

HOW FREE IS FREE ENTERPRISE

AS EXPECTED, the all-wise and benevolent dispensations of Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, told us what he is going to do with our money and how much of it we're going to be allowed to hang on to. We were promised, or threatened, in the Tory manifesto that direct taxation (which, we are told, prevents the rich from investing in industry) will be reduced and indirect taxation (which, we are not told but can guess, will prevent some of the poorer-off from acquiring the products of industry) increased. At the same time social services will be cut in order to develop private enterprise and individual initiative. Certain sections of the nationalised industries - which are notorious for losing taxpayers' money - will be turned over to private enterprise; amazingly enough, only those sections which make a profit since private enterprise is not interested in public service.

This is one of the highspots of six weeks of dynamic Tory inaction - with five years' office in prospect. We cannot expect radical Tory change since their function is to conserve. On a programme of free enterprise we are promised the freedom to buy one's own council house at a bargain price - exchanging the payment of rent for the payment of a mortgage which ensures the council house being ours when it starts crumbling into ruin. There's the freedom to pay for private education, and

the freedom to pay for hospital treatment. As Anatole France said, the law is open to all - like the Savoy Hotel.

How different from life under Labour! Under them we were compelled to paint our council houses a standard colour, go comprehensive, and go on a waiting list for urgent operations. Unemployment increased under Labour but the Tories believe that this was only because private enterprise was not able to expand with confidence. At the same time the unions have no confidence in the ability of the Tories to join with them in exploiting the consumer or in maintaining differentials. Ted Heath is the ghost at the Tory victory banquet; a fact sufficient to keep him out of office - since no-one wants a reminder of failure.

The concept that anarchism is a left-wing doctrine dies hard. It is true that one's heart is on the left and that emotionally one felt that despite all its flaws, sins, power-seeking, compromise, betrayals, rank dishonesty and humbug there was a faint shadow of idealism still lingering around Transport House and one felt that only if..... The right-wing acceptance, as with Tucker and Ayn Rand, of anarchism with its concomitant sponsorship of free enterprise accepts all the evils, selfishness, exploitation and injustice of capitalism; and the illogicalities of the wage and money system. It is something of a relief to know that nobody (at

WE'RE GIVING YOU MORE OF YOUR OWN MONEY TO SPEND!



...AND WE'RE TAKING MORE OFF YOU WHEN YOU SPEND IT!

least in this country) starves, one can always eat the Social Security's shit - until one throws up. It is also a comfort to see workers no longer crawling before the boss for fear of unemployment - but one feels that this tough attitude is over-playing the role and one would wish that some workers would find some pleasure or vocation in work rather than the perpetual chase after the bone of higher wages.

Such is the technological development of society that the Conservatives will be forced to adopt, whether they wish it or not, Socialist policies of welfare in the same way that Socialist and trade unionists have been forced to accept Conservative and capitalist standards. The conservatives will be forced to subsidise unemployment and social welfare to ensure the survival of a conservative society.

Where does this leave the anarchists? 'Between two worlds, one dying, one powerless to be born'. Neither capitalist free enterprise nor socialist welfare state will contribute to human freedom. The anarchist message is not 'Out with the Tories' or 'Forward with Free Enterprise' but a plague on both their houses.

JACK ROBINSON. (at

'THESE CONDITIONS OCCUR DUE TO STAFF SHORTAGES'

HOW often do we read this when one of our hospitals hits the headlines? The Normansfield affair, Rampton, and recently the case of a 4-year-old mentally defective child who choked to death after a ward had been left to the supervision of an overworked SEN, and two untrained student nurses.

What are the facts? The story goes back a long way, back to the days when hospitals were entirely dependent on Irish girls coming over and taking on the job of nursing, being the only labour force prepared to work a 96-hour fortnight for a pittance under the domination of authoritarian matrons who were recognised as 'Loco Parentis'.

The aftermath of the Second World War had created a tremendous burden on the existing hospitals - especially psychiatric ones. They were inadequate to cope; furthermore as a placebo to salve the desire for 'A world fit for', Beveridge had reorganised Poverty. Those nasty revolutionary ideas which had followed World War I were to be sidetracked; there emerged a new social tranquilliser - the Welfare State - and as if we didn't know, it would concern itself with us from cradle to grave.

The upshot of all this was the introduction of the National Health Service. The worker was going to get wigs, dentures, glasses and be treated for all those ills that make workers unworkable and 'cost industry such a lot in production'.

At that time nothing was said about the Health Service being a guaranteed market to the drug manufacturers or equipment suppliers who were about to make millions in profit out of human suffering, millions which would be paid for by the working class through taxation.

Many of those discharged from the forces had had enough of inhumanity and turned to nursing. Here to some was a job which was humane and socially useful, but the structure was already set, rigid and authoritarian, a militaristic hierarchy. Also new bureaucratic forces were at work; the state had taken over, and as a result many became disillusioned and gave up what had seemed a worthwhile career.

Those who remained began to introduce new ideas and relationships which threatened the existing order. Low wages and long hours stimulated the growth of something never before permitted in the profession - trade unions. The only organisation existing prior to this was the Judea Royal College of Nursing, which acted similar to the company union in industry.

Then in the latter part of the 1940s it happened. Nurses - for the first time - marched on Hyde Park; they formed a

rank and file movement and started talking of direct action.

Both the Royal College of Nursing and the unions quickly got together and opposed this; nurses were given a rise, the working week was shortened and the rank and file movement fizzled out.

Now it was realised that the trade union officials could serve as a very useful member of the Whitby Council controlling pay and conditions in the health service - many of them served as members on the management committees.

In the course of the years that followed nurses, often because of public pressure, got other rises in pay; one in particular was such that together with the rise was an increase in board and living charges, increase in laundry costs etc, so that many found they were worse off with the rise - in fact they had actually lost money.

Then came the implementation of the famous, or should I say, infamous Salmon Report.

A few headstrong militants - probably anarchists - went around with placards saying "You can stick your Salmon in tins".

This was to be a scheme which was to restructure the whole health service. Communication was to be easier, the status of the nurse was to be raised. The scheme was even spoken of as 'democratising the Health Service'. What happened? In fact nothing except labels were changed and all of a sudden the nurse found her workload had increased; there were more forms, procedures, and above all more chiefs and fewer Indians.

The hierarchy was still there but now it was a paternalistic hierarchy, and so we have arrived at the present situation - a health service overworked, understaffed, having to cope with an ever-increasing workload, often in outdated institutions with inadequate facilities, carrying on its back a massive bureaucratic machine whose purse-strings are held tighter than a duck's arse.

One nurse often looking after two or three wards, especially in the 'no use to capitalism section' - the mentally defective, psychiatric, and geriatric. Here costs are cut to the bone and not by surgeons.

The situation we now have in the health service is one which is characteristic of all the state's undertakings as an inevitable consequence of inherent bureaucracy within the framework of a capitalist system of society.

For years health workers of all grades have been subjected to conditions of

service which more militant workers in industry would not tolerate.

Each time they have struggled against these conditions they have been subjected to moral blackmail and the full force of the media has been levelled against them, charging them with putting their patients at risk, when often the opposite has been true; they have had to fight the system so that they can bring about changes that no longer put their patients at risk.

The result is that now we have reached a critical point in the health service because of staff shortages. These are acute on a national scale and many hospitals have been shut down.

This state of affairs is the logical consequence of a policy based upon a hierarchical bureaucracy and a flagrant exploitation of immigrant labour in a job that has no parity with industry - even under capitalism.

The gap grows, and furthermore, the three year training of nurses cannot solve the problem in time to avoid a steady worsening of the situation. Now Thatcher has achieved her ambitions the screw will be tightened, economies in the social services are the order of the day and the bureaucrats at all levels will enforce the cutbacks to curry favour with those above and thus perpetuate their own careers.

It will be the most underprivileged and needy in society who will bear the brunt of all this - the mentally handicapped and the geriatric, the non-exploitable and those who can no longer be exploited.

Collectively, those in the health service - doctors, technicians, nurses and ancillary workers, vital to its functioning as such - are aware of the problem. It is they who daily experience the staff shortage and the penny pinching, the make-do and restrictions on what preventative medicine could achieve.

