

THE CRIME OF PUNISHMENT

The Price Of Coal

IT IS REPORTED THAT WHEN THE THREE BOYS WHO RECEIVED ONE TWENTY YEAR AND TWO TEN-YEAR SENTENCE FOR 'MUGGING' WERE SOLEMNLY CALLED BEFORE MR. JUSTICE CROOM - JOHNSON AGAIN ON A CHARGE OF ROBBERY (for stealing five cigarettes, a bunch of keys and 30p) THEY RECEIVED A FURTHER TWENTY YEAR AND TWO TEN-YEAR SENTENCES OF DETENTION. THE JUDGE, WITH ALL THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW ARRAYED BEFORE THESE TWO FIFTEEN-YEAR OLD BOYS AND ONE SIXTEEN YEAR OLD, PRONOUNCED THAT THESE LATTER SENTENCES WERE TO RUN 'CONCURRENTLY'. BEWILDERED, DAZED AND SHAKING THEIR HEADS VIOLENTLY, THE BOYS WERE USHERED BACK INTO THE BASEMENT CELL. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE WORD 'CONCURRENT' MEANT.

THE JUDGE HAD NOT EXPLAINED. HE HAD DEALT WITH THEIR VIOLENCE. NOW HE MUST, TO BE FAIR AND JUST, DEAL WITH THEIR ROBBERY - OF FIVE CIGARETTES, A BUNCH OF KEYS AND THIRTY PENCE. HE HAD SAID "THE PUBLIC NEEDS PROPER PROTECTION FROM YOU, AND IT WOULD BE QUITE UNREAL IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS CASE TO DRAW ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN YOU FOR THE ROBBERY COUNT AND THE ORDER I MADE IN RESPECT OF THE OTHERS." HE JUST HAD TO KEEP THE BOOKS STRAIGHT: HE HAD NO NEED TO EXPLAIN THE WORD 'CONCURRENT'.

THERE IS A fashion in crime as in all else. Once it was coshing, once it was Paki-bashing or even bashing 'queers' on Wimbledon Common. Footpads and garroters had a long and dishonourable history. Jack-rolling, or attacking a drunk for his money, was the subject of a learned American sociological theory and now 'mugging' has made its way into the scant vocabulary of headline writers and the consciousness, not to say consciences of judges. Whether 'mugging' has, as they say, any statistical significance is quite another thing.

A Guardian report (23/2/73) of Home Office statistics gives the figures of rises in crimes of violence by 10%. This figure for Jan-Sept 1972 includes "murder, an at-

tempt, threat or conspiracy to murder; manslaughter, infanticide; child destruction; causing death by dangerous driving; wounding or other acts endangering life, endangering a railway passenger; endangering life at sea; and abandoning children under two years." It will be seen that this table of crimes of violence includes motot accidents, which with the increase in cars must undoubtedly increase.

The Home Office report goes on to say "the pattern of crimes of violence had hardly changed since criminal statistics began on a systematic national basis. Offences of violence against the person fluctuated between two and three per cent of the total and together with sex-

ual offences were never more than five per cent of all recorded crime.... Any statement about statistics of violence should take into account the lack of uniformity among police forces in recording." Exactly, there are lies, damn lies and statistics. Why then all the brouhaha about mugging? Apart from its trendiness, that is?

Perhaps it's just Birmingham that has this trouble? Oh no, the Sunday Telegraph November 5th, 1972 (about the time of the Handsworth 'mugging') reports (by the 'Close Up' team) "Birmingham appears to be well on top of the problem" and according to Detective Chief Superintendent Harry Robinson, head of the city's C.I.D.: "Mugging is on the decrease in Birmingham. During the first 9 months of this year (1972) 194 offences were recorded against 242 during the same period last year. "Frequently we find that weapons are not used in mugging offences - fright is the weapon, fright alone. It only takes three people to stand in front of a man on the pavement and ask 'How much have you got on you'".

If one wishes to find the really big increase in crime, this is not so widely publicised for success in this type of crime constantly goes unpunished - indeed it often gets rewarded with public esteem to follow. Peter Gladstone Smith in the Sunday Telegraph (September 3rd 1972) writes "Contrary to the public's impression, the main increase is not in violence... The really big rise in the June figures is in offences of forgery, counterfeiting and fraud which have doubled in a year."

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT are subjects that have concerned man throughout the ages. Severe punishments have been modified when they were found not to eliminate crime. Crime has increased with the complexity of technology and law, and the poor attempts at reform by moderation of penal harshness have taken the blame.

After we had emerged from the devil theory of crime, it was theologically modified into the doctrine of original sin; with the onset of science came the theory of heredity with its Lombrosian overtones of physiological criminal types; followed by the socialistic and sociological theories of environment. Sociological and psychological theories of deprivation - both psychic and economic - have largely survived. Buckle had a theory (not untrue) that crime rose and fell in direct ratio to the price of food. Kropotkin even fell into a trap of calculating homicides by formula: "Take the average temperature of the month and multiply by seven, add the average humidity, and multiply again by two; you will obtain the number of homicides to be committed during the month: $H = 2(71 + h)$ ". Clarence Darrow, the American lawyer and a former anarchist, says "It has been noted in every civilized country that the number of property crimes materially increases in the cold months and diminishes in the spring, summer, and early autumn."

The socialist theory of crime engendered by poverty has taken some hard knocks. But it is a fact that the boys sentenced in Handsworth were unemployed and Paul Storey (who got 20 years) was of mixed white and West Indian parentage. Since Social Security has taken the sting out of absolute poverty, unemployment merely serves to accentuate boredom and a longing for adventure which crime has always fulfilled for youth.

