

# FREEDOM CONTACTS

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Sydney Libertarians, PO Box 24,  
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PO Box 2042, Auckland.  
PO Box 22, 607 Christchurch.  
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CANADA  
Open Road, Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver, B.C.

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Arizona  
Malicious Hooligans (anti-nuclear group), 1110 W. 2nd St., Tempe, AZ 85281.

California  
Autonomia, PO Box 1751, San Francisco, CA 94101.  
Libertarian Anarchist Coffee-house, meets last Sunday every month at Cafe Commons, 3161 Mission St., San Francisco.

Minnesota  
Soil of Liberty, Box 7056, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, Minn. 55407.

Missouri  
Columbia Anarchist League, PO Box 380, Columbia, Missouri 65201.

**Freedom Press**  
IN ANGEL ALLEY  
84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.  
LONDON E.1

## Desires

New York  
Libertarian Book Club, Box 842  
GPO, New York, NY 10012.  
SRAF/ Freespace Alternative U,  
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(publ. of 'anarkistische texte')  
c/o Gebr. Schmueck, c/o Liber-  
tad Verlag, Postfach 153,  
1000 Berlin 44.  
Libertares Forum, Postfach  
100755, 1000 Berlin 36.

East Westfalia: Anarchistische  
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1455 Copenhagen.  
Rainbow Anarchists of the Free  
City of Christians, c/o Allan  
Anarcho, Tinghuset, Fristaden  
Christians, 1407K Copenhagen.

Sweden  
Gothenburg: Frihetligt Forum,  
Landsvägsgatan 19,  
41304 Göteborg.  
Stockholm: Frihetligt Forum,  
and Revolutionär Anarchists  
Organisation.  
Both at Box 11075, S-100 61  
Stockholm.

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

## Meetings

MIDLANDS ANARCHIST FEDERA-  
TION CONFERENCE 19 January 1980  
In the Queen's Hall Community Centre  
Nottingham, starting 11.00. Food  
provided, bookstall, social at night (we  
hope). Items for agenda/workshop  
suggestions, requests for directions  
and further information from Notting-  
ham Anarchists c/o Mushroom Books,  
10 Heathcote St., Nottingham, or  
tel. 582506 (day - messages only) or  
53587 (evenings). Please notify us in  
advance whether accommodation  
needed Friday/Saturday, and if child-  
care required. There will be space  
for a women's meeting; other suggest-  
ions include 'anarchists and the anti-  
nuke movement' and 're-organising'  
the M.A.F.

U.S.A.  
First International Symposium on  
Anarchism to be held on Lewis & Clark  
College campus February 18-24 1980.  
There will be scholarly papers, a  
film series, art exhibition, lectures,  
plays, round-table discussions, press  
conferences, etc., and exhibition of  
international anarchist press in the  
library. Send publications, suggest-  
ions for program (speakers, films,  
plays, etc. which might be included)  
to Anarchism Symposium Committee,  
L.C. Box 134, Lewis & Clark College,  
Portland, Oregon 97219, U.S.A.

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'I am the Printer'



**...AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

END of a decade the Sixties were 'The Swinging Sixties', what do we call the seventies? How about the Sinister Seventies? Or should the adjective be 'Cynical'? It was cynicism in the 70s when illusions were shattered for all those who believed in a benevolent capitalism, steady progress under socialist policies, a steady enlightenment for the masses.

There has never been a time when the State showed more cynical behaviour of its own forces, tactics following the murder of prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs, the cover-up of sanction-busting, the jailing of juries—all, and many more. No doubt everyone will be overjoyed to hear that all 4 persons have been acquitted on all charges. Her fiddling of the tax system is making vital part in bringing inflation to a higher rate than ever before, bringing more misery to those affected by the welfare cuts.

At the beginning of the decade Ted Heath promised to do something about the 'unacceptable face of capitalism' but by

1979 it to demonstrate more anti-social action, right wing journals, name of the poor over greed and exploitation—and devil take the Devil. She is a walking disaster area—and for many the disillusionment is all the greater because she is a woman. The only consolation in which is that she demonstrates that it is the power that is the corrupting influence, not her sex. Not the only lesson we can learn to help us face the Eighties!

**ACQUITTED!**

# WHAT LAY BEHIND THE BINDON TRIAL?

Had John Bindon not stood trial in the Old Bailey accused of murder, manslaughter and making an affray, the aspect presented by his two co-accused, George Galbraith and Raymond Bohm, would have been peculiar.

The prosecution case was that there had been two sides involved in the fight in which John Darke died. Bindon's two co-accused were, according to the police, men who had fought against Bindon on Darke's side. So without Bindon the police case would have seemed odd, because the only accused persons would have been the dead man's own friends.

So Bindon was a prop that the prosecution sorely needed. The defendants were running what is known as a 'cut-throat' defence - that is, where there is a fundamental conflict of interest between accused persons.

Consequently the case was rather weird, with one civilian prosecution after another saying some things that went in Bindon's favour and other things that went against Galbraith and Bohm, while counsel for the latter two men, in cross examining, doing what they could to discredit what had been said in Bindon's favour.

Not that they could do this very effectively on many points. It was patently obvious that Bindon, unarmed, had been unmercifully attacked after he had intervened to reason with and restrain Darke, who was stabbing Roy Dennis, also unarmed. Strangely, no motive emerged for Darke's attack on Roy Dennis, save to say that it was hinted, without further explanation, that Darke had had a disagreement with Dennis's absent brother.



"YOU'LL NEVER CREDIT THIS SARGE  
BUT HE'S BEEN MUGGED BY A NUN!"

The prosecution sought to establish that the fight took place in three distinct stages:

Stage one. Darke attacks Dennis. Bindon intervened, unarmed. He is stabbed in the side, from the rear and is thrown across the clubroom.

Stage two. Bindon lands on the floor, face down. Darke kneels astride him stabbing, cutting and taunting him with a knife, while two of Darke's friends, Galbraith and Bohm, armed with knives, keep others at bay to prevent any intervention on Bindon's behalf. At the same time, Galbraith eggs Darke on.

Lenny Osbourne, (still missing) managed to grasp the blade of Darke's knife and Bindon, very badly injured, manages to get to his feet.

Stage three. Police say there was now a clear break in the fight, but Bindon got the knife he had tucked in his boot and made a revenge attack on Darke, stabbing him at least three times.

Hence the murder charge.

Bindon did not dispute that, on staggering to his feet after Osbourne's intervention, he had armed himself. He also agreed that he had stabbed Darke in the final stages of the fight. But he denied that there had been a clear 'stage three' break or that he had then made a murderous revenge attack.

Even if Darke did withdraw slightly within the small area of the club-room (and some prosecution witnesses did not say this) those that say he did testified that he was returning to the attack. And all the prosecution eye-witnesses testified that, by this time, they were scurrying from the club as fast as they could, terrified.

The prosecution case was clearly not made out on the evidence of its own witnesses.

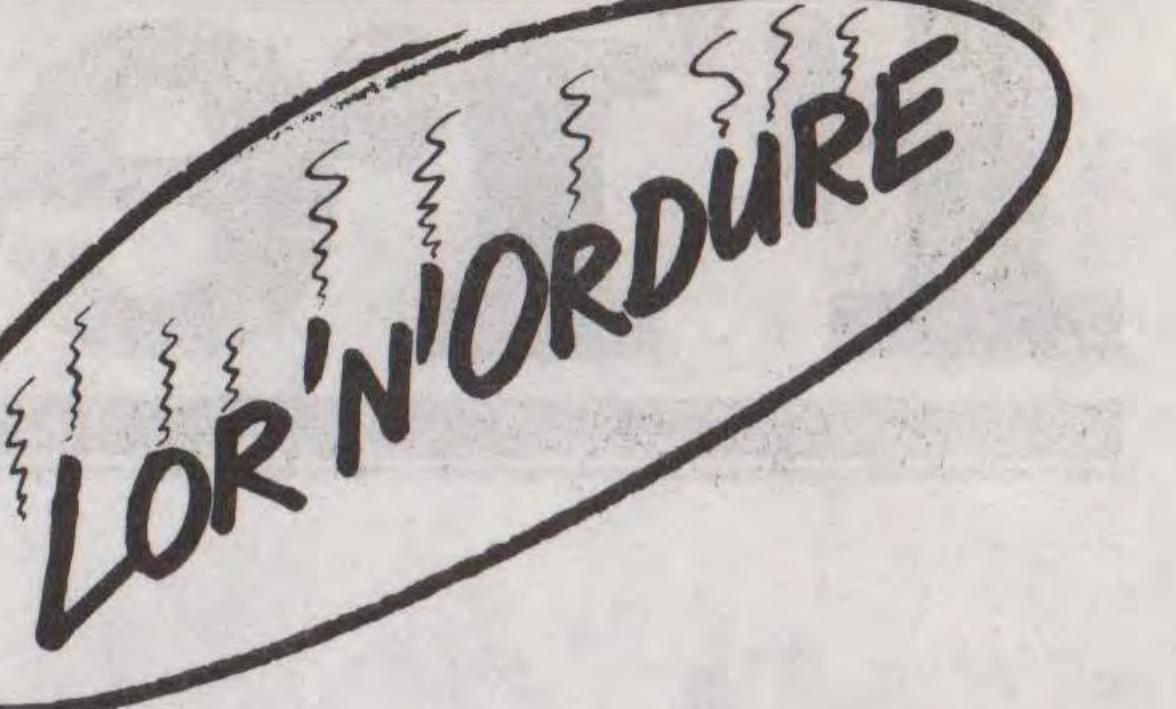
The logic of the prosecution case would seem to be that Bindon, despite the sheer violence and hatred with which Darke had wounded and taunted him should, once on his feet, have told himself 'I'll let Darke finish with me, I won't arm myself, but will report this matter to the police afterwards.'