And as a collective they could bring a vast amount of knowledge, experience and intelligence to bear on the problem. But under the present system of society and present hierarchic set-up, all the valuable potential is dammed up or channelled into ineffectual cul de sacs.

Control remains in the hands of those divorced from the job, and at levels where contact with the patient does exist, they must not rock the boat with radical ideas.

Politicians, with their usual lack of knowledge or experience, juggle around; Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries today, Minister of Health tomorrow. Still, it's well-paid and the perks are good. Two things come out of all this.

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These fine thoughts are from none other than Batgirl. The Batman has been living down the image left over from the TV series and has improved immensely. In this recent issue, as he roams through an anti-nuclear rally, his role as a self appointed vigilante is questioned, but it is decided that he would never help the police to harass

innocent demonstrators. Then, Batgirl, having just found that she is going to lose her seat as a Congress representative because she will not play party games, arrives and incites the crowd. I look forward to future improvement.

The Batman and Batgirl on Persons Unknown march?

'SELF-CONFESSED'

Richard Flint and Shaun Fensom, two students at Sussex University, have been suspended for disrupting examinations. The exam in question is a compulsory science test which has been boycotted for the last two years. The two suspended were banging drums outside the exam room. The suspensions almost caused a full strike at the university. The media made great play with the fact that the two were "self confessed anarchists". However, when interviewed on Radio 4, they took the opportunity to put the reporter in his place and give a concise definition of anarchism.

SORRY!

Owing to pressure on space and other headaches, all letters have been held over till next time.

ACT OF WAR IN WALLA WALLA

ON Wednesday 9 May, 1979 at 1 pm we took over by force the Classification and Parole Building in the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla, Washington and held 10 persons hostage for 12 hours.

This was done because the conditions and treatment in the prison threaten not only our own lives, limbs and minds but the lives, limbs and minds of every prisoner here.

The conditions and treatment in this and nearly every prison in America amount to cruel and unusual punishment and violate the Declaration of Human Rights.

All attempts at speedy change and/or reform have failed.

The law is already well established that prisoners have the right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment and to escape from conditions and treatment that threaten their lives, limbs and minds.

All legal resource either fails or takes too long and we could not and cannot

safely remove ourselves from these conditions.

Neither could we or the vast majority or our fellow human beings in prison here and all across America; so for us and them we did what we did to the best of our ability for justice and human rights.

What we did was both an act of civil disobedience and war over the treatment and conditions that prisoners are subjected to daily in the Washington State Penitentiary and in nearly every prison in America.

The only force we used was the seizing and holding of hostages, not one of which was hurt by us.

We used this force in self-defence and as a last resort in an attempt to expose and eliminate a greater evil; therefore we did no wrong and violated no law.

CARL L. HARP
ROBERT S. GREEN Jr.
ROBERT C. WASHBURN

prison notes

SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE 1.

THE small solidarity committee that has been set up for the above prisoners in Montreal (c/o La Nuit, Box 2, Stn. La Cité, Montreal, Quebec, Canada) add that during the time they held the 10 hostages they were in constant communication by phone and bullhorn with the media, prisoners and people outside, and talked about their conditions and maltreatment in the prison. They report that the majority of prisoners supported them, over 200 staying in the yard to prevent the guards from attacking.

The main demands of the three were a Federal investigation of the prison, Federal protection and a transfer to Federal custody (because they fear for their lives); lawyers, formal court charges and a jury trial (with full public scrutiny of the illegal activity at the penitentiary). HAPOTOC also report that the three are now buried in the prison's Intensive Security Unit - a 'behaviour modification unit'. They fear that without support they may not live for the trial they have demanded to expose the penal system in Washington State.

HAPOTOC and the Montreal solidarity committee ask that letters be sent to the Governor of the State, Dixie Lee Ray, and to President Carter, as well as to your local American embassy, to back the prisoners' demands and ask for their safety.

SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE 2. FREE O'MEALLY!

Australia: FREE O'MEALLY COMMITTEE, P.O. Box 48, Fawkner, Victoria, Australia. Australian comrades are involved in the campaign to free Bill O'Meally, who has served 27 years in gaol, much of this time in solitary, is now the longest serving prisoner in Australia's penal history. Convicted of killing a policeman in 1952, he is now 61, and the state government of Victoria has refused all appeals on his behalf. Gaol officers say that he is perfectly fit for release, but he would appear to have been singled out for absolute and total life imprisonment. The Free O'Meally Committee meets 6.30 Tuesday evenings, Forsters Hall, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, LaTrobe St., Melbourne. Support of every sort is welcomed from local and overseas comrades.

Love and Rage
CARL L. HARP

No. 126516
P.O. Box 520
Walla Walla, Wn. 99362

A LETTER FROM CARL...

Dearest friends

Trusting you receive this letter, I wish to comment on the article in the Review by T. Jennings entitled 'Thoughts on Sexuality' (vol. 40 no. 6). The whole issue I thought was great, but I wish to express my opinion on bisexuality in the article.

All human beings are born sexual beings - heterosexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality are not in a sense natural states. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are conditioned states, and bisexuality is either a state of confusion between heterosexuality and homosexuality or a step back or forward to the reality that one is a sexual being by nature at birth. It does not matter who or what you love. PREFERENCE is not wrong and a right we have so long as it is not sexist in thought and/or practice. (Why you are whatever you are determines the right or wrong of it).

I cannot condemn heterosexuals, homosexuals or anybody else - if there is any condemning to be done they must condemn themselves because they know why they are heterosexual, homosexual, or even bisexual. If in practice I see them practising sexism then and only

then can I call them sexist and condemn them as wrong.

Anarchists must realise all of this as they realise all human beings are anarchists by birth and conditioned all their born days to be everything and one, but themselves.

Anyway, hope this adds to the discussion in a positive manner.

At present and for a while it seems, I am again buried alive in segregation - this time facing 10 years and habitual criminal charges (on top of four consecutive life terms!) for my part in the 9 May takeover of this prison for human rights and justice in prison. I and my comrades face a major political trial here over the incident. I will write soon about it. I am under heavy attack by the state and so are my comrades because we embarrassed them in exposing them to the world, May 9th. They plan to kill us or at least bury us in here.

Love and Rage
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HUNGER STRIKE FOR SURVIVAL

AFTER two months of hunger strike the conditions of a number of prisoners in West Germany have been described by lawyers as 'especially alarming'.

Against a background of utter indifference from the media, prisoners of the Red Army Fraction and 2 June Movement in prisons throughout the country, have embarked on their biggest protest action since August 1977 (only a matter of weeks before the terrible events of that autumn).

In the first hunger strike declaration, dated 20 April, the RAF prisoners in Berlin protested against "continuing and perfected isolation as part of the State strategy of liquidation of the prisoners of the armed anti-imperialist groups". They say, "the clearest sign of this strategy now is the project of the Federal prosecution, Federal Criminal Bureau/State security and regional justice authorities to isolate us in special cells".

The 2 June, whose hunger strike declaration is also dated 20 April, make an equally strong protest against the building of special cells and 'dead units'. These have or are being installed in places like

Celle, Luebeck, Berlin, Bruchsal, Stammheim, Straubing and Landsberg, and their design is the experience of eight years of isolating prisoners. They are described as "acoustically isolated concrete bunkers with armoured glass windows, airtight doors and an air-conditioning which causes pressure differences, glaring neon lights all day, sink, lavatory and mirror made out of tin, furniture that is screwed down or embedded in the floor, which is concrete. Several of these isolation units are in electronically totally controlled wings, hermetically sealed off from the rest of the prison. In the units there is no possibility of communicating with one another."

The prisoners are demanding inter-alia, the abolition of these cells. Older demands include the holding of prisoners in groups of at least 15, the lifting of information restrictions and abolition of the glass partition (Trennscheibe) which makes visits so distressing. They are demanding the unconditional release of Gunther Sonnenberg, who was seriously injured in the head during arrest some time ago and has since been suffer-

ing from epilepsy. They have also demanded the release, or transfer to Berlin from Stammheim of Irmgard Moeller.

