

FREEDOM

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TEN PENCE

A DANGER TO 'DEMOCRACIES'

IT IS A sad fact that working people generally favour leadership and the power of others to make decisions for them. Indeed it might not be such a positive choice but rather that an alternative has not been made clear to them. I'm sure that the average trade unionist really does not favour a £6 limit for yearly increases. And yet the TUC, without any vote or consultation of its ten million members has given their support to the Labour Government. In return the Labour Government has steered a very difficult course to avoid penal sanctions against workers who might take industrial action to achieve over and above the £6 limit. The onus, in fact, falls on the employer, but it would still be possible for managements to sue workers who took action to force them to pay an illegal claim.

This is the type of dilemma that a "democracy" faces in a period of crisis. It has to adopt totalitarian methods for the survival of the system. The limits imposed will obviously mean cuts in the living standards of and even hardship for many working class families. The £6 limit is also not a panacea for the prevention of or even the limiting of unemployment. There are so many other factors affecting inflation which could mean that a limit on wage increa-

ses could in fact bring about such a drop in purchasing power, which would result in a further rise in unemployment. It is the so increasing numbers of people who are out of work, both here, in Europe and in America, which could lead to a dangerous situation for "western democracy". It is the general economic slump which could make people question the "democracies" they live under. Equally it is this fear which seems to have moved President Ford of America and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany to agree that it is "vitally important" for the economies of the European Community and the U.S. to be integrated.

This co-operation has really been forced on them by the suppliers of oil

and other raw materials who have of recent years realised that they are now in a position of strength. For without these raw materials the economies of the western democracies would grind to a halt.

President Ford said we "are making a turn towards a healthier economy". This prediction might well be true of the future, but in America millions were still suffering poor housing and receiving federal aid even when the general economy was healthy. But it is not just on the economic level that the capitalist system falls short. For most of the work available is soul destroying and made worse by a system of order givers and order takers which degrades us all. Basically, as far as State and the big employers of labour are concerned, people are only units to make profits. Capitalism has failed to provide enough for everyone's needs and at the same time has failed to give people complete satisfaction and choice in their own lives.

With the deepening crisis of the system we must do our utmost to ensure that people seek an anarchist alternative to capitalism. That the natural solidarity and mutual aid that exist between people be shown and used as a basis for a stateless society.

P. T.

SQUATTING

POSSESSION IS NINE POINTS

SQUATTING IS back in the news again. The People took its usual weekly header into the sewers with a series on squatters "THE OLD ETONIAN HOUSE GRABBER: He jemmies way in for squatters" (Heathcote Williams). The Evening News ("Life in a Layabouts' Paradise") and even the non-trendy steam radio "Any Questions" (BBC 4) noted it with a lamentable display of public ignorance, with a bishop and the liberal Steve Race putting in a good word for "decent" squatters. Wildcat and Anarchy (new series) both have articles on squatting in their current issues. Anarchy's contribution by members of the Kingsgate Squatters and Rent Strikers' Co-operative for Self-Management is quite the best and most thought-provoking.

Those of us with embarrassingly long memories will remember the 1969 start of squatting; as a means of social change and protest it has been with us for longer than that. In fact the institution of property was set up by "squatting". Reference to the histories of Australia and the United States reveal that in their early days "squatters' rights" were honoured as establishing land ownership (or tenancy).

One of the king-pins of the law on squatting dates (as every property-owner moans) from 1381 when, as Ron Bailey says in Anarchy 102 (August, 1969), an Act was passed to prevent barons returning from the wars and finding that other barons

had occupied and taken possession of their land, from retaking their property by force. Trespassing, which it was and is, was to be allowed only "in a peaceable and easy manner". Trespassing has always been regarded as a civil offence and "squatting" is theoretically a matter between the property-owners and the "squatters" into which the police cannot intervene (theoretically) except to keep the peace.

This is the law theoretically, and certain bold occupations of premises, pressures by councils which have failed to do much otherwise about housing, and use of legal evasions by squatters have all impelled the Commission of lawyers to propose revision of the law. The proposed revision involves making trespassing a criminal offence - which would make the new law applicable to factory occupations and to demonstrations inside business or government premises. It is quite possible that the latter usages are those chiefly sought.

It has been stated that there are sufficient laws on the statute book to deal with squatting were it to assume the proportions of a menace as the press assumes it to have done. Under the pretext of searches for drugs, weapons (both of these can be planted), vague conspiracy charges, searches for stolen property besides the customary police blind eye to the illegalities of bailiffs and property owners are all adequate to deal with squatting as it is.

(Continued on Page 2)

Reg Prentice, who is fighting a move to sack him by his Left-wing dominated constituency



"START WORRYING, REG, THE DAILY MAIL'S BEHIND YOU."

POSSESSION IS NINE POINTS (Continued from Page 1)

Pressures by councils with regard to services of gas, water and electricity are weapons that have been used in this almost one-sided battle. Councils have been known to tear roofs off squatter-occupied houses and board up officially vandalised property to stop squatters. (Roger Insall, the *Evening News* reporter, quotes a slogan at Albion Free State, Great Western Road, Paddington: "Corrugated iron is the character-armour of the council".)

Property-owners and councils are not, as the newspapers would have us believe, defenceless and at the mercy of ravening hoards of layabout squatters. This is pressure based on individual cases which is designed to force through a mess of dangerous panic legislation.

It is quite a usual defence mechanism for a guilt-ridden individual (or council) to transfer his guilt to the object of his persecution or his indifference. The homeless (which is what squatting is about), said the London County Council (c. 1967) "have usually been married couples between the ages of twenty and forty, having two or three children under sixteen. About three-quarters of the adults were born in Britain and one quarter in Ireland. The men are mainly in semi-skilled or manual occupations. The husbands' wages are below the average. . . It was impossible to doubt that the homeless made sincere efforts to find somewhere to live, and that these efforts usually turned out to be a demoralizing waste of time and money. . . The main reason why families had failed to find accommodation was the apparently growing refusal of landlords to take children. . . Only ten per cent of the men are out of work. . . Asked whether the typical homeless family was feckless and ne'er-do-well, or decent and respectable, we found far more truth in the latter."

Since 1969, particularly in London, the situation as regards homelessness has grown worse due to inflation, demolition of houses to make way for roads and commercial properties, and government legislation which has made landlords even more reluctant to let property at a reasonable figure.

The tendency has been for the mixture of homeless families, rootless bohemians, and the revolutionary to comprise the squatters. There has been a growing emphasis upon the necessity for the abolition of rent since the financial system seems incapable of providing homes. At the same time, it is fairly universally admitted, even by the press, that the number of vacant houses (dwelling units) at any one time exceeds the number of homeless.

Only the financial system of rent and property-owning prevent this seemingly simple solution being applied. Hence individual squatters provide their own solution. This is anarchism in action, for the ideas of direct action are the major contribution of anarchism to social change.

PORTUGAL

COMMUNISM IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

THIS COUNTRY is predestined to political balance. The Cunhalist dictatorship is replacing the Salazarist one. Statistically, both have minority implantation. As bad leadership never comes alone, the Soarists have been as pernicious as the other two. The former socialist party, at the beginning of the century, fought anarcho-syndicalists and opened the way to Salazar. If comedy could not turn into tragedy, the present crisis would show only how political parties have everything except the people's interests to defend. Contrary to what one might think, the Portuguese Communist Party is not razing to the ground "the revolution of the flowers"; it continues to hold firmly to its strategy -- to take over power and to keep it for itself alone, arrogantly. It arrives innocent and meek as a lamb. Under its working-class skill, it hides a wolf's voracity. Once the lamb is swallowed, the beast claims to be the master of the whole flock, or better still: of the whole State. Marx was only Hitler's precursor, in the same way that Cunhal is the natural heir of Salazar. Bastard heir, but heir. And as the Pope says, Communists and Socialists are brothers; Soares is a bastard heir of Spínola.

And social change there has been, but in 1969 it was feared that the compromise 'successes' of squatters in negotiation with councils were 'defeats' and 'betrayals'. Now, it is admitted that some squatting reviled once as 'illegal' is now 'legal' and 'decent'. Now it is obvious that one must push to get 'rentless squatting' regarded as no less legal -- not that legality matters. This is underlined by the remarkable proposals by Peter Walker and some Conservative theorists that council houses should become the property of the tenants after twenty years' occupation and the tenants should live in them rent free. Whether this is a Macchiavellian move by Tories to sabotage municipal housing or is based upon obvious facts is unknown, but it is clear that council houses of any age have been paid for anyhow by the tenants. That the rates are now so high as to virtually outstrip rents. That as tenants qualify for social security, the rent is paid by the State anyhow. That with the advancing age of properties repairs are likely to prove a greater liability than the rent. If, however, Tories can begin to think like this it must be an idea whose time has long since passed -- and it probably should have been done long ago.

The same way that 'legal' squatting was only belatedly recognised as just and right by councils and progressives, so rentless squatting will prove to be the only answer to the housing problem which neither private enterprise, local authorities or the state can solve. Carry on squatting.

Jack Robinson.

Since April 25th there is a constancy in "their" revolution. All the parties which had opposed the army have been pushed out of the government (Caetanists, Spínolists and others less known. When will the Soarists' turn come?) The Portuguese Socialist Party made so many mistakes that now it cannot welcome the present crisis with open arms. Claiming to be the defender of "the people", it refuses popular democracy. For the PSP, the people's will means Parliament and pluralist capitalism (the poor and the rich classes). For the PCP, the people's will means State capitalism, replacing Parliament with a circus, where comrades say what cannot be said by other comrades and that all workers are equal but some workers are more equal than others, you know. As the PCP is the most organized in astute policies, it played on the idea of "apolitical" Popular Committees of Revolution. Even gods are not apolitical.

The Prime Minister is close to the PCP. A few sentences by him explain a lot of the present crisis and his party's responsibility within it. After attacking capitalism and the right wing, he says: "Intense exploitation of the atavistic anti-communism of a great part of the Portuguese people (. . .)" Follow him and wait: "A continuous escalade of leftism has been verified through time." Now understand him: "The central matter of socialism is a matter of power. Only the control of power by the workers permits the establishment of a socialist society." First he is against the right, then against the left. He is now at the centre of a Government in a country of an anti-communist people. What is more, he wants to give power to the workers. Which workers? "The establishment of new relations will have to be imposed during a certain period, which demands the placing of power in the workers' hands. Once the matter of power is defined. . . there appears the need for a political vanguard. The need springs from the impossibility of of the immediate access of the workers to power, so it falls to the vanguard to conduct the process and to create through time the necessary conditions for this accession to take place." Mere Marxist dialectics, isn't it? The people refuses communism, wrongly. The people is on the left, wrongly. If workers were to be with the Communist Party, here, they would be on the right road. The workers are against the CP, they are stupid. The CP wants to give them power. For that the CP will impose power on the workers, just for a while, because they never know their own will. . . Apart from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, all the Communist Parties are criticising the Portuguese Communist Party; a lot of its militants are leaving it; wanting to be identified with the Armed Forces Movement, both are losing the people's support. For a long time the PCP have been fighting all the groups on its left. Now it needs them, in order to betray them tomorrow as it did the Portuguese Socialist Party, and as the PSP did to anarcho-syndicalists yesterday.

F. J. M.

ORGANISING ANARCHY

AS LONG AS THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT in Britain has consisted of circles of friends who know and understand each other's position, it has been felt that there is no need to define what we believe in anything other than the vaguest terms. Indeed, attempts to do so have been rejected as dogmatism. However, this kind of cosy introversion makes the movement a secret society which can be entered and understood only by interested people with the tenacity to seek out ideas which often remain unexpressed because they are assumed to be self-evident or generally accepted. It is ludicrous to complain that people are not interested in our ideas if we are too lazy or confused to define them accurately!

There have been many analyses of the weaknesses of the anarchist movement. The criticism has come from many directions that the main problem springs from the reluctance to adequately define our positions. We agree with that criticism. The people who originally formed ORA/AWA based their organisation on this assumption and concluded that they were the only "real" anarchists and that everyone else was really a "liberal" or whatever other strange term of abuse they could find. In fact, this tendency has proved itself to be Leninist in theory and practice, and we can see no common ground for practical co-operation with AWA.

Why do we need an organisation and how should it define itself?