There wouldn't have been any afterwards for Bindon. Even Darke's wife has been quoted in the press to this effect.

As FREEDOM reported in an earlier issue (14th July 1979), there had been no suggestion in the statements of witnesses tendered by Bindon by the prosecution prior to committals that he - Bindon - had killed Darke for a 'contract' fee. But that was the surprise allegation made at the committal hearing. It was weakly repeated at the Old Bailey.

It makes the police case against Bindon seem all the more sinister and malevolent that they called their very dubious evidence in this connection when they did.

At committal and trial, the prosecution called one William Murphy (who was



himself, in July, convicted of knifing a man to death) to say that, whilst in Brixton on remand, Bindon had told him during numerous conversations how he (Bindon) had been offered £10,000 to kill Darke; that Bindon had already received £5,000 and that Bindon's women friend, Vicky Hodge, would collect the rest.

Murphy further alleged that Lenny Smithers, part-owner of the club where the fight occurred, had put up half the money, while John Twomey (at the time of committal also remanded in Brixton, on bank robbery charges) had put up the rest.

This Twomey had done because he had been informed on by Darke for that very bank robbery. Twomey, within days of Bindon's committal provided a secret tape recording to show that he had been fitted up on the bank robbery charge and he was soon freed.

At the trial, Det. Supt. Michael Huins, a senior officer in the case, surprisingly admitted that Twomey had never been interviewed about the 'contract' allegations and further, that although Smithers had been interviewed, bringing charges against him in connection with the 'contract' had not been considered.

At the committal stage, DS John Ross (then a Flying Squad officer involved in the Twomey bank raid case) testified that Darke had informed on Twomey over the bank raid and appeared to add credibility to Murphy's allegation. That is, until Twomey's secret tape emerged. At the Old Bailey DS Ross made a conspicuous non-appearance.

Not apparent from the media trial coverage, was the fact that if this really was a genuine 'contract to kill' case why, in his lengthy opening address, did the prosecutor refer to this fundamental issue only very briefly, and with obvious embarrassment, at the very end of his address? There are some folk who think that Det. Supt. Michael Huins, because he superseded Victor Kellaher as head of the Drug Squad, is straight, but one wonders, after a case like this, what if anything very precise, Huins' 'straightness' can possibly mean.

Mr Aubrey Myerson QC, defending Bindon, was very impressive, especially when cross-questioning Murphy. Obviously a high point in the trial. Murphy had had many 'revealing' conversations with Bindon, but never once asked questions, prompted, or queried a single point.

Although Murphy said he testified because he was against people being 'paid' to kill, he never felt outraged enough to ever speak his mind to Bindon. He never told the police his motive for informing was because he was against violence or people being paid to kill. It emerged that having been a criminal all his life and being in prison this time for murdering a male friend of his wife because he had a paranoid fantasy that they were having some sort of secret affair, he

was desperate not to lose her. So he wanted by his 'contract to kill' testimony (plus testimony similarly accumulated which he'd offered in two other cases) to show that he was now a changed man. He admitted he was 'paranoid', quickly adding that he was 'like 90 per cent of the population'. (A frightening example of the hazards of being remanded in custody to await trial!)

As usual, police 'verbal' was very much in evidence. One or two examples were particularly memorable. Bindon, badly injured, fled to Ireland immediately after the fight. He had to get hospital treatment and days later contacted the other senior officer in the case, Police Supt. George Mold (of Angry Brigade fame). Mold went

to Ireland where Bindon made an initial statement, although previously ill, and agreed, when he was able, to return voluntarily rather than be extradited. On his return Bindon, still very ill, was met off the boat by Mold's men and taken directly to Fulham Police Station for immediate interrogation by Mold in the absence of his solicitor.

Mold, obviously sensitive to Bindon's grave condition, was probably worried that to interrogate Bindon in that physical state might invalidate what was recorded, it having been obtained when Bindon was under a form of duress. So the evidence as given tells us that when Mold questioned Bindon in the morning and after lunch, both

interviews start with Mold enquiring of Bindon how his health is and Bindon perkily saying both times that he is 'fine George, just fine'.

Mold did admit that Bindon suffered enormously when he had to climb up to the first floor of the police station for the lunch interview, and he admitted that Bindon was continually coughing up blood throughout the interview. (How 'fine' can you get?)

He quickly said that this 'concerned' him (Mold) greatly at the time, but would not agree that, when asked how he was, Bindon had said on both occasions, that he was feeling very bad.

# ALL OVER IN FIVE MINUTES?

Commons All-Party Penal Affairs Group, Home Secretary William Whitelaw announced the setting-up of a Prison Department equivalent of the notorious Police Special Patrol Group, attacked and injured seventy prisoners in the long-term (D) wing at Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

This POA attack force is apparently styled in Prison Department parlance "The MUFTI Squad" (Minimum Use of Force Tactical Intervention). Press reports the next morning emphasized that it was all over in five minutes.

Of course, it wasn't a five minutes' affair at all. The special "MUFTI" assault squads had to be mustered from various London prisons; the Scrubs' hospital wing had to be got ready; and later, numerous heads had to be stitched. The latter details weren't included in the next day's brief press reports. The Daily Telegraph had the longest report, at 1200 words. The Home Office was saying that NO prisoners had been injured. It was news management with a vengeance.

In their idealistic way, the Home Office wanted matters to stay that way. A security clampdown was placed on 'D' wing. No letters went out for two weeks and no visits were allowed. This included legal visits. Civilian ancillary workers in the prison itself were also denied access to 'D' wing.

Release received urgent 'phone calls on its emergency 'phone system from prisoners' relatives, as did groups such as the Howard League and PROP. It seemed to Release that the clampdown was more severe than anything it had ever known. And that remains the considered view of PROP.

PROP, together with the Prisoners' Aid Committee (PAC) and other interest groups, picketed the Scrubs on Saturdays and a lot of information has now been gathered about what happened on the night of 31st August and subsequently. The Howard League has also appealed for information and, in common with PROP and the other interest groups, at an early stage called for an official investigation.

On 9th October, in response to Parliamentary pressure from Robert Kilroy-Silk, Chairperson of the House of

Scrubs affair. She reported that although the Chairperson of the Scrubs' Board of Visitors was phoned on the night of 31st August and asked to attend 'D' wing as soon as possible, that person never journeyed there until Sunday and found 'nothing seriously amiss'.

Anna Coote also revealed that Mr Gibson, who is now heading the enquiry had, the following day, sent a telegram of congratulations to the contingent of Wandsworth officers involved in the attack. Gibson's impartiality is, therefore, seriously at issue. Gibson denies that this is the case, claiming that as the congratulations were signed by his secretary, his position is in no way compromised. A further ground of criticism is that those who wish to give evidence will only be able to do so if they are invited.

The PROP report is comprehensive, but certain kinds of detailed information have been withheld because some inmates are in the process of initiating legal proceedings against prison staff for criminal assault.