Irmgard, who has been on hunger strike since 5 May, is believed to be in a particularly serious condition. She was the sole survivor of the night of 18 October 1977, when Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe and Andreas Baader were found hanged and shot, and she herself with knife wounds in the breast. She has been in isolation on the same floor at Stammheim ever since. As well, she has just received a life sentence for the Heidelberg bombings of 1972 - on the evidence of notorious crown witness Mueller - after having served the 4½ year sentence originally imposed on her for another offence. She is suffering from heart trouble and fellow prisoners fear she may not survive the dangers of forced feeding. The demand that she be transferred or released has now become one of the most important aims of the strike, and it is imperative that she be given support by prison groups outside as well as in the Federal Republic.

NO GODS NOR MASTERS

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on the side of the Allies and Mussolini was out of the war, with Stalin. Though Stalin's cryptic question to Churchill, on being told that the Vatican was coming out of its neutral corner, gave the game away. "How many divisions does the Pope have?" was what Stalin wanted to know.

Came the end of the war and Stalin showed the Pope just how many divisions he had when he overran Eastern Europe. Communism and Godless materialism came out of the barrels of five million guns and the Pope just didn't know where to look.

Some vocal resistance was mounted in the early years in Hungary, where Cardinal Mintzenty was finally forced to take refuge in the American consulate, but the exhausted Polish people - to defend whom the British and French had declared war in 1939 - had no alternative but to knuckle down to the new tyranny. The church slumbered with them, biding its time. You've got plenty of time when your eyes are on eternity.

The Poles too, placed by a malevolent fate between Germany and Russia, have no doubt learned to bide their time, the hard way.

Mind you, they've had their moments of impatience, like the Poznan, and later the Radom and Ursus food riots, but the Church looks for something more than that before it will make any kind of move in the eternal chess game it plays so

well. It was waiting, as predators will, for signs of weakness.

Not weakness in the sense expressed in Stalin's question about divisions - which showed little more than the crudity of his concept of power - but weakness in morale, in conviction.

The signs came and are still coming, slowly but surely. Stalin's death in 1953 was a great relief to everyone - even, though they daren't admit it, the Communists themselves. Three years later Khrushchev did admit it and his denunciation of the old dictator led inexorably to the explosions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia - put down, of course, by Stalinist methods - and defection of Communists in their thousands throughout the world.

Ironically, the very thing which has exposed the weakness of the European Communist parties is the very thing which they have hoped would bring back their strength - Eurocommunism.

By announcing their independence from Moscow, by denouncing the path of revolution in favour of social democratic gradualism and cooperation (however uneasy on both sides!) with socialist parties, the Communists have told the world that they have gone soft.

Their materialism is wilting, from the dialectic materialism of Marx to the consumer materialism of the capitalists.

At a time like this, for the Vatican to choose a Pope from the only Communist country with a large Catholic population was a brilliant move - and to send

him on a splendidly stage-managed travelling circus round that country an inspired gamble. And everybody hoped to get something out of it.

The Polish government, for being so broadminded; the western governments, overjoyed at the Pope's reception; the Eurocommunist parties elsewhere, seeking the working class Catholic vote; even the Kremlin, for turning a benevolent blind eye to strange happenings just over the border - and most of all, the Vatican, laughing up its cassock and rolling in the aisles, as you might say.

For freedom lovers everywhere, however, isn't it all just a bit too sick? In 'The Struggle for the Soul of Mankind' (Humankind as we would now say) those who lose are those whose souls are claimed by one side or the other, as part of the spoils of victory. For the Poles - for whom we have the deepest sympathy in their plight - to welcome a spiritual dictator as a relief from a temporal one is as absurd as it was for the Ukrainians in 1941 to welcome the Nazis as a relief from Stalin.

John Paul II is no dissident, even. He is an arch-orthodox, leader of an institution with a history of repression from which the Communists still have a lot to learn.

We are not impressed, Papa, with your jolly jokes and your peasant songs. We know what you are after and that is why we still cry: NO GODS NOR MASTERS! EDITORS

REPORT ON SPANISH ANARCHISM

ON 18 May of last year the New York Times reported that Spain was lapsing into a period of political quiescence. In a 'special' report it divulged that the country is moving into a time of reaction after rapid change evidenced by such signs as the waning of enthusiasm for political parties, the lack of activity at the universities, and the fact that the posters and graffiti on the walls were growing old. One can only conclude (or so we are told) that the Spanish people have become somewhat disillusioned with 'democracy' and that we are witnessing a 'posthumous victory for Franco'.

The Times article is a paradigm of the shabby job done on Spain by the established US media, with their sketchy, often distorted reports and their obsession with major political parties, reformist unions and, for occasional sensationalism, 'Basque terrorists'. For on the very day on which the 'inactivity' was proclaimed, Barcelona was witnessing a general strike in which five major sectors of the economy were participating, including metal workers, textile workers and the building trades. And on that same day all the major unions sponsored a huge demonstration, attended by 500,000 people, supporting the demands of the workers. After this legal demonstration, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT sponsored an illegal continuation to show the militancy of the Catalan labour movement. Over 200,000 people participated in this action. There were skirmishes with the police, although little direct confrontation and no injuries. At the same time, the very face of Barcelona shows the extraordinarily high level of politicisation. Virtually every wall in many areas of the city is covered with posters and political slogans, the great majority of which derive from either the anarchists and the CNT or the Marxist-Leninist left. The most recent addition at that time was tens of thousands of posters in support of the CNT's hotel and restaurant workers' strike, which began on May 18. Political activity pervades this, the largest city in Spain, activity manifested in the ubiquitous offices and meeting places of unions and political groups and neighbourhood, political and educational centres. It is fitting that Barcelona, with its seething activity and its passion for participation, should be one of the focal points of the resurgence of the anarchist movement.

As has been reported, the CNT has over 300,000 members as of last year. The movement is especially strong in Catalonia, where there were 110,000 members organised in over 70 local federations. These figures are in some ways deceptive, since membership in the CNT does not have the same significance as does membership in the reformist unions. The CNT is a union of militants, so the effective strength is much greater than the numbers might indicate. For a

fair comparison, imagine what the US labour movement might be like if it included nearly 2 million anarchists with a large percentage of militants.

In the CNT of the past, the nature of the political commitment of the membership has been a matter of dispute. It seems certain that in earlier times of rapid growth the CNT came to include many members who were drawn to the militant unionism of the organisation without a clear awareness of its political philosophy. If this assumption is correct, then the CNT of today is in a position of much greater strength and theoretical coherence, for it is today far more clearly an anarchist organisation. While some members would put more emphasis on its syndicalism (militant unionism) and others on its anarchism (anti-authoritarian praxis), all are committed to an anarchist position. The younger generation of CNT members (who are the overwhelming majority now) are virtually unanimous in their rejection of the CNT's (or perhaps more accurately, its leaders') collaboration with the state in the 30s. It is conceivable that there is a larger self-conscious anarchist movement today than ever before.

A question that is frequently asked is the status of the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) and its possible future relationship with the CNT. On April 10 of last year representatives of the FAI appeared before the national committee of the CNT and announced that it is indeed again in existence and again working in the CNT. At one time the FAI was known as a kind of anarchist vanguard within the syndicalist CNT. This role, which was always questionable from the standpoint of libertarian theory, is apparently not the one it is to play in the future. The FAI seems to be distinguished, not by its more explicit anarchism, but by its greater militancy and its illegality. It remains illegal and apparently has no desire to conform to the dictates of the state in order to qualify as a legal organisation. Because of its recent re-emergence, its future role in the CNT does not yet seem clear.

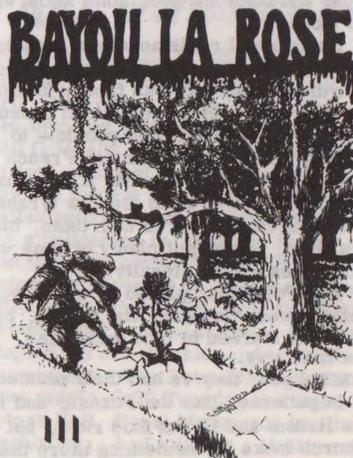
The CNT national committee is now located in Barcelona. The process by which the committee is selected is extremely complex, and constitutes an interesting experiment in libertarian organisation. It begins with each of the 12 regions soliciting suggestions for national secretary. Each local union suggests names which are passed on to the local, and then the regional federations. After much discussion a list is compiled in each region, which selects a person to be proposed by that region. The entire membership then votes on this list from all the regions to select the national secretary, who, in turn, proposes four additional secretaries who will usually be from the city in which the committee will operate in that year. These secret-

aries must be approved by the regions. The committee consists of these five secretaries plus the secretaries of the 12 regions. The five members chosen nationally are selected from the same locale to simplify the organisation. There is no question of centralising power in any area, since the committee remains in a city only one year. According to Ramon Barnils, editor of Solidaridad Obrera, the most important factor is not the structure itself, but rather the level of participation in the process by the membership, and their ability to choose officials who are 'natural leaders', that is 'non-bureaucratic leaders'. Furthermore, in a highly decentralised organisation like the CNT, such officials have little control over the direction which it takes. In Barnils' view, the national secretary has less actual power than the secretary of a local union.

