

anarchist fortnightly

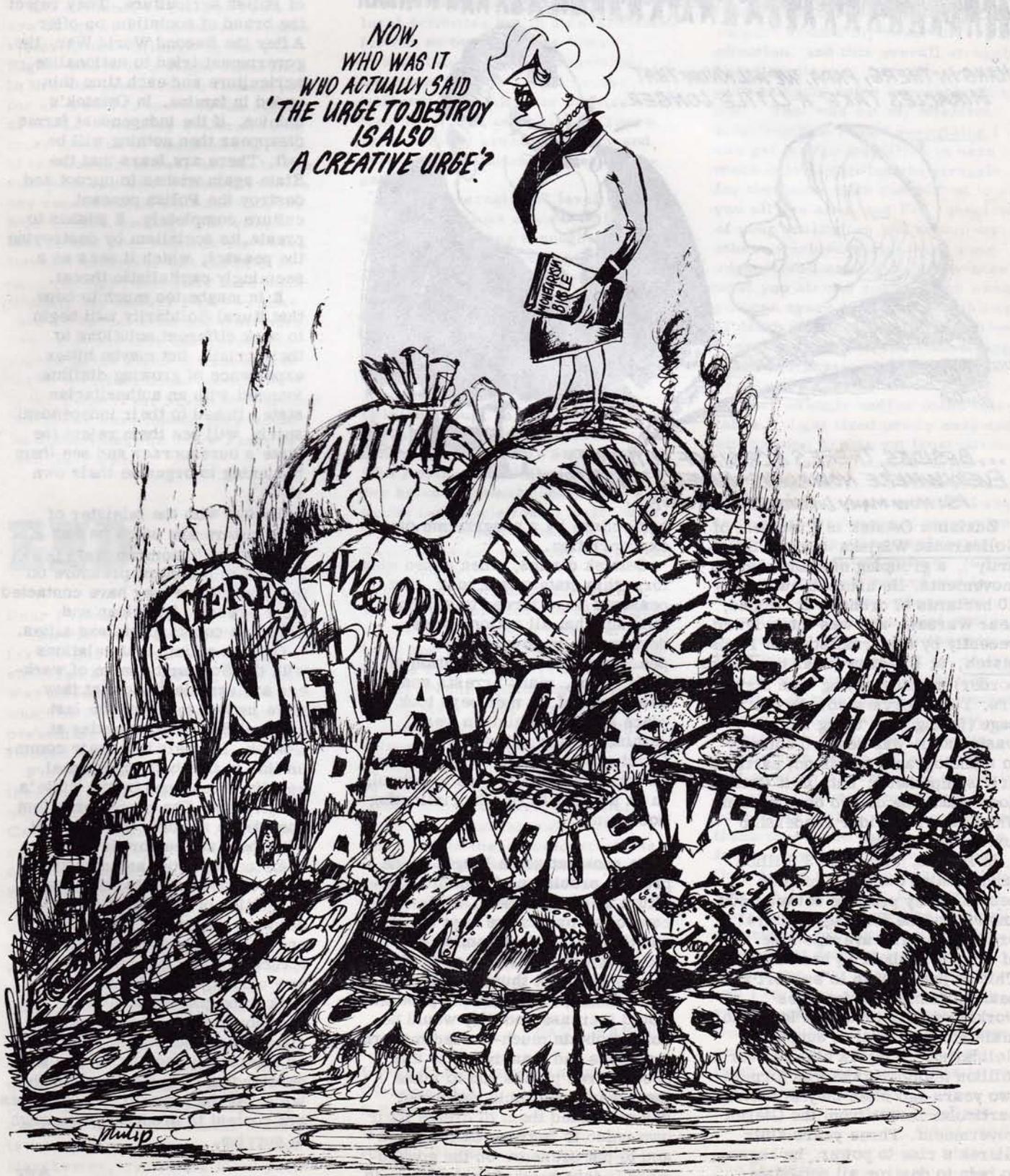
Freedom

13th February, 1981
Vol 42, No. 3

25p

INSIDE: Rural Solidarity, Letters from America...

NOW,
WHO WAS IT
WHO ACTUALLY SAID
'THE URGE TO DESTROY
IS ALSO
A CREATIVE URGE?'





"HANG IN THERE, PAPA, WE ALL KNOW THAT
MIRACLES TAKE A LITTLE LONGER..."



... BESIDES, THERE'S A CRISIS OF AUTHORITY
EVERYWHERE NOWADAYS - HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED?

PS: HOW MANY DIVISIONS DO YOU HAVE?

Zdzislaw Ostatek is President of *Solidarnosc Wiejska* ('Rural Solidarity'), a grouping of many peasant movements. He himself cultivates 10 hectares of orchard at Gropec, near Warsaw, and was interviewed recently by a journalist from *Paris Match*, at Rzeszow (near the Soviet border) whilst meeting with strikers. The interview covers one page (facing page being rather wasted as it was devoted entirely to a photograph) and is not particularly sympathetic, but, in it Ostatek does make one or two observations which deserve wider readership and understanding.

In Poland, there are 3 million farms which employ 7 million people. They produce between 30% and 90% of the total agricultural production. The average size of a farm is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hectares. This is just enough to support a peasant family and involves working a 14 hour day at least, to maintain this level of support. *Solidarnosc Wiejska* claims over a million members and was formed two years ago when they felt under particular threat from the Gierek government. Three years after Gierek's rise to power, he began to destroy all non-state

agriculture by a programme of expropriation.

Ostatek claims, when asked what form this state attack took, that peasants were forced to sell their land and that all actions were designed to impoverish the peasantry. After the creation of their Union, many arrests and detentions of its members took place and even children were detained by the authorities. Children's satchels were searched, as they made their ways to school, in an attempt to find incriminating documents.

He spoke at some length of the present problems of Polish agriculture as he saw them. State-controlled prices are kept too 'low' and there is little incentive to increase production. If agricultural prices were not thus fixed by the state then, in his opinion, production would increase and they would be able to obtain much-needed modern machines and manure. It is this need to free prices and to make their work profitable again that has motivated them to create their own union to regroup their forces and to put pressure on the government to take heed of their demands.

He declared himself 'for' socialism within industry, but not for the peasantry, as it had been tried before in Poland with disastrous results. They wish now (would you believe - yes I suppose you will) to profit from their movement to create 'A State within a State' and to establish the private farm as the foundation of Polish agriculture. They reject the brand of socialism on offer. After the Second World War, the government tried to nationalise agriculture and each time this ended in famine. In Ostatek's opinion, if the independent farms disappear then nothing will be left. There are fears that the State again wishes to uproot and destroy the Polish peasant culture completely. It wishes to create its socialism by destroying the peasant, which it sees as a seemingly capitalistic threat.

It is maybe too much to hope that Rural Solidarity will begin to seek different solutions to their crisis, but maybe bitter experience of growing disillusionment with an authoritarian state, linked to their independent spirit, will see them reject the state's bureaucracy and see them beginning to organise their own lives.

Relations with the Minister of Agriculture are poor - he has called them 'incompetents'. In an attempt to put more pressure on the government they have contacted their French, American and Canadian counterparts and allies.

Ostatek claims that relations with the Solidarity union of workers are excellent and that they were invited to attend the last national Solidarity meeting at Gdansk. He feels that their common link is that both unions feel equally threatened by the State's constraints. The people have lost confidence not only in work, but with the state authorities. It is unfortunate, from an anarchist point of view, that he sees the resolution of the crisis in a renewal of confidence in the state, and in the rather authoritarian structures (my words, not his) of new unions. They do, however, seek to be consulted in all decision-making processes that affect them and regard politicians as completely lacking in true understanding of agricultural problems. At the moment, the peasants are content to produce just enough to survive.

REPORTS

Dundee

AFTER a suggestion to re-form the long-dead Scottish Libertarian Federation 23 anarchists attended a hastily called meeting in Dundee on the 24th of January. The morning was given over to introductions and discussion about what the SLF had been and why it broke up. This topic was resumed in the afternoon after a few social pints, focussing on what the people present wanted this SLF to be and do. Much time was spent on what this group, if it was to be a group, was to be called. The final decision was nothing - an unnamed grouping of libertarian socialists coordinating specific actions on a personal level throughout Scotland, the organization existing only to transfer information and resources through the network, putting people in touch etc.

Specific issues raised included anarchist/libertarian music tours in Scotland. Although we realized that it is now too late to arrange things to coincide with the 60th anniversary of Kronstadt, as originally planned, the people from Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen are still considering an East Coast series of events. Speaking tours were discussed and the conversation edged into personal politics and strategies. By evening I felt that we all knew each other better than before. Personally I regarded this initial meeting

as successful, making the prospects for libertarian socialist politics in Scotland look brighter.