Whereas the Humber Police investigated inmates' allegations of criminal assault following the Hull Riot and eventually pressed charges, Scotland Yard have repeatedly refused to investigate similar Scrubs' allegations, and have referred the matter back to the Home Secretary. (By the time you read this there may have been a solicitor in the High Court seeking an order that McNee should follow up the criminal assault allegations.) With the Met SPG having been so far let off the hook over the murder of Blair Peach, no doubt the Met in turn felt it owed a favour elsewhere over the Scrubs' allegations.

It is unclear on whose authority the Scrubs' Special Assault Squad actually acted. There is increasing concern at the present time about the militant and unsanctioned actions of Prison Officers Association (POA) members in numerous

continued on page 7



\* Wormwood Scrubs, Special Report. 25p plus postage from PROP, 21 Atwood Road, London W6.

# ANARCHIST-FEMINISM - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

OVER 100 women attended an anarchist feminist conference in London on the weekend of 7-9 December. The conference was organised by women from Spain, Australia and the USA as well as Britain, with men taking charge of the crèche and helping with refreshments. The list of pre-arranged workshops ranged from astrology, meditation and life drawing to use of video, badge-making, self-defence and attitudes to violence, and women in prison.

Among both organisers and participants there was disagreement on the usefulness of a separate meeting at Conway Hall between women and men on 'sexism in the anarchist movement', and if anyone had hoped to keep discussion confined to that subject they were to be disappointed. By the end of the evening what seemed, to me at any rate, to be a central question, remained unanswered: were many anarchist women themselves helping to reinforce sexism, by taking little or no part in anarchist, as opposed to feminist, groups and activities? In other words, did the anarchist movement actually matter to them?

One woman agreed that she was not involved in the local anarchist group because she automatically assumed that the men should be left to get on with it. A second said she had never been to an anarchist meeting because she felt more confident with other women. A third complained about the lack of feminist content in papers like FREEDOM, but was unable to suggest what these should do when it was pointed out that many women preferred anyway to work for women's or exclusively anarchist papers and newsletters.

How should we break out of this vicious circle? Is a future possible in which the anarchist movement in this country is split in two along sexist lines, with women claiming to be the only true anarchists and men accusing them of introspection?

Perhaps others will think this a more suitable question for the feminist astrology class. At any rate, the actual discussion did not deal with it but drifted chaotically around sexism in general. Much of it got bogged down in a hopeless sort of exchange between one group of men and another, caused by one or two men resenting the fact that members of a Men Against Sexism group spoke in soft tones with middle class accents, and had been to university. (One ended by shouting several times over that everything had been FUCKING BORING).

All this was sad because a desire to learn something from the meeting was shown by the large turnout. In my view it could have got somewhere had the org-

anisers tried to put some form and structure into it. To many anarchists this seems so inimical an idea that they must break instead into half a dozen or so small groups, mostly consisting (as was pointed out at the time) of their own friends or other like-minded comrades - a move which completely defeats the possibility of substantive debate.

The same 'tyranny of structurelessness' criticism can also be made of the main part of the conference, which was held in the great, gloomy halls of the Centro Iberico in Harrow Road. There were too many different topics to choose from, thus too many groups meeting at once (not to mention little truants from the crèche). Noise ruined concentration, and again people began to split into sub-groups, which made things yet more difficult.

Another disadvantage was that there was scarcely any time for plenary sessions, where women who had come to an anarchist meeting for the first time could find out more about anarchism itself before the workshops started. The last workshop of the conference, 'Anarcho-feminism: Where do we go from here?' could have been split into two parts, with the first session on the first morning. For instance, there could then have been a general discussion on the differences between revolutionary, radical, socialist and anarchist feminism; this could have helped to clarify ideas before the participants embarked on specific topics.

Very possibly the number of workshops stemmed from the fact that this was the first conference for such a long time. Inevitably then the most valuable part of the meeting consisted of establishment of contact between people gathered together from all parts of the country. There were also women from Spain, including the Catalan poet, Marta Pessarrodona, and a member of Women Against Imperialism, who talked about the women's movements in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, and in particular about women in Armagh prison.

This was an informative and, naturally enough, provocative session. Women Against Imperialism are calling on all feminists, including anarchists, to "build a campaign around political prisoners in Armagh Gaol", fighting for political status. This raises the immediate difficulty for anarchists of supporting a campaign which would lead to a greater hierarchy among prisoners rather than demanding better conditions for all prisoners, as well as questioning the grounds of their imprisonment in the first place.

Another point is that of women supporting the IRA at all, and parallels were made with the Bolsheviks of Soviet Russia and Islamic revolutionaries of Iran.

I have referred mainly, and deliberately, to what I saw as weaknesses of the conference. Being, however, one and indivisible, I was not able to attend all workshops, some of which were undoubtedly of interest and practical help. Nor have I mentioned the music, dancing and feminist films. There was a general feeling that the conference should be followed shortly by another, probably outside London, and probably to develop more fully some of the themes that arose. This was an encouraging sign of the weekend's success as a catalyst, and the organisers are to be thanked for the work and effort they put into it.

GAIA

## SOLVING HELPLESSNESS

My memory of meetings is appallingly bad - and even if it were not, I'm sure that my account of the evening session of the Anarcho-Feminist conference would be so biased as to be positively misleading for those who didn't attend and insulting for those whose views I chose to recount.

However, I would like to comment on a contribution made at the meeting which I believe was important. One woman (I think one of the facilitators/organizers) pointed out that she (and, by implication, other women) found it difficult to involve herself in the production of a/an anarchist

magazine. The impression I received (not necessarily the one given out) was that of helplessness in that, whilst the problem was clearly outlined, no attempt (or request) was made to solve it.

Helplessness is something I would wish on my enemies, but not on anyone who supports (or at least, does not actively oppose) anarchist ideas. It is a truly pessimistic condition in that it implies an individual who is powerless to act, being enslaved or determined by forces 'beyond his or her control'.

But need helplessness be permanent? The answer, if we are to be optimistic

(and surely we must be optimists otherwise what would be the point of doing anything?), is no - for, as you may have anticipated, an antidote exists in the form of action. Now I know this is easier said than done - but I would like to suggest to those who restrict themselves to analyzing problems, that involvement in their solution is ultimately more satisfying (and, of course, more productive for the cause in which we all believe). Specifically, I know that people producing magazines are always grateful for support (e.g. Freedom) and those who do not are not worth supporting. The message then is clear - get involved and solve helplessness! J.

## The March Of Men



## WHY THE MINERS AREN'T ON STRIKE

THERE was a feeling, it seemed in some quarters, that we would have been by now in the grips of another miners' strike. Those who looked to the miners to start the big fight with the Tory government must be very disappointed that there has been a rejection of the offer from the union to take us all out for a strike or something - it was never made clear what would happen - for a wage settlement that not many people believed was attainable.

What we have seen in this acceptance of the National Coal Board's offer is really a bit of sense. I was in favour of the strike but realised that there was not much chance of having one or winning it.

After the last strike in 1974 an agreement with the Central Electricity Board was reached that they would no longer pay for coal when it was delivered but when they used it. So now the CEGB has tons of coal stockpiled at its power stations. This means that any strike would take weeks to have an effect, as

they have a sizeable reserve on stock. After the 74 strike it took nearly a year to regain the money lost in the strike. This time it would have been a longer strike and not that many wanted to go through that again.

The productivity scheme has been getting people in my area, North Nottinghamshire, a good lump in their pay packets. On the strength of this many people have taken on more commitments such as HP and mortgages. It is a fact that if you're getting enough then you don't see much point in trying for much more. To go on strike you have to be sure, or fairly sure, of winning and also not have much to lose in that things have got so bad unless you do something they can only get worse.

So we have settled on 20 per cent and whatever else can be gained this year. Of course next year may be different if inflation keeps going.

What it does show is that despite popular mythology miners don't go on strike at the drop of a pit helmet, they will go

when they think there's a good chance of winning. Meanwhile the little strikes that happen every week will go on, threats of closure will be ritually reacted over and then forgotten as another pit is shut. Joe Gormley, with one eye on his coming peerage and the other on his wallet, will carry on 'leading' us until he is replaced by the dreaded Arthur Scargill who, if past records of 'militants' becoming leaders is anything to go on, will do little but huff and puff. Sir Derek Ezra, the chairman of the NCB, will continue his search for the robotic miner who won't strike. Slowly the areas that rely on the mining industry will decline again and maybe next year we'll be out to bring down the government, to replace them with the Labour party and then settle back to let the whole corrupt business carry on with 'four' people at the helm. Perhaps people will wake up, it's to be hoped they will.

CLEM TURFF

should have the effect of making the disciplinary procedure unworkable, and showing clearly the management's victimisation.