The CNT of today seems to be uncompromising in its commitment to decentralist, participatory forms of organisation. One of the most important practical and theoretical positions of the CNT is its support for factory assemblies. It holds that the workers in each workplace must be the ultimate decision-making authority, and that 'higher' levels of organisation have an essentially coordinating function. The CNT does not accept the call for 'worker councils' as sufficient, for even councils can lead to an alienation of power if an effective system of direct democratic decision-making by the workers themselves, with a high level of participation by all, is not operating. The

THANK YOU, COMRADES

This article first appeared in Bayou La Rose, no. III, the new American anarchist paper, 2115 Esplanade Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70119.



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CNT thus takes very seriously the concept of power 'from below'.

According to members of the CNT, it is increasingly coming to be looked upon as an 'umbrella organisation' for all the anti-authoritarian movements developing in Spanish society. For example, there is a strong connection between the CNT and the feminist movement. The libertarian women's movement, Mujeres Libres, is an entirely independent organisation which operates its own ateneos, or educational centres for women, yet there is a considerable overlap in membership, and the CNT gives strong support to feminist issues. Similarly, the CNT is unusual among labour movements in its open commitment to gay rights. Not only does it support gay rights groups outside the organisation but, in addition, meetings of gay CNT members are also held. There is also a close relationship with the ecology movement. There is a growing interest in ecology in the CNT, and increasing numbers of ecologists are joining the organisation. Recently anti-nuclear groups have met with the CNT to increase its active support for anti-nuclear activities.

The growth of the CNT has not been as rapid in all areas of Spain as it has been in Catalonia. There are many barriers that must be overcome, including attempts by opponents to label it as a violent or terroristic movement. Perhaps an even greater obstacle is the memory of 40 years of repression under Franco, in which over 100,000 CNT members were murdered after the Civil War had ended. This is particularly true of areas like Andalusia, which had a long libertarian tradition, but which fell to the Fascists before the constructive achievements of the social revolution of 1936 began. Yet the praxis of the labour movements in such areas has been profoundly influenced by anarchism, and the CNT has hopes for gains there in the future.

The resurgence of the CNT has great significance far beyond the borders of Spain. Already it has given rise to demands for a revitalised anti-authoritarian labour movement in several European countries. The USI, the Italian anarcho-syndicalist organisation, has recently been reconstituted. The French Anarchist Federation recently met to discuss the long absence of an anarchist workers' movement there. The Swedish syndicalist union, the SAC, has shown interest in the development of the CNT and has sent representatives to Spain to study the situation. An area in which the CNT had a profound influence in the past is Latin America, and it is today attempting to re-establish ties with anti-authoritarian movements there. (Anyone who can assist in this effort should write Coordinadora de Solidaridad Latino-america, Calle Burgos, 55 Barcelona).

JOHN CLARK

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POLICE REVIEW

The police investigation into the death of Blair Peach on the anti-NF demonstration at Southall has proceeded somewhat jerkily. The pathologists report said that his skull had been fractured by a lead weighted cosh, rather than by a police truncheon. Such an item was discovered in the locker of an SPG member at Barnes. The owner of the locker was questioned for four days and then released. The police say that he has been ruled out from their investigations but that he will face disciplinary procedures on other charges. (possession of an offensive weapon? assault? conspiracy? general nastiness?). Meanwhile "Time Out" reports that they have received information, from a policeman's relative, that police from Kensington station took coshes made of rubber hose pipes containing iron bars to the Grunwick picket lines in 1977. Official comment from New Scotland Yard "We are not aware of this."

However, members of the SPG who are feeling got at and unloved can take consolation, as bossman David McNee has come to their support. His annual report published yesterday, must also provide reassurance to any members of the public who have become disturbed by hints that a paramilitary group of armed thugs is roaming amongst us. "I will continue to use the SPG as my support group" ('my') "I do not know of any Special Patrol officer who is selected because he is brutal or rugged" (obviously the sample of Special Patrol officers with whom I have been acquainted is unrepresentative) "If you behave yourself on the streets of London and don't go out wanting to fight or make trouble then you will have no worry about the SPG" (with the report only just out I haven't had time to nip down to Brixton and do a quick poll of reactions to this amongst the black kids, who have been enjoying saturation SPG policing. But, then, their opinions must be suspect. As far as I can tell they are all guilty of Sus.)

Those who do have cause to worry about the SPG, "raping, drunken and violent hooligans", "marauding gangs of dirty youths and men", in short, those who "have no right to be regarded as rational, responsible people" now know what they can expect. The above graphic descriptions come from James Anderton, still carrying on his campaign to clean up Greater Manchester. He is now calling for the setting up of "penal work camps where through hard labour and unrelenting discipline they should be made to sweat as they have never sweated before and remain until their violence has been vanquished by penitent humiliation and unqualified repentance" (Amen)

Commissioner McNee and Chief Constable Anderton have expressed similar sentiments in the past, as we have been glad to document in FREEDOM. In the light of all this reassurance it is apparent that criticism of the Knights in Blue is misguided "from those who should know better" to quote Sir David again. The BBC is, of course, anxious to demonstrate that it does, indeed, know better. This is part of the agreement that they have just entered into with the Metropolitan Police:

PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE METROPOLITAN POLICE
1 These points are only for cases which the Metropolitan Police consider delicate, affecting privacy, 'sub judice', national security and such areas. They are not for news items or straightforward current affairs features on police work—eg the opening of new police stations, the introduction of new vehicles and equipment, etc.
2 When embarking on a potentially sensitive programme, a BBC producer would meet with somebody from 'P' Department to talk over the subject and the area the BBC wished to portray, as well as the facilities they considered necessary to do this. The programme area would be defined as clearly as is possible at this stage. Afterwards, the BBC producer would send a letter to the Metropolitan Police setting out what had been agreed.
3 The Metropolitan Police would then agree the letter's contents and acknowledge that it covered the necessary points.
4 The Metropolitan Police would be kept informed of any subsequent change of plan and, if necessary, a further meeting would be convened to agree any alterations. Similar talks would be held between the Police and the BBC to sort out any disagreement.
5 It would be open to the Metropolitan Police to write to the BBC outlining anything they thought went against an agreement between them. The BBC would then look into the matter and report their findings to the Metropolitan Police.
6 If the Police were not satisfied, they could register a formal complaint with the BBC's Director-General.

TIME OUT

'DUE TO STAFF SHORTAGES'

Continued from page 3

Firstly, a real health service cannot exist under capitalism, even as a guaranteed market for the drug companies or means of keeping the work force useable. The health of a nation extends beyond the four walls of an institution; the patient is a product of the social forces which fashion him or her and within whose parameters s/he is treated.

Secondly, an authoritarian hierarchy, together with all its bureaucratic bullshit, doesn't enhance the health of anyone: rather the opposite, for it denies the contribution that could be made by vast intercommunication networks amongst workers in all fields working as equals. Only when the collective intelligence and experience of all directly involved can be freely

brought to bear through an equalitarian participation in the decision making process in the running of a health service will it be efficient, and the well being of the community assured.

This is not to say that the ward cleaners will prescribe drugs. No, knowledge must guide. But equally, because they may clean the toilets don't think they may not be capable of contributing a valuable idea. I have seen consultants make mistakes.

Only in a free society is this possible, only in a non-authoritarian, profit-free society. But in the meantime health workers can be a hell of a force for change.

BOB MANDER

SRN, RMN, Dip Soc Sci (Lond)
(National Health Service Reject)

News From Angel Alley

IF MONEY - or rather, the lack of it - limits our activities in Angel Alley, a shortage of collaborators runs it a close second.