We believe that world capitalism is entering its most serious crisis since the thirties. This crisis is largely the result of the tremendous growth of working-class militancy since the war. On an international scale workers have managed to secure ever greater wage increases while fierce international competition has prevented exporters from accommodating the full effects in higher prices. In short there has been a massive profits squeeze. The old panacea of growth is clearly no longer a viable solution. With every country pinning its hopes on increasing its exports at the expense of its competitors a world depression is inevitable.

The only solution for capitalism - apart from war - is to launch an all-out counter-attack against the working-class. We believe that the continued existence of capitalism depends on the success of this offensive. In Britain the ruling-class has not been dreaming. While the "revolutionary Left" is playing cowboys and Indians with the National Front, the state - from politician to policeman - is preparing its greatest offensive against the working-class since 1931.

We believe that the seriousness of the crisis, and the severity of the sacrifices that will be demanded of the working-class, should force them to seriously question whether their best interests lie in preserving the capitalist system. It is in this context, with a sense of great urgency, that we approach the task of creating an effective libertarian movement in Britain.

Many comrades who reject the AWA structure and Leninist and Leninist ideology see no need for any kind of national federation, mainly because they feel that they can best spread anarchist ideas by concentrating on their own activity in their affinity groups of five or six comrades. We believe that this emphasis is perfectly correct and the best way of making a revolutionary start is in our own back-yards. However,

the basic questions of organisational structures cannot be resolved simply by avoiding them.

Comrades who are part of an active group seem unaware of the problems of isolated individuals - and most anarchists in Britain are isolated. Obviously, avowedly Leninist groups or AWA do offer something to isolated revolutionaries. Often good revolutionaries tolerate authoritarian and centralist groups because they see that the only alternative for them is total isolation. Isn't it time we offered them a genuinely libertarian alternative?

We have already said that we feel the need to define our position. It is not a presumptuous attempt to provide the "real" definition of anarchism; not to prove that we are real anarchists and anyone who disagrees is not; but simply to sketch the basic principles of our concept of anarchism. Defining our position makes it clear to us and those who consider it whether or not there is a basis for co-operation and the building of an active federation. It seems obvious to us that a common attachment to the label "anarchist" is not enough.

We are perplexed that many of our comrades whilst rejecting the AWA structure simply see it as a fairly minor difference of opinion between comrades about the best way to organise. We believe that it is a fundamental question which will have a decisive effect on the kind of society we are trying to create. Organisational structures - rather than ideology - define the real nature of a movement.

Our anarchism is based on fundamental principles of voluntary co-operation and mutual aid, individual responsibility and autonomy. Consequently, we reject all organisational structures based on centralism, formal membership, collective responsibility and delegation of responsibility.

What we have written above should make our position clear to other anarchists. However, it would probably be inadequate for people who have had little contact with anarchist ideas.

National Anarchist Conference

Dear Comrades,

It has been proposed by a number of comrades from Corby and Leicester that a national anarchist Conference should be held one week-end in October, possibly in Leicester or Nottingham, if sufficient interest is shown in the idea.

The Conference will provide an opportunity to make and renew contacts, and to develop co-operative links between autonomous groups and individuals.

Please let us know if you are interested in coming to the Conference and if you can help with the preparatory work. Assuming that sufficient interest is shown we will produce a pre-Conference mailing of reactions, criticisms, suggestions, discussion papers, etc. (Please enclose a stamp!)

Fraternally,

Terry Phillips,
7 Cresswell Walk,
CORBY
Northants.

Thus for a fuller definition we would define ourselves as follows:

- We are working to create a free, socialist society based on voluntary co-operation and mutual aid: a society in which everyone is involved in the work and the decision-making as an equal.

- We oppose all governments everywhere, whether capitalist, "socialist" or "communist" which by their nature inevitably constitute, and defend the interests of, a privileged class. We oppose all political parties which because of their hierarchical structure are inevitably embryonic ruling classes.

- We believe that a social revolution will be achieved by the initiative and co-operation of autonomous groups of working-people organising to take control of their work-places and communities for the good of all. We seek to encourage these revolutionary initiatives and to maintain their independence from authoritarian and centralist parties and groups who try to impose their authority on the people and, thus, arrest the revolutionary process.

- We believe that it is the structure of a revolutionary organisation, and its relationship to working people outside of the organisation - rather than its ideology - which dictate the structure of the new society it helps to create. We base our organisation on the principles of voluntary co-operation and mutual aid, individual responsibility and autonomy. Consequently, we reject all organisational structures based on hierarchy, centralism, formal membership, collective responsibility and delegation of responsibility.

We invite everyone who shares our basic principles to join us in creating an Anarchist Federation.

Terry Phillips & Ray Cowper
7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

IN BRIEF

SID RAWLE, part-organizer and publicist of the Windsor Pop Festival, was freed from his imprisonment for contempt. It was stated by the judge who made the order that Sid Rawle should be released "in the interests of the public" in order that he may publicise the fact that the proposed Windsor Pop Festival will be held at Watchfield (a disused airfield) in Oxfordshire from August 23rd. This was arranged by the Home Office without consultation with local authorities. No suggestion has yet been made by Sid Rawle or the Home Office that, in order that a peaceful festival may take place, police (uniformed and un-uniformed) should be excluded from the new suggested site "in the interests of the public".

SPEAKING in Salisbury to a BBC reporter, Mr. Clive Small, the Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith said there were no political detainees whatever in Rhodesia: "People are detained in Rhodesia for the same reason that they are detained by the British in Northern Ireland. That is because they pose a serious threat to the security of the State. If terrorism stopped in Rhodesia and a cease-fire became effective, the threat would then fall away and we would be able to release them." --reported in Rhodesian Commentary (Salisbury) June 1975.

LAST TANGO FOR LA PERON

THE IRRATIONALITY of politics could find no better illustration than Argentina today. The country is bathed in blood: every day the newspapers lead with the latest assassinations, the work of "left-wing" Peronist guerillas, the Montoneros, or the sinister AAA (Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance). Inflation is running at 100-200 % (nobody seems quite sure). But there are signs that the nightmare spell may soon be broken.

Peronism has been deprived of its magic for its power-base, the organised workers, by hard economic facts, and they in turn, by means of unofficial strikes and demands for 100% pay increases, have forced the corrupt leadership of the trade union organisation, the CGT, to compel the resignation of the Minister of Social Welfare and the Economics Minister. This in itself is a blow to the usual paternalistic, hierarchical structure of Peronism, where orders are handed down from the top, and obeyed, Mafia-style.

The ousting of Lopez Rega and Rodrigo (who had introduced 100% price increases, and then attempted to hold wage-rises below 50%) is a severe blow to the authority of the President, Senora Maria Estela Peron, who has no more to recommend her to Argentinians than a glossy appearance (common to women of the ruling class the world over) and her late husband's name.

If ever there was an *éminence grise* it's Lopez Rega. He inveigled himself into the Peron household in Madrid some years ago, and rapidly became Peron's righthand man. When the Peronists won the elections in 1973, Lopez Rega became Minister of Social Welfare by Peron's fiat, and remained such until his recent removal. His activities before joining Peron are very shady, but he did write a book on astrology, he believes himself to be the reincarnation of the prophet Daniel, and he is a member of an occult sect called the "knights of Fire".

After joining the government he made his son-in-law, Raul Lostini, President as a means of getting rid of all the left-wing Peronists from the cabinet, paving the way for Peron. After Peron's death, Senora Peron took over formally, but the power behind the throne was Lopez Rega.

He organised the AAA death squads with some of his friends in the police force, and he used it, with the typical disregard for human life, the sadistic glorying in death, to instil terror into all liberals, intellectuals, journalists, Jews... the usual victims of fascism (no member of AAA has ever been arrested). It is only recently, with Lopez hounded out of the country (he's now back in the Peron mansion in Madrid) that the AAA reign of fear has abated. Whilst he was still in the presidential palace (though out of office)

the AAA killings went on.

Rodrigo was an old friend of Lopez Rega, he was another occultist, but the sources of the policies of both of them are hardly clouded in obscurity. Argentina is owned by North American capitalists who are only too happy to see prices shooting up and wages held down. But now they will have more of a struggle on their hands. The Argentinian workers have lost some of their Peronist illusions, and they have made sure that none of the Lopez Rega clique can inherit power when Senora Peron goes. (Ever since the departure of her Brujo, poor Maria Estela hasn't been feeling too well. She's been pleading for a "three week holiday due to nervous strain" and keeping to her sick bed, though she managed to get off it for Eva Peron day. One can imagine what kind of a "head-ache" she has.)

The real question is whether the events of the past two years can destroy the myth of Peronism among the workers. Peron achieved his status by giving power to the workers that they had never experienced before. When his ability to keep on giving the workers the good time was failing, when the bourgeoisie felt that enough was enough, there was a very "fortuitous" military coup. As a result the Peron era came to be seen as a golden age by the workers. Any radical group which wanted

to gain kudos among the working-class has to be Peronist. The Trotskyists were Peronist, the Argentinian equivalent of the Spanish National Syndicalists were Peronists -- nowadays all the guerilla movements want to re-establish "true Peronism" even if this involves removing his third wife from power.

The description of the Montoneros guerillas as "left-wing" by the British Press is very curious, especially as the other major guerilla grouping, the ERP (People's Revolutionary Army) came out of a Trotskyist political party, the Workers' Revolutionary Party (no relation to our own WRP - they withdrew from the IVth International some years ago). The Montoneros are essentially nationalists, like the ETA. Their leaders are former members of Argentine Catholic Action. They were not made illegal by the Peronist government, but went underground voluntarily and "proscribed themselves". They can rejoin the Peronist movement from clandestinity, whenever they like.

Obviously, neither they nor the ERP have anything to offer the Argentinian people that the Argentinians cannot take for themselves with their own hands. Let us hope that the next few months in Argentina will discredit the elitism of guerilla revolutionaries for good and all.

D. L. M.

GOOD RIDDANCE FANFANI!

WE CANNOT help but be mildly pleased to see the end of the reign of Amintore Fanfani. Up until Wednesday 23rd July, Amintore Fanfani was the Secretary of the Christian Democrat Party (DC) of Italy. On that Wednesday a special national congress of the DC gave Fanfani a vote of "no confidence" and hence his resignation was demanded, and soon given.

It was, quite frankly, inevitable that such a step should be taken by the DC. The DC has no ideology or general policy. Its only aim is to remain in power. Ever since the last war ended the DC has been in command. Therefore, the DC has shown itself capable of being either a fascist, conservative, liberal, or socialist party depending on the mood of the moment.

For the past 30 years since the end of the war the voting figures (under a "proportional representation" system) have been very steady. The Communist Party (PCI) have kept their voting figures moderately strong and so the DC has constantly adopted a political line which ranges from fascist to laissez-faire liberal with an extremely dubious pseudo-socialist input. In other words they adopted the role of

the last defence against communism.

During the time of Fanfani's secretaryship this "last defence against communism" role took on a decidedly reactionary and fascist look. One recent alarming result was the passing through parliament of the "public order" legislation which has already ensured the imprisonment of various left-wing comrades under charges of "suspicion of subversion" etc. . .

The political ideology inside the DC is just as, if not more, varied than the total spectrum of political ideology inside the Italian parliament. Hence it is not surprising to find that in the insatiable struggle for power inside the party, Fanfani's opponents (the Dprotei faction) have been trying to oust this reactionary monster since 1953. Unfortunately, all these attempts till lately depended on the prime minister of the day taking the initiative and pursuing a more left-wing line since the electorate was not likely to respond. Time and time again, Moro during his periods as Prime Minister let the Dorotei faction down.

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GOOD RIDDANCE (Cont'd from P. 4)

Last year, however, on the 13th May the Divorce Referendum was held in Italy. Fanfani made the DC adopt the antildivorce line alongside the fascist MSI, on the grounds that to be in favour of divorce was to be in favour of Communism. The anti-divorce faction, of course, suffered a heavy defeat. It seemed that Fanfani's days were already numbered. The regional elections for Sardinia followed (about a month later) which showed that the political leftward swing in the referendum was in fact a swing in the political mood of the nation.

Fanfani, however, was not to be perturbed. He approached the regional administrative elections on the 15 June of this year with an even fiercer anti-left line. His "opposed extremisms" propaganda was played down slightly whilst the "public order" propaganda was augmented along with clumsily heavy hints as to which sections of society were to blame (i.e. the communists, anarchists, etc. ...) The fact that the fascists were madly blowing up everything and everyone within range at the time was conveniently ignored and used to favour anti-left propaganda.