People departed, going West and South, I hope those who stayed enjoyed the party. The next meeting of all the contacts will be in Glasgow on the evening of the 21st of February, contact John Cooper, 34 Raithburn Ave., Glasgow G45.

To be put in contact with your local libertarian socialists in Scotland, write to J. Cowan, 3R 17 Cheviot Cres., Dundee DD4 9QJ.

B. M.

Hastings

POISON PEN (18a Markwick Terrace, St. Leonards on Sea, E. Sussex) - who, incidentally are desperate for an electric typewriter (VERY CHEAP); can anyone help? - have drawn our attention to a piece of EMI nastiness. Yes, this is the very EMI that makes records and other assorted electronic goodies. This particular nastiness comes in the form of publicity leaflets lauding a 'New Concept in Barrier Warfare Systems' EMI RANGER, Anti-Personnel Mine Laying System. I kid you not. Mines, claim EMI, can be laid using this device in a fraction of the time previously required . . . can fire up to 1296 mines per minute . . . automatic arming . . . reliable and cost effective. Weight of Discharger (fully loaded) is 630 kgs., loading time is under 6 minutes AND (for those of you who are interested in supporting this trade) smaller launchers can be provided to suit individual requirements. The mind boggles.

Think on this next time you see EMI on the label.

Poison Pen also draw our attention to a proposal from the Hastings Anarchist Group that the CND movement should adopt a policy of non-cooperation with this government, beginning with a collective refusal to take part in the forthcoming census. If a large proportion of CND supporters & sympathisers adopt this attitude, the government would be powerless to retaliate and would be forced to recognise the depth of feeling within the country against the retention and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Group believe, quite reasonably, that it is naive in the extreme to await the arrival of a sympathetic Labour government (well don't hold your breath, folks! - typist) and to delay taking positive action now with this in mind. CND should demand, not ask, that this country should unilaterally reject the use or possession of nuclear arms.

Lib Ed

The next issue (no. 30) of Lib Ed will be devoted to examining how or if libertarian and revolutionary teachers can work effectively in state schools.

We want also to look at the ways recent education cuts have affected the capacity for radical action, and to report on the fightback.

If you can contribute, please contact us. If you would like a copy of the current Lib Ed, please send 55p.

LIB ED COLLECTIVE

6 Beaconsfield Road
Leicester.
(Tel: 0533-552085)



Cumbria

CUMBRIA Anarchists have changed address (please see contacts list for full details).

They write:

We have moved into a house in the town and now have enough space to offer anyone a place to stay if they are visiting the area

Sussex

Sussex Anarchist Group have sent in news of the Group, based in Brighton at the University of Sussex (please see Contacts List for full address).

They write:

We began last autumn, a small group of students and one campus worker, some of us having broken with the Libertarian Socialist Group (which produced the paper Libertarian Student. The L.S.G. has moved further away from an anarchist position towards that of the S.W.P. The Anarchist Group has so far been engaged mainly in anti-nuclear work, and campaigning against military recruitment on campus. We organised a public meeting on Ireland with Ronan Bennett which unfortunately was poorly attended due to lack of publicity. We have also been selling FREEDOM, Black Flag and Xtra on campus and in Brighton. We are arranging a regular bookstore and are producing our own magazine, of which we will send you a copy.

DAVE

Damage

A COURT in London recently awarded a woman £12,000 damages in compensation for being wrongfully arrested and detained for 14 hours. Maybe it was just an example of the British state pretending to be humane and living up to its traditions of decency, but it sets a really surprising precedent.

I mean on that basis, they owe me about £2,000 for one occasion. £8,000 for another and with a few others, I'm probably entitled to about £15,000 in compensation. And as for what the Persons Unknown are worth - well...

or passing through. We think we are in contact with all the anarchists in N. Cumbria, but we understand that there are subscribers in West Cumbria, although they were not active when we lived over there.

Many thanks for your efforts at FREEDOM PRESS; it is nice to read of all the exciting things (and the depressing things) that are going on in the big wide world. Here in Cumbria we have to make common cause with the ecology

and pacifist groups, the groups trying to strengthen the village communities and local culture. All reformist stuff, but without it we remain isolated and a clique. There won't be an anarchist revolution in Cumbria in the near future, so for the moment we have to try and support the libertarian and communitarian aspects of life in our farms, villages and towns. And of course enjoy our own lives as fully as possible.

JOHN

Too Much Chicken

WHILE one can well believe that the American Embassy staff in Teheran - the 'hostages' or the 'spies' according to one's preference - were maltreated in captivity; (indeed captivity and maltreatment are generally so synonymous that the phrase is tautologous, and only when phony captivity is arranged for the leaders of foiled military or similar risings and the prisoners are lodged with their state security friends for gaolers is there likely to be an exception;) it is nevertheless an interesting fact that the only complaint any of them made over the telephone before they were handed over to the CIA for debriefing is that they were sick of eating 'chicken legs and rice'.

Putting aside any unworthily cynical suspicions that the punchings and other physical harassment which they now claim were given them by the CIA during this debriefing, in order to persuade them to make the right noises now; putting aside any invidious suggestions and odious comparisons that had a similar number of people fallen into the hands of the Shah's gaolers or those of CIA supported regimes in South America, South Korea now or South Vietnam not so long ago, (not to mention our own dear Northern Ireland), that the released prisoners might not look so healthy and might prove by their mental and medical state that the treatment had been more harsh - even if somewhat less publicised on release - one is still left with a question.

One knows that the press lacks tact, that they persist in getting their interviews, that they will harass those who refuse to be interviewed, that they will illegally break into houses in order to get pictures of strike leaders, that they are not put off by the fact that

those whose pictures they want are rich and powerful, even royalty, that they will follow ambulances into hospitals, interrupt funerals, and so forth; one has always understood that American press were even brasher, even less given to regard for privacy and delicacy than British. Then why is it that in one of the completest press coverages the world has ever seen, that with media blanket coverage of every issue remotely connected with the release of the 'hostages', that not one reporter, anywhere, managed to penetrate the screen, and get an interview with the released 52 before they had been 'de-briefed'? (Not even a long range camera shot, of anything that was not an official release, not even a recorded telephone interview.)

It means that the 'security' mounted by the US government must have been enormous. We were told the 52 were taken to Weisbaden for medical treatment before being allowed back to the USA; one knows that medical care in the States is exorbitantly expensive, but was this really necessary, especially since all the 'hostages' could be seen to walk on and off the planes? Why was it necessary to keep some of the 52 isolated from others at Weisbaden?

It is obvious that the US government was seeking some way to avoid fulfilling its part of the obligations under the release agreement. One notes that the delay for the release was due to the fact that at the last moment the American papers did not accord with earlier agreements so the plan to welch came earlier, and is not purely the product of Reagan's victory.

L.O.

Unity is Strength

GANG of 630 release Communiqué on Ongoing Hostage Situation in Washington !

IN a not unexpected, powerfully worded, Communiqué, issued from the Basement Oyster Bar of Westminster today by loyal members of the House of Commons, the Gang of 630 confirmed recent rumours by pledging lasting solidarity with the Washington Incarceration Front.

The Communiqué, roughly typed and apparently copied (without prior authorisation) on the Gardener's Xerox 4000, was received at 10.00 hours today by The Star, The Tatler and The Farmers' Gazette.

The Gang of 630 state that firm action will ensue if the demands of the WIF are not met in full within 7 days. Immediately following the expiration of time allowed there will be swift reprisals on several fronts:-

- 1) Subsidised Balaclava Allowance for the SAS will be withdrawn.
- 2) The Post of Ghost Writer to the Chief Commissioner will be scrapped.
- 3) Arts Council to be instructed by Internal Memo that the 'Plant a Vine in Highgate' Grant will be suspended for 5 years.
- 4) Supplies of dogs (from Club Row collection) for research at Porton Down to be cut drastically.

Longer term action threatened includes:-

- 5) Immediate cancellation of the proposed 31½p Martinmas Payment to UVF Veterans.

6) Withdrawal of Life-Peerage recently awarded to Chairman of EMI for his services to Peace.

7) Closure of A10 Sports and Social Club.

8) No re-issue of Savings Stamps for the Right to Work Campaign.