We have in mind the Freedom Press Library, which as pointed out in these Notes, must remain inoperative so long as we cannot find a comrade, preferably a librarian, sufficiently interested in the potential of an anarchist library to assume the responsibility of organising it on a long term basis. We have had over the past twenty years so many enthusiasts who have been more concerned with going through the library for their own ends, generally leaving it in greater disarray than it was before they started, that we now appear to some friends as dogs in the manger when we do not automatically welcome with open arms every newcomer who wants to get the library operational in double quick time! That we do want to have a working anarchist library no one can surely doubt seeing that we have never stopped adding contemporary material to it. But what form should an anarchist library take? What purpose should it serve? Who are the kind of people we should seek to attract? Indeed what kind of material should it house? And

how should the material be classified?

These and many more questions come to mind if one sees an anarchist library not as a happy hunting ground for the ever-growing number of sociology graduates in search of subjects for their theses but as a centre generating anarchist ideas and research.

As we see it, the librarian(s) for such a library should be less concerned with librarianship (though it is an essential ingredient) and more with using the library themselves as a means of stimulating their own political imagination and in turn communicating their thoughts to editors and other propagandists, through meetings, discussions, duplicated bulletins at regular intervals, and of course articles for publication. Students in search of a thesis - that is who have time but few ideas - would then be most welcome, our librarian taking the place of their professors too busy entertaining on TV quiz programmes, or churning out more pot-boilers for the commercial market, to have the time to

think and to stimulate their students.

An anarchist library in our opinion should not even attempt to emulate the established socio-political libraries. Assuming, materially, that it could, we doubt whether the results would justify the effort and money involved. For those of us who have followed the growth and development of the universally acclaimed Institute of Social History in Amsterdam from its very beginnings it, alas, now points to everything that an anarchist library should avoid if we keep ends always to the forefront. On the other hand the C.I.R.A. (International Centre for Anarchist Research) in Geneva with which our anarchist library would wish to establish close links, lacks funds and staff, and apart from producing its bulletin, the last issue of which is reduced to listing what the professionals call "accessions", nothing emerges to stimulate anarchist propaganda.

Should our anarchist library relegate the autobiographies and biographies to the basement and fill its shelves with books dealing with self-management, land use and ownership, economics, production and distribution, education, housing, etc. . . . ?

To all those of you who favour the idea of an anarchist library we pose the kind of questions we have been posing ourselves in the hope that you will send us your views. If the response is encouraging we will certainly arrange a meeting later in the year. All letters will be answered.

BOOKSHOP

Robert Blatchford: Merrie England. A classic work of English Nineteenth Century libertarian socialism - not without relevance today. 102pp., ppr., £1.20 (19p). Edward Bellamy: Looking Backwards, 123pp., ppr., £1.20 (15p). An important Utopian work in the tradition of Morris's 'News from Nowhere' - which it, in fact, predates.

* Rudolf Rucker: Nationalism and Culture, 614pp., £5.50 (86p) ppr., £8.50 (86p) cloth.

* Richard and Anna-Maria Drinnon: Nowhere at Home Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman & Alexander Berkman, 282pp., ppr., £4.95 (54p).

Red & Black: An Anarchist Journal No. 8 1978/9, from Australia, 40p (10p). Including articles by Paul Avrich, Rudolf Rucker, Bob James, Mark McGuire - on the IWW in Australia, and "Jack the Anarchist" on Communism and Sexuality. A limited number of copies of no. 7 of Red & Black are still available at 40p (10p).

IF YOU ARE joining in the Election post-mortem, two articles from Freedom Press's recent publication THE IMPOSSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY (142pp) £1 (post 19p)

SELF-INTEREST & VOTING and CALLING ALL SOCIALISTS should help to liven up the occasion.

No socialist disillusioned with the Labour Government's performance should be without The Impossibilities of Social Democracy. For only £1.19 post free we can save you further disappointment next time.

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Freedom

SUPPLEMENT
16 June / 79
Vol 40 No 11

THE REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

A FEW YEARS AGO now I was a delegate to a National Union of Students conference. For every topic under discussion there were numerous motions and amendments from the various political factions present. Every group wanted affiliation to its front organisations and its analysis and philosophy enshrined in the Union's policy statement. To this end they would produce leaflets listing their motion or amendment and a lengthy explanation of every nuance that made their analysis clearer than that of the IMG or IS or SLL. One such leaflet sticks in my mind. It read:

Instructions: Conference instructs the Executive to work for mob rule and anarchy

Affiliation: Conference instructs the Executive to break off all existing affiliations and affiliate at once to the Situationist International

Policy: The Union adopt as its major policy document The Revolution of Everyday Life by Raoul Vaneigem.

There followed a funny and cynical analysis of the 'spectacle' of a formal Union conference. 'Spectacle' is a word that often crops up in situationist writings. Union bureaucrats, politicians, policemen, journalists, TV personalities, OXO cubes and Coca Cola (and many, many others) are all part of the Spectacle. How they relate to one another is the Spectacle itself.

At the time I tried to get a copy of Vaneigem's book but it was out of print. Now, thanks to the Rising Free Collective, it is available again. For those who have struggled with that other cornerstone of situationist philosophy, Guy Debord's Society of the Spectacle, Vaneigem's book is like a breath of fresh air. Vaneigem's book is as open and discursive as Debord's is esoteric and closely-argued.

The Revolution of Everyday Life was written during 1963-5 coming after the austerity of the fifties and with the consumer society getting into top gear. It is tense with Vaneigem's anger and revulsion against the kind of society that makes us consumer and commodity at one and the same time; the anger and revulsion that burst onto the streets in Paris in May 1968. Vaneigem's words literally burst onto the streets in the form of graffiti during that summer and anyone active at that time can't avoid a feeling of déjà-vu.

"... and everyone wants to breathe, and nobody can breathe, and some say 'We'll be able to breathe later'. And most people don't die because they are already dead". . . . "Those who make a revolution by halves dig their own graves" . . . "People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have corpses in their mouths". Few writers have had their words put up by paintbrush or silk-



screen so soon after they were written.

Vaneigem revolts against the kind of society in which a national leader (General Eisenhower) can call "To save the economy we must buy - buy anything!" to which a Ford worker responds, "Since 1936 I have been fighting for higher wages. My father before me fought for higher wages. I've got a TV, a fridge and a Cortina. If you ask me it's been a dog's life from start to finish".

The way out of this game is by individual liberation which makes global liberation possible - because the latter cannot succeed without the former. Vaneigem does not go into details about workers' councils as does Debord but concentrates on the construction of situations . . . "To federate moments, to bring out the pleasure in them, to release their promise of life", we have all known those moments . . . "Revolutionary moments . . . festivals in which individual life celebrates its union with regenerated society". Revolutions have always been in danger of becoming more important than the people they are made for. Vaneigem denounces La Pasionaria's call, "Better to die on our feet than live on our knees". But better still, the situationists argue, to live on our feet. "The revolution ends the moment it becomes necessary to sacrifice yourself to it. To lose yourself, and fetishise it . . . the call for sacrifice tolls like a funeral bell".

The Revolution of Everyday Life is an optimistic book from an optimistic period in our history. Paraphrasing Lenin, Vaneigem declares that "Despair is the infantile disorder of the revolutionaries of everyday life". The book has been criticised for being long on analysis and short on solutions but as such it was a product of its time. As Gray wrote in his excellent postscript to the Situationists (Leaving the 20th Century) - "We thought that if we explained how the nightmare worked everyone would just wake up". The Revolution of Everyday Life is not a manifesto. It is a vivid and intense description of the nightmare.

LARRY LAW

The Revolution of Everyday Life, by Raoul Vaneigem
Published by Rising Free Collective, 280 pages. £2.00

(This seems to be a good opportunity to mention Larry's own Situationist creation:-

Spectacular number one: 20p from
Times Images Box 99,
Freedom Press



TO BE OR TO HAVE

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

THE ANTI-CONSUMPTION ETHOS

There is in the middle of this great orgy of consumption a growing disdain among young people; there is also a greater honesty in relationships, with the demystification of sex. As Fromm says, this progress towards freedom has not developed too far. Partly I should say because of the rootless nature of modern urban society in which affluence gives the freedom to purchase many things, but no right to control the future, which is darkened by the constant threat of instant annihilation, and by the growing constraints that excessive consumption will increasingly impose.