Indeed, much that is known in urban life as crime is adventure or youthful high spirits in more appropriate surroundings. Inspector Jane Polan speaking to the Howard

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The flooding at Lofthouse Colliery, near Wakefield is another unwelcome reminder of the huge price miners and their families pay in order to provide all of us with coal. Despite the vast improvements in safety, coalmining remains one of the most dangerous jobs in which to earn a living. Disasters underground have an added horror of human life being literally buried alive. The anguish seen on the faces of those who wait for news at the pit head is now familiar to everyone. But the Lofthouse disaster is also a reminder of the old private employer who squeezed every penny of profit he could out of the mines and the miners. They neglected safety regulations so that he ended their lives underground and those who escaped were worked into an early grave.

The same owners are responsible today as they were then because many of the old mines were sunk before the Mines Registration Act of 1911, and there is no accurate record of all the shafts and tunnel shafts were only filled after constructing a raft about 30 feet down from the surface. So the neglect of the profit-seeking owners is still killing and maiming the coal miners of today.

P.T.

LETTING OFF STEAM

THE TUC DECISION to "invite" unions to call out their members on May Day represents another compromise in that many workers were already planning a strike for that day as a demonstration against the government's policies. My own regional committee of the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians sent out the call over a month ago. By then those who are at present in struggle against the government's freeze will have been defeated. Gas men have already been defeated and have voted to end their struggle and accept the Phase Two offer. Their industrial action was both ineffective and unwanted by their unions. The rank and file were isolated and divided by the different forms of action taken. Control throughout remained in the union officials' hands.

The hospital workers' action is similar. The unions couldn't even supply enough leaflets to pickets for distribution to the public. Both the gas men and the hospital workers are disillusioned and without financial assistance from the TUC or other unions. Years of inaction and the resulting poor rank and file organisation are now taking their toll.

Mr. Heath has told the TUC "Let's start new talks," about wages and prices. They will certainly accept this offer rather than mount resistance to the wages freeze and the statutory limits on incomes.

The May Day Committee revived a few years back the idea of a worker's holiday for both himself and his family on the first day in May. Successful demonstrations and entertainments were organised. They might not have been so widely supported but the ideas behind them went further than the TUC's present charade of letting off a little steam.

UCATT member

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GREEN OR ORANGE PAPER?

ONE'S FIRST REACTION to the White Paper was 'too little and too late'. Later considerations made one feel it might be an oasis in a vast desert and give breathing space. It is deplorable that no mention is made of disbanding the RUC and forming a more just unarmed police force. As Lord Hunt said so long ago now the RUC are so corrupt they are beyond reformation. It is disastrous that internment without trial should be retained, and the Irish dimension is very much slurred over but all the minority and both our government and opposition see it as a tiny, weeny step in the right direction. One must welcome wholeheartedly the Charter of Human Rights. Elections should be held, not as late as September or even late June but NOW, before the Local Elections, and the most important thing is for both IRAs to hold their fire. To do so will be to their advantage if they can be intelligent enough to see it, for the Unionists have declared they will seek election and then make the Paper unworkable and so get back all power - especially what they call a "Strong Stormont" with complete control of security. Faulkner has fallen from grace as he gave a lukewarm welcome to the Paper. Let the combined forces of UDA, LAW, UVF, Vanguard and the others get on with their wrecking policy and the British will have the scales removed from their eyes and see it as not "our boys" defending the right but those who call themselves Loyalists being the most disloyal of all in their lust for power and a "Croppie lie down policy" which cannot ever be allowed again. There is a very real chance all their hot puffing may blow themselves out, if only the IRA will shut up and give it a chance. Paisley says things like "A very dangerous thing in this document is the progress suggested towards a Council of Ireland". His vaunted loyalty is on a par with his vaunted Christianity; neither

exist. All he wants is to be Minister for Ireland first and Prime Minister for the U.K. next. Proportional Representation is the only way to get any balance of power in the six counties and this is to be. I wish Craig when he talks about making the proposals unworkable would remember the last time he called a day of non work and the terrible carnage that followed. Myself I think it is all up to the IRA now. If they will only be wise and not aggressive, all other things will be added unto them by the stupidity of their opponents.

This is a very superficial summing up but it is what we war-weary people think. No doubt as I read and re-read the paper over the next week or two, and listen to more and more politicians and others speaking, I shall become more critical and more intellectual about it all - but sometimes it is one's first reactions that are the soundest. I am afraid it is the old policy of "wait and see", and Eirann go bragh, H.

*Ireland for ever.

We invited a viewpoint from Ireland. We do not share our contributor's faith in the use of an election or any appeals for moderation to the warring factions. However, there are few revolutionary hopes in Ireland and whatever slight gains can be seen in the White Paper are in spite of, not because of political or religious groups. The workers in Ireland have, like those of all countries, power in their hands. Their heads alas are filled with religious and nationalist nonsense so although this White Paper is one more desperate British attempt to clear up a Conservative-Unionist mess it will still remain a problem for the Irish people. EDS.

Dear Editors,

I would like to take some of my time and your valuable space to reply to S. E. Parker's criticism of my article on "East Coast US Anarchism: Communist and Individualist" (FREEDOM 24/2/75).

This article was intended to create a dialogue, conversation, reflection, and thought. I realized at the time of its writing that there were ambiguities in it: however, S. E. Parker failed to address these real problems. Specifically, I'm referring to elitism and anarchism. I hoped that the article would provide responses on this problem and solutions for uniting the different schools of thought within anarchism.