Unbeknown to Fanfani, people are just not as thick as politicians would like them to be. The Italian press, for a start is not entirely moderate (i.e. centre-right) as it is in Britain. Further, too many fascists were constantly being caught (eventually) to give credence to the "left wing equals disorder" theory. Finally, 30 years of unfulfilled promises and blatant corruption is more than enough for many people to stomach.

It is not surprising therefore that the June 15th elections should show great gains for the Communists. An actual shift in electoral results, of course, is just what the Dorotei faction of the DC needed to be able to oust Fanfani. The DC, to survive, must attach itself to the political current of the day and Fanfani no longer has a part to play in this scheme. Referring to one of the "people" who was about to vote against him, Fanfani said that Peppino Sinesio had come to him on bended knee begging for a government position, and he laid his jacket down wherever Fanfani was about to walk. He would now like to look him straight in the eye when he voted against him.

This last sentiment of Fanfani's sums up the way in which the DC's internal politics have been framed for the past 30 years.

A very disappointed Fanfani has now been dropping hints about forming a new right-wing alternative to the DC. Why doesn't he join the fascist MSI?

Whilst it is both amusing and sad to see this party of megalomaniacs choosing a different mask to suit the occasion, it is pleasing to see a really unscrupulous politician being given the chop by another unscrupulous mob.

Francesco.

Sydney

THIS IS just a small note to explain what we are up to here in Sydney. After the large and successful national conference here in January, things have been a bit confused. However, just after May Day we acquired a shopfront in Redfern (an inner city suburb). It consists of three reasonable size rooms - first a small bookshop, then a separated room for the anarchist library, then a larger meeting area with a kitchen at the back. The Library is coming along quite well, though no borrowing as yet until we sort everything out. Long-time friend Col Pollard now living in Woollahra, helped us out with initial stock for the bookshop, but it will take some time to build up stock due mainly to lack of finance.

No. 6 of Red and Black (been ready for printing for over 12 months) should be ready any day now. Still having printer's problems, this time it is being done by 1*3 press in Melbourne, an anarchist owned and run small offset printing house. Many other interesting things are going on in other parts of Australia. Will write again soon - in fact someone should have written a better report of the conference for FREEDOM - see what we can do for any future events.

Fraternally,
John Mett.

VILLAGE MILITIAS

IN RECENT YEARS, throughout America, Liberals in government have been sponsoring "gun control" laws. They usually describe their own efforts in silvery "humanitarian" terms. However, there are people who think this is merely an attempt to disarm the working class for whatever State-Capitalism plans next for the country. Rightwingers are usually quiet and secretive while they make their private storehouses of weapons and build their private armies. The American Left (in contrast) habitually wallows in quietism and paranoia. Something new (however) has been added to the situation in just the last several months: a new dimension, village militias.

Northeastern Minnesota (historically and today) is a "leftist" region. It is here (alone) that the Communist Party maintained its membership base throughout the years. And all leftwing tendencies are found here. The Mesaba general strike, an important event in IWW history, happened here. Minnesota alone of all the states had a Farmer-Labor Party (related to the Labor Parties in Europe) take power. The FLP, however, was not very European: at founding, it was metamorphosed and americanized by Guild Socialist and IWW influence... merging it with the Democrat Party and expelling all the (independent FLP militants. Many villages and towns in Northeastern Minnesota have customarily had Socialist Party or socialist Mayors... in opposition to the U.S. Steel Corporation, et al. I have always thought the trotskyist SWP would do well in the North... but their egotism causes them to think only of

big electoral contests and to lose big. At any rate, Northeastern Minnesota is a leftist region. So this will explain the population-base out of which the "village Militias" have been made.

About a dozen towns and villages (opposing the gun control laws of the Liberals) have thus far created militias. The Militias are not private armies nor secretive, but public, the official or community armies. They are not conscriptive but voluntary. They are not right-wing but left-wing. And they are illegal. Attorney-General Spannaus has declared them to be illegal. Governor Anderson has threatened to send the National Guard against the towns if the Militias are not disbanded. When asked if they would obey the order, Mrs Sweedman (commander of one of the Militias) said, "we will just ignore it." The Militias exist in a condition of community civil-disobedience.

Lee Clausen, editor of a local small newspaper in one of the villages, and active with the New Left in Minneapolis during the Sixties, was the initiator of the idea of creating town Militias. And the first Militia was founded at the village of Blackduck (Pennington), where there was an Anarchist agricultural commune through most of the Sixties. The village Militias in Minnesota have an uncanny resemblance to the libertarian Militias of the Spanish Revolution. Perhaps we are witnessing the emerging nucleus of what trotskyists call a "dual power" situation... in which the proletarian organism rivals the power of the Government. As usual with the trotskyists (however), whenever their theories would be put to good use (...as in Portugal), they are hiding out in Duluth, making a left-Cover(let) to take people over to the Stalinists.

Séamas Cain.

AN AMERICAN tabloid weekly paper which recently assigned a reporter to retrieve refuse from outside the Washington home of Dr. Kissinger, Secretary of State, has night disclosed what had been found in five bags.

The paper, the National Enquirer, said the refuse included hundreds of secret service documents and a shopping list for three cases of different brands of whisky.

Earlier this month the State Department said the action of the reporter, Jay Gourley, in taking the bags had caused "grave anguish" to Mrs. Kissinger. The paper, in this week's edition, said documents retrieved by Gourley included: Detailed work schedules for the agents on duty at Kissinger's home; a memo that revealed that the secret service is testing a new code light signal for all its limousines; a note which gave the number and type of arms and ammunition carried in each secret service car; a note, presumably written by an agent, indicating that a shotgun had been left behind during Dr. Kissinger's trip to the Virgin Islands last month.

An empty prescription envelope indicating that Seconal, a powerful tranquilliser, had been prescribed for one of the Kissingers.

--Daily Telegraph, 21.7.75

LAND NOTES

THERE IS nothing like the threat of food shortage to arouse the interest of people in growing things, and the second world war produced many books on the subject. One such, by an American author, *Five Acres and Independence*, quotes Henry Ford in a moment of clarity:

"The land! That is where our roots are. There is the basis of our physical life. The farther we get away from the land the greater our insecurity. From the land comes everything that supports life, everything we use for the service of physical life. The land has not collapsed or shrunk either in extent or productivity. It is there waiting to honour all the labour we are willing to invest in it and able to tide us across any local dislocations of economic conditions. No unemployment insurance can be compared to an alliance between man and a bit of land."

This concern was overtaken by an era of superficial affluence, of psychological selling, the Macmillan era of "never having it so good". This closer awareness was submerged in a festival of unprecedented consumption for all but the inevitable minority of the underprivileged at home, and the underprivileged nations abroad.

The bubble has burst, as inevitably it had to. The realities of the situation based upon cheap oil and cheap food and the attempt to cope with it by tinkering with a grotesque financial system has produced the inevitable crisis. All the political parties are united in advocating a temporary drop in the standard of living until we are in the position to once more use oil with the same disregard for its consequences.

While there is the prospect of more oil over the hill the agricultural prospect is bleak. According to the *East Anglian Daily Times* of 11 July, there will this year be the worst cere-



— Есть предложение выбрать председателем колхоза близнецов. Сидоровы. Один будет ездить по совещаниям, другой — работать.

A PERFECT SOLUTION

Caption: "A proposal has been made to elect the Sidorov twins chairmen of the kolkhoz: one will attend the conferences while the other works."

—From Krokodil (Moscow), March 10, 1965.

al harvest for five years. The crazy thing is that this is a source of some relief to the millers as a lot of last year's expensive grain is unused. People cannot afford to buy the expensively produced meat that this grain would normally be producing.

However, the basic world surplus of grain is very small compared to the potential need. Once more the purchase of large quantities of grain by the Soviet Union will harden prices on the world market to the disadvantage of the Third World.

In this respect it is significant to record that Russia prior to the revolution was a grain exporting country. It may be argued that this was due to low internal consumption but up to very recently consumption remained low, particularly in the agricultural sector. The catastrophic famine that followed the revolution was compounded by the liquidation of the Kulaks as Russia's industrialisation was carried out with a ruthless disregard for consequences to the working population of that country. The traditional agriculturalists having been liquidated, Russian agriculture never recovered. In spite of the glossy magazines of Soviet propaganda showing the tractors and combine harvesters of the Machine Tractor Stations the reality still is that this potential granary of Europe has to purchase grain from abroad.

After the departure of Stalin the standard of living of the agriculturists was raised with a resulting increase in production. Khrushchev stumbled in his efforts to stimulate the clumsy agricultural system to reach US levels of production. The study of Soviet sources reveals the disastrous decline in the years 1958 to 1963. The collectivisation of farms was a manoeuvre centrally directed and politically motivated. Little regard was paid to the variations of conditions and flexibility required to deal with the difficulties of agricultural production. The Russians themselves were aware of the shortcomings of the agricultural system, as witness various cartoons on Krokodil. One, for example, shows a collective farm with signs left by an inspector from the productive administration. They read:

- Fill in the puddle.
- Collect manure
- Curl the tails on the oxen
- Tell the cows to calve by April 10
- Tie up the dog
- Rename the bull
- Re-paint the tractor red
- Find out why the roosters are hoarse
- Check the well bucket for leaks
- Sow wheat in this field.
- Apply manure

- Plant cabbages there
- Plant carrots here
- Examine roof for holes
- Hang a box here for the starlings

The inspector's parting remark is

IN OTHER MATTERS, COMRADES, YOU ARE FREE TO DISPLAY YOUR INITIATIVE.

Here it is worthwhile drawing our readers to the new Freedom Press publication *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*. Here are accounts of the agricultural progress of these collectives in a country where physical conditions are particularly difficult for agriculture. The spontaneous nature of those collectives free from central political control, and the toleration to the individual producer, resulted in increases of production. This in spite of depletion of manpower, the young men being at the front. Surpluses were sent to the front and to the towns. Food was equitably distributed. This was achieved by technical advances, better housing of livestock, sharing machinery. In many collectives money was abolished and food and other needs shared.

The catastrophic famine that was a consequence of the revolution in Russia did not occur in Spain; the flexibility of these collectives which allowed for differing conditions, not only resulted in a happier but also a more efficient society in terms of production. It is interesting to record that the first attack on the Spanish Collectives was made by the Stalinist communist armed forces.

A. A.

TO HELL WITH ECOLOGY

That's what the lady said. We want wages so we can get rid of the work. We want in our homes the technology that puts a man on the moon. And if the state has to pay for housework we'll get it, because the labour would be too bloody expensive. And we want the wages from the state, because our work is for the whole economy which would collapse without it a lot quicker than under a strike of any industrial union; we service the workers, to allow them to do the job; we are not raising children, we are raising workers; we don't just raise our children, we discipline them, because they must be good workers, good citizens. . . And to hell with Marx and Lenin too. We don't want liberating from housework so's we can take a second job outside -- because the jobs women get, for example nursing, teaching, secretarial, are housework too, ministering to people, listening sympathetically to the boss's troubles, and if at the end of the day you go out with a man and he has the privilege of paying for your meal and drink he expects a little something . . . (sex is housework too).

Much of this (especially the last point) has been exploited for all its sensation (Continued on Page 7)

TO HELL WITH ECOLOGY (Cont'd from P. 6)

potential by the "popular" media in the pre-publicity for the Power of Women Collective's meeting (Conway Hall, 25.7.75) to demand Wages for Housework. It's not such a sensationally new idea as it may seem. The nub of the argument is that it takes two people's labour to earn the wage paid to the man of a household for his week's work and only one of the two is getting paid; or that one person earning a wage has to expend time and energy in servicing him or herself for the job and this is not paid for and should be. In some measure it's a process that has already started. When family allowances were first introduced in Britain, the state made the point of paying that portion of the family income to the mother instead of to the male breadwinner. Any gathering of women in the present day contains a proportion of young women who are bringing up children without the presence of the men who fathered them, doing it to some extent on social security and to that extent receiving wages via the state for this work. A single, unemployed person is paid a sum for subsisting.

Kropotkin put it rather better about seventy years ago; to paraphrase, that no one can point to any property, invention or product and say "this belongs to me, it is my creation, all-my-own work". It is the work not only of millions of contemporaries but of countless millions since stone age man hacked out his first tool. And therefore well-being for all is the just and achievable aim.