Our Washington Correspondent writes:-

'The population of America, held hostage now for 211 years by the WIF in a safe but sorry state under the terms of a loosely worded Charter (or Constitution as it is more widely-known overseas) are beginning to show signs of strain, as a result of various newly-developed methods used to break their spirit of Opportunity. In a calculated programme of Imaginative-Reflex Conditioning, WIF leaders have allowed only the Wall Street Journal and back copies of 'Variety' as post-briefing reading and will permit only those foods approved by the Association of Intensive-Farm Operatives of America. The sensory deprivation techniques (details of which were leaked by the Coke delivery man) still continue: force-feeding of pastrami on rye with onions, chick peas, grits and minced hog, compulsory viewing twice-weekly of "The Green Berets", and, the most innovative of all, the "Family" Chorus Line Revue following the shoving and hair-pulling in the Las Vegas Room mixed Ego-Massage.

The demands of the WIF, straight forward enough to the new

reader, and reprinted in full in today's Communiqué, include:

1) Exemption from Voting awarded only on proof of Honours Pass in the Eysenck I.Q. Evaluation Test (Tokyo Edition, revised 1935).

2) Voting to be compulsory in all States covered or not covered by McDonalds.

3) Gideons Bible to be replaced by Freedom of Information Index (Plus A ddenda) in all serviced accommodation.

4) State Marathons to be held bi-monthly in all principal cities to raise funds for the UK Liberation Front of the Council for Social Democracy.

5) Morning Feeding of Vietnam Veterans in Central Park to be introduced, to draw attention to the shameful situation in South America where a tribe of 34, untouched by the privileges of civilisation and democracy and the Inter-Clearing Ballistic Missile, are permitted to live without Advisors.

6) Immediate implementation of Building Program for the new Carter Conurbation in Nevada for the surviving members of the Ronald Reagan Season Movie-Goers Club of 1924.

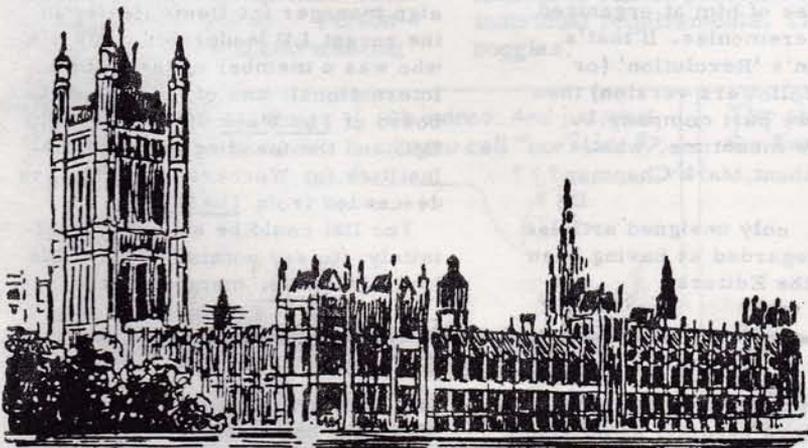
Recent reports as to the health of the hostages suggest that some are weakening in their resolve to keep America a land of the Brave. The Brave apparently broke under interrogation by J. Carson (Chief of Staff of the League for the Trivialization of Communications.) and allowed his remaining section of the Yellow Mountain Reservation to be developed by the Research Faculty working on new techniques to perfect a non-polluting but non bio-degradeable Document Shredder for the Salt and Pepper Talks on Peace in Balukhistan.'

For an In-Depth Review of the implications of this situation for World Nutrition, see tomorrow's Illustrated Supplement....

(Sponsored by the Brixton Committee for the Unification of Yorkshire.)

LATE News

The Bishop of Rome's Special Envoy will visit Westminster on Friday to plead with the Gang of 630 not to weaken in their resolve and to pray for resolution. Special permission for the visit was granted by HRH Prince Charles (Defender of World Wild Life), presently at Balmoral grouse-shooting.



The Gang of 630's London hideout

SAS heroes

DESPITE vetting by the police, prejudiced directions from judges and all other efforts to secure the proper verdict, our juries are showing themselves to be an ever more unreliable part of the state machine. A serious lapse occurred last week at Westminster Coroners Court, where the jury took nearly an hour to reach a verdict of 'justifiable homicide' at the Iranian Embassy siege inquest. The surprise confessed by the coroner at this extraordinary case of indecision is quite understandable. After all, we have been treated, under the glare of TV cameras, to a real life drama which puts 'The Professionals' right in the shade. All the ingredients were there: Iranian 'terrorists' with no popular support; innocent hostages supported by the inevitable police hero; long drawn out negotiations and then, finally, the wreaking of vengeance by our home grown SAS heroes.

The coroner clearly found it difficult to see what could have caused the delay. Could it be that the jurors were a little disturbed by the discovery of only one air pistol in the embassy, the other weapons having been thrown out? Were they perhaps concerned by one witness's testimony that a 'terrorist' was held and shot through the head at close range and that others, apparently after surrendering, suffered 10, 15 and 39 wounds? Well, even if they were disconcerted by the sheer savagery of the siege, the coroner clearly suffered no such misgivings, and that's all that matters. Our state heroes may have ignored the 'rule of law' coveted by their masters, but then rules are made to be broken, aren't they? And to think the Iranians chose England because they regarded it as the 'home of freedom'!

R. T.

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LETTERS

Lennon

Dear Editors

No doubt you're receiving a lot of feedback about the recent article 'Chapman' (20 Dec, vol. 41, no. 25). I am inflamed with anger. The insinuations about John Lennon are ridiculous. Your true priorities are obvious when you dwell on the fact that John Lennon was very rich. So what? What would it achieve and prove if John Lennon were on the dole? What if he had given his last penny to feed starving Kampuchians? It might have bought one meal - then what? It's a cop-out to lay that responsibility on him. If it belongs to anyone it belongs to all of us. It is true that money is power in our society. But note the vast difference in the way John Lennon exerted the influence of his 'power' from someone like Rockefeller. Don't forget the benefit concerts, the peace rallies, the freedom marches. And for your information, yes, John did give cash to various causes: in fact 10 per cent of his earnings. I'm all for peaceful revolution, aren't you? I think it's pretty fucking revolutionary to enlighten and inspire the lives of as many people as John Lennon did. Don't get so wrapped up in figures and finance of revolution to forget that the most valuable gift that's givable is awareness.

SUZY MAY

London

THE REPLY....

OK I agree we're all to blame, but bloody hell - did you see the newspapers the week he died? - talk about obscene. 'Working Class Hero' all over the centre pages, (famous champions of the working class are the Daily Star and The Sun) not to mention thousands of people weeping and wailing in public over pictures of him at organized mourning ceremonies. If that's John Lennon's 'Revolution' (or rather his followers version) then I'm afraid we part company...

And in the meantime, what's happening about Mark Chapman???

DS

By the way, only unsigned articles should be regarded as having been written by the Editors.

Trot threat

Comrades,

PS in his comments on Labour happenings in the last issue said that - in one sense - the LP right has justification in attributing the so called swing to the Left in the LP (a purely mythical swing of course Benn is not as radical as the Bevan of 49, Bevan was not as radical as the Lansbury of 35, the Lansbury of 35 was not as radical as the Lansbury of 06) to Trotskyist infiltration; instancing the Militant's descent from one or two members of the old RCP. However that descent proves no more than the fact that at the other end of the LP spectrum, Dennis Healey is also an ex-member of the RCP as was the late Bessie Braddock, so that one could as fairly argue that the Labour Party's undoubted swing to the right in the fifties was due to Trotskyist infiltration.

Indeed this latter theory would seem to be supported by the weight of numbers: item, Jock Haston, former Chairman of the RCP, leader of the Independence faction of the RCP - to which Militant's theorist belonged - subsequently witch-hunting political officer of the London Labour Party and a senior official in Frank Chapple's EEPTU; item, T. Dan Smith, former RCP convert from the ILP, responsible for the rightward move within the N.E. England Labour Party, and for the involvement of the L.P. there with capitalist business, his enthusiasm for which subsequently took him to prison; item, Eric Varley - who was campaign manager for Denis Healey in the recent LP leadership contest - who was a member of the Fourth International, and of the editorial board of *The Week* in 1963 (both IMG and the founding group of the Institute for Workers' Control, are descended from *The Week*);

The list could be extended indefinitely; (to say nothing of the noble lord of Gowrie, member of the

continued on page 7

N.B.

All those of you who have been writing letters recently about Max Stirner, and all those of you who are going to be interested in read-

ing them are requested to patiently await the next issue of *FREEDOM*, when they should find them lurking somewhere in the Review.