Many search for new identities:

To-day millions of people in America and Europe try to find contact with tradition and with teachers who can show them the way. But in large part the doctrines and teachers are either fraudulent or vitiated by the spirit of public relations ballyhoo or mixed up with the financial and prestige interests of the various gurus. Some people may genuinely benefit from such methods in spite of the sham; others will apply them without any serious intention of inner change. But only a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the new believers could show how many belong to each group.

The complexity of modern life and the magnitude of forces against change, tend to enhance the attraction of religions and gurus who suggest that action on a collective level is unnecessary. On many levels, in spite of disappointments, there have been some marked changes:

While the political revolution of the twentieth century, the Russian revolution has failed (it is too early to judge the final outcome of the Chinese revolution) the victorious revolutions of our century even though they are only in their first stages are the women's the children's and the sexual revolutions. Their principles have already been accepted by the consciousness of a great many individuals and every day the old ideologies become more ridiculous.

The nature of having is not, as we are told, human nature but against nature, which is a continuous process.

Speaking of having something permanently rests on the illusion of a permanent and indestructible substance.

In effect I am what I have, and not; I am what I am. Here in a nutshell is the devastating nature of property ownership on the human, social and physical environment. The whole structure of society based on the family (as Fromm says, the psycho-social agent) is designed specifically to adjust people to a soc-

tety in which domination and authority of this kind is normal. One of the agents in this restriction of will is the modification of the sexual urge. Recognising this there are desperate rear-guard actions of those who want to tame and structure that urge, i.e. the Festival of Light, which is darkness, and the gurus with their ashrams and return to repression of women:

Not sex, however but the breaking of the human will is the reason for vilifying sex. A great number of the so-called primitive societies have no sex tabu whatsoever. Since their function without exploitation and domination they do not have to break the individual's will.

Authoritarian man runs back to an authoritarian institution; this is the problem of the revolutionary process. There is no problem in producing to satisfy human needs; the problems are political. If people do not wake up soon they could become physical problems. Anarchists have to create confidence that the vast superstructure is superfluous and that indeed it hinders human progress in a real sense. They also have to create a desire for freedom that is overwhelming.

What matters is that both luxury and poverty shall be eradicated- equality must not mean the quantitative equality of each morsel of material goods but that income is not differentiated to a point that creates different experiences of life for different groups.

It seems to me that income presupposes money and that the whole question of money has to be seriously considered. It is the camouflage of exploitation behind which the repressive forces of that exploitation sit. It is only useful in a 'having orientated' society.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE - THAT IS THE QUESTION!

Being is to be free from everything other than those things required in order to be alive.

The modern sense of activity makes no distinction between activity and mere business. But there is a fundamental difference between the two that corresponds to the terms "alienated" and "non-alienated" in respect to activities. In alienated activity I do not experience myself as the acting subject of my activity- rather I experience the outcome of my activity; and that as something "over there" separated from me and standing above and against me. In alienated activity I do not really act; I am acted upon by external or internal forces. I have become separated from the result of my activity.

The whole professionalisation of many activities in which design is separated from doing - housing, health, agriculture, etc - is reflected in schism in society and the environmental disasters which face us in practically every area of human activity.

But most people find giving up their orientation too difficult; any attempt to do so arouses their intense anxiety and feels like giving up all security like being thrown into the ocean when one does not know how to swim. They do not know that when they given up the crutch of property they can begin to use their own proper forces and walk by themselves. What holds them back is the illusion that they could not walk by themselves, that they would collapse if they were not supported by the things they have.

COMPULSIVE ENERGY

Energy is life and energy is change. It is not by nature static, but most energy in authoritarian society is expended compulsorily, but it is not the compulsion of biological necessity. Most modern energy use, both human and physical, is alienated. Quoting Spinoza, Fromm says:

According to Spinoza activity reason freedom well-being joy and self-perfection are inseparably connected-- in the same way as passivity bondage irrationality sadness powerlessness and strivings contrary to the demands of human nature are.

Much of what drives modern industrial society is mentally sick, as is the motivation of modern education which serves that society. How far removed are those who are elected to

run society is illustrated by the reply of an MP to a schoolboy who suggested we would be better off without money. How could we save or accumulate capital without money, he asked. The whole history of the post-war years - both first and second - show what an illusion this is, when the real capital of the world is being relentlessly destroyed: soil fertility, forests, fisheries, minerals, fuel. The money myth spells passivity, dead capital. The old-fashioned farmer carried over his real capital in haystacks and fertility; the modern farmer sells everything from year to year, converts everything into money, creating endless fluctuation.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIETY

For Spinoza mental health is in the last analysis a manifestation of right living; mental illness a symptom of the failure to live according to the requirements of human nature. "But if the greedy person thinks only of money and possessions the ambitious one only of fame, one does not think of them as being insane but only as annoying; generally one has contempt for them. But factually greediness ambition and so forth are forms of insanity although usually one does think of them as illness".

(Ethics 4 prop. 44) In this statement so foreign to the thinking of our time, Spinoza considers passions that do not correspond to the needs of human nature pathological; in fact he goes so far as to call them a form of insanity.

That this sort of insanity should have become normal in modern society is the reason why that society drives steadily to self-immobilisation from one quarter or another. Indeed such thinking has penetrated so-called radical and left wing thought with stultifying determinism, which has more to do with the fatality of the East and the established stratification of society in the so-called socialist societies.

This attitude was often contrary to Marx's own teaching "History does nothing".

PASSIVITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

Modern society produces fictions and hides the whole of reality with an induced unconsciousness. This condemns modern wo/man to be a receptacle of externally produced sensations having less and less to do with the production of those sensations. Modern wo/man becomes either a puppet or a Frankenstein's monster.

Anarchists have always contested the view that human nature requires to be moulded into some form of social behaviour by mental or physical coercion. Usually some vested interest lays this on human beings for 'their own good'.

What is attractive about Spanish anarchism is its activity and concept of work as a creative process, a form of expression. The view that it is merely a meal ticket to be gained with as little care and effort as one can get away with, is one which accepts the capitalist ethos. Spanish anarchists showed their ability to run their own society when the time came. Quoting Fromm:

Speaking more generally the fundamental elements in the having mode of existence are competition antagonism and fear. The antagonistic element in the having relationship stems from its nature. If having is the basis of my sense of identity because "I am what I have", the wish to have must lead to the desire to have much to have more, to have most. In other words, greed in the natural outcome of the having orientation. It can be the greed of the miser or the greed of the profit hunter or the greed of the womaniser or the man chaser. Whatever constitutes their greed the greedy can never have enough can never be "satisfied". In contrast to physiological needs, such as hunger, that have definite satiation points due to the physiology of the body mental greed --and all greed is mental even if it is satisfied via the body -- has no satiation point, since its consummation does not fill the inner emptiness boredom loneliness and depression it is meant to overcome.

JOY - PLEASURE

Pleasure in the modern idiom has been largely divorced from activity: pleasure is purchased, and a vast amount of it is

joyless and the opposite of the expanding human state, which is essential if people are to expand their control over their environment and achieve true dignity. One only has to see the suicidal sadness of many of those who are 'successful' in the professional pleasure business. Fromm says:

Pleasure and thrill are conducive to sadness after the so-called peak has been reached, for the thrill has been experienced but the vessel has not grown. One's inner powers have not increased. One has made the attempt to break through the boredom of unproductive activity and for the moment has unified all one's energies - except reason and love. One has attempted to become superhuman without being human. One seems to have succeeded to the moment of triumph, but the triumph is followed by deep sadness: because nothing has changed within oneself.

And then goes on to quote Spinoza on this theme:

Spinoza gives joy a supreme place in his anthropological-ethical system. "Joy" he says "is man's passage from a lesser to a greater perfection. Sorrow is man's passage from a greater to a lesser perfection."

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

With reference to this interesting sub-paragraph of the book I need only quote a small piece to show how penetrating Fromm is on the subject of the human condition. Talking about induced submission in authoritarian society:

That submission is not necessarily conscious as such. That it can be mild or severe, that the psychic and social structure need not be totally authoritarian, but may be only partially so, must not blind us to the fact that we live in the

mode of having to the degree that we internalise the authoritarian structure of our society.