Apparently the management believed that by victimising activists they would 'give an example' to the others, and frighten us away from dissent, and any belief in our union as a collective force. The Libertarian Socialists, other 'far left' groups and many unaligned students aim to stop the expulsions, build a strong autonomous union, and continue our opposition to 'sifting out' assessments at the university.

We need much more money for publicity etc. and especially to pay the fines. Please send donations and letters of support to: Sussex 5 Defence Fund, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Brighton. Also contact Libertarian Socialist Group, c/o Students Union.

DAVE MUNDY

## CRIME AT SUSSEX

for the defence. The university management fully supported the prosecutions.

Two of those convicted, including ex-union president Richard Flint, face the Appeal Board against expulsion, a process held up by the trials on the grounds of evidence being sub judice. They are facing expulsion for 'disrupting exams'. A petition is to be sent to the vice chancellor, signed by a minimum of 100 students, stating that they participated in the exam disruptions, based on their acceptance of the union mandate. This

# PERSONS UNKNOWN - JURY OUT

AS we go to press (Monday, 17 December) the jury in the Persons Unknown conspiracy case has retired to consider their verdict. All we know at this stage is that judge Alan King-Hamilton directed that Trevor Dawton should be acquitted of the conspiracy charge. As Vince Stevenson's case is so closely linked with Trevor's, his counsel intervened to say that the judge should also direct acquittal for him, at which King-Hamilton replied, "That's up to the jury". Later in the day, we hear, the jury asked for a number of exhibits, including the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* definition of anarchism and *The Anarchist Cookbook*.

Our correspondent writes:

The judge's summing up has bridged the weekend. His Lordship began in great form with a vindication of jury vetting, understandably oblivious to the Attorney General's vague and silly guarantee of 10 December that "There will be no further jury vetting, if it should prove necessary, except under my direct approval".

He also did well to remind everyone that this was not a political trial. His reasoning was subtly based on the entry in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Kropotkin's) explaining that the word anarchy was derived from the Greek word meaning 'without a ruler'. This meant that 'if there was no ruler a state of lawlessness could result' and, as we all know, "That is the very opposite of politics, because politics is the art and science of governments".

It must, however, be admitted that, with utmost respect to the Learned Judge, his directions were not always simple to follow. For instance, it was not clear why, if anarchists were the non-political animals he described, he should take such pains to explain that 'It is one of the principles of the British constitution that anyone may hold any political view he chooses, however extreme, subject only to the laws of libel, slander and sedition'.

It was also unclear why, if they were non-political, he supported the prosecution theory, of which political motive was an integral part, and much resorted to for effect, or why, in particular, he was so fascinated by the contents of *The Anarchist Cookbook* that he proceeded to interpret from it at some length.

The presumable purpose was to show how some anarchists were indeed violent, as opposed to others who were not. In his own words, 'Some of them are violent. The crown does not have to prove motive, but in this trial it is alleged that the defendants did have a militant anarchist motive to attack some establishments by force'.

In the distant convolutions of some juror's brain, perhaps Ronan's quiet voice echoed: 'What persons in their right mind would want to cause an explosion at an atomic power station?' And (to Worsley's rejoinder - 'A person who believes strongly that authority is evil ... may get carried away in a moment of extravagance, especially when they're young') 'I would hardly want to do away with nuclear power by causing a nuclear explosion ...'

But if this were the case, the juror was almost certainly reassured by His Lordship's insistence that the trial was

not political, and anarchist politics were, in fact, a contradiction in terms. It followed that both political views and political motives (or at least, self-proclaimed political views) were a complete irrelevance to the case.

And yet .... One gets the feeling, doesn't one, of beginning to turn in circles. Does a faint recollection of 'terrorist cells' not linger in the public mind, a faint aroma of sodium chloride in the nostrils?

And what about the rumour that the prosecutor, the Crown, has been secretly converted to anarchism?

## CO-FOUNDER OF WHAT?

OUR regular TV review feature would, this week, have contained a discussion in depth of an issue of historic importance to all revolutionaries.

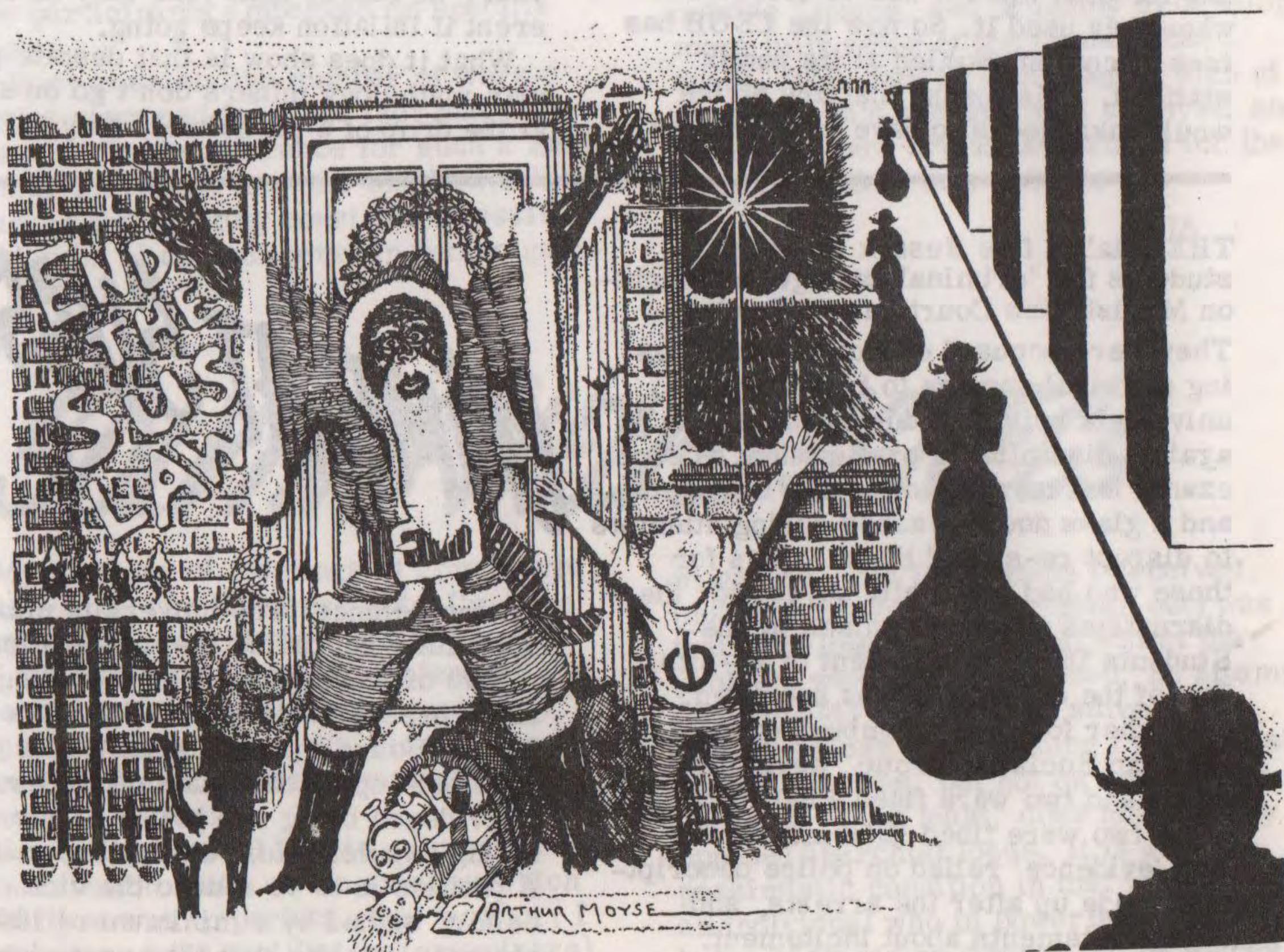
BBC2 (where else?) on Monday, 17 December, broadcast a programme in its 'Reputation' series, on Leon Trotsky, announced as a 'Co-Founder' of the Russian Revolution.

Unfortunately, Monday evening is the time when we have to prepare FREEDOM for our printers. So we missed Professor Alec Nove assessing one of the century's leading political influences. We also missed the contribution from E.H. Carr and Trotsky's grandson (whoever he may be).

So will some comrade please write in and tell us if the programme told the world about Trotsky's part in the betrayal of Makhno, after his victory over the White Guards and the German interventionists in Ukraine - including Denikin.