LETTERS

Letters

LETTERS

LETTERS

An Apology

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I think I owe some of you an apology. In one of my more recent letters in Freedom I guess I have projected some frustration around the lack of support around my case, my situation, and this overall struggle here in prison. I am involved in guilt tripping some into supporting me. That was not my intention. It is true that I need everything I can get just to stay alive in here much less to continue to struggle for the cause I am committed to as you all are also, but I'm conscious of your reality too and that many others worldwide also need your support so I ask for and only accept what you all can spare if and when you can spare it. The possibility of death at any time, the conditions I must suffer, and constant struggle affect me physically, mentally and spiritually causing me to react/project wrongly and/or make mistakes. I get tired pretty easy and often which brings out frustration, and I am kind of scared which don't help a lot. No excuses, justifications, just truth that I share to help others 'correct' themselves and/or to help others understand things, people, me better. I have a theory that has worked and is working for me and others, but sometimes I push too hard and/or lose my patience. For the first time in over six years I am on the offensive against the enemy and winning on many levels - for myself, others, you all, and the cause. I do not wish to see the offensive fail or gain only a little ground, and so often I in trying to maintain the offensive make mistakes, project wrongly. I apologize, and thank those who have brought this fault to my attention even though they did so not meaning to criticize me. All of you are in numerous ways even by just writing me and/or printing my letters etc. doing good/great support work for me, around me, my case and situation, and I love you all plus thank you very much. We are winning. Don't hesitate to question, inform, and/or criticize me where you think it is necessary for this is an us trip not a me thing.....

Love and Rage,
CARL HARP.

San Quentin.

current cabinet, who in the mid and late sixties was in IS; and there denounced anarchists (at a meeting addressed by PS) as agents of the CIA, for our position of 'Neither Washington nor Hanoi'.)

The evidence is that ex-Trots are as apt as ex-Stalinists to move violently and viciously to the Far Right, (there is a slight difference in that the predominate tendency is for ex-Trots to move to the right of the LP, while ex-Stalinists are more often to be found on the right of the Conservatives, but there are exceptions to both.) That therefore any connection of Militant with the RCP proves nothing. The simple fact is that ever since in the 1890s Herbert Morrison left the SDF to enter the ILP, marxists have been entering the Labour Party to convert it to marxism and that more often than not they have promptly moved to the right of Labour and taken it further from socialism. If the Council for Social Democracy members were honest they would be clamouring for more Trots to join their Party.

L. O.

END

Dear Friends,

You may have heard of the plans for the Easter Anti-War March, endorsed by CND, END, ANC and War Resisters International and which is being co-ordinated at present by a March committee in Hebden Bridge.

For those who do not know of these actions, I shall explain. The object is to oppose the siting of Cruise missiles in this or any other country in Europe, and to oppose nuclear weapons and government war plans in general.

The strategy of the action is to make the action non-centralised while 'mass', regional and international at the same time and will consist of local activities and an international demonstration/conference.

On the local level various Peace, ND and Anti-nuke groups in this have already planned actions to take place over the Easter period; for example, a Trans-Pennine march is taking place between Leeds and Manchester, contacting local people

on the way and ending with a rally in Central Manchester, protests are planned in Rugby at a military communications centre, there is to be a rally at Greenham Common and many more actions are in hand. The idea is to initiate local activities but in a co-ordinated format so that they are 'mass'.

With this open-ended formula, anarchist groups are of course welcome to participate in or initiate their own activities. There remain many areas, military and defence installations as yet untargeted.

On the international level, there are to be actions against military and nuclear bases throughout 'Western' Europe, though not all activists in Europe are yet in agreement. However the links established so far represent the start to a movement we hope will eventually reach into 'Eastern' Europe. An international demonstration is being planned, by a Belgian group, in Brussels, home of NATO, EEC and a Russian Embassy for Easter Saturday 18th April, to be followed the next day by an informal conference/social for people taking part, with a pledge to future mutual support. Coachloads are expected to go from this country.

A national planning conference will have taken place in Birmingham by the time you read this, but many local and regional planning meetings will be happening. (There is a Trans-Pennine planning meeting taking place at the Trades Club, Hebden Bridge - next to the Post Office - on 7th February at 2.00 pm to which all those organising or participating in activities in the North of England are welcome.)

We think that the molecular structure of these demonstrations accords well with libertarian principles and hope that the anarchist movement will give full support.

For further information, news, suggestions or donations please contact the address below.

Yours for a free world

PAUL WRIGHT

Upper Calder European Nuclear Disarmament,
5 Eaves Mount,
Mytholm,
Hebden Bridge,
W. Yorks.

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

ABERDEEN Libertarian Group
c/o 163 King Street, Aberdeen.
ABERYSTWYTH. David Fletcher,
59 Cambrian Street Aberystwyth.
BARRY. Terry Philips, 16 Robert
Street, Barry, South Glamorgan.
BELFAST Anarchist Collective,
Just Books, 7 Winetavern Street,
Belfast 1.
BIRMINGHAM anarchists/anarcha-
feminists meet Sundays. Contact
Alison at Peace Centre, 18 Moore
Street, Ringway, Birmingham 4.
(tel 021 643 0996).
BRIGHTON Libertarian Socialist
group, c/o Students Union, Falmer
House, University of Sussex,
Falmer, Brighton.
BRISTOL Bedminster, 110 Gren-
ville Road, Bristol 3.
CAMBRIDGE Anarchists, Box A,
41 Fitzroy Street, Cambridge.
CANTERBURY Alternative Research
Group, Students Union, University
of Kent, Canterbury.
CARDIFF. Write c/o One-O-Eight
Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Road.
COVENTRY. John England, Stud-
ents Union, University of Warwick,
Coventry.
CUMBRIA 12 Bath Terrace,
Drovers Lane, Penrith, Cumbria.
DUBLIN. Love v Power, Whelan's
Dance Studio, 51 South King Street
Dublin 2.
EAST ANGLIA DAM
Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens,
Saffron Walden, Essex.
ESSEX. Oral Abortions, The Cat-
skills, Maldon Road, Gay Bowers,
Danbury, Essex.
EXETER Anarchist Collective c/o
Community Association, Devonshire
House, Stocker Road, Exeter.
GLASGOW Anarchist Group, John
Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue,
Castlemilk, Glasgow G45.
HASTINGS Anarchists, 18a Mark-
wick Terrace, Saint Leonards-on-
Sea, East Sussex. (0424)420 620.
HULL Libertarian Collective, 16
Park Grove, Hull, North Humber.
KEELE Anarchist Group, c/o
Students Union, The University,
Keele, Staffordshire.
KEIGHLEY anarchists. c/o Simon
Saxton 1 Selbourne Grove Keighley
W. Yorks BD21 2SL.
LAMPETER Anarchist Group,
c/o Adian James, SDUC, Lampeter,
Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.
LIVERPOOL Anarchist Group, c/o
Hywel Ellis, Students Union, Liv-
erpool University, Liverpool.
LEAMINGTON and Warwick, c/o
42 Bath Street, Leamington Spa.
LEEDS anarchist group and DAM
Dave Brown, 2A Seaforth Place
Harehills, Leeds 9.
LEICESTER. Blackthorn Books,

74 Highcross Street (tel 21896), and
Libertarian Education, 6 Beacons-
field Road (tel 552085).

LONDON

Anarchist-Feminists, Box 33,
Rising Free, 182 Upper Street N1.
Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor
Avenue N5 (01-359 4794 before 7pm)
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 8pm, Halfway House
Pub, opposite Camden Town tube.
Freedom Collective, Angel Alley,
84b Whitechapel High Street E1.
(01-247 9249). Aldgate East tube,
near Whitechapel Art Gallery.
Kingston Anarchists, 13 Denmark
Street, Kingston upon Thames,
(01-549 2564).
London Workers Group, Box W,
Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, N1.
(01-249 7042) meets Tuesdays 8pm
at Metropolitan Pub, 75 Farringdon
Road, EC1.
Middlesex Poly Anarchists, Students
Union, Trent Park Site, Cockfosters
Road, Barnet, Herts.
Black Bomber Anarchists, Hackney/
Lambeth/Barnet, Box 29 Rising Free
182 Upper Street N1. Bi-monthly
magazine out in December, 15p.
South London Anarchists, Box 33,
Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, N1.
West London Anarchists, Box WLA
Freedom.
Xtra! Structureless Tyranny, 182
Upper Street N1.
MALVERN and Worcester area,
Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Stor-
ridge, Malvern, Worcestershire.
NORWICH Anarchists, c/o Free-
wheel Community Books, 56 Saint
Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk.
NOTTINGHAM, c/o Mushroom,
10 Heathcote Street (tel 582506) or
15 Scotholme Avenue, Hyson Green
(tel 708 302).
OLDHAM. Nigel Broadbent, 14
Westminster Road, Failsworth.
OXFORD anarchist group. Solidarity
c/o 34 Cowley Rd. Oxford.
PAISLEY Anarchist Group are un-
fortunately contactable through the
Students Union, Hunter Street,
Paisley, Renfrewshire.
PORTSMOUTH area anarchist group
c/o Garry Richardson 25 Beresford
Close Waterlooville Hants or
Duncan Lamb, 'Nirvana', Chichester
Yacht Basin, Bisham, West Sussex.
PLYMOUTH Anarchists, 115 Saint
Pancras Avenue, Pennycross, Ply-
mouth.
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.
SUSSEX anarchist group.