FEAR OF DEATH

Modern society has attached itself very much to property, but the fact that we die does not have to affect our whole life. The question has not been studied much. Religions, as far as I can see, have been particularly obsessed with it. The idea of immortality, particularly as a reward for certain behaviour on earth, seems to be another way of reinforcing authoritarian society. Fromm quotes Epicurus: "Since we are here, death is not yet here; but when death is here we are no more". And further quoting Spinoza, "The wise think about life, not about death".

The whole modern cult of insurance, connecting the economic and financial ethos with the end of life and not its duration, and the clock which ticks away life is a matter of commerce which rules all.

RELIGION: CHARACTER AND SOCIETY

Religion is dealt with by Fromm in a very wide sense. He puts the word in inverted commas and referring to religion in this widest sense, he says that the impulses contribute contribute the energy to move men and women to accomplish social change.

To clarify, "religion" as I use it here does not refer to a system that has necessarily to do with God or with idols or even to a system perceived as religion, but to any group-shared system of thought and action that offers the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion. Indeed, in this broad sense of the word no culture of the past or present, and it seems no culture of the future, can be considered as not having religion.

ALAN ALBON

POLITICIAN ON THIRD-WORLD JUNKET



ANARCHISM IN AUSTRALIA

Chummy Fleming

JOHN FLEMING, generally known as 'Chummy', was born in Derby, England, the son of an Irish father and an English mother who died when JW was five years old. One of his grandfathers had been an 'agitator' in the Corn Laws struggle and his father had been involved in Derby strike activity. (1)

There is some doubt about the date of his birth, as there is of his death. I'm still checking these, but 1867 appears likely for his birth:

"...at 10 he had to go to work in a Leicester boot factory. The confinement and toil broke down the boy's health and whilst laid up with sickness he began to reflect and to feel that he was a sufferer from social injustice(2)"

Fleming attended the free thought lectures of Bradlaugh, Holyoake and Annie Besant, before coming to Melbourne. Andrews recorded his early period in Australia this way:

"(JWF) was 16 when his uncle invited him to Melbourne. He arrived in 1884 and for a time he was a good deal more prosperous than later, getting work as a bootmaker (2)"

His prosperity did not last long, as by early 1885:

"....I was amongst the unemployed. Mr. White finished a violent speech concluding with remarks about Brutus, and we started in procession to the Treasury buildings, with a banner on which was inscribed, 'Bred or Work'. Immediately we arrived the police attacked us (2)"

Fleming was amongst those arrested, but because of his youth was discharged. However, the next Sunday, he was back on 'the Wharf' (Melbourne's Sunday afternoon open-air forum) raising money for those sent to jail or fined.

This early involvement in street politics, and the implied commitment to direct action which characterised 'Chummy's' long life, gives rise to one of the contradictory impressions about him, namely that his anarchism was very perfunctory

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- 14 Kenajick 'Life of Maurice Blackburn' (etc.) (unpublished MS) p. 465.

and ill-formed. The other impression is that he was a pragmatist, able and willing to work with whatever was at hand, but with quite a clear view of how the various pieces fitted together and what his long term goals were.

For instance, he worked within the Victorian Operative Bootmakers' Union for years (up till 1904 when he was expelled for 'disloyalty') while castigating the Trades Hall Council and Labor leader Trenwith (also a bootmaker) for selling out the workers. But in 1891 he was President of both the YOBU and of the Fitzroy branch of the Progressive Political League (the forerunner of the Australian Labor Party). There is evidence that his involvement with the Knights of Labor and the Single Tax League (of Henry George) with which he spoke and organised up until 1896 (approx) allowed a loose-knit coalition of libertarian 'agitators' to combine and to infiltrate other groupings without being attacked as an anarchist, which was a label solidly stigmatised at the time. Internationally the anarchist influence in both the Knights of Labor and the Single Tax movement predates the arrival of the two groups in Australia.

On the more definite side, Fleming's interests while a member of the Melbourne Anarchist Club (1886-1888, main period of activity) were personal relations and the position of women. Secondly, he was a stalwart of the struggle to establish May Day in Australia, being treasurer of the organising group in 1890, chairperson of the first public May Day gathering (1892) and a feature of all May Day processions held (from 1893) until the 1940s at least.

Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly his work on behalf of the unemployed and in the area of working conditions (unions, technological change and free labor bureaux) was highly influential in changing legislators' attitudes towards the role of government. Again, however, the material available is capable of different interpretation.

In August 1887 'Chummy' had work but he still addressed a crowd of 2000 unemployed men, in rain and cold, and with John White led a deputation to Mr Nimmo asking for work. On another occasion:

"The unemployed meeting was held on a piece of land near the Workingmen's College. At the conclusion of the meeting old John White and I carried the calico banner which had written on it 'Feed on our flesh and blood Capitalist hyena, it is your funeral feast'. When the unemployed arrived at the Trades Hall they were attacked by unionists. During the fight the banner was destroyed. The police came and ended the fight(3)"

He was often in jail, out of work (he opened his 'own shop' at least twice) and beaten up. On one occasion, April 1892, at a meeting at Fitzroy Town Hall to discuss the election of labour members of Parliament, A Mr Best, MLA, said "agitators of the Fleming type should be exterminated like rabbits". 'Chummy' got up to reply, was mauled and pushed off the stage. Helped back onto the stage by friends, he succeeded in having passed an amendment that Best was unfit to represent the workers. A further meeting was held outside

the Hall which Fleming addressed; then he went home to bed with a sprained ankle and an injured hip. (4)

In 1901, he is reported very ill, Andrews for one (5) believing he would not recover. But he did, with the aid of money raised for him (6) and got straight back to work, particularly as chairperson of the unemployed movement.

In May of that year, he took his unemployed agitation to the point of rushing onto Prince's Bridge to halt the Governor General's carriage which was crossing through cheering crowds on its way to open Parliament. Hopetown told the police not to interfere and listened as Fleming put the case for the unemployed. (7) Later, on the evening of the 'big spread' (the banquet) Fleming represented the unemployed again by strolling into the hall, had 'a friendly confab with one or two labor members (of Parliament) who greatly enjoyed the idea, (then) proceeded to luxuriate in the toffiest part of the whole assemblage. His presence was a grief of mind to Detective Macnamany who assiduously tailed him up for three hours and a half. At the end of that time Fleming got tired of the sport and considerably gave the officer an opportunity of showing him the door ..." (8)

The G-G later entrusted Fleming to the distribution of money and champagne to the unemployed. Lord Hopetown had apparently been told by G. M. Prendergast (MLA) that Chummy "was the most honest man I know" and that he had an unofficial directory of the unemployed. (9)

A broadsheet Revolution in Australia, by 'Autonomist', believed to be Fleming, is the only long writing I know of his.

It is both a call to arms (a general strike from 1 May, 1906) and a fanciful redition of the circumstances under which an actual revolution might occur, with a harking back to the 1890s to verify and legitimate. It would seem that however one interprets his activities before this, some time around the end of 1903 he decides he's had enough of 'legitimate channels' and becomes heroically, obstinately anarchist. On being expelled from the THC (he had spoken in support of communist anarchism, and of dynamite 'overcoming dual opposition of police and military' (11) he said (12):

"I am going to be expelled because I am an anarchist. I am in the company of Tolstoy, Spencer and the most advanced thinkers of the world. Workers will never get their rights while they look to Parliament. A general strike would be more effective than all the Parliaments in the world... We have been hanged in Chicago, electrocuted in New York, guillotined in Paris, and strangled in Italy, and I will go with my comrades. I am opposed to your Government and your authority. Down with them. Do your best. Long live Anarchy."

These are just some of the incidents in the long, colourful life of a complex man. He died sometime in the 1950s, his ashes were scattered over the crowd on the Yarra Beach (13) where he'd spoken every week for over 50 years.

"... to the very end respected and esteemed by the radical elements in the labour movement because he was sincere, courageous, indefatigable.... (14)"

IT IS DIFFICULT when reading the works of one's writer friends to be absolutely detached and to avert the paranoia (usually well founded) of identifying other friends - or even oneself - in a novel. One is forced to conclude that writers must necessarily be writing out of their own experience and any friend or acquaintance is fair game. On coming across in the public library a 1975 novel by George Target (review copy not received) one hesitated to read the thoughts on such a subject as strikes by one who, one knew, was familiar with the anarchist attitude to strikes.