Now, directly to S. E. Parker's criticism.

1. I in no way attempted to imply that anarcho-capitalists are terrorists. I simply meant that this person was a terrorist and also an anarcho-capitalist. Neither classification is inclusive of the other. The conclusion that S. E. Parker draws is entirely his own! If the glove fits, wear it.

2. S. E. Parker seems to have a refined ability to twist statements and to interpret them to suit his purpose. The article I wrote was intended to give a brief idea of anarchism on the east coast of the U.S.A. and to acknowledge the existence of anarcho-communists here. "There are some dedicated anarchists here and all of us are not individualists!!" This means exactly what it says. All of us, if you will, are not either individualist or communist oriented. I didn't conclude it. S. E. Parker concludes this, not I. In my article I praised both the Libertarian Book Club and the Laissez-Faire bookshop. The latter being more specifically individualist oriented, but both have many materials covering both subjects.

3. S. E. Parker says of my article that, "One of his comrades was present at a discussion at the New York Laissez-Faire Bookshop that ended in a brawl." The comrade I referred to was not only present but "headed a panel discussion". The reason why I think that "anarcho-capitalists" are "highly suspect" in "libertarian thought" is that in the USA the individualists around the N.Y.C. area frequently speak of "capitalism without imperialism". Capitalism, to me, denotes a belief in private property and tends towards inequality. This doesn't seem to be a particularly anarchist notion, to state it quite mildly.

4. Parker assumes that in my opinion anyone who admires Howard Hughes is a "Cretin". Another clever bit of sophistry. If this sentence was interpreted in the context of the article, a different meaning would arise. "Cretin" was used in reference to those people who consider themselves anarchists and yet admire Hughes. Such a combination is in the very least intellectually inconsistent and unworthy of further consideration.

5. S. E. Parker seems disturbed over my statement to the effect that "Individualism has long been a historical tradition in the US that tends to propagate that syphilitic germ - capitalism." This can be supported, if one takes a look at the USA in the 19th century and the resulting 'Robber barons'. The predecessors of today's Rockefellers, Carnegies, etc. I agree wholeheartedly with Parker that capitalism is not necessarily equated with individualism. I neither implied nor stated that it is.

Now that the record is straight I would like to thank S. E. Parker for responding to me, thus continuing the dialogue. The fact that the response missed the point is less important than the fact that a response was made. I have one final curiosity, is it Mr. or Ms. Parker?

Yours fraternally,
DAVID WATERS

New York.

Dear All,

Comrade Aldridge concedes that "possibly Kropotkin's idea of communism is different from Marx's" which is big of him; nevertheless could one suggest that when writing to attack anarchist communism he first take the trouble of finding out what it is and if Kropotkin is too much for him at least read the A B C of Berkman. Indeed since he seems to think that Marx wanted a system in which "the state takes total control over the economy", and this was in fact Marx's definition of the last stage of capitalism one might wonder if he knows what any form of communism - other than the Stalinist travesty - is.

The anarchist communist would not reply therefore in the words of Mr. Aldridge's fourth paragraph. He would say all private ownership of the means of production - and all state ownership too - involves the exploitation of workers, the conversion of surplus value derived from the workers' labour to the benefit of a privileged minority and that wherever there are class divisions based on economic grounds there will be a state and that conversely wherever there is a state, that state rests on class divisions based on economic differentials.

Mr. Aldridge thinks than an anarchist who joins a syndicalist group - that is a group which aims to abolish class divisions in society and the state by means of a social general strike and thinks that to get this it is advisable to advocate the formation in advance of an industrial union federation - surrenders his individuality, but that a member of an Union of Egoists (Egotists?) does not; why not? It is quite obvious from his letter that at least his brand of individualists do not oppose class exploitation and so he remains permanently a willing slave; a syndicalist may freely cooperate and so be ready to forgo some of his time in order to work with others. Mr. Aldridge's variety of individualist is prepared on the other hand to allow the continuance ad infinitum of a system whereby most people are forced to forgo far more hours not for the good of humanity and a cause but for the good of a single boss.

Fraternally,
Laurens Otter

Wellington,
Salop

Dear Comrades,

I was interested to read, if not convinced by, R. Aldridge's letter in FREEDOM (17/3/73) about anarchism being pure, and that no such hybrids as anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists really exist.

Not knowing about the former, I will take him/her to task on the latter - anarcho-syndicalism. To equate "joining any syndicalist group" with "automatically surrendering his own will", and "being subject to the authority...decisions...and discipline of the group" seems to me to show a singularly naive understanding of free and willing co-operation.

If a number of people are syndicalists, and also see the anarchistic ideas of authority, leadership, the state, etc. to be valid, especially in an industrial society, and merge the two compatible theories together; then further, because of a general unity of view, freely come together to put their ideas into practice and to propagate those ideas, then where is the surrender of free will, the discipline, etc., etc.?

In the A S A we manage to exist, to produce a monthly paper (and that being produced by a different group in rotation), to produce pamphlets, and to meet regularly in a number of groups to discuss and further our views - all without this repressive authority which R. Aldridge sees as an 'automatic' consequence of "joining any syndicalist group".

More generally, individualism is fine, but that does not mean that any sort of co-operation is the opposite pole - repressive authority. The very fact that his/her letter appeared in FREEDOM was due to a 'free and willing co-operation' existing between a group of people.

So let's not be 'bitchy' between ourselves, but co-operate with each other.