Now people's idea of what makes well-being will vary, and its attainment be more nearly reached or furthest fallen short of depending on the size, number and kind of needs felt. And depending also on whether the road set out on is going that way. The aims expressed by these speakers of Power of Women, (although they hope for a movement of fundamental revolt from the community, the woman-in-the-supermarket) came over as being materially for more of the same that we have now, the liberation being freedom from dependence on sexual partners. They appear to see in Big Brother salvation from Big Daddy.

M. C.

COLLECTIVES IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, by Gaston Leval, translated by V. Richards. 368pp. Paper £2 (24p) Cloth £4 (46p post)

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YOU'RE JOKING!

"RESOLUTION OF THE NORTH-WEST LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP PASSED AT THE MEETING OF THE GROUP ON TUESDAY, 15TH JULY, 1975

The North-West London Anarchist Group supports the decision of the Workers' Revolutionary Party to work for the resignation of the government, calls on all left groups to unite against the attempt to impose living cuts and a corporate state on the workers and unemployed workers and all the poor, and urges the working class to demonstrate its rejection of this final treachery of the "Labour" government by general strike with occupation and with the maintenance of essential services for the people and in solidarity with the strike."

"Dear Comrades -- If you could find room to publish this we would be greatly pleased, as we feel it is of general significance to the Anarchist movement.

Love and Courage, --J.
18 July, 1975, London NW1"

LETTER

GANDHI

Dear Comrades,

Classifying Gandhi as an anarchist is not confined, as Ms Banerjee suggests (Letter, July 19th) to Western Romantics: see, for example, Adi Doctor, Anarchist Thought in India. The case for so classifying him rests in part on his own description of the ideal society as one in which life has become so perfect as to be self-regulated: "In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State." One must add, however, that Gandhi believed that this ideal should be approximated to as closely as possible and that, as "a practical idealist", he often operated with what some have called "a second order ideal" which allowed for the continuance of some State functions and, for example, the nationalisation of the railways.

Gandhi's views on caste were not as simple as Ms Banerjee appears to think. In essence, he distinguished sharply between varna and caste. The former - the four estates of ancient Hindu society, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya & Sudra - he regarded (romantically?) as functional, non-hierarchical groups which together constituted an organic unity making for social harmony. In contrast, caste, with its restrictions on intermarriage and interdining, and its inherent notion of superiority and inferiority, he regarded as anathema. As he once put it, "Varna has nothing to do with caste. Down with the monster of caste that masquerades in the guise of varna. It is this travesty of varna that has degraded Hinduism and India." For an excellent discussion of this point, see Dennis Dalton's contribution to P. Mason (ed.) India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity, O.U.P., 1967.

Whatever Gandhi's own views may have been, many contemporary Gandhians are quite clear that their object is to achieve a casteless classless and stateless society: see my book (with M. Currell) The Gentle Anarchists.

Yours fraternally,
Geoffrey Ostergaard.

WE THINK the above resolution from the North-West London Anarchist Group shows how some comrades are unclear about their anarchism. Firstly we do not see what is achieved by the passing of resolutions. It is a form of activity which is contrary to our ideals because it places the onus on others to carry them out. It is also a substitute for direct action.

The Workers' Revolutionary Party is a political party. Supporting their resolution and calling on others to do the same is giving support to an organisation and a set of ideals which are diametrically opposed to anarchism and the type of society we desire.

We do not understand why you support the Workers' Revolutionary Party's highly commendable exhortation. Others of the same ilk will no doubt applaud your laudable, breathless and one-sentence aims. Logically, from your resolution one could support other political groups and aspiring parties like the International Marxist Group, the Marxist-Leninist, I.L.P., International Socialists, etc.

Pious resolutions, as many trade unionists will tell you, achieve very little. What effect does such a call have on the Labour Government? Are anarchists only concerned with the resignation of the Labour Government? On that limited aim one could include Mrs. Thatcher and the Tories. Surely anarchists are opposed to all governments and not just to the one that happens to be in power. To aim for the resignation of one pre-supposes that you support another to take its place. Why just this government? Anarchism as we understand it, is against all governments, whether they are led by Gerry Healey or Tony Cliff on the one hand and Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Thatcher on the other.

The general outcome of past co-operation with political parties or groupings by anarchists is that we have been double crossed. When you call on all left groups to unite, this would place anarchists with some strange bedfellows. 'Left groups' whose ideas in the past have been responsible for the imprisonment and death of our own comrades. Surely our memories are not that short; and why can't we learn from what happened in Russia, Spain, and more recently in Cuba? Have we not demonstrated outside and been carried out of all these embassies in our protest and opposition to these repressive regimes and their persecution of anarchists and syndicalists? Do we now support a political organisation which cares nothing for freedom and would, if ever they came to power, be equally as repressive as those mentioned above. Having forced the

(Cont. on p 8)

YOU MUST BE JOKING!

(Continued from P. 7)

resignation of the Labour government, do you want some other party to take its place? None of these things are clear.

Your resolution also assumes that the Labour government's cuts in living standards are the "final treachery". This co-called treachery gives the impression that the Labour government has strayed from its true path when as anarchists we know it has only reformed the existing system of exploitation and not attempted to abolish it.

As anarchists we are in favour of a general strike to end the capitalist exploitation of man by man and to abolish the State. However although we may desire this, we do not see it happening in the near future. Certainly it is a goal to which we are and should be working towards, but we also know that resolutions of the nature you propose are just whistling in the wind.

EDITORS.

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BOOKSHOP NOTES

IT IS POSSIBLE that Oriole Chapbooks (USA) will shortly have a U.K. distributor. Meanwhile, Freedom Bookshop has in stock a selection from their excellent list of titles; it will be very useful if they can receive a wider circulation. Titles at present in stock are: Oscar Wilde's *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* (75p + 8p post); John Dos Passos: *Facing the Chair, Sacco and Vanzetti: the story of the Americanisation of Two Foreign Born Workmen* (£ 1.50 + 11p); Eugene V. Debs: *The Canton Speech, with Statements to the Jury and to the Court* (50p + 6p); Percy Bysshe Shelley: *An Address to the Irish People* (75p + 8p); and William Morris: *A Dream of John Ball* (75p + 8p).

Another interesting series of titles is the Times Change Press series, also from the USA, who have now a U.K. distributor. We have three of their range in stock, Emma Goldman's *The Traffic in Women and other essays on Feminism* (65p + 8p); *Hip Culture: Six Essays on its Revolutionary Potential*, with essays by Murray Bookchin, Irwin Silber and others (60p + 8p); and Murray Bookchin's *Ecology and Revolutionary Thought* (60p + 8p) with the "Ecology Action East" Manifestos, "The Power to Destroy - The Power to Create" and "Buy Now... Die Later", plus the essay "Towards an Ecological Solution" - also by Bookchin.

Black & Red (Detroit) have recently reprinted Maurice Brinton's excellent essay on authoritarian conditioning and sexual repression, *The Irrational in Politics* (50p + 8p), including also shorter articles on "The Russian Experience", also by Brinton, and "My Job and Why I Like It" - some of the "prize-winning" efforts in a competition organised by General Motors in 1948 - 'nough said!

We have just received a fresh consignment from the USA of what to me is still the most important book for anarchists to read, Peter Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* - regrettably increased in price, but still a bargain at £ 1.50 (42p) in paperback. Simian have recently reprinted in a cheap pamphlet format Bakunin's *God and the State* (25p + 8p), up until now the only available edition has been the more expensive US edition - still available at 34p + 11p.

An interesting libertarian of whom little is known in this country is Albert Jay Nock, and Free Life Editions have recently made available his *Our Enemy the State*, together with his essay "On Doing the Right Thing" (£ 1.50 + 15p) with an introduction by Walter E. Grinder.

Lastly, an interesting English-Language Japanese Anarchist periodical, *Radical*. Numbers 5 and 6 of this magazine are at present in stock at 10p (post 6p) each. They include articles on the Japanese Anarchist Movement and the Current Political Situation in Japan. J. H.

§
Remittance with order is appreciated, adding postage as in brackets. All the titles mentioned in this article are available currently from Freedom Bookshop at the prices itemised.

MEETINGS

SCOTLAND July 2 - Aug 23. "Connections" - live, work, play, learn together; write, think, at Laurieston Hall, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire. SAE for details. Alternate Sundays, Hyde Park Anarchist Forum, 1 pm, Speakers Corner. Speakers, listeners & hecklers welcome.

Every Sat. & Sun., Centro Iberico/International Libertarian Centre, 83A Haverstock Hill, London NW3. (entrance Steele's Road 2nd door), tube Belsize Park or Chalk Farm From 7.30 pm, discussion, refreshments & c. MANCHESTER. SWF weekly mtgs. Enquire Secretary, c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Rd Manchester M1 7DU

FRANCE International Camp organised by French CNT, near Perpignan 1 July-30 Aug. £F per day per person. All comrades from IWMA welcome. For details write CNTF, 9 rue Duchalmeau, 66000 PERPIGNAN.

PICKET Saturday 2 August 1 p.m. Outside Brixton Police Station To protest at harassment of squatters, black people, etc.

Outside Queensland House, The Strand WC2 (near Australia House). Thursday 14 August PICKET 12 noon To demand drop the charges against Walker, Garcia & Lacey and abolish the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Acts. Self determination for the Australian aborigines.

PUBLICATIONS

DIRECT ACTION no. 8 out now 5p + 5 p post c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7DU or Freedom Bookshop THE MATCH! U.S. Anarchist Monthly. News, reviews, history, theory, polemic. \$3.00 per year from P.O. Box 3480, Tucson, Arizona 85722, or try Freedom Bookshop for specimen copy 13 p including postage

GROUPS

LEICESTER Anarchist Group contact 41 Norman St., Leicester. Phone 24851
SWANSEA anarchists interested to form group for discussion, street theatre, drinking tea, therapy - anything possible - write Tim, 64 Woodville Rd. Oystermouth, Swansea
ABERGAFENNI - anyone interested in forming libertarian group contact 21 Monmouth Rd

CONTACT

PEOPLE/ORGANIZATIONS

Single parent - 3 young children, involved in alternative education, wd like share home one bedroom (poss. dble) & room for another child with others, share kit., bath & living rms. S. Durrani, 25 Wiverton Rd. S.E.26

LIBRARY workers contact Martin Everett, 11 Gibson Gdns, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1AW with view to forming network.

POEMS & SONGS (anarcho;pacifist, anti-militarist, antiracial, COS tribunal statements &c) any lang., wanted for Abolish War Anthol. Mark Wm. Kramrisch, 55 Camberwell Church Street, London SE5.

NEXT DESPATCHING DATE for FREEDOM is Thursday, 14 August. Come and help from 2 pm onwards. You are welcome every Thursday afternoon to early evening for informal get-together and folding session.

WE WELCOME news, reviews, articles, letters. Latest date for receipt of copy for inclusion in review section is Monday 4 August. All other news/features/contact notices much reach us by Monday 11 August.

FREEDOM'S Anarchist Review

SUPPLEMENT to Vol. 36 Nos. 30-31 2 August 1975

SQUARING THE CIRCLE

TO CONCENTRATE here on the anarchist point of view (ignoring the theological schisms, heresies, theses and so on, that occupy much of this book) *Proletarian Order* is both frustrating and oddly satisfying. The relation between the anarchists and the communist "Ordine Nuovo" group of Turin is an interesting one. Williams is fully aware of the importance of anarchist activity in Italy at the time and the way it influenced the actions of extremely worried socialists. In fact he supplies an illuminating insight into the impulse given the formation of a "pure" communist group within the Italian Socialist Party by the wide popular appeal of intransigent syndicalism and notes the coincidence between the people's excitement at Malatesta's return to Italy in 1919 and the emergence of the "Ordine Nuovo" group in Turin. But while openly recognising the fact he makes no serious endeavour to understand the reasons for that appeal. In the end he is too good a Marxist to ascribe anarchist influence upon the "masses" to anything but a lack of sound Marxist education or firm party organisation which, like God, would impose form upon the waters of chaos.

Yet, though not its main concern by any means, *Proletarian Order* does raise in the interested reader more than a mere historical curiosity in the relation between the anarchists and communists of Turin, and especially between the anarchists and the young Sardinian, Gramsci. How, for instance, did this collaboration come about, and could it have been successful?