George Target is known on the radio for his 'Thought for the Day'. He is a polemical Christian in the style of an earlier Lord Soper, and even as recently as last week he had a letter in the *Guardian* deservedly scoffing at the Turin shroud. There was a time when he spoke to the London Anarchist Group, admittedly critically, and in 1970 wrote *Confound their Politics: An Elector's Guide to the Traditional Game of Who Governs?*. In this book he did me the honour of a mention and a remark that I cannot remember having said to the effect that I would rather re-paper a bathroom than go on the CND march (in fact I went on the majority of CND marches; I missed the first one).

However, be that all as it may, I thought the title of this novel (his ninth) promised interesting reading on a critical subject. I did not expect George Target to have gone for the soft option of joining the anti-union, anti-strike hunt, with Ted Willis (in his *Churchill Commandos*) for I have a respect for the firmness and fairness of Target's views although they differ from anarchism.

Some of my best friends are writers.

The book is an account of a series of strikes, all quite fairly represented and presenting an uncanny resemblance to last winter's series. Told in cinematic-like flashes, it switches from strike meetings to public adverse comments and descriptions of the chaos. This leads to the formation of a vigilante group who take personal vengeance on strike leaders on behalf of society; even to the extent of kidnapping (a) a strike leader and (b) a strike leader's daughter. However, the strikers and the vigilantes are both soft at the centre, for both the leader and the daughter are released from hostage thanks to the innate decency of strikers and vigilantes. George Target is too nice a guy to follow up the logic of his plot outline. The series of strikes finishes up in a series of catastrophic explosions, involving loss of life, which are manifestly treated by the author as 'an accident' but one feels that action by pickets is one of

the contributory causes, and there is some hint of shoddy workmanship taking some of the blame; but perhaps George Target was trying to say that we are all (to some extent) to blame. This impression is heightened by a shared favourite quotation from Blake on the title page: 'He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars: General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite and flatterer.'

The impression is unfortunately given that the author is sitting on the fence, but I do not feel that this is necessarily so. Nice guys finish last and George Target cannot plump for the class conscious strikers or for the equally class conscious vigilantes so therefore we are still left with the problem.

How can workers in a socially necessary occupation assert their need for a recognition of the importance of their work (in this society only recognisable in cash terms) except by depriving the public (of whom they are part) of their services and thus causing undoubted hardship. One would think that in a sensible society the fact that the dustmen (for example) caused greater inconvenience when on strike than, say, stockbrokers (or authors) would entitle the dustmen to greater social recognition. However, in a society which recognised the equal value of all work, the mere vocational pride in being a dustman would, freed of the wage system and cash nexus, be sufficient reward.

What does George think?

Jack Robinson.

Strike the Strikers, G.W. Target, Duckworth, £3.95.

MILL'S OPINION

IN HIS book *Anarchism* George Woodcock points out that (p. 79) "the anarchists accept much too uncritically the idea of an active public opinion as an easy way out of the problems of dealing with anti-social tendencies". He here goes along with Orwell, who said that "public opinion, because of the tremendous urge to conformity in gregarious animals, is less tolerant than any system of law".

LeGuin's *The Dispossessed* gives us a picture of such intolerance on the anarchist planet of Anarres where (p. 273):

"... the social conscience completely dominates the individual conscience, instead of striking a balance with it. We don't cooperate - we obey. We fear being outcast, being called lazy, dysfunctional, egoising". The anarchists on Anarres have "made laws, laws of conventional behavior".

I would like to think that most thinking anarchists are well aware of this danger in public opinion. This essay should not have to show that it is a problem (not only for a future anarchist society but for any commune existing at the present time). Rather, it is aimed at introducing an approach that anarchists seem to have let slip by. This approach was given by J.S. Mill, which it may be argued, is at the core of his *Essay on Liberty*.

Mill was no anarchist, but his approach to public opinion is highly relevant to the problem of public opinion outlined above.

Mill's essay is essentially an examination of the constraints that may be allowed when we consider wo/man in society. In doing this he makes a distinction between those actions

which have a harmful effect on others: 'other-regarding' actions, and those that only have an effect on the agent himself which he calls 'self-regarding' actions.

Mill believed that public opinion is legitimate in cases of 'other-regarding' actions (he also, unfortunately, thought laws legitimate). However he believed that in those cases which cause 'NO DEFINITE DAMAGE, OR NO DEFINITE RISK OF DAMAGE' to another we should not allow public opinion to have a place.

Two things should be noted:

- 1) Mill believed that public opinion has a strong effect on actions.
- 2) But Mill believed that it should only be used in cases of 'other-regarding' actions.

If Mill's principle of non-exertion against self-interested actions can be used as a basis for the existence of public opinion in an anarchist situation the dangers suggested by Woodcock, Orwell, LeGuin and others would be reduced considerably. Public opinion would stand against murder, rape, etc. but would not relate to private matters.

A final point can be given in Mill's own words: "It would be a great misunderstanding of this doctrine to suppose that it is one of selfish indifference ... instead of any diminution, there is need of a greater increase of DISINTERESTED exertion to promote the good of others".

BRIAN R. HARRISON

PRESS RELEASE

from The Irish Urban Sports Society -
Porgema Hone, Press Secretary.

KILLJOYS ATTACK REVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL SPORT

Speaking at the annual dinner of the Irish Urban Sports Society, the Society President, the Rev. Horne Tooke, talked of the danger that traditional sports might be abolished by killjoy legislation.

Such killjoys he pointed out were aesthetically and spiritually soulless; for who otherwise could fail to appreciate the sheer beauty, the faultless timing, the wonderful choice of venue for the kill, of a recently highly-publicised and vulgarly condemned example of the sports.

Killing Tory M. P.s - sub-vermin to use the beautifully expressive phrase of the late Aneurin Bevan - killing them moreover actually within the precincts of the House of Commons' a sport, which of late has been woefully neglected and allowed almost to decline out of existence; is absolutely essential for the well-being of the country. No-one has ever suggested that these sub-vermin have any saving grace; there can be argument as to whether rats may kill smaller vermin & thus serve a good purpose, there can even be argument as to whether fleas, internal worms or such-like would be best left alone; but there can be no serious suggestion that a Tory M. P. is best left alive.

There is - unfortunately - no evidence to show they are an endangered species' and even if there were scientific control of the breed would necessitate some form of cull. Some people have expressed concern that the sport's resurrection smacks of private enterprise; it ought to be run more properly under state auspices. Indeed one might hope that one day, something of the sort will come, and that perhaps the Olympic Committee will arrange to adopt it as an international sport' but one can only hope to resurrect this traditional sports in a small way at the beginning.

News from ANARCHISTS

We've been a bit lax in mentioning other libertarian papers. For a start, here's the main English language ones. Latest issues of those marked * are available from Freedom Bookshop as indicated. Please add something for postage.

- BRITISH**
- ANARCHY * 37a, Grosvenor Avenue, London N5 (No. 28, 20p.)
 - BLACK FLAG * Over the Water, Sanday, Orkney KW 17V 2BL (Vol. V No. 8, 20p.)
 - BREAD AND ROSES ACA, Box 2, 136 Kingsland High St., London E2.
 - INTERNATIONAL TIMES 36 Davenant Road, London N19.
 - LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST * c/o 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 (No. 4, 15p.)
 - LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION * 6 Beaconsfield Road, Leicester. (No. 26, 30p.)
 - PEACE NEWS * 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham. (No. 2096, 20p.)
 - SOLIDARITY * 23 Solar Ct., Etchingham Park Rd., London, N3 (No. 7, 15p.)

In addition there are local papers in Aberdeen, Cambridge, Hastings, Sheffield and Swansea.

OVERSEAS

- EVERYTHING (Anarchist-Feminist) c/o Box 393, Wentworth Building, Union, University of Sydney NSW 2006, Australia.
- FIFTH ESTATE 4403, Second Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201 U. S. A.
- OPEN ROAD Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver B.C. Canada.
- RED AND BLACK * P.O. Box A 425, Sydney South, NSW Australia 2000 (No. 8, 40p.)
- SOIL OF LIBERTY * P.O. Box 7056, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis MN 55407.

In future, plugs will be made as new issues arrive.