Yours fraternally,
Graham Briggs

Harlech

THE FACE OF FASCISM

Dear Comrades,

When I read John Brent's review, the Face of Fascism, I was unable to decide whether he was being satirical or whether he had, ironically, really fallen victim to the Fascist technique of the Big Lie. For to equate logical positivism with Fascism is, of course, an inversion of the truth. Since both are now largely historical phenomena, the relationship between them is a matter of historical record. Fascism, in so far as it had any coherent philosophy, relied on rationalist metaphysics. In particular the notion of the Herrenvolk was lifted from Nietzsche and the notion of the historical mission of the nation state from Hegel. The Vienna Circle, out of which grew the logical positivist movement, was expressly opposed to rationalist metaphysics and therefore to the philosophy (such as it was) of Fascism. This did not escape the attention of the Nazis, and Carnap, Bergmann, Feigl and Frank, members of the Circle, fled to America to escape Nazi persecution. I have no means of checking at the moment, but it seems likely that other members of the Circle were not so lucky and died in Nazi concentration camps.

Incidentally, isn't it time we stopped seeing Fascists under the bed? As I have said before in these columns, the word Fascism is perfectly respectable as a term of abuse, but its indiscriminate use in theoretical discussions is highly misleading. Such Fascist movements as now exist are anachronisms, doomed by the developments of capitalism to impotence. The emotional main-spring of Fascism is the idea of nationhood, the independent nation state, the "Glorious Fatherland". The requirements of modern capitalism are making this idea no more than a dream. Should we not instead concentrate our attention on the international social-democratic monopoly capitalist alliance, for which we apparently have no convenient name, but which is exemplified by the EEC?

For this alliance with its liberal face, Fascism is a convenient red herring.

Yours fraternally,
Geoffrey Barfoot
Wells, Somerset

J.B. replies:

The enemies of yesterday are the allies of today. One does not have to look for Fascists under the bed when they are in the streets. Racism and romantic nationalism are very much alive today, hence the success of people like Powell, Craig, Paisley and many other similar people. The EEC is a horror as well, but it's not the only monster that threatens us today. Modern Fascism is perhaps more sophisticated than it was in the thirties, but it's the same underneath. The alliance with logical positivism surprised me too, but one can see how it would work. What is disturbing about today is the disappearance of the liberal middle ground, it was not revolutionary, but it did at least ensure a modicum of social decency. Now the liberals, frightened of revolution, or just the general chaos, are going over to Right-Wing authoritarianism of various kinds, and giving tacit support to racism, so I do not see why the word Fascism cannot be legitimately used.

YOUTH SPIRIT and
COMMUNITY ACTION IN GERMANY

Hello friends,

IN FREIBURG there is a Youth movement for a public young people's house, independent from all political and other institutions, which shall be managed by the young people themselves. This movement is in its beginnings. It's a great pleasure to see these young people (who belong to those who are usually called "unpolitical" by the "left") fighting energetically every kind of tutelage and leadership. We hope it will continue in this spirit.

At the moment we are establishing a sort of tea room in the cellar of an occupied house, as a provisional meeting place, with music, papers and pamphlets, etc., where the movement can develop comfortably. The movement originated in the fact that most of the young people don't know where to go in their free time. The owners and supervisors of some pubs and clubs show a really racist



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behaviour towards long-haired or carelessly dressed people. There is no place where you can make your own music, there is hardly anywhere for dancing and to come into closer contact with other people: you are condemned to consume. We want to establish a big public meeting point where all sorts of activity can be developed, independent from bourgeois morals, authoritarian owners, watchers and bureaucrats.

We (Ruth and Günter) are living in one of the two "expropriated" houses which exist in Freiburg at the moment (the house we lived in before has been destroyed). The inhabitants work together in their fight against the authorities and in informing the population. In our house we are about 15 people having Sunday meals, a small bus and other things together. People who are "wealthy" provide for those who don't get enough money. The owner of the house wants to kick us out, but he must learn that it is not too easy.

Greetings from
Ruth Gassenschmidt
& Günter Gemp

PEOPLE OR POLITICIANS IN POWER

AGE OF UN-REST

Whenever the Labour Party is in opposition their general policy statements have "left wing" bias. This is a luxury political parties can afford when they are not in power. But as we all know, when they are elected the realities of power soon impose a different line of action.

However, as anarchists we consider that it is impossible to achieve the social revolution via the ballot box. Political parties stand for reforms, not revolution. Reforms do not change the power and class basis of a capitalist society. They might give a section of the public a greater say and provide participation for people in decision making, but the final decisions affecting people's lives will still be made by those who remain remote and powerful. If opposed they will be backed by the full oppressive might of the State. They will fine you, imprison you and finally hang or shoot you, if necessary, in order to preserve their power, wealth and privilege.

Mr. Wilson in recent speeches has climbed onto the grass roots participation bandwagon. His speech at Blackpool concerned industrial democracy and the means by which workers can be involved in the decision making and the running of their work places. He draws the right conclusions concerning the present status of people working in industry. Like, workers have "no source of income but their pay" and "their deeply-held conviction at shop floor level that industrial workers have been second-class citizens for too long". Strikes, he says, are often an unconscious desire "by ordinary people for more control over the way their lives are conducted inside and outside the factory". Mr. Wilson says that they "can rarely use their creative talent for positive action", and that a vast area of potential economic strength is being sealed off. From all this one can only con-

clude that Mr. Wilson only wants to use workers' natural organisational ability and know-how to get increased efficiency and productivity. He let the cat out of the bag when he said: "Unless radical changes are made in relations between management and shop floor it will become increasingly difficult for modern industry to function effectively." Mr. Wilson wants "radical changes" so that things can remain the same. He realises that present day industry is so interdependent and therefore very vulnerable to the action of small groups of workers who might, in his own words, strike because of the "monotony of so much of modern production work". He wants to avoid these costly interruptions by involving workers on elected committees who could make "joint decisions on work load arrangements, assembly lines speeds and techniques as well as general production methods". These committees would be elected from the shop floor in elections organised and administered by the trade unions in factories with a hundred employees or more.