And tell us also - did they mention Kronstadt? And did they mention Trotsky's approval of the Brest-Litovsk pact with the Germans?

Just for the record ... we'd like to know. Just to be able to assess in accordance with the correct political analysis the stature of one of the century's leading political influences and co-founder of the Russian Revolution ....



## SORRY! SUBS UP FOR 1980

WE have come to the end of another year. Comrades may have noticed that the renewal notice for the coming year which they've usually received before now have not been enclosed in a recent FREEDOM. We have deliberated about the subscriptions for 1980. When the postage increased in August we hoped to be able to absorb the cost, even though (for the first time) overseas surface mail postage is higher than that for inland and despite the fact that the exchange for dollar subscriptions has for some time brought in less than the sterling subscription rate. But, with the Post Office set on raising postage again in the new year, we have decided this would get us into real difficulties and we would not be able to go through the year without having to ask subscribers to make up the difference.

So for 1980 the rates are:

Inland and surface mail overseas,	
sterling £7.	
USA .....	\$15.00
Canada .....	C\$18.00
Airmail USA	US\$20.00
Airmail Canada	C\$22.50
Airmail Europe	£8.00
Airmail Australasia	£9.50

### OAPS READ ON

HOWEVER, we have subscribers who have been loyal readers and supporters for years, now living on retirement pension, who will find this a largish bite out of it.

So, for these subscribers we are making a special rate of £6 a year.

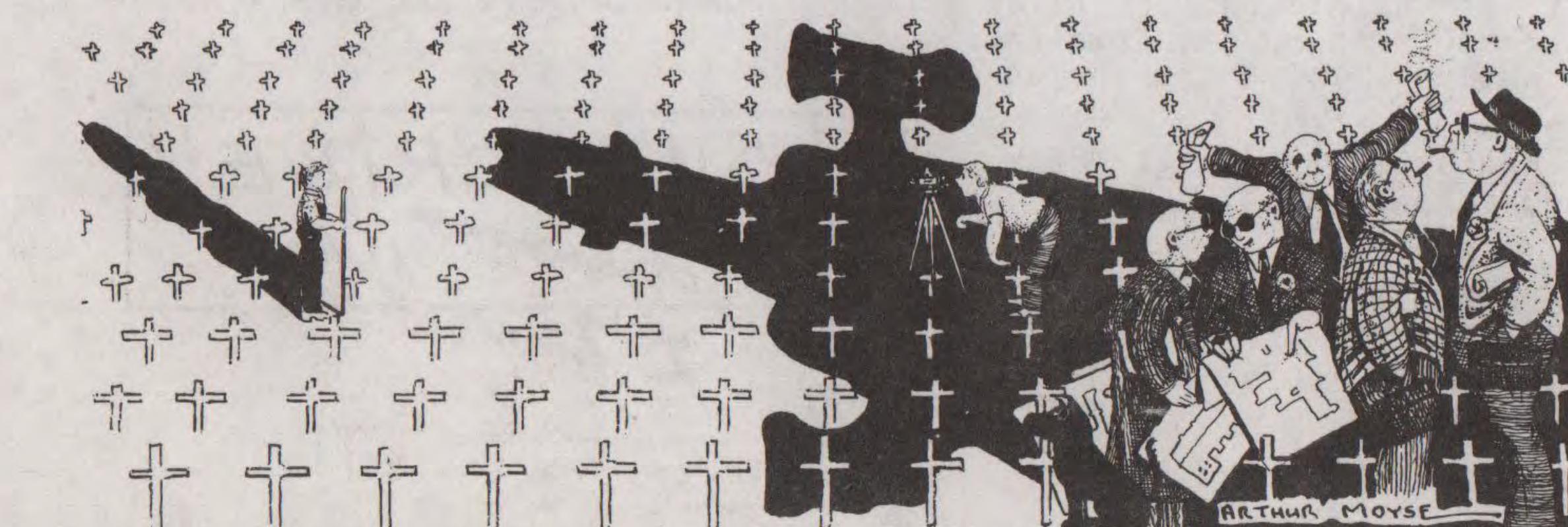
## LONDON READERS PLEASE NOTE

There have been various difficulties during this year, as you will have noticed with the late arrival of several issues and, in fact, plain inability to keep to the regular fortnightly 16-page issue. We regret this slipping from FREEDOM's long record of dropping onto the doormat punctually and regularly as long as the Post Office was functioning punctually and regularly - you're always welcome.

Next year we'd like to print the type of anarchist paper that is so plainly needed at this time and which, the steady stream of new enquiries shows, is also wanted. More regular production will involve an editorial group that has time to think, plan, write and to seek material from relevant sources on important and immediate issues. So please, if you can help with our technical problems or can type - get in touch.

Looking forward to a year in which we - subscribers, distributors, readers and helpers - can get the anarchist analysis and alternative to the growing number of sensible and sceptical people who are looking for an alternative to the present dreary mess.

## WHAT ARE THEY PLANNING?



## ALL OVER IN FIVE MINUTES?

continued from page 3

establishments. Close observers of the prison scene recall that the POA called for the reinstatement of those POA members who were convicted of Hull Riot criminal assault charges. There is a very real possibility of a full-scale mutiny of POA staff. This was an issue raised by Teddy Thomas, a recognised and respected authority on penal affairs, at the Howard League's four-day conference on 'The Role of the Prison Officer in the 1980's', held at York University in October.

The conference heard of the refusal of POA members at Wakefield Prison (a POA training school establishment) to allow two women (a probation officer and the prison's psychologist) to have keys, despite orders to the contrary from the Prison Department and the Prison Governor. And the conference heard from a member of the Board of Visitors of one establishment about the hostility shown towards him simply because he has carried out his BoV supervisory functions properly. This critic, according to The Times, has since been completely denied access to the establishment by the POA. Far from being all over in five minutes, the problem of mutinous and riotous prison officers is getting worse.

## IN BRIEF: UNION BANS 245-T

THE farmworkers' union has instructed all its members in forestry to refuse to use the herbicide 245-T, which contains dioxin.

Dioxin has been banned in America after being linked with miscarriages (it was used as a defoliant in Vietnam) and there is strong suspicion that recent unexplained miscarriages in North Wales and the mysterious death of a flock of sheep in Somerset were both due to recent spraying of nearby fields with 245-T.

The Forestry Commission has rejected a call to ban the herbicide spraying of its plantations - but the union has taken unilateral action.

## ONLY A RUMOUR...

A Reuter report says that 'Second Class' signs on taxis driven by blacks in Johannesburg will be abolished early next year. The Licence Office has been under pressure from civic groups to abolish a by-law under which black taxi drivers must stencil the signs on their vehicles.

We understand that it is only a rumour that William Whitelaw has put in a bid for the stencils, intending to set up a business making T-shirts for women seeking foreign husbands.

# BOOKSHOP NOTES

D I A R Y 1980: Housmans World Peace Diary 1980 (incl. 64-pp International Directory of Peace Organisations) £1.45 (14p)

CALENDAR 1980 Walt Whitman/ Anarchist drawing £0.10 (8p)

Writing on the Wall: France, May 1968, a documentary anthology, 327pp., paper, £4.50 (40p)

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER: The Never-Ending Wrong (on Sacco and Vanzetti) 64pp., cloth, £2.90 (25p)

ALEXANDER HERZEN: From the Other Shore and The Russian People and Socialism, 208pp., paper, £1.95 (29p)

MARIE FLEMING: The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisee Reclus and Nineteenth Century European Anarchism, 300pp., cloth, £10.95 (60p)

MARTIN A MILLER: \*Kropotkin, 342pp., paper, £4.50 (60p)

## FUNDS

### FREEDOM DEFICIT FUND

Donations Received  
1 - 14 November

IN SHOP: Anons 85p; WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £3; J.K.W. £1; LONDON SE6: B.S. £10; LONDON SE18: F.Y. 35p; CAMBRIDGE Mass: S.D.H. £1.50; HARTFIELD: O.M. £50; SEAHAM: D.H. 50p; HERSELT Belgium: M.V.E. 20p; LANCING: M.R. 63p; WHITTON: R.S. £10; LONDON SW9: -- £4; NEWCASTLE: F.W.K. 11p.