It has been customary to explain it on one hand by Gramsci's liberalism, his determination to fight union bureaucracy and party elitism, and on the other by the desire of the anarchists to make of the factory (and ward) councils a base of libertarian combat against all forms of government. Gramsci, however, didn't deny the importance, let alone right to existence, of either unions or party. At this time much of his energy was taken up in creating a complicated, rather Montesquieu-like system of checks and balances between councils, socialist party and unions. The party would continue to be "the organ of communist education, the dynamo of faith, the depository of doctrine, the supreme power which harmonises and leads towards their goal the organised and disciplined forces of the worker and peasant class". The party should not interfere with the councils, but the councils would become a "magnificent school in political and administrative experience", drilling the workers "into thinking of themselves as an army in the field" to

PROLETARIAN ORDER (Antonio Gramsci: *Factory Councils and the Origins of Italian Communism 1911-1921*), by Gwyn A. Williams. (Pluto Press, £2.70)

make the party's revolution possible.

As for the unions, they were an integral part of capitalist society. Their function was commercial - the manipulation of prices on a given bourgeois market. They must not interfere with the revolutionary cells of the future workers' state any more than the party apparatus, but through a process of interreaction the influence of the councils would help weaken the stranglehold of union bureaucracy and the influence of the unions would bring necessary discipline to the councils.

Such a concept could have little attraction for anarchists who must, as well, have remarked upon Gramsci's likening of the cold sharp "conquistadors of empire" with the cream of the communist revolutionaries, or his telling comparison between the early Church and the young communists, or the savage intensity of his hatred for the "petty bourgeoisie" (a silly term in English) with which, of course, anarchism was tainted in the Marxist view. In one icy fit of rage he called upon its expulsion from society "as one expels a swarm of locusts from a half devastated field".

Then there was the council structure itself. The councils were to be democratically adapted from the already existing fossils that were the internal committees, and linked up with city ward councils of non factory workers to prevent "factory egoism". They were to be based on the "English system". (Gramsci had studied not only the Russian soviets but De Leon and the IWW and the British shop steward movement and his criticism of the unions was largely drawn from the British experience). The councils were thus still clearly hierarchical. The rank and file elected commissars who could be revoked by referendum. These formed Councils of Commissars, all union members, who formed Executive Committees. Gramsci insisted, against vigorous opposition, on the councils being open in their initial stages to unorganised labour and to anarchists (a clear reflection on his common sense) but quite apart from the puritanism and heavy producer morality of this programme, typical of the Torinese mentality of the time, it pukes of school or the armed forces. The Executive Committees for instance, must keep an eye upon the workers, "whipping on and driving the slow and den-

ouncing the inept and the incapable to the council". . .

"LENIN IS DEAD, LONG LIVE LIBERTY!"

Why, then, did the anarchists take such an enthusiastic and important part in the Turin councils? Williams puts it down - with a satisfied smile no doubt - to lack of scruples among most anarchists. It's probably simpler than that. To begin with the anarchists were fast recovering from the blow dealt them by the growth of parliamentary socialism, whose premature impotence became more evident each day. As Williams points out, the *Unione Anarchica Italiana* (Usi) was rapidly growing in numbers. The April food riots of 1917 had shown the anarchists to be the only effective organisers of resistance; it was the anarcho-syndicalist intransigence of the railwaymen of Pisa, Livorno and Florence in refusing to transport troops, of the workers and seamen of Livorno and Genoa in sabotaging the ports, of the strikers striking against trade union power and so on, that held the popular imagination and led to the cry "Lenin is dead, long live liberty!" on Malatesta's return to Italy. Williams notes the "rapid and virtually uninterrupted growth" of libertarianism among the rural workers of Parma and Ferrara, but also among the building workers of Bologna and Rome, the railwaymen, dockers, sailors and engineering workers of Lombardy, thereby acknowledging its far from merely agricultural appeal.

This strength must explain the confidence with which the anarchists saw the factory councils, and their conviction that they could steal away the heart of the council movement. Reservations there certainly were about the nature of its organisation, notably with Malatesta and the anarchist communists; but Malatesta admitted its potential for direct action, while in the midsummer of 1920 Usi issued a manifesto on the councils stating that they were "in accordance with the ends of anarchist communist principles, absolutely anti-State organisms and possible nuclei for the future direction of industrial and agricultural production".

As for Gramsci, his authoritarian utterances didn't send the anarchists into a sulk as he might have wished, but rather had the invigorating effect upon them of ice-cold bath water. The anarchist engineer Carlo Petri even worked with "Ordine Nuovo" for a time, launching his counter-offensive in Gramsci's own paper and Gramsci retaliated in this sensitive area as

SQUARING THE CIRCLE

best he could. Anarchism, he said, decayed in proportion to the degree of industrialisation in a country. Anarchists were a "religious" group of mystics whose absolute belief in freedom (and here, in fact, his reasoning was identical to that of the nationalist demagogue Papini) would end in slavery. Anarchists were not exclusively working class. In reality they represented "the elementary subversive feeling of every oppressed class and the diffused tendency of every dominant class". Thus, for instance, the French bourgeoisie, in rebelling against the aristocracy, were being anarchistic in their liberalism (!)

Gramsci realised the danger of the anarchist intellectuals and therefore lavished his formidable gift for invective upon them. But he hoped the class-conscious anarchist workers could be converted to state communism through participation in the councils. Workers' anarchism was really a struggle against the bourgeois state, not the state itself; once the new centralised state was founded it would bring the anarchists freedom! As Williams says, "This was not likely to convince Ferrero and Garino," two anarchist militants within the councils whose revolutionary calibre Gramsci greatly admired. For the anarcho-syndicalists were "council leaders born", and, says the author, "Once Gramscian-communist grip began to slip the movement was wide open to the seductive schemes of factory seizure and the expropriating general strike. Indeed, despite the thunder of Gramsci's discipline rhetoric, one may even suspect that his system, if put in practice, would have resulted in something not unlike the achievements of the Spanish CNT as it tried to rebuild after the 'defeat' in May 1937. This is speculation; the consonance between the council movement and the anarcho-syndicalists was fact. And by March 1920, the 'communist' discipline of the Turin movement was breaking down."

DELICATE DIALECTICS

This last observation would seem to suggest the weakening of the councils through anarchist unruliness. Yet Williams recognises that the anarchists were the staunchest supporters of the councils to the end (Ferrero died fighting for them in the heart of Turin in 1922) and were the only important group coherently and consistently to oppose the referendum on a compromise settlement with government and employers towards the end of the factory occupations. His book reflects, too, the enormous difficulties involved in the ordinovista attempt to reconcile the role of the councils with that of the party, operating in a completely libertarian manner in the heart of the whole mass of the working population were, says Williams, "to say the least, dialectically delicate!"

Thus, when he concludes that a "combined offensive by employers, fascists and the state, in the context of a collapse of working class morale, had driven the councils out of history", this is really only half the tale. The confusion caused by Communist insistence on trying to square the circle takes up a large part of the rest. How realise workers' self-government when the council delegates must be ultimately controlled by party discipline? How dissolve the incrustation of union bureaucracy through workers' factory and ward parliaments when these are to be influenced by union discipline with the workers, and especially their representatives, remaining sound union men? If the continued intactness of the bourgeois state can be blamed for the fact that "There was nothing like the drastic reorganisation and rationalisation of industry under workers' control of the Spanish Revolution" that intactness must be explained not only by the obstructionism of a sluggish and parasitic socialist party, not only by the movement's isolation from the rest of the country, less industrially developed than "Italy's Petrograd", but also by the incoherent attitude of the Communists themselves. In other words the Communists had already begun their "historic compromise", despite appearances only adding to the impressive list of failures in social revolution since the early days of the Risorgimento.

* * *

The British who, through their own attempts to liberalise trade unionism, had their part in inspiring the council movement, can certainly learn much from the mistakes of the Turin experience - the failure to develop the councils steadily both in numbers and in quality, both inside and outside the factories, the failure to guarantee their real autonomy and consequently the truth in the old saying about wine and water where anarchists and Communists are concerned. Unfortunately this book is written on the whole in a stale and artificial English - probably distorted through the author's constant contact with Italian - and as a survey of the Turin of the time it is very incomplete. A lot of space is taken up with the Jesuitical proceedings of socialist and Communist politics, and though Gramsci is presented in a more objective light than has been usual in works dedicated to him, he tends to come across more as a powerful computer than a living personality.

This is a pity, because without an understanding of his personality the genuine respect anarchists felt for Gramsci as a man and revolutionary is hard to make out, and so is Gramsci's whole writing. The intense physical and moral sufferings of his life, the self-imposed austerity of one who, as a poor crippled hunchback with an eternal headache, had "almost only known the more brutal side of life", and who blanched at the impertinence of writing about human solidarity when he himself had almost never known love, did have a deep ef-

fect on his work, whatever he may have wished. ("How many times I wondered if a man could bind himself to the masses if he had never loved anyone, not even his parents, if one could love a collectivity when one had not profoundly loved single human creatures," he once wrote.) In Gobetti's words "... only the eyes, lively and ingenuous yet reserved and veiled in bitterness give an occasional suggestion of the pessimist's kindness and good nature and the firm vigour of his rational temperament. ... Behind his open sincerity one can sense the weight of an inaccessible anger, from the sentence of a solitude that disdains all confidences, springs the painful acceptance of responsibilities stronger than life and hard as historical destiny. His rebellion is sometimes resentment and sometimes the deepest wrath of an islander who can reveal himself only in action, who can free himself from the slavery of centuries only by investing his commands and an apostolic zeal with something tyrannical. ..."

With the collapse of the movement Gramsci had a nervous breakdown. He spent a while in Moscow. His later preoccupations concern to a far greater extent the role of the party as the modern Machiavellian Prince. Yet it was the fate of this man, whose political concepts were totally opposed to the anarchist philosophy, to be accused by his own colleagues of anarchistic and syndicalist tendencies, to be constantly forced into recognition of the anarchists' superb "communist" potential, to be linked with them to the end in a strange and equivocal bond of admiration and courage.

In prison, Ferri tells us, the anarchists Piacentini and Ceresia were "particularly close to Gramsci". During the Spanish Revolution it was the anarchist Camillo Berneri who made a radio appeal to revolutionary unity in Gramsci's name only minutes before being killed by Communists in the streets of Barcelona.

Gramsci, who had just died, would have recognised in this generous tribute the last and most savage of the ironies of his relationship with the anarchists. It is a relationship of which Gwyn Williams is aware in dedicating his book to the memory of Pietro Ferrero, metalworker and anarchist "who led the last struggle of the councils in April 1921 and who was killed by the fascists on 18 December 1922".

G. F.

[Much of this book has in fact already appeared in the New Edinburgh Review double issue on Gramsci, which also contains his letters from prison. In these often very vivid and moving letters Gramsci becomes human. G. F.]

ONCE the government has been overthrown. ... anarchists will have the special mission of being the vigilant custodians of freedom, against all aspirants to power and against the possible tyranny of the majority.

--Errico Malatesta.

ANOTHER LOOK AT BRITISH ANARCHISM

I FEEL reluctant to criticise John Quail's summary of the history of anarchism in Britain up to the end of the First World War (FREEDOM, Anarchist Review, July 19), when I was unfortunately unable to hear his original lecture and when I have naturally been unable to read his forthcoming book. Anyone who has tried to cover this kind of subject in a single talk or article knows how difficult it is, and J.Q. has obviously done an interesting and stimulating job, but I do nevertheless think that at least a few points ought to be made at this stage in case any readers should suppose that all the statements he makes so confidently are somehow beyond question.

Concepts J.W. rightly reminds us that the anarchist movement emerged from the labour movement, and that the first conscious anarchists saw themselves as taking part in a working-class struggle. But he wrongly extends this approach to his whole view of anarchist history; this is a valid view, but it is not the only possible one, and it is absurd to describe a different view as being "wildly wrong". J.Q. is too schematic in his distinction between agitation, which is real anarchism, and other forms of activity, which are not. Practical agitation may have no effect at all, theoretical propaganda may have a great effect, and the two are often no more than aspects of the same work. It is tempting -- especially for professional intellectuals -- to overemphasise the intellectual side of anarchism, but it is just as tempting and just as mistaken to underemphasise it. Anarchism derived not only from practical developments in the labour movement but also from theoretical concepts which were discussed in the labour movement and more widely in all radical and progressive circles. In tracing the history of anarchism it is surely important to achieve a balance between these two aspects of its nature. It is true that a misleading authorised version of British anarchism has grown up over the years, but it would be a pity if an equally misleading revised version should grow up in its place. Anarchism is both more and less than libertarian socialism. What is needed is a dialectical approach which makes a more productive use of the contradictions between anarchism and other forms of socialism and libertarianism and between the various forms of anarchism itself.