Workers would also be represented at directorial level like that being considered by the TUC which has been operated in Europe. Mr. Wilson also cites his party's legislation for the steel industry whereby workers' representatives sit on the various boards which administer the industry. But all these examples are about participation, involvement and consultation. They do not touch on who ultimately controls the industry. On the important subject of job security, Mr. Wilson says there "must be effective and democratic procedures, as of right, for dealing with dismissals, redundancies and threatened dismissals, and above all factory closures". However, when all these procedures have been exhausted, if the economic situation demands it, men and women will be thrown onto the stones. It is of little consolation that you've been consulted, represented and then democratically

sacked, the end result is the same. No doubt steel workers will confirm this.

A national consultancy service to provide a 'flying squad' for dealing with problems arising from pay, productivity, reorganisation and the threat of redundancy is also a part of Wilson's grand scheme of things to ensure the continuation of capitalism.

The old saying that they will do anything but get off our backs is true today as it was a century ago. The employers are still exploiting those who work for wages and the State supports them with the police, the courts and the army to make sure that this state of affairs continues. Mr. Wilson might reform it by smoothing off edges, ease the liberal conscience, but assuming his party gains power, he will not and cannot legislate for a workers' take over of industry. It is even unlikely he will be able to go as far as his speech proposes, for those who at present control and own production will jealously guard the power they have and many will be unwilling even to give way to these consultation committees.

To gain the full control of our lives we have to take over and run our work places for ourselves and the community. Industrial democracy, like its political counterpart, is an illusion which offers no alternative to people but control from above by a different set of administrators. Likewise Mr. Wilson's plans would not alter the basic power structure in industry. The huge multi-national companies' power would not be in the least affected by these elected committees discussing "factory lay out" and "work speeds". Mr. Wilson's service to the profit motive system is putting forth yet another garden path which leads nowhere except to our continual exploitation as wage slaves.

P.T.

THE GLORY THAT WAS WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY

IT IS BECAUSE of a belief in the usefulness of working class solidarity that I am a member of the trade union which negotiates with the management at my place of work. It claims also to negotiate on my behalf. The union is APEX, which is the new zippy trendy name for the old clerk's union CAWU, and the new titular style has done nothing to alter the decrepit, run down and generally reactionary character of the union.

Although I knew it would only be a waste of time I took myself along to the AGM of my union branch the other day. The branch has over 450 members and the AGM had an attendance of just 23. As best I could judge these sturdy souls were all, apart from myself and my mate, either officers of the branch or staff representatives, the clerk's shop steward. And before the meeting was over my mate had succumbed and been appointed as delegate to the area advisory council, a stirringly bureaucratic title if ever I heard one.

One of the items at the meeting was the awarding of honoraria, or cash gifts to people in the branch in recognition of services rendered to the members during the past year, from £15 each for the secretary and financial secretary to £1 each for staff representatives and auditors. More or less all of those present were eligible for one or more of these gratuities and they apparently perceived nothing bizarre in sitting around voting each other money that belonged to the other 430 members of the branch as well.

A shower of complacent clerks giving each other £50 that doesn't belong to them is bad enough, but for me the horrifying part of the meeting came after the election, if such it can be called, of officers. They had trouble enough drumming up enough nominations to fill the jobs and didn't have the energy to get nominations to make any of the posts actually elective. And when the appointments were concluded a member called out "Rule 13, Mr Chairman!" Even in a meeting most of which seemed to me to be without meaning or purpose, this interjection seemed to have an absurdity all of its own. But no. The chairman replied

that under rule 13 all those who had just been elected to office must declare that they were not members of any organisation on the proscribed list of the union. Which to me smacks of thought police in the trade union movement, but no matter.

I was amazed when all those who had just been appointed nodded in sage agreement that proscribed organisations were not the sort of thing they would ever be members of, whatever they were.

Some months ago I asked my staff representative to get me a list of the union's proscribed organisations and he couldn't. Nor could the branch secretary, but here I was assured that it consisted merely of communist and fascist groupings. Not satisfied with such vagueness I wrote to the union's general secretary at head office. After waiting for a reply for over a month I sent another letter to head office and received in due course a full list of the proscribed organisations of APEX, the clerk's trade union.

Our union branch has for its officers and delegates people who, far from their hackles rising at being asked, in effect, if they were subject to any deviant political opinion or thought, can nod affably and deny adherence to a list of organisations which covers two and a half sides of foolscap, and which they have never seen, let alone read through or studied.

Meanwhile, back at the solidarity of the working class, the fact of its continuing existence in any form is, in my view, a token that working people accept the trade union apparatus as a fair resting place for career bureaucrats, and know that real struggles will be carried on where the strength lies, on the factory floor and at the office desk. And from there we can, as the situation may at any time demand, create our own functional organisations to do battle, heedless of the activities of those procedure obsessed and complacent pissballers who claim to lead my trade union branch, and most others.