TOTAL: £82.14

Previously acknow'd: £1167.20

TOTAL TO DATE: £1249.34

Donations received  
15 - 28 November

LEWES: D.M. £1; ISLEWORTH: P.P.B. 45p; LONDON N19: A.G. 14p; DUNEDIN: M.B. £2; WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £3; J.K.W. 50p; LIVERPOOL: J.G. 53p; CALIFORNIA: Proceeds from a Picnic of Italian Comrades held on 16.9.79 at Santa Theresa Park, San Jose, per B.S.: £45.50; LONDON SE18: F.Y. 25p.

Total: £53.87  
Previously acknow'd: £1249.34

TOTAL TO DATE: £1303.21

Please add postage as in brackets. Items marked \* are published in the USA

US customers please convert prices and postage at £1 = \$2.20; Canada - in sterling or convert at £1 = \$2.60

BOOKLISTS: Please send SAE 10" x 7" with 13½p stamps, or 2 International Postal Reply coupons for our full booklists

### BOOKSHOP OPENING HOURS

TUESDAY: 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
WEDNESDAY: 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
THURSDAY: 2 p.m.\* - 8 p.m.  
\*provided BR Eastern Region working normally; if not, open at 6 p.m.  
FRIDAY ) ALWAYS RING BEFORE SATURDAY) CALLING TO CHECK IF SHOP OPEN.

INTERROGATIONS nos.17/18: On Workers' Control (in Italian, precis in Eng.) 256pp., paper, £1.60 (29p)

ARTHUR KOESTLER:  
The Sleepwalkers: A History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe, 623pp., paper, £1.75 (33p)  
Arrival and Departure, 190 pp., paper, £0.70 (17p)  
Darkness at Noon, 211pp., paper, £0.65 (17p)

B. TRAVEN:  
The Treasure of the Sierra Madre, 222pp., paper, £0.40 (17p)  
The Cotton Pickers, 200pp., paper, £2.50 (29p)

GREGORY P. MAXIMOFF:  
\*My Social Credo, 16pp., paper, £0.25 (11p)  
The Guillotine at Work: Vol. I : The Leninist Counter Revolution, 337pp., paper, £5.95 (60p)

JACK LONDON:  
The Assassination Bureau Ltd., 184pp., paper, £0.85 (17p)  
Revolution: Stories & Essays (ed. by Robert Barltrop), 164pp., paper, £1.50 (17p)

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\*Vices are not crimes: a vindication of moral liberty, 64pp., paper, £1.95 (17p)

PAUL AVRICH:  
\*The Russian Anarchists, 303pp., paper, £3.50 (29p)

VLADIMIR FISERA:  
Workers' Councils in Czechoslovakia: Documents & Essays 1968-69, 200pp., paper, £3.95 (29p)

### PREMISES/OVERHEADS FUND

Donations Received  
1 - 14 November

WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £2.00  
Previously acknow'd: £180.20

TOTAL TO DATE: £182.20

Donations received  
15-28 November

WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £3; MANCHESTER: R.B. £1.95; LONDON N.19: J.H.J. £7.

Total: £11.95

Previously acknow'd: £182.20

TOTAL TO DATE: £194.15

OUR TARGET FOR 1979 WAS £1,000

In Angel Alley, 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (tel. 01-247 9249)

# Anarchist Review Freedom



In this article Alan Albon criticises what is perhaps a fatal lack of interest in the land among modern, overwhelmingly city-based revolutionary movements. His solution is to counter agribusiness with a return to peasant values. This is not one which all anarchists would necessarily agree with, and we would welcome more debate - the hotter the better! - on the whole question of what we should do with our land.

EDITORS

IT IS significant that this paper, in common with many others, devotes so little space to the crucial question of agriculture. This is not surprising in a country where the peasantry is almost non-existent. However, there is a faint stirring of interest, confined in practice to those who can afford to pay the outrageous price of land, or those engaged in the city farms movement that was preceded by the street farmers. Apart from Kropotkin the only person in the post industrial era who was concerned about land tenure and use was Henry George, who produced a land taxation scheme designed to prevent land speculation. Personally I do not think that tinkering with the taxation or monetary system will correct the gross imbalance of human society in relation to its most important resource. For all this Henry George had some important insights. He observed in his book Progress and Poverty that poverty accompanied commercial progress and that the price of land went up with an expanding population, and that those who benefited were not the members of the community from whence the increased value came. Today pension funds and insurance companies are paying top prices for poor land, contributing to the higher cost of living in the important areas of food and housing. The PRICE bears no relation to the VALUE in terms of food production. George proposed to leave the land with its existing owners and use taxation to remove the speculative element. This leaves the whole question of ownership and control undisturbed. George was not only con-

cerned with the price of land, he was also concerned about the effects of rural depopulation. He wrote:-

"The concentration of population in cities fed by the exhaustive cultivation of large sparsely populated areas, results in a LITERAL DRAINING into the sea of the elements of fertility ... In a great part of the United States we are steadily exhausting our lands".

The following propositions have to be considered:-

1. That agriculture is the ONLY, and I repeat ONLY, human activity that is capable of producing wealth continually and that, moreover, has the capacity to increase its basic capital. (This has nothing to do with stocks and shares, money and other nonsenses). Modern agribusiness does not come into this category, as it is more akin to mining than to the basic biological processes from which the arts of arable and animal husbandry are derived.

2. That the so-called computer and micro-chip revolution will only accentuate the problems that face urban men and women. They will produce quantities of refrigerators with nothing to put in them, millions of motor cars for a petrol-less world, cookers without fuel or food and the myriad trivia daily gorged and disgorged by people in the cities. In addition they will add to a society already hooked on to a one way media system, producing human vegetables, nihilistic protestors or fodder for the psychiatric business.

### AGRICULTURAL REALITIES

Getting away from the fantasy world of finance, money, accountants and the twisted values that these fantasies impose upon agriculture, as on most other human activity, let us look at the tasteless carcasses that hang in the supermarkets and the irrigation boosted bags of water that adorn the greengrocer's shop, and see what the real economics of the situation are as opposed to those foisted on us by the so-called schools of economics.

Agribusiness depends almost entirely on depleting resources and not on human resources, of which there is an abundant

supply. The US department of agriculture has calculated that it takes five calories of energy for US agribusiness to produce one calorie of food. This is not the end of it, for it takes a further 20 calories of energy to process and deliver a doubtful product to the shops. Peasant farming uses solar energy, and disposes of only one calorie of energy to deliver five calories of food, and in some places many more. Yet in agriculture (and transport) the juggernaut continues on its blind path, determined to get rid of the peasants who are left - if not in quite the same ruthless way as Stalin, and early industrial England, then just as effectively nonetheless, by behaving as if all resources were still limitless. Nuclear energy will create more problems than it solves, for energy is only half the equation. Materials are the other.

Hierarchical society, from its urban power base, has always sucked into itself human and material resources that have ultimately impoverished the source of that power and wealth and led to ultimate decay. Modern industrial society, with its discovery of coal, oil and electrical and nuclear power, has added a new dimension to the speed at which vital biological resources are consumed. Yet in this country last year more food was consumed than produced.

At the end of a long life with about 150 inventions to his credit, Thomas Edison, on being honoured, observed "that while he should be pleased at the acclaim said that his pleasure was tinged with sadness as he saw his grandchildren and wondered whether they would be so pleased with science. Taking the example of problems of balance he had with dynamos, he said that unless science was balanced with humanity it could prove a curse to humanity". He saw the way things were going then.

#### TECHNOLOGY

It is said that technology is neutral. I do not believe this. The technology of a hierarchical, exploitative society reflects hierarchy and exploitation, and of all human activities this is the most true of agriculture. Whichever way you look at it industrial agriculture is an expensive way of producing food in terms of energy use, capital equipment, soil exhaustion and pollution hazards, and the cost grows all the time. Yet in spite of enormous inputs, yields of staple cereals have not greatly increased. It could be said that the yield of the average daily cow has risen enormously. On the face of it this seems true, but when one really goes into the economics of such production the fallacy is obvious. A gallon of milk now costs much more to produce because a much larger area of land is required to produce it; much more energy is used to produce it, and veterinary costs are higher. Grazing animals are efficient producers of milk from grass, and you can increase their real productivity by raising the fertility of the soil and grass and careful selection of the animals successful in doing this.

In *Farmers Weekly* of 23 November 1979 there was an article linking lameness in cattle to modern dairy rations. It was said that most cases of lameness had a metabolic origin and had grown more prevalent with more intensive dairy farming. This word intensive is misused, for while many more animals are kept in a certain area, the animals are fed on extensively produced food requiring energy to transport it. With the capital costs of rearing dairy cattle so high veterinary opinion in the same issue suggests that it may be better to go for more lactations and for lower, less costly yields. The same article also points out that groups of cows above 20 produce stress symptoms. So it seems that the old 20 cow per person idea was not such a bad one. It is well known that the most productive unit of land in land use terms is the allotment and the house cow too is nearly always a phenomenal producer.