c/o Students Union, Falmer House
University of Sussex, Brighton.
SUNDERLAND anarchists/DAM
c/o 183 Durham Rd. Sunderland
SR3 4BX

SWANSEA. Don Williams, 24 Derl-
wvn, Duvant, Swansea.
SWINDON Area. Mike, Groundswell
Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon.
TAYSIDE Anarchist Group, 3L 188
Strathmartine Road, Dundee.
TORBAY Anarchist Federation, 24
Beverley Rise, Brixham, Devon.
TORNESS Public Parks Dept.
Contact for the 27 Parkkeepers
c/o Box 23 163 King St. Aberdeen.

NATIONAL

DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT,
c/o Box 20, 164-166 Corn Exchange
Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Man-
chester, M14 3BN.

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST GROUP
1 Grove Gardens, Leeds LS6 4EG
MIDLANDS Federation. Secretariat
c/o Coventry group.
NORTH EAST Anarchist Federation
as for Hull.

SCOTLAND. Local libertarian
groups may be contacted via:
J. Cowan, 3R 17 Cheviot Crescent,
Fintry, Dundee DD4 9QJ.

SOLIDARITY libertarian communist
organization (Publish Solidarity for
Social Revolution) c/o 123 Lathom
Road, London E6. Groups and
members in many towns.

THAMES VALLEY Anarchist Fed-
eration - contact Oxford group.

Desires

WOULD any NALGO members
interested in swapping experiences
or helping out in a NALGO anar-
chist magazine please contact:
Box C 121 Railton Rd. Herne Hill.
London SE24.

A magazine 'South London Stress'
is also available from the above
address for 25p.

ANYONE who has a copy of Stirner's
"The Ego and His Own" that they
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Spanish democracy in Catalonia

THE 'Paisos Catalans', or Catalan-speaking countries, stretch from Perpinya in France to Alacant in Valencia, and include the Balearic islands. The Catalan language, regarded as the proper language of these areas by the majority of their inhabitants, was spoken clandestinely (that is, in the home) throughout the forty years of the Franco regime, which sought to impose linguistic and cultural unity on a quadrilingual and culturally diverse peninsula. Catalan (the first language of seven and a half million people, or a quarter of the population of the Spanish state) was forbidden in schools, shops, offices, on the telephone, and, it goes without saying, in films, books, television and radio programmes. The Catalan flag, and any other indication that Catalonia had a cultural identity of its own, was also banned. This is why the great Catalan poets and novelists of this century remain largely unknown outside their own country, and why Catalan artists, despite the Catalan spirit of their work, are usually called 'Spanish' by the world at large, even when this has been against their expressed wishes. I'm referring to the architect Antoni Gaudi, the painters Joan Miro, Salvador Dali and Antoni Tapies, the cellist Pau Casals and many others. Furthermore, and above all, under Franco, any direct, uncompromising verbal defence of Catalan independence was punished by prison and torture, and occasionally by death (Salvador Puig Antich, for example, was executed 2 March, 1974). This despite the non-violent nature of Catalan independentism.

Nowadays the situation has improved in some respects. In shops, offices, and other public places, Catalan is used freely. About half the telephone operators in the area speak it or have learnt it; the other half are still in the habit of cutting you off should you speak to them in your native language. All private schools and a few of the state schools now teach in Catalan, but the majority of the schools continue in Castilian, which of course also means they teach from a centralist point of view. Thanks to the raising of the ban on Catalan as a printed language Catalan is now the most published language without a state in the world. There is one private Catalan radio station and two hours of Catalan television broadcast each day. But the private Catalan television company, which has been ready to broadcast (all day, every day) for a year now, has not yet been granted a licence by the government, although its programmes are not political, rather cultural. The Catalans also have an elected president, Jordi Pujol, who, like all politicians, claims most where he can do least.

On the surface then, things are not too bad. Despite a certain amount of hindrance - above all in the electronic media - the Catalans are enjoying freedom of expression. Unfortunately, it is not total. For those who insist that Catalonia, in order to be free, must be completely independent of the Spanish state, a different treatment is reserved. Under Franco, there was a special court which often dealt with political cases - the Tribunal de Orden Publico. It was this court which handed out maximum sentences to thousands of men and women, in effect because they were considered enemies of the state. This court was the most effective instrument of repression employed by the Franco regime. It is now called the Asemblea Nacional and it still tries political prisoners. Its personnel is today identical to that which it had in Franco's time. It is because of this court's rulings that there are now between forty and sixty Catalan independentists in prison. None of these people even have anything to do with armed groups. They are in jail solely on account of their opinions.

There is a further aspect. Amnesty International has just released a report in which it gives fourteen concrete cases of political prisoners who were brutally tortured in Spanish jails in 1978 and 1979. There are, needless to say, many more than fourteen cases in practice. Yesterday I went to the presentation of a book written by a poet, one of the fifty or so Catalans now in jail. The man doing the presentation told us in detail about life in the Model Prison in Barcelona, where his brother spent the last year and a half. One corridor of this prison, 'Gallery 5', is administered by a group of guards who have been selected for their sadistic tendencies. One prisoner had his shoulders permanently dislocated, another had to go to hospital for a month after serving his sentence. One man, a lunatic who was transferred to the model prison because he had escaped from mental hospital several times, was found dead after a month. The director of the prison claimed it was suicide, but doctors found deep cuts on the back of the body and on his testicles. The man had been tortured to death. Democracy. Of course people might have known it would be like this.

Far from improving the situation is deteriorating rapidly. First, the absurd Scala case, in which CNT-ers are being detained for no reason at all, is ample proof that the government considers its primary duty to be repression of its enemies at any cost whatever. Second, the Hendaia affair, in which a group of Spanish fascists entered a bar in French Euskadi, shot dead two innocent men and wounded eight others, (all the fascists in the pay of the Spanish police) shows that the government is the No. 1 terrorist group in Spain. Third, and most important, is (ironically) the new 'anti-terrorist' law instituted on the 3rd of this month. Any demonstration down to a strike by public employees will now be considered as terrorist activity. Homes may be entered, letters and phone calls intercepted all without the people concerned knowing and without the police giving a reason when or if they find out. People may be detained in a similarly arbitrary way and the 72 hour limit for detention without charge has now been abolished. In Girona recently police cordoned off an entire area, searched every house and detained several 'suspects'. Such is the mentality of the Spanish police that all Catalans are considered potential 'suspects'.

The dogmatic members of the 'old guard' of the CNT (not the younger ones whose attitude is more fluid) will tell you that Catalanism (viz. loving Catalonia) is a hindrance to human understanding. In the Civil War it was the CNT who put up signs in Barcelona telling people not to speak in Catalan - the very signs Franco put up a few years later. Now, even the CNT has come to accept that the best way to communicate with people is to learn their language, their first language, the language they think and feel in, and love for itself. Of course the Catalans understand Spanish, in the banal sense of 'understand'. In the profound sense of the word they have nothing to do with it whatever. I believe that the spirit of Catalanism, pacific but angry, undogmatic but strong, anti-hierarchical but organised, patriotic but antijingoistic and intelligent but informed with great love and emotion, is authentically anarchic, more so in many respects than the utopian dogmatism of some of the 'official' anarchists. If given the choice, I would rather spend my life struggling on behalf of one 'minority' culture which I know and love, than on behalf of any amount of universal futuristic ideal worlds. (I believe anarchism must defend 'the Europe of languages and peoples as against the Europe of the nation-states.

Letter from America 1:

Campfires along the Sunset Trail

ONE event seems to sum up the unconscious motivations which went into the groundswell which lifted Ronald Reagan onto the trail and thrust him into the saddle for the coming four years.

This was the acquittal of a group of John Birch Society members of a series of blatant shootings, carried on nationwide television.