There is so much good sense and fresh thought in what J.Q. says that I at least feel particularly disappointed by the defects apparent in what has been printed so far. I offer the following points in the same spirit that he offered his talk, as an attempt not to close a question but to continue a discussion.

Previous Writers. J.Q. is right to begin with a criticism of the most widely read previous writer on the

subject, and George Woodcock's treatment of the British movement in Anarchism is certainly open to objection; but he is wrong to caricature Woodcock's account so unfairly, and he goes too far in the opposite direction. It is true that Woodcock personalises and romanticises the movement, but not as badly as J.Q. suggests; and it is also true that Woodcock includes several significant factors which J.Q. mistakenly excludes. For a really objectionable treatment, see James Joll's The Anarchists, which completely ignores the British movement and mentions no native libertarians between Shelley and Read!

Anarchist Origins The "beginning" of British anarchism was not "in the late 1870s". It would be wrong to give too much weight to individual propagandists and activists before the specific movement appeared in the 1880s, but it is also wrong to give no weight at all to the long succession of such writers as Gerrard Winstanley, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, William Godwin (whose Enquiry concerning Political Justice was described by Max Nettlau as "the first strictly anarchist book"), Shelley, and so on, and of such agitators as William Thompson, John Gray and Thomas Hodgskin, who inserted many libertarian ideas into their socialist tracts, or above all to the libertarian tendencies which can be traced through the Spencean, Owenite, Chartist, Cooperativist, and Internationalist movements right down to the socialist revival of the late 1870s.

These tendencies influenced and were themselves influenced by early American libertarianism, especially as represented by Josiah Warren and Stephen Pearl Andrews. The London Confederation of Rational Reformers, which was formed in 1853, and the Cosmopolitan Review, which was published in 1861-1862, were typical manifestations of the Anglo-American development of libertarian reformism. Both were dominated by Ambrose Cuddon, who began his political career in the Owenite movement and ended by leading the delegation to welcome Bakunin to England in January 1862 and attending the meeting of English and French workers which called for the formation of an international workers' organisation in August 1862. Albert Meltzer has called Cuddon the first English anarchist, which may be an exaggeration, but not much of one. It is also worth noting that G. J. Holyoake, the publicist of Chartism, Cooperativism and Secularism, published an edition of Burke's Vindication of Natural Society in 1858, with the title The Inherent Evils of State Government, with notes about such figures as Warren and Andrews, and with an appendix "briefly enunciating the principles through which 'Natural Society' may be gradually realised". Anarchism was certainly in the air long before the 1870s,

even if it was not yet in concrete or collective existence.

The Anarchist Movement Of course it is not true that FREEDOM somehow represented "Year One of anarchist influence in the British working class", since it began publication only in 1886 after several years of anarchist development; and I don't think anyone has ever suggested that it performed such a function. But neither is it true, as J.Q. suggests, that Benjamin Tucker's Liberty "has that honour"; far from "coming in from about 1880-1881, it began publication in August 1881, and there had been plenty of anarchist influence in operation by then. When the German anarchist Johann Most was arrested for welcoming the assassination of the Tsar in March 1881, there was not only the "agitation on his behalf" which J.Q. mentions but also an English version of his paper Freiheit, called Freedom; from April to June 1881 seven issues were published by the English Section of the Social Democratic Club in London and edited by its secretary, Frank Kitz. Then in July there was the International Revolutionary Socialist Congress in London, at which such English libertarians as Kitz and Joseph Lane joined the anarchist leaders from all over Europe and North America who advocated propaganda by deed following the assassination of the Tsar.

Kitz and Lane were only the best known of many English agitators in the London radical clubs who had been working for a libertarian form of socialism during the 1870s, as J.Q. describes, and who moved towards anarchism during the early 1880s. Surely the main anarchist influence from abroad was not so much an American paper as the European refugees from Bismarck's Germany, Tsarist Russia, and France after the fall of the Commune; J.Q. mentions the Germans, but not the Russians and French, who also belonged to several organisations with English members. No doubt Liberty performed a significant function in putting forward an unequivocal anarchist line from 1881 onwards, but it can hardly have exerted a major influence on the international socialist movement in London.

The Individualist Aspect After oddly emphasising the American individualist paper Liberty, J.Q. even more oddly ignores the British individualist papers and personalities. After all, the first viable anarchist paper in this country was The Anarchist, begun in March 1885 by the individualist Henry Seymour -- who was a follower of Tucker. It lasted for more than three years, being succeeded by other papers such as the Revolutionary Review and Free Exchange, and Seymour also produced several leaflets and pamphlets and

had a wide circle of acquaintances in the anarchist movement. There was no strict line yet between individualist and communist anarchists, and for a time during 1886 Seymour was involved with the group which eventually produced FREEDOM.

Seymour was by no means the only individualist figure in the anarchist movement of that time -- there were also John Henry Mackay (author of *The Anarchists*), Henry Tarn (editor of *The Herald of Revolt*), Auberon Herbert (editor of *The Free Life*), and so on to our own day. J.Q. has a perfect right to concentrate on anarchism as it appeared in the labour movement, but he has no right to pretend that individualist anarchism did not exist or does not count.

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Kropotkin and FREEDOM It is not true that "the news of Kropotkin's arrest in France and his imprisonment in 1883 had reached England via Tucker's *Liberty*"; the whole episode and its later developments were reported widely in the British press, including *The Times*, and an English translation of the collective statement of the defendants in the Lyon trial was issued during 1883 as a leaflet which Nettlau described as "the first publication I know" of the emerging anarchist movement. It should be remembered that Kropotkin was already well known in this country, and had indeed lectured to radical and labour groups during 1881-1882.

Nor is it true that when Kropotkin returned to England after his release in 1886 "he set up a small propagandist newspaper called FREEDOM or that "the whole Freedom group was basically a front organisation for Kropotkin". He was certainly the main inspiration of the group, but it had existed before his release, it took the initiative of inviting him to England, and it was quite capable of running a paper without him. No doubt he was its most famous member, but his articles were usually anonymous like most of the rest, there were plenty of important articles by other people, and the paper stood on its own feet with or without him -- as it has done ever since.

Incidentally, it is quite untrue that Kropotkin's English was "appalling". His written English was fluent if unidiomatic, and he earned his living for forty years as a contributor to the scientific and liberal press in this country; he was not the only person, then or now, foreign or native, who "needed people to sub-edit his work"! His spoken English was also fluent if accented, and there is plenty of first-hand testimony that he was an effective public speaker, both in Britain and in North America. J.Q. adds an unjustified slur in remarking that Kropotkin "could speak French because it was the court language in Russia"; that had long ceased to be the case, and his excellent command of French (and German) was the result of a particularly good education and particularly hard work.

Kropotkin is open to strong criticism, but it must be based on the facts.

Charlotte Wilson J.Q. patronises Charlotte Wilson with a grudging description: "She was a member of the Fabian Society, she was a clever lady in many respects, she did her best, but she was by no means an agitator." She was far more than this suggests. At that time the Fabian Society had not yet taken up its characteristic position, and as a member of the Fabian Executive from 1884 to 1887 she was the leader of an active anarchist fraction -- Bernard Shaw said that when she joined "a sort of influenza of anarchism soon spread through the Society". She wrote articles on anarchism in the Social Democratic Federation paper *Justice* and in the Fabian paper *The Practical Socialist*, and a summary of the latter article was published in the anarchist half of the Fabian pamphlet *What Socialism Is* in 1886. She took an important part in the debate among socialist leaders on the issue of parliamentarianism in September 1886, and it was after the victory of the parliamentarians that she withdrew from the Fabians and concentrated on FREEDOM, which she edited and published from 1886 until 1895. J.Q. cannot forgive her for eventually withdrawing from anarchism, but she gave it more than ten years of her life. Mackay called her "the most faithful, the most diligent, and the most impassioned champion of Communism in England". She may not have been what J.Q. thinks of as an agitator, but she was thought pretty good in her time.

Mackay, who disagreed with her ideas, said that "she was not a captivist speaker, but her voice had that iron ring of unalterable conviction and honesty which often moves the listener more powerfully than the most brilliant eloquence". She was also more than just "a clever lady"; she was one of the first women to get to Cambridge and one of the first middle-class women to commit herself to socialism. She was a highly intelligent person who held her own in a highly intelligent milieu, and she deserves proper credit for her services to anarchism during a critical period.

Bombs J.Q., like nearly everyone else, makes the mistake of seeing propaganda by deed only as bombing, and of seeing anarchist bombs in isolation from other bombs. Propaganda by deed, as originally advocated in the later 1870s, meant not bombing but insurrectionary activity with particular propaganda value -- occupations, riots, risings, and so on. There are occasions when bombing might count as propaganda by deed, but only when more productive forms are impracticable. This was certainly not the case in France, and there is virtually nothing to be said for Ravachol, however hard J.Q. tries; it was even less the case in England. In other countries, anarchists who turned to bombing were only imitating groups which pioneered such methods -- strikers, populists, socialists, republicans, nationalists, and so on. In Britain in those days (as in these days) they imitated foreign bombers, but they also imitated another group which is

hardly ever mentioned in this context but which is worth mentioning in the light of recent events -- the Irish nationalists. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s there were frequent political explosions in England caused by the militant wing of the movement for Irish Home Rule, and the very few anarchist bombers must be considered not only in connection with foreign intrigues and police plots but also with a very real armed struggle going on around them. One could generalise as J.Q. does for the whole movement, and say that anarchist bombing represents a barometer of all bombing.

Lessons What is the lesson of anarchist history in this country?

It is tempting to quote an old comrade who answered such a question by saying, "Fuck all!" J.Q. agrees that he has not really offered a history of the anarchist movement so much as a history of "working-class self-activity" seen "through the anarchist movement itself". But isn't this a form of what he calls "the *Jewish Chronicle* style of writing history", giving marks to this or that manifestation of working-class revolt according to its libertarian content. And isn't this just another version of what he complains about in George Woodcock, looking at people who weren't really anarchists but were nearly anarchists and so count as anarchists? Perhaps, when his book has achieved the success it deserves, it will be possible to write a history of the British anarchist movement itself, steering a middle way through the two extremes.

N. W.

WILLIAM MORRIS and LEADERSHIP

"At the final meeting of the Hammersmith Socialist Society at Kelmscott House, on Sunday, January 17, Andreas Scheu, in his remarks, asserted that the Socialist League was a failure and this failure resulted from the fact that Morris was no leader. Commenting on this, a comrade writes: Out of the Socialist League a considerable portion of the present Anarchist movement has directly grown, and if the S. L. ceased to exist the reason was that its existence was no longer felt to be necessary. During the latter period of its existence, most of the members had studied and adopted Anarchism, and thought best to act on their own lines; so the loose forms of a constitution and rules were dispensed with. It should be emphasised that Morris, honest and fair-minded as he was, never tried to make use of this machinery of power to impose his particular views on the main body. Whilst he disagreed with Anarchism to some extent, he never tried to stamp it out by intolerance and authority. When he saw no longer his way to agree, he left -- as he did in 1884 in the S. D. F., when he and others have left that body though having a majority on the Council, and formed the S. L. In this way of broad tolerance the S. L. differed from almost all Socialist organisations, and this will constitute for it a more proper place in the history of the movement than big numbers pledged to constitutions, rules, and platforms would ever have achieved."

--from FREEDOM Feb, 1897.

FROM ITS earliest beginnings on paper Kingsnorth Power Station (Kent, England) was a 'darling' project of the CEGB (Central Electricity Generating Board). This was not just because its planned size would make it the biggest fossil-fuel burning generating station in the whole of Europe, including European Russia; Kingsnorth was also going to be unique in that its designers intended to make it the first power station to be built in Britain using computers at every stage in its construction.

The boffins thought of everything. They procured the site in the marshes to the east of the village of Hoo Saint Werburgh in Kent. They had the level of the lower parts of the site raised many feet by using fleets of lorries to bring in thousands of tons of new earth. They ordered all the tens of thousands of tons of steel girders required for the construction of the biggest buildings, and had the boilers and turbines pre-fabricated. With the aid of computers they had planned and organised everything. They had made allowances for this emergency and that contingency. The great super-plan seemed complete in everything -- that is, except for one factor.

