store by products that are hard to get, there will be no more thieves.'

Thus Lao Tzu's political philosophy can be summed up as a consistent critique of the state —

'The people suffer from famine because those above them eat too much tax-grain. That is the only reason why they starve. The people are difficult to govern because those above them interfere. It is only through this that they are difficult to keep in order.' (75) —

and the advocacy of a tribal pattern of living. This has been stressed by numerous writers, and is further evidence against the idea that Lao Tzu was a religious mystic — for there is no special pleading for monasticism or a hermit-like existence. Throughout *Tao Te Ching* it is assumed, as Waley notes (92) that an ideal state of society once existed, before the 'great Way declined', and that what was needed was the restoration of this kind of society. Unlike Confucius the ideal envisaged was tribal; not a feudal aristocracy. As Toynbee puts it;

'The Taoists' prescription for healing the wounds of the Age of the Warring States was to repudiate civilization and to revert to the way of human life that had been followed in a self-contained neolithic-age community.' (1976; 220)

Needham's studies make the same emphasis:

'The Taoists aim for society was a kind of agrarian collectivism, without feudalism and without merchants; they advocated what was virtually a return to a simpler way of life.' (Ronan 1978; 104)

As with Ovid, what *Tao Te Ching* conveys is not a mythical image of a past Golden Age — although this is the way the writings tend to be interpreted; rather it articulates a theory based on a social reality — that of tribal society. The writings of Chuang Tzu (Legge 1962; 287-89) beauti-

fully express the nature of this 'age of perfect virtue'. It conveys a period when there was no coercive authority, no food shortages, no books or literati; a time when people had no use for any form of record other than knotted ropes. The writings express a distrust of technology and knowledge; and an affirmation of a classless society when people were 'left to their natural tendencies' (op cit 227).

Many would see this kind of focus, in its primitivism, as retrogressive, even reactionary. But this I feel would be misleading, and for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Needham points out, Taoism was closely linked with political anti-feudalism and various 'rebel' movements in the third and fourth centuries BC. Even the concept *phu* (uncarved block) essentially referred to 'social solidarity' and had, it is suggested, a strong political content. Secondly, again as Needham stresses, Taoism, unlike the primitivism in Europe, was naturalistic, and initiated a scientific movement that had no equivalent or counterpart elsewhere. Even the distrust for technology must not be overstated: 'What the Taoists were objecting to was the misuse of technology, not technology itself; to its use as a means of enslavement of men by the feudal lords' (Ronan 1978; 105-7). Waley in fact suggests that Lao Tzu's ideas on technology were very similar to those of Gandhi (1939; 69). And finally, it is worth noting that Lao Tzu repudiates the hierarchical relationships implicit in kinship and marriage structures of that period, for as Nisbet remarks, Lao Tzu (along with other religious philosophers of the sixth century BC) espoused a kind of universalism that transcended the narrow confines of kinship and race (1973; 178). The ideal expressed seems to be that of a decentralized community, and one verse in particular (5) is instructive in this context, for it suggests that impartiality rather than kin ties should have salience for the sage.

The ideas expressed in *Tao Te Ching* have often been compared with the modern anarchism of writers like Kropotkin. And the contrast seems justified. For Lao Tzu, the 'gentle sage' (as Rudolf Rocker describes him), was essentially a political philosopher whose ideas were encapsulated in a mystical poetry of a naturalistic kind. I contend that he was not a religious mystic, and it is of interest that two important studies of mysticism (Underhill 1930, Bharati 1976) make no mention of him. But was he an anarchist? The answer to this must I think be affirmative; he was indeed the first writer to express the libertarian socialist ideal, and I can do no better than conclude this essay by quoting yet another verse (8) from his classic work.

'The highest good is like that of water...

And if men think the ground the best place for building a house upon

If among thoughts they value those that are profound

If in friendship they value gentleness

in words, truth; in government, good order;

in deeds, effectiveness; in actions, timeliness —

In each case it is because they prefer what does not

lead to strife,

And therefore does not go amiss.

BRIAN MORRIS

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Illustrations:

Front page: 'Bamboo'; linocut by Henry Evans.

Page 11: 'La Perspective amoureuse' by Rene Magritte

Page 13: 'Forest' by Max Ernst.

Page 15: Section of shell 'Nautilus pompilius'.



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'I cannot believe that the study of the past has any object save to throw light upon the present' WALEY 1977; 14

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