The shootings occurred on 3 November, 1979 when a group of Ku Klux Klan members drove up to a demonstration which was organising itself into a march through the streets of Greensboro, North Carolina. The 75 protesters, members of the Communist Workers Party, were gathered to march against Klan attacks on organisers working to unionise black workers in hospitals and textile factories.

After a short bout of fisticuffs the Klan members opened fire at point blank range, killing five people instantly and injuring many others. However, the demonstrators were not ignorant of the facts of life on the front line in the American South and 52 seconds later they returned fire. A general shoot-out continued until police arrived.

That the Communists were totting guns was taken by the state as a justification for conducting the case as if there were no guilty parties. The defense agreed in the opinion and so the Klan members were acquitted this past December. A good example of how the much-lauded gun laws which have led to more than 3,000 violent deaths in the USA this year tend to favour those favoured by the state.

But the confrontation itself stands as a metaphor for a combination of social and economic factors which have grown up almost unnoticed during the vagaries of the Carter regime.

Demonstrators were out in the streets not only because there is a continuing campaign against black organisations of any kind in the USA, but because the new thrust of factory siting has placed the South of the country at the centre of an economic process not matched in power since the days of cotton plantations and slavery itself.

The recently completed US census confirms that the classic migration tendency from east to west has, in the last decade, been surpassed by a move from north to south. North Eastern cities have begun to drain out, not to the cities of the West Coast but to the nexus of the 'new industrial heartland' - a half-moon of geography beginning with Atlanta and dipping through the big cities of Texas as well as Arizona and ending in San Diego, California (near Mexico) which is about to pass San Francisco as the second largest city in that state.

Here corporations can bargain for the same incentives to settlement that they have become accustomed to in Third World nations like Brazil, South Korea and Taiwan.

After years of struggling with management complexities caused by union leaders demanding a piece of the action in return for a docile labour force bought off by wages rising more or less in tune with the rate of inflation, company presidents suddenly find themselves happily at home in a part of their own nation where armed gangs of rednecks will ensure, in an informal way, that no unions at all will disturb the easy course of capital accumulation.

The front line has become the city of Atlanta where a continuing saga of violence against black children offers a 'tip of the iceberg' clue to a rising trend rooted in competition between black and

white for jobs.

If there is any reason for attributing an ambience or special flavour to the interests which underwrite the powers attaching themselves to Ronald Reagan they may be cited here in the 'New South'.

If Jimmy Carter represented an Old South of white Christian values aligned to a moral imperative within the black civil rights movement, Reagan draws strength from the rump of whites who were left leaderless after George Wallace left the national scene. Joined by the 'moral majority', which draws its strength from the bible belt and a network of national TV shows regularly demanding funds over the airwaves on channels throughout the nation, the Wallcites have become the wedge which has finally broken up the 'new deal' coalition of liberal northerners and conservative southern democrats.

If any one development may be seen in the Reagan victory it is this final disruption of the populist undergrowth. The political demography of the 'new conservatism' points to a centre of power lodged somewhere West of Chicago with support from the sun belt. But if the spectre of 19 year old footballers from the University of Florida expressing powerless rage at the condition of American hostages in Iran before entering into a ritual expression of the United States way of life in a college football game may be seen as now firmly entrenched at the centre of the nation's vision of itself, it is only fitting that a man whom the Mayor of Newark New Jersey described as 'The American-Flag' should emerge as their leader. Together they will reach out for a kind of America which never really existed but which all dream of having passed in an age when a simple call to the seas could strike terror into the hearts of godless revolutionaries - sporting a disregard for the equality of opportunity represented by a used car salesman in a small town somewhere in Indiana or Kansas.

And if the liberal bourgeois establishment suddenly finds itself eclipsed within its own construct - the political system - the left and the vast majority of people within the nation it represents must now face the full fury of a republic pledged to divest itself of the welfare state.

Drawing upon a combination of Wallace-style rhetoric and conservative libertarianism devolving from the theoretics of Ayn Rand, Reagan's new adviser on Social



Services, Martin Anderson (a long-time resident of the conservative Hoover Institute at California's Stanford University) will begin to 'roll back' welfare payments and support for public services. According to Anderson, welfare benefits 'hurt more than they help'. 'Subsistence payments build up a kind of poverty wall around recipients that locks them into dependence and discourages them from looking for work.'

The flavour of this invective is carried over into plans to attack abortion rights, reinstate school prayers, block any plans for a nationalised medical system, defeat the women's equal rights amendment now passing through state legislatures, and dismantle all energy and environment controls.

These cuts will occur in an atmosphere of increasing violence touched off by the events at Greensboro. Now there are daily reports of attacks on black people in most major cities. To protest all these developments and a future of increasingly narrowing horizons, people will have gathered in Washington on 20 January for a Peoples' Counter-Inauguration. It has been organised by a task force created at a conference conducted in Greensboro two months ago.

Exactly what effect these demonstrations will have is open to conjecture.

One sure thing is that the new ascendancy within the capitalist political spectrum will have a clear run before it for at least the rest of this year. Only external disaster, for example an interjection

into the El Salvadorian revolution, could bring criticism to the heart of the Reagan dream.

Americans, that is those who still have something to vote for, are passionately enamoured of a vision which seems to have attached itself to an echo of unassailable world power which was last heard before the Vietnam war. They feel that this power was built upon the operation of a 'free' market of ideas and skills within the nation, allowing the construction of wealth capable of spreading beyond the borders of the nation as the best advertisement of the moral superiority of the capitalist way of life. A reconstruction of the foundations for this wealth accumulation engineered by a father figure trained in the 'golden age' of the 'free market' appeals as the obvious route to exemplary world peace based upon American superiority.

It is, of course, essentially a myopic view akin to the blindness which fails to acknowledge the growing violence created by contradictions in social and economic processes within the USA. That this fantasy of the sunset trail is so obvious makes analysis and prediction all the more possible and should provide a ready area for the activities of the left. That there is in place a government which believes in the fantasies of the sunset trail makes the future seem ominous and yet somehow unreal.

BRIAN MURPHY

Letter from America 2:

Visions of the 'New Poor'

IN 1948 a 12 year-old girl was raped by her step-father in a small village near the town of Lynchburg, Virginia.

Nine months later she had a child. Suffering from mental collapse and physical side effects from the whole experience she was admitted to the Lynchburg Training School and Hospital for 'treatment'.

Unknown to her she was sterilized.

Today she stands with others on a Washington D.C. street in silent protest against a system at work in the heartland of Ronald Reagan's power - the 'new south' - which allows people taken into public

institutions to be sterilized against their wishes.

The Virginia Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) says there may be as many as 65,000 people in the USA who have been sterilized when in psychiatric care - and they do not know it.

The ACLU of Virginia uncovered the massive sterilization scheme in that state only last spring, and it has been in operation since the 1940's. Both men and women have been victims of the state sanctioned mutilation process, based on what one Virginia official said was an attempt to 'weed out misfits, loose women or incor-

rigibles'.

These revelations come at a time when the American people are crowing their 'freedom' for all the world to hear as their precious 'hostages' are coming home. But this dark side of the US public health system also points to a continuing endemic disregard for the rights and needs of women and children at a time when the whole welfare system itself is about to come under attack.

At the same time as the Reagan administration is preparing a cut of public spending amounting to 107 million pounds, two recently issued reports describe a worsen-



ing condition of life for women trying to care for their children on their own.

The 1980 report of the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity indicates that 49% of the families living in extreme poverty are now headed by women, up from 29% in 1960. In fact, the report predicts that if the current rate of increase continues, female-headed families 'will comprise 100% of the poverty population by about the year 2000.

The reason, says the council, is that female-headed families are caught between a rising divorce rate, an increased labour market and rapid deterioration of social services.

Confirming this situation another report, from the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights shows that the earning capacity of women and minorities has declined rapidly over the past 10-15 years. Both groups have been increasingly segregated in low paying, dead-end jobs or pushed out of the workforce altogether. Once out of work women find their unemployment benefits, Social Security benefits and disability pay are barely enough to survive on because they were based on pay levels which are now 59% of men's.

Women who do manage to get and keep jobs still face the enormous problem of childcare and 'the double day'. Many women have to stop working because they cannot find anyone to look after their children, or cannot afford to pay for childcare. The alternative - to go on the dole until the children are grown - is also difficult because food stamps and welfare payments have lagged so far behind the cost of the bare necessities of life.

Meanwhile violence towards women inside marriage is now driving more into single-parenthood. A recent report on the national television network CBS (itself a recognition that the problem has become so large that it can no longer be ignored) focused on the situation of battered wives in the area of Austin, Texas.