In the eyes of these 'experts', whose only ideal was better and more machine-like organisation, the workers who were to build the project appeared to be nothing more than automata who would have to act like an army of little tin soldiers if the overall plan was to be fulfilled in the time allotted. That, however, was the greatest of the many mistakes made by the boffins because from their lofty perches these haughty technocrats were unable to see that the thousands of construction men who came to build Kingsnorth were not brainless cabbages prepared to play the role of robots in the great clockwork construction plan, but were real live human beings who would never work in the way their controllers had earmarked for them.

For the first few years at Kingsnorth I was never personally involved in any serious industrial struggle. This was because I was working for civil engineering firms whose workers were more prepared than those employed by mechanical engineering companies to tolerate rough working conditions and a small hourly rate of pay. Militancy among the civil engineering employees tended to be associated almost entirely with the skilled workers. But even the latter's militancy was only of the mildest variety and seldom led to more than a short period of 'working-to-rule' over a matter of a differential of a few pence per hour or something like that.

The Kingsnorth civil engineering managements were a very coy bunch and dealt with their workers in the light of the motto "divide and conquer". Each of the bigger employers had with him a number of permanent workers who moved from project to project as and when their boss desired. These were called 'travelling men'. They were usually key workers whose loyalty was guaranteed through being paid a higher wage as well as a lodging allowance, and also by means of such 'perks' as a free return trip to their home towns - in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland - every few weeks with so many hours of travelling time allowed for at their normal rate of pay. I once knew a Kingsnorth travelling man who had so many hours clocked on his card as extra perks by his employer that the wages clerk concerned discovered they came to a total of more than the overall number of hours (7 x 24) in that particular seven-day working period. Yet at the same time almost all his fellow workers were drawing only sufficient wages to keep the wolf from the door.

This divisive practice of 'buying' key workers was used with particular effectiveness by Tilemans, who had the multi-flue chimney contract on which I worked for some seven months. At any one time Tilemans employed about thirty-six workers, about half of whom were travelling men. The rest of us were 'locals' who came from the surrounding area. Of these travelling men, the great majority came from Western Ireland. They were called chimney hands, and quite a few of them looked upon their employer as a sort of benevolent patriarch, though there were others who had a directly opposite conviction.

To a great extent, Tilemans chimney hands looked upon the labourers with a certain contempt. In fact it would be true to say that they formed a sort of worker aristocracy on the job. One could even call them a 'warrior' aristocracy. For they were very much a wild bunch - fearless young men who just laughed in the face of danger as they worked like a tribe of agile

monkeys, often hanging precariously without the aid of a safety harness while they tried to overcome some obstacle with their feet dangling several scores of feet above the ground. Now and again I saw some of them doing stunts, just for kicks, that ordinary circus artists would have shied at. It was a miracle that none of them had a fatal accident at Kingsnorth. But six of them were killed on other smokestacks within two years of their leaving our site.

Altogether, I spent a summer, autumn and winter working on the Kingsnorth chimney, and during all of this time it was brought home to me time and time again the kind of beating that workers have to take when they do not organize themselves to deal with their employer. On one fine autumn day I remember how our pitiful state, resulting from lack of unity, was made very clear when some men who worked for ICL (International Combustion Limited) came over to link up a huge metal flue from Number One Boiler to our chimney. In my own case, for instance, I was paid the grand sum of five shillings and ninepence (29p) an hour plus an extra penny per hour for every 50 - 60 feet the chimney rose in height. I worked ten and a half hours per day - sometimes much more. And if I came to work for the full seven days each week I was given two pounds bonus. The work itself was extremely hard and dangerous. I worked in all kinds of weather - pushing barrows loaded with concrete, carrying heavy lengths of steel, and moving big wooden planks while I stood with many feet of a drop below me, with one foot on a temporary abutment and the other on the head of a short bolt a few millimetres thick stuck into the chimney wall. I shudder now when I reflect on how little stood between me and death during those days.

BIG BROTHER'S WAGE SLAVE

In contrast to our wages and conditions, the ICL men were fabulously well off. Two years later when I went to work with ICL myself it was with great satisfaction that I contrasted my new job, which was also a labourer's one, with the wages and conditions I had on Tileman's chimney. This contrast was best demonstrated in the matter of height and 'dirty work' money -- which on the ICL job came to three shillings per hour during the four years I worked for that particular firm. While so far as dangerous working conditions were concerned, the ICL men had a safety committee which would not have tolerated the dangerous hazards which were part of our daily life on the chimney.

The actual reason why a much better working situation prevailed was not because its management was better than Tileman's (which it wasn't) but because the ICL men were well organised at shop floor level and trade-unionwise. One just could not get a job at ICL, for example, without being a member of a trade union with one's weekly contributions fully paid up.

On the chimney job, in marked contrast, there was no organisation of any kind. The men were just not interested in getting organised. I sounded them out about getting a union going, but I didn't press my point very strongly because it was quite obvious that my efforts would lead to nothing constructive. I had not forgotten how quickly I had got the sack in a large factory some years earlier for trying to get a union going among people who were not interested either.

One trade union official from the Transport and General Workers Union actually came into our canteen during the dinner break one day. He spoke quite well for about twenty minutes on the advantages of being organised - not just from the point of view of working conditions but also with regard to such benefits as having legal help and other assistance in the event of an accident, which was a very common happening at Kingsnorth. But except for four of us, who were already union members, the man was not even listened to and got only abuse for "disturbing their dinner break" from an audience who continued to play cards.

However, while the chimney hands displayed a marked reluctance to show an interest in anything other than wine, women and song, I soon found a way to get to their hearts. This was

through writing stories in rhyme form for them. I would think up some imaginative theme and then cast the chimney hands and members of the management in the role of the good and bad chief characters. Some of these stories were very long, running to over a hundred stanzas, and they became very popular. One day I actually came across two men having a fight because one of them claimed absolute ownership of a copy of one particularly popular story. During this time I found out how to put over the message of FREEDOM to enslaved fellow workers who would not normally look twice at the usual socialist broadsheet.

As well as writing these stories in rhyme, I also composed many short poems while working on the Kingsnorth smoke-stack, for which there was also a certain demand from a section of the chimney hands. The following one was composed one dark cold winter's evening amidst a lot of scaffolding close to the top of the huge smokestack when it was half built. The lights had partly failed as a result of overloading the power supply. Men were huddling on a platform just above me, stamping their feet to try and keep warm. Others were leaning over the scaffolding staring blankly at the dim lights, their black duffle coats giving them the appearance of giant bats about to pounce. Such was the scene. But my mind's eye saw the whole of oppressed humanity; and these are the lines I composed during those moments :-

What are we - Creatures of the night?/Lost, deprived of will;/
In darkness groping, sans all sight,/While much blood we spill.

Encaged by schemes of bureaucrats:/Conform or be slain;/
Some men they say must dominate:/Slaves we do remain.

Dogmas they tell us to believe:/We must bow or die:/Changes
show our 'betters' deceive,/While they bleed us dry.

But not forever will this be:/We are not the dead;/Workers
eyes have begun to see,/Workers feet to tread.

To a great extent I never felt so inspired nor so full of optimism for mankind as when I worked on that chimney job. Perhaps it was also caused by the ever present possibility of a terrible death if one made a wrong move without thinking. Whatever the reason I wrote poetry day after day while with Tilemans. I remember one fine winter's morning in particular. I was standing on the chimney waiting to start the day's concreting on the windshield surrounding the big flues. The sky was brightening in the east. The last stars of the night were fading. As my eyes wandered over the great panorama of sky and sea and land spread out before me, I was filled with an exciting new hope for the world. In spite of the wars, the famines, the injustices and the oppression going on all over the globe, I felt that this was a time of fundamental social change; and that this present troubled historical epoch was the prelude to the dawn of a new day in the history of mankind. 'If only the oppressed of the world would awaken', I found myself thinking, and felt deeply moved as if thoughts were directed to the whole of humanity from my lofty perch. 'Awake! awake!' I found myself saying. Very soon words filled my mind and quickly shaped themselves into the lines of this sonnet:-

Awake you helots from your sleep!/And greet the rising light
of day!/The dark of night will soon decay;/Build peace! Let
not the children weep!/Into your hearts let real joy seep!/Our
masters soon a price will pay:/When people's voices have
their say;/Your beds of sorrow leave with leap!/Arise the Sun
can now be seen!/Perceive the promised Star of Morn!/Tis
time to smash the state machine;/On bourgeois things we will
pour scorn;/A vision new we must now wear;/In struggle
FREEDOM will be born.

Perhaps it was inevitable that someone with this kind of visionary outlook should sooner or later end up behind bars. But at that time I was living a very stable kind of life - just another Kingsnorth worker with a wife and five children to provide for, and spending as much of my spare time as possible working on the vision underlying my Of Man and Revolution (part of which was published in FREEDOM).

It is very possible that I would have spent much longer than just seven months on the Kingsnorth chimney were it not for getting involved in some trouble on that particular contract. This 'trouble' was yet another painful illustration of the real life situation of the Kingsnorth workers which was so

very different from the one presented by the press and others.

The winter of 1965/66 was not such a bad one; but at one stage several inches of snow fell in the Kingsnorth area. Immediately afterwards the snow froze hard and the weather became very cold for a few days. It was impossible to do out our usual work on the chimney but we still worked - doing odd jobs and the like. After two days or so of this the management decided to give all their travelling men their regular 'long weekend' during the cold spell. So on a bitterly cold Saturday morning only those of us who lived in the surrounding area came to work. We found that all the members of the management had gone away as well - except for a general foreman who had recently been transferred from a chimney contract in Essex. We already had a general foreman, and this new kapo was merely waiting (on full pay) for a new contract to open up. He had done nothing since his arrival some weeks previously, and we had simply ignored him as he hung around the job with nothing to do. But on this particular Saturday morning we found that he was in charge of us.

None of us liked him as a person. Those of us who knew of his background as an overseer liked him even less. We knew, for instance, that he had a marked reputation for being a bully and a sacker of men. On his previous contract where he had been in charge for two years he never had more than fifteen men working under him at any one time. But yet during those two years he had sacked over two hundred men - sometimes for no other reason than because he was in a bad mood and just kicked the first man who displeased him off the site.

This was the man who was in charge of us locals that particular Saturday morning. He was tense and silent as he watched us doing off jobs here and there on the contract. I happened to be of those chipping ice off some wooden platforms. It was boring work and I soon decided to go home when the ordinary working week ended at noon. By mid-morning tra-break time most of the other men had decided to do the same. Then to our consternation the sullen foreman announced that a fresh round of concreting would begin on one of the chimney flues at one o'clock. We were amazed at this announcement, because the air temperature was below freezing point (on the firm's thermometers) and it was therefore contrary to the rules of the civil engineering field to work with ordinary concrete in such conditions. The men on the flue to be concreted pointed this fact out to the general foreman, and told him that in any case they had no wish to do Saturday afternoon overtime and intended leaving the site at noon - which they had a perfect right to do. But the coarse and inarticulate overseer would have none of this. Standing in the snow at the base of the smokestack he put his hands on his hips and, looking contemptuously at the men, spat out the words: "I will sack any man of you who does not work this afternoon."

Well, he was as good as his word; as the men were leaving the site at noon he told them that they were sacked. At first he was going to sack the lot of us, but then he changed his mind when he appeared to realize that the firm would have no labourers on the following Monday morning. And so we went off with the five sacked men, leaving him and about three 'blacklegs' to pour the concrete.

Over the whole of that weekend I felt bitterly angry and spent much of the time writing a letter many thousands of words long to the managing director of Tileman's. In this letter I detailed the story of how the men came to be sacked and ended it by asking that the men be given their jobs back. The sacked men know I was doing this and on the Monday arrived on the contract to await the result. But nothing happened on that day. The regular chimney hands came back after their weekend off and began working as usual as if nothing had occurred. By mid-morning on Tuesday impatience was at a height. A member of the management rang up head office and was told that the letter had arrived but that the managing director had not yet dealt with it. Eventually, some two days later, the 'big boss' of Tilemans arrived on the site to investigate the sackings. But by that time the steam which had been generated amongst the local men had vanished, while the sacked men themselves had got fed up waiting and had left the site. This meant that there was no pressure on the managing director to give the men their jobs back; and in the end nothing came of his visit except

a confirmation of the foreman's decision.