Tom Star

THE SEA BELONGS TO EVERYBODY

IT IS ALMOST incredible that two modern, technically advanced and still prosperous nations like Iceland and Britain cannot solve their disagreement over fishing rights without playing at Vikings in the North Atlantic. It was naughty of the Icelandic gunboat to fire two shots at Her Majesty's armoured ram Statesman, which was (despite denials by British officials) in all probability trying to run them down. Don't the Icelanders realise that the British have the right to go where they like, do what they like and throw their weight about, because Britannia rules the waves?

Surely at this day and age people can now see that unless the policy of exploitation of the world's resources regardless of consequences is abandoned there soon won't be any fish? Or oil? Or steel? Or even breathable air? It is not a question of Britain's rights, or Iceland's either. These nationalisms themselves are totally out of date and absurd. It is time to say, "The sea belongs to everybody. Let us work out some means of conserving its resources, so that we shall be able to avail ourselves of them forever."

The world's population is rising, and it should be stabilised of course. Nevertheless the population problem should not be used as an excuse when a perfectly avoidable catastrophe occurs. If our resources were organised for the benefit of the world's population as a whole, not for the profit of big business or for the power of the various states, it should be possible for everyone in the world to have enough to eat. Not necessarily enough to indulge in sumptuous banquets every day of the week, but enough to live well.

The catastrophe the writer had in mind was of course a sudden famine. There are those who believe that the present famine raging in parts of India is not just another Indian misfortune, but the beginning of a world-wide food shortage. Be that as it may, there is also a smaller catastrophe looming up. Although the Icelandic fishing "war" is comic compared with Ulster and Vietnam, there are considerable dangers when great armoured and powerful tugs

BY 2073 work had really become a four-letter word. If there had been any concept of obscenity 'work' would have been one of the great unmentionables. The word 'business' was generally used as an euphemism for the unavoidable occasions but like going to the toilet it was rarely mentioned in polite society.

The age of retirement had been pushed back to fifty, and with full automation of production twenty-five was the age for turning over from compulsory university to 'business'. However since the four-hour day and the four-day week were the maximum hours (with no overtime) it was truly the age of leisure.

Since the machines had taken over production, man, and we include of course women, had assumed the necessary function of consumer. All homes had wall-to-wall television with small channels laid on with 'gropes' on the chair arm rests. The Konsumptchen television, (in what used to be known as the kitchen) had a slot into which could be inserted the Consumato card, this was designed so that when on the screen appeared in colour, smell and touch an object that one desired one merely inserted the family passport and the punch-holes recorded the fact and within minutes the object arrived having been dropped down the roof-shute from an automated helicopter. Manna was the organization which supplied meals by this method. Consumato Est was the general parent-body of this social service.

Television had taken over the function of conveying entertainment, news and gossip to a wholly captive audience. Newspapers and periodicals had long since disappeared and books were relegated to libraries and museums where micro-scanners were busy going through them and storing all the knowledge contained therein in one giant computer.

Since there was so little in the way of news the TV programme invented the majority of items and the gulf between fiction and fact had long disappeared.

Marijuana had not only long been legal but also compulsory so people passed their days in a befuddled haze of TV, stereo pop, expanding consumption of plastic food and pot. As for living, the machines did that.

Into this latter day Eden crept foreign agitators spreading the subversive doctrine of work. Tightly-knit bands got together to carry out their nefarious tasks such as making small articles of furniture which they bartered for similar goods. The revolutionary doctrines of foreign revolutionaries like Tolstoy and Coomaswamy spread and they had even succeeded in using such English names as Morris and Ruskin to back their arguments favouring the so-called dignity of labour and the alleged creative instincts. In spite of its obvious dangers to the economy the labour movement as it was called was in full swing and the doctrine of General Work spread like the plague.

Such strange cults as cooking and gardening revived and life as lived by the machines died out. The commodity shutes were blocked in some houses and it was even rumoured that there were those who didn't even switch on the TV.

The era of rest came to an end. The Age of Un-Rest took its place in history.

Jack Spratt

go charging about the sea, or gunboats fire their shells. Someone is quite likely to be killed this way sooner or later.

John Brent

As we go to press we learn that there has been some violence off Iceland. An Icelandic gunboat "put a warning shell and blanks across the bow of a British trawler... Coastguard headquarters said one of its patrol boats used her 2.3 inch cannon when the Hull trawler *Brucella* tried to ram her after defying orders to leave the area". - *Guardian*, 26/3/73. And so it will continue until someone is killed. J.B.

Subscribers: Change of address - if you can, please inform us at least a full week before the operative date.

WHO ARE 'THE DWARFS'?



A COMRADE at Freedom asked over the telephone the other day, "Who and what are the Dwarfs?", and it seems that a lot of Freedom's readers are also unclear about this. In response to the comrade's request for an explanatory article, here goes.

It is, of course, impossible to define whole concepts of life or the universe in a sentence or two; if it were an easy task, we would not need libraries of volumes on such matters, or regular newspapers to discuss them. Words like "anarchism", "freedom", "harmony", "cooperation" and "peace" may be dismissed in a couple of lines by the dictionaries, but one could write millions of words, or discuss for hours, and only scrape the surface. But, if I had to sum up the Dwarf philosophy in one sentence, I would say that it is this: all men, women and children, as well as all other beings, have an inalienable right to live and fulfil their own lives free of all artificial structures or authority that others may attempt to impose on them; this right excludes only one thing, namely, the imposition of authority on others; and such a condition of society will lead, not to chaos or conflict, but to a natural harmony which is only disrupted when one or more members of the community attempt to exert control over, rather than cooperate and/or coexist with others.