There, men steeped in the conditioning of southwestern life seem to be turning upon their wives at the first sign that the American dream is not all that it seems in the advertisements.

The programme documented the brutal beatings and subhuman tortures women had been subjected to and went on to look at a centre for battered wives which has been sponsored by a local middle class philanthropist. In the case of

Austin, Texas, the women found a refuge and the national network got a 'happy' ending which renewed the mythology of midwestern Christian charity - a mythology which Reagan is counting on to take up the 'welfare slack' left after budget cuts.

However what the programme failed to show was the other 99% of situations throughout the northern industrial cities and the 'new west' where wife-beating occurs 'under wraps' as another American mythology is adhered to - the right of a man to complete control of his home environment.

Under Ronald Reagan it will indeed be a man's world, and the plight of women forced to the bottom of the economic system will continue to worsen in tortured silence, but for a few women's groups dotted through the 'liberal' heartland.

BRIAN MURPHY



'Lars Larson waits without.'

'Without what?'

'Without nothing. He's dead skint and wants to know if you'll lend him a couple of nicker.'

On yer bike!

Jupiter's Travels. Ted Simon
Hamish Hamilton. London. £7.95

TRAVEL books are generally not in my line of country, and they are mostly written by well-heeled people with plenty of time on their hands. Recently though, young people with plenty of time but limited resources have travelled far and wide. India has always been a favourite destination and lots have travelled the cheap hard way overland.

Ted Simon travelled through four continents on a British motor-cycle when the remnant of the British motor-cycle industry was struggling to become a workers' cooperative.

The coming of the aeroplane and motor car has added two dimensions to travel - isolation and speed in transit and not contributing at all to understanding. This journey, however, had the traveller brought very much nearer to the basics of the environment and exposed him to the changes of culture more closely.

A keen and sympathetic observer, he says of the crossing from Palermo to Tunis:

'I watched the thin hardy men with their enormous bundles of stuff fighting their way along the gangways and through the hatches, the scapegoats of Europe, wearing our cast-off clothing, hassled and slandered from border to border, available to do any job too dirty for a white man.'

Tourism from wealthy cultures tends to destroy the less wealthy ones and further unbalance the economics of such cultures.

When he reaches Nairobi, he says after travelling 7,000 miles:

'None of this means anything to

me. Nothing of my journey means anything to anyone here. We are engaged in a conspiracy, pretending to understand each other. Isn't that what makes the world go round? I meet a man I knew once in London. He is rubbing his hands together over the same deals, pickled and preserved in the same urbanity. Nairobi and London are joined by a silver tube that swoops through the pasteurized ether, and the same stuff pours out at each end.

I dress for the Country Club, a functioning relic from the days before the tables were turned. Anyone can join now, but in practise it's much the same blue-eyed crowd, still enjoying the privileges without the power.'

I have done a lot of motor-cycling in my time, and I agree with the writer that it is a different kettle of fish, probably like horse travel, except that oats, hay and water are more bulky than petrol.

Exposure to the elements can be an exhilarating and a debilitating experience.

There was some difficulty in getting to what is now known as Zimbabwe, and he had to go to Botswana, then buy a mandatory insurance policy for the six miles into Zimbabwe, what was then Rhodesia. No doubt a steady source of income for someone during the reign of the illegal regime!

Entering Smith country, he observes:

'On the other side of the fence, having entered the squire's mansion, is this office, all spick and span, but what hits you smack in the retina, what makes you want to shield your eyes lest they melt in their sockets, are these two White Men. Man, are they White!

They are dazzling like angels or something. And they are White in White. They have little White socks, and elasticated White shorts - perfectly cut to those plump White thighs and tight White tunics. I swear, once I appreciate that they are real and alive, I don't see people, I see flesh, and I know it's White right through, like pork or chicken, done up in a frilly White wrapping the way it comes ready-cooked from the delicatessen.'

This is one of the funniest episodes in the book, as he observes, he had been influenced by the Africa he had been through and most of the Europeans he had met had at least gone a little bit grey round the edges.

Simon's arrival in Fortaleza, Brazil, led to one of the more disagreeable aspects of modern travel, when he found himself detained for a week:

'I learned a rare lesson in the nature of serfdom.'

As if often the case in many countries in the north part of S. America, coffee was unobtainable. Only the West can afford to buy it. The "gringo" is now the "yanqui".

However, he got put into the computer at the Mexican border with no difficulty and said:

'Going to the United States from Latin America is like going to a movie - the kind they like to call a Major Motion Picture.'

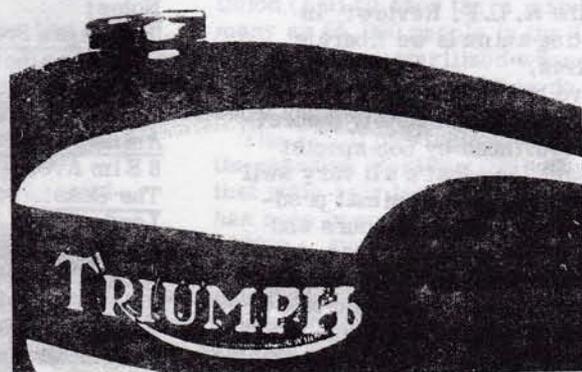
When he got to Los Angeles after travelling through some of the poorest areas of the world, he says:

'For several days I remained a total alien, and out of this alienation grew a feeling of tremendous outrage against the senseless extravagance of it all. It was entirely a matter of perspective. To a Southern Californian, his life-style and standard no doubt seemed like the least he could get by on. To me it seemed preposterous and sick. I wandered through supermarkets and along "Shopping Malls" disgusted and obsessed by the naked drive to sell and consume frivolities.'

Simon spent a good time amongst people who had retreated to the countryside from choice and of course benefited from the surrounding fat. Then he went to Australia, India and home.

This is a good book for the holiday, full of wisdom and interest.

Alan Albon



Why Veganism?

SHOULD there be an 'average' reader of FREEDOM (which I doubt, but the premise is handy), that person probably has in mind an image of vegetarianism and veganism not unlike, in terms of accuracy, the image held by readers of the 'Sun' of anarchists. I come to bury this image, not to resurrect it, and will no doubt be told eventually, many times, if I succeeded - on a scale from one to ten. I tremble at the suspense.

A Vegan, for those of you deep in the reaches of 'The Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy', is not a newly-discovered form of inter-galactic traveller, but an 'orthodox' vegetarian; a person who does not consume or use any product derived from animal slaughter or exploitation. Vegans also avoid all products (including medicines) which have been researched, manufactured and tested within processes that involve experiments and tests using animals. Why make this decision and what relevance does an explanation have to the pages of FREEDOM?

The grim details of animal exploitation have been well documented elsewhere, and regular readers will remember, I hope, the Animal Liberation Front Review of recent times. One does not need to have too fertile an imagination to reflect reasonably accurately on the horrors of the slaughterhouse, and even the most confirmed carnivores among my friends would not willingly witness that which they suppress whilst feeding on veal escalopes. However, even those who do so reflect should not be lulled into a cosy acceptance of talk of 'humane' methods of killing. Even if one can accept this as 'humane' in the first place, go on to realise that the journey from open field or factory camp to the drop is often obscenely cruel and the greater part of herdsmen, drivers and collectors are not the quaint rural characters who tuck their herds up at night and sing them to sleep. They are 'operatives', part of a mechanised and managerial process. They might just as well be working with steel or baked beans. Again, the cruelty of the home trade and of the export of live animals for slaughter is well documented and makes harrowing reading. Forget all tales of

rural idylls, dispel any inclination to delude yourself that the seemingly content herds wandering in the pastures green live to a ripe old age in subsidised retirement. As a recent country recluse, I have seen, too many times, herds of sheep pressed into tiny fenced enclosures by the road, like a collection of so many inanimate objects stuffed into a cardboard box; fixed there motionless, unable to move or to lie down or run away, whilst the driver goes moon-lighting. The livestock markets also show their cruel side, and a recent event in the South West of England where a horse made lame by barbaric treatment in transit was slaughtered on the spot by a driver with a knife, nauseated and angered even the Wimpy Brigade.

Not only do vegans believe that it is unnecessary nutritionally and economically to slaughter animal life in order for the human species to survive and survive well, they are also committed to exposing the specist and oppressive nature of the entire trade in animal products and in much scientific research. Whilst humankind can imprison, torture and kill animal life, whilst people involved at every level of this commerce can be numbed into a production-line mentality of regarding animals as merely marketable products, then the fascist and oppressive outlook which makes distinctions and qualitative judgements between differing human races, social groups, beliefs, ages, sexes and lifestyles can also prevail and flourish. It is the task of negating this fascist and oppressive outlook which I hope will appear worthy of adoption by readers of FREEDOM. To borrow a line from the A. L. F. Review: "In liberating animals we liberate ourselves."