#### A NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR A NEW AGE

The field is wide open for the development of new technologies. The sheer inability of agribusiness to solve the world food problem has long been apparent in the third world, where aid was given in unuseable machinery. The Green Revolution required inputs far beyond the means of the users and produced rice that was unpalatable and too expensive to grow. The pressures were to produce cash crops to pay for the military hardware of the rulers instead of to create a drive for self-sufficiency and real independence.



Alan at work

It is not impossible for an urban based society to have the backing of a productive small holding peasantry. In Japan there are such small farmers and the surplus rice production is a headache to the government, although there are many hungry mouths in South East Asia. But the main point is that the same techniques are applicable in this island too. From eastern Russia to southern Europe the peasant plot is still the most efficient in terms of energy and land use, though these two items are becoming the scarcest resources. Although our biggest asset, people power, is unused, all the odds are in favour of agribusiness, stacked by the finance houses and big business. However, with irreversible logic nature takes a hand.

There are techniques whereby the soil can be cultivated in suitable situations without inverting its structure; there are ways of dealing with sewage so that it is a valuable asset, and there are ways to increase the organic content of the soil. The present food production and distribution industry is a vast swindle, in which meat is boosted with hormones to increase body weight (i.e. water). The same applies to vegetables and fruit, through expensive and unnecessary irrigation which, together with fertilisers, destroys the soil structure. Machines that damage a third of the crop and leave a third on the field. Machines that are so heavy that they destroy the soil structure and require more machines to break up the subsoil.

If our cities are not to become hungry desolate areas in the middle of a desolate countryside, then some balance has to be achieved between them. Our ancestors did not leave the countryside of their own free will but were forced to do so by the new ruling class who saw power and riches undreamed of in the new industrial slums that were our cities. Here not only the adults but also the children were pressed into service in conditions that not even the serfs would have tolerated.

Hierarchical social systems, and the capitalist system in particular, have always existed on asset stripping. In the West, through the introduction of consumerism, some sort of partnership with the working class was achieved and the process was accelerated by which the capital assets of the whole of humanity have been stripped. Now, the positive conservatism of the peasants with their instinct to preserve the land, must be united with the wider and non-parochial knowledge that the planet embraces all humanity, and must be

*Continued on page 13*

# AN OPEN LETTER TO THE WORKERS-

'A SPECTRE is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism'. So begins, as everyone knows - perhaps Mrs. Thatcher - the famous Manifesto of 1848. She might possibly be different in that slight degree from her predecessor, the former 'Socialist' prime minister, Sir Harold Wilson, who continually boasts that he has never read Marx. Quite clearly the spectre is no longer what it was. It has ceased to becon with its magic wand the hopeful and the starry-eyed towards the effulgent light of that glorious future, dawn when the gates of the fruitful and honeyed land of Socialism will open wide and we, with quickening pulse and love in our hearts will, hand in hand, all enter joyfully therein. It is, sadly, no longer a vision to stimulate the imagination. It has become petrified, rigid and immovable; a sculpted monument that stands upon a bloodstained sacrificial sarcophagus where lies entombed that beautiful singing bird that embodied all the dreams of yester year. And, carved upon its artificially marbled panels, beneath the effigy, in letters of gold are the words: Economy. Production. Workers of the World—Work On!

'My name is Ozymandias,' wrote Shelley, 'King of kings. Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair! Nothing beside remains. Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare, the lone and level sands stretch far away.'

Another spectre, however, a rather shabby and degenerate apparition still haunts Mrs. Thatcher and her ilk. They need it. They are looking, through their wishful gloom, in a different direction. It frightens them. But, like all good sado-masochists, they are mesmerised and attracted towards it and wallow perversely in its fascination. What they see is not what is in front of their eyes but rather what their jangled synapses have conjured up behind them. And from this cerebral ferment there exudes a daily flood of mythological sewage which splatters the spectacles of the subservient and frustrates and distorts their vision.

And how do the workers fare in all of this? How do we struggle out of the mud, wipe the muck from our eyes, recognise the treadmill that we work upon and begin to think of a way to get off it?

The trouble is, so successful have the salesmen of modern mythology been that by far the majority of us have no wish to do so. The myth, like a film of phantasy, spins its reels between us and the truth and all we see are its reflections on an opaque screen which separates us from reality. This kind of thing has all been said before, of course, long before the television had actually realised the myth before our eyes, way back in ancient Greece by Plato who compared us, even then, to prisoners chained to the wall of a cave whose only glimpses of the truth were the vague and flickering shadows of reality reflected on the opposite wall. In those days, one must remember, they did not suffer from the unceasing battery upon their minds from the radio, the television, the press and all the never-ending effects of highly promoted so-called entertainment, not to mention the coveted compulsory education so generously provided by the State, together with our famous Welfare kindness which ensures that even our private lives are carefully managed and arranged. Ah! Yes, our modern mind manipulators will tell us, but in the days of ancient Greece the workers were slaves. Today it is different, the workers are free. They actually tell us so. In fact, they find it necessary to keep on telling us in case we may begin to doubt it.

We are free to march in the streets, to join our unions and support our leaders. True, they keep strengthening the police

force and painting wonderful pictures of life in the army but that is in the interest of necessary law and order and in spite of the fact that so much is spent in making us willingly subservient, it is obvious that they don't really trust us. We must understand that this is not our world. We are only let loose under sufferance provided we conform, and even so, passport or not, the permission we are patronisingly granted to conduct our own lives depends upon our grateful acceptance of supervision.

Naturally, therefore, being humans and not passively docile animals or mechanised robots, we react to this treatment. (Sadly, not all of us. But, at least, some of us do.) And it is here that we run into what has come to known as Catch 22. And let it be said, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to us is practically all our own fault. It is easy for us to blame it upon whatever government there is but we have to remember that we put them there in the first place and it is time we began to have a go at arranging our own affairs because no government so far has ever neglected its primary duty to the privileged, to the disadvantage of the rest, and all elected governments have always turned out to be liars.

Here is the catch. There are two ways which have been tried to get us out of this mess. Both, trailing around their separate paths, have similarly returned us to the starting point at square one. Maybe, perhaps, not quite at square one; possibly a stage or two higher up because we have the opportunity of looking back and recognising some of the tricks of the trade.

The first is the well-known liberal method. Nowadays there is not much of a future for this device. It has run out of substance and has left only a thin will-o'-the-wisp of its former significance to remind us that it once was a considerable force for change. (Although, admittedly, Cyril Smith is not without substance, it is not of the kind that can be of much help.) Nevertheless it cannot be so easily dismissed because there is much to be learned from it and its relics still hang around in the anarchist movement in the shape of individualism and the rejection of all suggestions of becoming organised or regimented into a controllable body. The movement had its great days and its followers were inspired to change the face of England. It has now descended to the tawdry political chicanery which has been carried out with more success by the Labour Party. One may say that the hopeful heart of it continued in the alternative communities which developed in England and the names of Owen, Olive Schreiner, Edward Carpenter and William Morris remind us that there were those who tried to keep its spirit alive. The Co-operative Movement arose out of it although 'Marxist' distorters have tried to claim it as a product of working class activity. The fact is that those workers were motivated by an ideology which was entirely liberal. In the Pennine valleys the local mill owner was also the promoter and chairman of the Co-op. John Stuart Mill's conception of liberty might still have something to teach some present day libertarians. Herbert Spencer, the philosopher of liberalism, wrote a book *Man against the State*. These liberals wanted no government interference. They were disciplined, active, independent and capable of self-management. Dissidents all: they were Quakers and non-conformists. These are the people who made the Industrial Revolution in this country - the Darbys of Coalbrookdale, Huntsman's steel, Newcomen, Watt, Telfer, Macadam - the connection between industry and dissent was close.

And why?  
Ever since the days of Cromwell the established ruling pow-

er in England was firmly fixed in the conviction that never again would it be possible for some military and arbitrary dictator to rise up from the ranks and usurp the authority which tradition and custom had created as the foundations of the English Constitution. The power of absolute monarchy, too, was kept in check. Protestantism had made its progress but Luther did not condemn Authority. It must be the right kind of authority. Nevertheless the concept of inner conviction confers the right to think, and here, in spite of this Athenian compromise in the name of democracy, one may still be able to uncover the trapdoor to liberty.