On my part I was furious and sick at heart at the whole episode: the heavy-handed action of the general foreman on the one hand, and the demoralised state of the men, on the other. I am sure that had we made any sort of stand at all our workmates would have been reinstated. It was made very clear to me at that particular time how vital it is that workers wherever they are gathered together should organise themselves, if only for the most elementary defensive reasons. But on the Kingsnorth chimney we were far from being organised and so we were ready prey for bad-tempered foremen and imperious directors who could act as their whims dictated without fear of opposition.

Such was my own disgust after the departure of Tileman's boss that I just could not stay on the job a moment longer, and I left Tilemans to start work on the coal and oil jetty contract which was then under construction by Laings. My utter disgust and disillusionment with modern Machine-Age

Man at the time was reflect. In the following poem which was composed one raw February evening when I was queuing up to clock out with a number of fellow workers. We had spent the day working on the windswept jetty. As I stood there looking at the tired, haggard faces of those around me I began to reflect upon how similar they appeared in the dim light of the gathering dusk, and about how all of us had become enslaved and corrupted in one way or another by the shall bourgeois values of Machine-Age Man. The words came quickly and soon formed a pattern:-

Spellbound by his own dominion;/ Yet master of he knows not what;/ Hitched to an idea of past meaning:/ Like a beast he struggles -/ Himself the burden -/ Towards some mystique of the emotions;/ And so lives a mode of man/ Without a soul,/ Sinking and suffocating/ In the mire/ Of his own making.

Michael Tobin.

(To be continued)

ETHICS

IN OUR DAYS, when the emphasis of the vocal young is so much upon the knocking down of systems and institutions, and on railing at ways of life and habits of thought that are thought wrong and old (old because they are wrong, and wrong because they are old); when the work or talk of demolition is considered good, whatever the means employed, and whatever the ways of life and habits of thought it itself engenders; when in the fight there is so much danger of losing sight of what the fight is for ("propter pugnam pugnandi perdere causas"): the publication of a book like Kropotkin's *Ethics** is most salutary and timely. It is not healthy to keep one's eyes constantly fixed on evil, whilst fighting against evil is often but a convenient excuse for doing evil oneself. Much of Kropotkin's writing, in his *Ethics* as well as in *Mutual Aid* is aimed against justifications of evil drawn from an order or way of nature supposedly sound and ineluctable. Darwin's and Spencer's "struggle for life" affords one such justification, and another is Nietzsche's "revaluation of values". Death unfortunately prevented Kropotkin from dealing with the latter in a projected second part of his *Ethics* as he so spiritedly did with the former. Some Christians, and not Christians alone, have tried to show that this world, being the work of God, could not but have been designed with a good intent; failing then to find much convincing evidence, they have postulated a supernatural world which would cancel or correct the evils of this one. Kropotkin sets out to show that goodness, love, altruism, compassion, generosity and abnegation have nothing supernatural in them, but are part of the order of nature and of the nature of man. *Ethics*, he says, is something zoological. Yet he does what the religious and the metaphysician set out to do: he "proves" that man is not alone in being good, nor hopelessly mistaken in his, sometimes desperate, yearning for goodness. He proves that goodness is in the world which man inhabits and is connatural with it. He proclaims that man's goodness and his yearning for it are not a weakness, a freak or a malady, but are

* This edition of *Ethics*, Peter Kropotkin is published by Prism Press. £1.95 in paperback, £4.50 in hardback.

right in being what they are. In contrast with a typically twentieth century existentialist viewpoint, Kropotkin does not see the world, or man's presence in it, as absurd, but shares in the nineteenth century's confident belief in progress, and he speaks of the progress of ethical conceptions as of a matter of fact. His optimism has more the overtones of the dedicated preacher than the intimate undertones of the man aware of a strain in all assertions, of a precariousness in all convictions. Kropotkin intends to find tonics and comforts to the ethical will, so severely tried in his as in our age. In carrying his intention out, he vastly overrates the role of science and of the tide of progress, but the evidence he gathered in his *Ethics* and *Mutual Aid* strongly testify to the ethical presence in human and a vast number of animal societies, in the animal world as a whole. To read his *Ethics* is to feel this presence, all the more keenly in each of his illustrations because of the faith in human nature and the yearning for a better society with which the book is shot through.

Kropotkin does not make the distinction between ethics on the one hand, which is social and concerned with results, and moral life on the other, which is individual and concerned with motives. From an ethical point of view it does not matter in the least if a person does all the right things for all the wrong reasons, while it matters a great deal if he does all the wrong things for all the good reasons. Who is anyone, besides, unless he be God, to decide for another person what reasons are right and what are wrong? Who is any one to decide, even for himself and with absolute certainty, for what reasons, if any, he acts as he does? If a man cannot decide for himself on what is right and what is wrong, there is no moral life, and the most human of freedoms is gone. Kropotkin is very much concerned with the freedom of the individual, but he is not less at pains to inspire him with lofty ideals, and to convince him that these are scientifically based. In his zeal against anything religious and

metaphysical he goes as far as to suggest that the ethical will is one of the many forces of nature, which in a sense it is, but may, in another sense, make nonsense of freedom. Ethical behaviour may be dictated by fear, vanity, self interest, impulse and instinct, religious metaphysical, even scientific convictions, but so may also unethical behaviour, with no fixed law or necessity to decide which it is going to be. Moral behaviour is a question of choice, sometimes a very difficult one. Though it usually follows a pattern which reflects the culture of the society one lives in, it also reflects one's character, and the sort of man one wishes to be. What type of man one wishes to be is also a matter of choice, and the ideal which Kropotkin suggests is that of the ethical man, morally motivated to be ethical. This ideal is consequent upon another, which only in a very minute, yet essential, part depends on the individual to be realized, that of the fully ethical, that is, anarchist, society.

A few important works on ethics have been written after Kropotkin's, some also claiming to be scientific, like John Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* and Moritz Schlick's *Problems of Ethics*, and others openly meant to make men better, like Nikolai Hartmann's *Ethics*. Ethical thought has also been enriched by Bergson's *The two sources of morality and religion*, Ralph Barton Perry's *General theory of values*, William David Ross's *The right and the good*, and Frank Chapman Sharp's *Ethics*, but should we pick up Charles Leslie Stevenson's *Ethics and language* we would have serious doubts about the progress of moral conceptions, if ever we believed in them as Kropotkin wished us to. Yet his survey of ethical thought up to the end of the nineteenth century will make rewarding reading. Some of the authors whose ideas he discusses are seldom read today, and are summarily dismissed, if mentioned at all, by lecturers on ethics and moral philosophy. Such authors have shortcomings and limitations, not only different from our own, but seemingly with little relevance to our preoccupations, but Kropotkin's presentation of them may lead us to some refreshing discovery, and to see some of our most gene-

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THROUGH THE ANARCHIST PRESS

SUMMER TIME, and no papers appearing. From Umanita Nova to Libertarian Struggle, from Wildcat to Le Monde Libertaire, not forgetting A -- Rivista Anarchica and The Match!, the anarchist press seems to be taking a break, for seasonal or economic reasons, or seasonal-economic reasons. We won't be seeing them again until September or even October.

Which presents this column with something of a problem. But perhaps we can turn it into an opportunity to present translations of interesting texts from some of the fatter, less frequently published magazines that come our way.

LONG and HOT

Long, hot summers like the one we're experiencing in Britain at the moment, have been associated with violence ('66/7 in Watts, '68 in Western Europe) but the roots of violence are deeper than simple meteorological factors, or the purely psychological reasons adduced by hack-psychologists.

Anarchists are much more concerned with the ethics of violence, and two European anarchist magazines which have come our way recently have special features on this.

Vol. 2 No. 7 of Freie Presse of Wetzlar (W. Germany) devotes eight pages of analysis and comment to the whole Baader-Meinhof, 2nd of June, Lorenz kidnapping phenomenon. The whole magazine is of interest to German-reading comrades.

And the third issue of Lanterne Noire has several articles around the problems of violence (particularly in con-

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rally accepted ideas suddenly questioned or illumined from a new angle. Take the idea of repression, for example, which we have accepted from Freud. Kropotkin insists on Darwin's remark on social instincts being of a more permanent nature than the self-centred and self-promoting ones. That makes us pertinently ask how, when, and with what effects these social instincts are also repressed, and whether the "restraint" which they command is not just as instinctual as anything we are wont to consider more authentic because obviously bearing Freud's libidinal stamp. Ethical feelings, - this is Kropotkin's main contention - are in us as in the animal world, they are us, and not just somebody else's will internalized, as already Hobbes, Bain and Spencer indicated. If Kropotkin were wrong, a free society would then cease to be a hope and inspiration, our life would be deprived of its anarchist dimension.

G. Baldelli.

nection with GARI), one of which we will now translate :

VIOLENCE & REVOLUTION

"In the eyes of the contemporary bourgeoisie, anything which averts the idea of violence is admirable. Our bourgeois wish to die peacefully; after the deluge."

--Sorel, Reflections on Violence.

IN THE JUNGLE of the cities the media are outbidding each other for violence. It's "news", the daily bread of public opinion in the bourgeois democracies. "Public opinion" is an old republican concept which is gradually being assimilated to one of the most successful phrases of our time, the "silent majority" (how can you not be silent if other people listen, watch, and speak for you).

Thinking about violence has been, and continues to be, a constant necessity for anarchists. Because anarchism is the negation of violence; because, as anarchists, we are up to our necks in violence.

"Violence, an increasing anxiety for the French," a headline across six columns in Le Figaro, 20 March 1975. "The reign of violence" (heading), Poniowski denounces "the growing contempt for the law as the source of disorder, crime and anarchy" (sub heading) first page, L'Aurore, 21 March 1975. "Terrorists defeated" (headline, first page), "The West German government refused to negotiate with the anarchists" (sub heading); "Each of the anarchists' terrorist acts... tempts the silent majority... to call for law and order and repression" (editorial), France-Soir, 26 April 1975.

These statements all cover different acts, but violence in all its shades is denounced by the established power -- the government and its flunkies: the formalisation into the state of the dominant class -- and, if possible, they amalgamate all forms of "criminal" violence: gang fights, juvenile delinquency, hold-ups, bombings, the occupation of factories, the kidnapping of bosses, broken shop windows, attacks on property or on embassies... Violence is anything which brings about the intervention of the repressive forces of bourgeois order. Violence is against the established order, against the State. Authority, the principle of authority incarnated in the State, is disputed, attacked. Intolerable!

Sometimes subtle differences appear, nuances which only serve to reinforce the principle of the State. For example, Schmidt is quoted as saying (Le Monde, 27-28 April): "The Head of State has placed the life of the ten hostages in the balance, not with 'the abstract authority

of the State', but with the life and well-being of all German citizens who would be threatened by the liberation of 26 anarchist bandits."

A typical bourgeois liberal text. First of all it is not a defence of the 'abstract authority of the State' but a justification of its existence by attributing to it the function of protecting the life and safety of all citizens, as if it were against them that revolutionary violence were directed, and not against the exploitation and domination of one class over the others, and against the bureaucracy which controls the institutional system.

Secondly: "twenty-six anarchist bandits against sixty million Germans" (sic): once again the amalgam between anarchism and banditry, used to legitimate the established order: anyone who does not accept the rules of the liberal democratic game is a criminal.

Decisive measures to combat political violence and criminality simultaneously, have been announced in Italy.

STATE VIOLENCE

The whole asinine uproar about violence is only concerned with one aspect of the problem, one particular kind of violent action: the violence of the oppressed, which is the only "illegitimate" kind.

Contrasted with it, the "legitimate" violence of the State. Don't forget that the State legitimates its own violence in wars and massacres even when it destroys the life and well-being of tens of thousands of people. Noam Chomsky writes: "concern about violence in Washington (as in Moscow and Peking) is highly selective." The term bloodbath "is commonly used to describe acts of violence and terror - past, present and future - against civilian populations when they are attributed to the enemy and where victory is not on our side". On the other hand, "certain bloodbaths seem to be considered as 'benign' or even positive and constructive".

But without going that far, the practice of conscious and methodical physical extermination of political opponents is becoming common, as in the cases of Nazism, Fascism, of Stalin and Franco, of Chile and Iran. (If we take a sufficiently long period into consideration, what country would not figure on this list?)

(To be concluded in our next issue)

Translated by D. L. M.