I have heard, many weary times, people completely theoretically convinced by non-specist argument, say that's all very well but they love to eat animal products because of the flavours and convenience involved. That, in my opinion, is on a par with the woman who squirmed when told of the methods used to produce *pâté de fois gras* and then said 'that's awful, darling, but Geoffrey won't

eat anything else.' If we foster that attitude, we'll soon be patting those young people on the head who join the Army for comradeship and foreign travel. So, there is a relevance to consider, information and alternatives to promote and a liberation to achieve.

Let us dispel forever the image of vegetarians and vegans as nut cutlet consuming, lentil-soaking dotties. That image is as reasonably held as the one of the anarchist with black cloak and smoking bomb. From a nutritional point of view, one can live well, even luxuriously, on exclusively plant sources. From an ecological point of view, land available for agricultural use is made most efficient use of by arable farming. Economically and acre for acre, it is more profitable to produce one ton of plant-derived nutrition than by arriving at it second-hand through the oppressive and intensive abuse of animal life. By developing a non-specist approach to survival we liberate ourselves and foster thoughts of mutual aid, self-sufficiency and equality of access to the earth's resources that appear to me to be not an unattractive prospect. The Vegan Society regularly publishes up to date information on nutrition and alternatives for vegan shopping lists, with all products listed produced by non-specist methods. They also provide information on alternative medicines and many household products that can be used as alternatives to those tested on animals. The Beast is a good source of information and contacts. Book lists, programmes of activities, propaganda and general tactical and strategic notes are also available through The Beast, the Vegan Society and the A. L. F. You have no excuse for being ill informed.

Notes;

The Vegan Society, 47 Highlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey. Publishes The Vegan magazine. £1.25 sub p.a.

Animal Liberation Front c/o 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham.

The Beast, 2 Blenheim Cres, London W11. Bi monthly 40p.

Animal Activists, PO Box 1, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent.

Animal Aid, 111 Estridge Way, Tonbridge, Kent. 0732 364546. Newsletter monthly 10p.

An Archist Report

Doctor Who dropped in to see me this afternoon on his way back from some time near the end of the next millenium. He had a newspaper of that era with him (which he wouldn't allow me to keep, since his picture was on the cover). When I was looking through it I noticed an article that I thought might be of interest to FREEDOM readers, so I copied it out for you and here it is

READERS may be interested to now of the existence of a small, rather quaint band of political idealists calling themselves 'archists'. Their movement is in fact very old, allegedly tracing its origins back to before the nuclear holocaust. Their main London centre is a small, dusty and dimly lit publishing house in the basement of the Buckingham Palace remains, called 'Hierarchy Press'; which I visited yesterday.

The political idea behind the archist movement is subtle and very far-reaching in its implications; also it is idealistic in the extreme, but the intelligent and imaginative reader should not find it too difficult to grasp. Essentially, the archists believe that society ought to be modelled on organizational patterns seen in certain herd animals: that is, we ought to set up different categories of human beings, some of whom are accorded the right to tell the others what to do. These selected individuals would be called 'leaders', and they could come in several different 'orders of magnitude' or degrees of importance, so that we would also have 'super leaders' and 'super-super-leaders' telling the leaders of lower rank what they should do, and so on. This could be extended 'upwards' and 'downwards' to any required distance, so that (one assumes) a whole continent or a whole planet could be controlled (the word archists use is 'governed') by a very small number of people - perhaps even by just one.

Well, this may all sound a little far-fetched, and at first glance we may be left wondering what the point of it all might be, so let us consider first the advantages claimed for the system and then some of its (to me) rather numerous disadvantages, some more sinister and insidious than others.

Firstly, one could imagine a considerable organizational gain and improvement in the co-ordination of things like the post, railways and health services. People would no longer arrange things locally to suit their own needs but would be told what to do by the 'leaders', so it would be easier to standardize services and distribute things more equitably. Conflicts of interests would be solved differently (and arguably more quickly) by letting the 'leader' decide what ought to be done. Presumably part of the leader's job would be to develop a sensitivity to people's needs and interests so that s/he could suggest useful compromises. Of course, people can also arrive at satisfactory compromises on their own, without referral to 'leaders', so we would have to see this advantage demonstrated, if indeed it is real.

Along with the system of 'leaders' would come a system of

'rules' or 'laws', which would be, approximately, the written form of what the leaders had told the people to do. An example of a 'law' would be something like: 'Nobody may drive a car on the right-hand-side of the road'. Of course no sane person ever does drive a car on the right-hand side of the road in this region, but this is only an agreed convention, not a 'law'. Now, if we can imagine having a large number of these written 'laws', people would be relieved of the responsibility of having to work out what they ought or ought not to do; which might be useful, provided you are quite happy to do what other people tell you.

I think the disadvantages begin to show themselves when one starts to work out in detail how such a system could be set up and maintained.

For example, what if you were to disagree with the 'leader', and did not do what s/he said? Some mechanism would be needed to ensure that this did not happen, and the one suggested by the 'archists' is a squad of trained 'enforcers' who would go around making sure that people did what the leaders wanted. They would need to be big, strong, preferably male, and perhaps equipped with some sort of clubs or knives! Hardly an attractive prospect for the rest of us! However, the archists assure us that this would only be necessary in the interim period. Eventually, the 'enforcers' would not need to use any physical force or coercion because people's behaviour would change. Everyone would become psychologically conditioned into doing what other people ('leaders') told them. This psychological



Yet another intrepid reporter

conditioning, which is central to archist theory, is called 'accepting the principle of authority'. Once a population has been conditioned in this way, the 'leaders' task becomes very easy.

Although I liked the 'archists' whom I met at Buckingham Palace, I think that the crankiness of their theories becomes very apparent from this point onwards. What free population of women and men, we might ask ourselves, are going to submit to brainwashing of this kind, even if it were physically/psychologically possible? What would be the side-effects of such all-pervasive mental manipulation? I am no psychiatrist, but it seems clear that such outlandish attitudes would quickly poison every human social relationship. Men, being bigger and stronger than women on average, would probably consider themselves higher up the hierarchy than women, with a right to order them around. Women would probably consider themselves superior to children, and animals would hardly merit a thought. Everyone would be preoccupied with their power and status, and constantly vying for position. Human existence would become a nightmare, inside the family as well as outside. The menfolk of each family group would all try to be 'leaders', while the women would be in competition for other rungs of the hierarchy. Family life as we know it would become impossible,



Two of our intrepid reporters

and the human species would probably have to be continued in some kind of 'minimal family', perhaps consisting of only one woman, one man and the children of that pairing. Only thus could the necessary hierarchy be kept sufficiently secure and unambiguous.

Then there is the question of selecting leaders. Of course many methods would be possible, but it seems to me that the position of 'leader' (and even more so 'super-leader' or 'super-super-leader') would tend to attract the very least suitable people; for example those with psychological abnormalities preventing them from forming normal equal relationships with others. Also, what kind of relationship would exist between different regional 'super-super-leaders'? Surely it would be one of competition and power-struggle. One can even imagine the 'super-leaders' of whole continents using their obedient underlings in an all-out attempt to slaughter rival populations and gain overall control. Scientific tools of mass destruction and genocide could be employed in these inter-leader squabbles, and finally the whole world could be laid waste. Perhaps the archists are right when they say that this is how society was organized before the holocaust - perhaps the holocaust was its natural expression and culmination.

But I am allowing my imagination to run wild. I do not think that human society ever resembled this model or ever could.

The notion of leaders, hierarchies and 'the principle of authority' has its attractions. On the surface it sounds like quite an ordered and predictable - even comfortable - society. But I am too much of a realist to believe that human beings could ever make it work. We have too many basic psychological weaknesses for it to be acceptable even for a moment. In laying ourselves open to the manipulation of disturbed 'leaders' we would immediately recoil from the experiment and fall back into our perhaps ramshackle and inefficient but essentially loving, co-operative and equalitarian anarchy, which is the indisputable natural state of human society.

I am an idealist too, at heart, and I bewail the shortcomings of what we have got, but there is little point in putting forward alternatives which ignore obvious and basic facts about human nature. Perhaps some day there will be human beings fitted for 'leadership'. But at the moment we are scarcely good enough or wise enough to govern ourselves - to think that we could be good enough or wise enough to govern others strikes me as the ultimate arrogance and a certain formula for disaster.

David Gardiner.

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