On the surface, most anarchist ideas are in broad agreement with this seemingly obvious statement. What, then, distinguishes the Dwarfs from other anarchist schools of thought? Perhaps the most important factor is that we see the libertarian ethic as relating to all existence rather than just to humanity. Thus, whilst opposing all forms of man's exploitation of man, woman and child, we equally oppose the similar exploitation of animals, the land and the environment which we say does not only not belong to anybody, but does not even belong to the human community as a whole. The American Indians recognised this, as did most of the peoples of southern and central Africa and other parts of the world, for they had no concept of the ownership of land, not even collective ownership by the tribe, but rather a working partnership between the human community and the land.

This is one example of the idea of collective scheme of things applying not just to man but to the total ecosystem which he is an integral part (i.e. nature). But the important point is the attitude to the nature of life itself, and our place in the universe and our relationship to the world around us, and the way we see ourselves and our society in a wider context. It would be useless

to bring about an anarchist human society whilst continuing to pursue economic growth, for example, and to abolish male, white, national or adult chauvinism whilst maintaining human chauvinist attitudes. This would be analogous to the attempt to reconcile the two opposites of "socialism in one country" and the abolition of the state. A true anarchist society, to be consistent and honest, must embrace everything that is a part of our world, everything into which we come into contact.

Given the above, other things follow logically. There is not space here to detail the reasoning step by step, or to closely argue each point, but the Dwarf movement sees the organic production of chemical-free crops as a logical extension of this view of life and relationships; everything is bound up with everything else, and nothing is totally separate from all other existence. An Israeli kibbutz, for example, although nominally a "commune", is hardly better than a Birds Eye factory if it employs heavy machinery to spray its crops which themselves are grown commercially in a militaristic and disciplined socio-economic framework and sold through aggressive marketing organisations; conversely, organic natural food producers will hardly find favour with us if they operate on strictly employer-employee or profit-motivated lines. No, every aspect of every human activity must recognise the total freedom and equality of all things before we would concede that a truly anarchist society had been born.

What, then, broadly speaking, is the aim of the Dwarfs? Very loosely (and it has to be loose, because there are many ways of being, doing and having the same thing: there can be no room for dogma in any anarchist viewpoint), we would like to see evolving a society comprising libertarian organic communities, absolutely independent of each other and of any "greater" authority, possibly (hopefully) federally cooperating if they want to (but with no pressures on them if they don't), growing food and producing manufactures as a partnership between humanity and the rest of nature. These communities would best operate on a small scale: the larger a community, the greater the tendency for a hierarchy and bureaucracy to develop, as well as the greater stress and tensions and resultant breakdown in human relationships (examples of which will be seen in any big city in the West today).

Two things, I think, remain to be said. First, the nature of the movement. It would be hypocritical, and against the whole idea of what we are saying, if the "structure" of the "organisation" did not

reflect its message. So, to reflect the message accurately, there is no structure and no organisation. You are simply a Dwarf if you agree with the general principles we hold in common, and if you choose to think of yourself as such. In fact, labels are something we should eventually get away from, but to call ourselves "anarchists", "libertarians", or "Dwarfs" does at least sum up a general philosophy and distinguishes us from members of the Monday Club or National Front (although these days many members of the Monday Club would no doubt call themselves "anarchists"). The movement has no office-holders, no committees, no "membership", no constitution: it is simply a general idea, and includes anyone who subscribes to that world-view.

Finally, what have Dwarfs done to achieve the stated aims of a free society? Well, local groups of Dwarfs do get together on a geographical basis and form action groups in their own communities, and various groups have started free schools, info/help centres, community newspapers, community workshops, food cooperatives and other schemes run on collective lines. They have also held bike-ins, koff-ins, and various political street theatre events. One definite plan currently being discussed is a complete alternative village community, Harmony Village, to consist of a number of small organic farming communes, coming together cooperatively at the village level to provide all community services: free exchange market place, free school, a windmill to provide electricity and power, a printing press and a community workshop with a common pool of tools and equipment available freely to all. A pamphlet on this is available for 10p (or free if you can't afford it) from 14a Hansard Mews, London W14 8BJ.

In short, then, Dwarfs are people who have decided that the best way to bring about the free society that we envisage is by building actual working and living alternatives now, rather than just spending all our energy on calling for changes from the "authorities" (although we see value in both tactics); and the means for doing this are by getting together with others in our own areas, forming local groups and getting these practical alternatives together, from cooperative workshops to free schools. You can write to the above address if you'd like to find out where your nearest Dwarf group can be contacted, or sometimes they are included in the Contact column of Freedom.

Gandalf

Continued from p. 1

argue for Penal Reform underlined is by saying that "many children are stealing shillings from parking meters in the same way that real children regard robbing apple trees of their fruit - it's all right to take two or three".

Among the causes of crime (apart from the basic factors) are blamed primary motivators television, cinema and horror comics. These are merely secondary factors, since they have existed before TV and the cinema and will doubtless persist in the last horror comic has been needed. In regard to 'mugging' if a crime exists appreciably apart from areas of London, it is some measure due to the deathly atmosphere of life in big cities brought about by the family absorption in the home and the omnipresence of TV. So in a sense mugging is caused by TV. What is more alarming is the anomie of the big city, for example New York where the situation looks on from time to time at muggings going on before our eyes without lifting a finger to help either side.

The only answer to crime in present-day society appears to be the vicious mixture of vengeance, repression, reform and isolation measured out from time to time with shocks of barbarity like the sentences on Pauline Jones, Jake Prescott and the awful 'concurrency' of Mr. Justice Croom-Johnson.

Juvenile crime is something one grows out of... the sentences at Birmingham make it something one grows into.

Clarence Darrow never forgot his anarchist upbringing. For all his reformist yearnings he spoke much sense in Crime, its Cause and Treatment (1924) when he wrote "Most of the criminal cases would... be prevented if the state would undertake to improve the general social and economic conditions of those who get the least. Only a fraction of the money spent in human destruction, in war and out, would give an education adapted to the individual, even to the most defective. It would make life easy by making the environment easy. Only a few of the defective, physically and mentally, would be left for courts to place in an environment where both they and society could live. Perhaps some time this work will be seriously taken up. Until then we shall muddle along, fixing and changing and punishing and destroying; we shall follow the old course of the ages, which has no purpose, method, or end, and leaves only infinite suffering in its path".

Jack Robinson

PRESS FUND

Contributions. March 15th-21st Inc.

Glasgow, J.B. 75p; Aberdeen, B.L. 20p; London SW19, D.T. 70p; Bozeman USA, J.C. 80p; Barnet, J.C. £2.00; Wirral, G.J.D. £1.00; Wolverhampton, J.L. 40p; J.K.W. 10p; Manchester, P.L.N. £1.00; Glasgow, A.J. 22p; Blackburn, Anon. 50p; Crowthorne, P.G. 20p; New York, L.M. £2.10; London SE18, F.Y. £1.20.

TOTAL	£ 11.17
Already acknowledged	£549.36
TOTAL TO DATE	£560.53

Letter

A HEALTHIER MOVEMENT?

Dear Friends,

Dave Coull is certainly better informed on the state of the movement than I am, but I can't help but think the picture he paints is a bit too rosy. As a member of the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance, I can't say that I've noticed that the "movement" is having more impact on British society since the ASA replaced the AFB.

Many ASA members are syndicalists in name only, and seem to do next to nothing on the shopfloor or in their union branches. The main obsession of ASA is with the publication of Black & Red, which regardless of whether or not it is produced on the 'rotating editorial basis', is no good if it doesn't back up the activities of our members on the shopfloor.

True enough there are more anarchist publications and conferences than there once was, so the comrades now get more chance to give their egos an airing, but there's not much evidence that all this has been matched by a real increase in practical participation by comrades in struggles in industry and elsewhere. Apart from being a successful publishing enterprise the ASA does not appear to have made much headway in establishing contacts in industry.

Yours fraternally,
B.B.
Rochdale, Lancs.

THURSDAYS at Freedom Press from 2 p.m. Help fold and despatch FREEDOM

Teachers wanted for Free Schools.

Write to: Tony Brantingham c/o Dwarf News, 14a Hansard Mews, London W14 8BJ

Will all organisations please note there is a new secretary of Harlech Libertarian Group (including ASA and ORA): Bob Long, Coleg Harlech, Harlech, Merioneth, N. Wales

LONDON ASA meets every Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. at 3 Grange House, Highbury Grange, N5. Black & Red Outlook always available; by post 5p + 2½p

NOTTINGHAM: Trent Polytechnic new anarchist group forming. Contact Shirley Moreno and John Hinsley through Fine Art Dept., Dryden Street, Nottingham.

"Schools Anarchy Propagation Action Group" for non-collectivist school anarchism. Contact SAPAG c/o 1 Springbank, Salesbury, Blackburn BB1 9EU

New Earth Group, 112 Thomas Street, Dublin 8. Publishers, bookshop and meetings.

MICHAEL TOBIN DEFENCE COMMITTEE 265 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent

Anarchist woman having deserted capital, husband desires maintenance from him. Serious suggestions and advice about getting this gratefully received. Box 102

STOP THE FRENCH TESTS. Contact Greenpeace, c/o 176 Finchley Rd., London NW3.

You as a Product, booklet on the family as key link between individual and social reality. 40pp. 10p + postage from Soc. Society Bookstall, Univ. of Newcastle u. Tyne, or from Freedom Press.

CARDIFF: Dwarf Group starting. Contact Ian Matheson, 45 Corporation Rd., Grangetown, Cardiff

WANTED - GAS STOVE for East End squatters. Contact Freedom Press

NEW YORK LIBERTARIAN BOOK CLUB Lectures, fortnightly on Thursdays 7 p.m. at Workmen's Circle Centre, 369 8th Ave., corner 29 Street, admission free. April 12 Irving Levitas: Messianism and Anarchism; April 26 Abe Bluestein: The Spirit of Freedom in America

S.E. LONDON Gutter Press. Contact Vera Krishek, 01-852 8879.

Comrade has to move in six weeks' time, would appreciate knowing of 1-2 unfurnished, or large furnished room. In any case has furniture to give away but it must be collected. D. Tullman, 248 Haydens Road, Wimbledon, SW19. (Can anyone offer van to transport gas stove to squatters?)

"Alternative shop" opening this summer needs advice, suggestions; in particular legal help. Please write Box 103

Libertarian Struggle, monthly paper of ORA, 5p + 2½p post or sub. £1 12 issues from 29 Cardigan Road, Leeds. (also in Freedom Bookshop)

Ian and Peggy Sutherland have moved from 91 William Street to: Plot 38, Pheasant Field Development, Dale Road, Spaldon, Derby.

Marked for Life, anarchist booklet against exams in univs. & colleges (reviewed FREEDOM 3/3/73) 18p from M.F.L., 36a Fairfield Gardens, N.8

We go to press on Monday. Latest date for receipt of MSS., LETTERS, MEETING NOTICES is the Monday in each week of publication.

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