And so it was with the best intentions in the world (i.e. according to the 'human nature' of the time), the English prevented all advances from below to climb the ladder and escape to freedom. The French Revolution had stricken them with fear. The image of Napoleon was of an ogre rather than that of a destroyer of ogres. He had really further alarmed the entrenched Whiggery and the Tories and convinced them of the righteousness of their particular method of oligarchy. No soldier could rise from the ranks. Palmerston defended the purchase of commissions in the army on the grounds that it was 'only when the army was unconnected with those whose property gave them an interest in the country, and was commanded by unprincipled military adventurers, that it ever became formidable to the liberties of the nation'. The events in Paris in 1789 must not happen here. England must be thoroughly insulated against revolution and the principle was firmly established that all avenues to the higher echelons of this society must be marked off as closed to those not acceptable to the English unwritten mythology of 'Democracy for the Yes-men only'. Witness the public school system. This was why the recent Blunt affair caused such annoyance.

So if any little corporal had ambitions here he must find another road. And that road could only be found outside the restricting controls of the State. If you cannot go upwards you can go outwards and spread yourself far and wide in all directions. So - what about the acquisition of wealth? Dissident, almost by compulsion, the way forward was thus made for the industrialists to make their revolution without the waving of the tricolour and all the other demonstrative hullabaloo which, as DeTocqueville has pointed out was almost unnecessary anyway. To put it another way, if you cannot go out by the front door you can slip out by the back way.

So then, away we go with Robert Owen to New Lanark or still further away to New Harmony in America. Or otherwise we set up our factory in the bleak valleys of the north of England. And if the state intrudes upon our activities we try to alter it to suit our ends. Hence the Reform Bills. John Bright went into politics to get rid of the Corn Laws but he would not accept any office in the Government; nevertheless he opened the door for the compromise which has proceeded via Lloyd George and Jeremy Thorpe to the present censors after power.

This is the way it all goes. We start off in opposition to the State and finish up as part of it, and become, willy-nilly, very concerned to maintain the status quo.

Such too is the sad story of the Trade Union movement.

There will, however, be many anarchists who will tell me that they do not see themselves as relics of this liberal tradition. Maybe it is personally satisfying to them to opt out and exist like a modern Robinson Crusoe in a cul-de-sac. But the established way of life is still moving around them and, whether they like it or not, they will be carried with it. After all, they must live by what it provides and as consumers, in a negative way, if nothing else, they help to maintain it.

It is not surprising that Lenin poured much scorn on liberalism and readily accepted Marx's idea that the workers would overthrow the ruling class and open the way for socialism. This brings me to my second point. It is, of course, this method which has been tried as the other way to achieve our freedom. And the existence of the Soviet Union is a manifestation that this doesn't work either.

There is a mythology which surrounds the working class, and it is the recognition of this largely self-imposed, do-it-yourself fantasy which will help to remove the mud which blocks our vision: mud which we have been intrigued to see as beautiful and which is possessed of a remarkable clinging capacity. It has hardened very often into concrete structures which will be difficult and painful to clear away because their solidity

represents adherence to the principle of NO Change: our inverse form of Toryism.

The words 'workers' and 'working class' have become elevated to a pedestal which merges on the religious. To cast a doubting and critical eye upon these symbols of our birthright can only be compared to the nationalist view of the betrayal of one's country. We are not people. We are British, French, Catholics, Muslims, Blacks ... and Workers.

Revolution is another word which is calculated to weave spells and to cover up reality beneath the magic of fantasy. The French Revolution replaced a King with an Emperor; the Russian Revolution got rid of the Tsar and installed Stalin in the Kremlin. And the workers in Iran, having overthrown the Shah, are similarly convinced and manifestly overjoyed in the belief that they also have made a Revolution. It must not be forgotten that whatever way we may describe those changes of government, they could not have been achieved without organisation.

The question which must be answered by those who wish to organise (Direct Action Movement, London Workers Group - see FREEDOM nos. 12 and 18) is how are we going to avoid making the same mistakes, because I am convinced, nevertheless, that organisation is necessary. And do not let us denigrate the people who led us into these traps before; they were not fools. But we shall be the fools if we do not learn from them. Obviously the organisation we must direct our attention towards must be a very different organisation and its final result must not be the creation of another ruling authority.

The myth was started on its beguiling career by Marx and provides another example of a bright and progressive idea which has been converted by its disciples into its lifeless opposite. Marx could not be blamed for the way that people conditioned under the omnipresent rule of authority have interpreted him. The fault, dear brothers and sisters, is not in our stars but in ourselves, that we are underlings. (Beg pardon for the paraphrase).

Let me quote from the famous Manifesto again: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word oppressor and oppressed

... Our epoch, however, is the epoch of two hostile camps, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat". The inference implicit in this statement is that the proletariat will overthrow the bourgeoisie as their forebears in previous class struggles have done. Lenin in the State and Revolution was at some pains to pick out the passages which showed that Marx really meant that. But the truth of the matter which upsets all this is that the slaves did not overthrow the Roman Empire, nor did the serfs, in the Middle Ages, overthrow feudal society. To be fair to Marx, this is what he actually said: "From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie developed". This bit seems to have been forgotten. Probably because it upsets the whole of the party programme.

The burghers of the medieval towns who made their own laws and enclosed themselves within walls to keep the feudal barons out, established their own independent way of life totally different from feudal society. Serfdom became a thing of the past. They were wealthy and powerful and created their own coinage and their own religion (their own ideology), and advanced knowledge and learning considerably. The serfs, for instance, had no need for double-entry bookkeeping, nor for the compass, for maps, nor for the development of science. In other words a new consciousness had arisen, a new way of thinking which penetrated the former mythology, and a new society, self-managing and fully-formed had grown up inside feudal society which eventually 'burst asunder' the fetters of that society. One does not have to think very deeply to see that a successful revolt of the serfs would have produced nothing more than another feudal regime with, say, Wat Tyler as king instead. (And Wat Tyler, leader of the toilers, stands in a straight line with Stalin and the Ayatollah).

Similarly, without developing the point any further, it can be seen that the revolt of the slaves under Roman rule places Spartacus as a predecessor of Wat Tyler.

The significance of all this is that if the working class are going to overthrow the rule of capitalism it will not be as the working class. They will have ceased to think of themselves as the working class. And, brothers and sisters, I think we should start on this track immediately, because if we are still

being self-indoctrinated to think of ourselves as the workers when we enter the new society we shall want leaders and authorities to tell us what to do.

Neither Marx nor Lenin provided us with the necessary consciousness to take us into the promised land. In fact they were too full of scorn for what they chose to denigrate as Utopia for them to think of it. Besides, the immediate struggle completely occupied their time. Their programme did not take into account the rise of a Stalin. In addition you cannot produce a consciousness out of economic theory or an ideology out of mathematics and monetary calculations. The Have-nots will assuredly rise up in revolt if deprivation forces them to do so. But they do not make an uprising in order to preserve their position as Have-nots. Trade unions actually do, but not an uprising, merely an attempt to improve their lot, which remains static. There is no Have-not consciousness. A new society will not be founded on the principle of maintaining a Have-not state. A vacuum is not an ideal to be aimed at; to carry the argument a step further it is as though the slaves at the time of Spartacus had been successful and had thus obtained their freedom, but instead, they had said, no, we are slaves, we have a slave consciousness, we must be true to our credo. In fact, if the conditioning process had been half as complete as it is nowadays they could not have done anything else.

But haven't we already seen it happen? Brothers and sisters, it must not happen again.

It is therefore not on for Paul Buckland who wants action and organisation (no. 12, 2 June) and for W. Millis (no. 13) who wants to be an individualist, to attack one another since they represent, in different ways, the two alternatives I have indicated, because either way can lead us into a dead end. As Laurens Otter says we must build a bridge. That bridge I see as the creation of the consciousness that will lift us out of the

mud; the consciousness that will remind us that we are human beings and not just toiling robots on a conveyor belt; and that we have possibilities that are suppressed and confined within the limitations of this circumscribed world of material production. The day of the silicon can be our day. Let us think how we can prepare for it. Struggle, of course, we must. But do not let struggle become a way of life; our vision must carry us beyond it. Think of the IRA ...

Well, you say, after all this verbiage, is there a way forward? I can only hint at the direction of my own thinking on the matter because this article is already long enough.

I think there is a clue to be unearthed in Marx's word alienation. We do not see the wholeness of society. We live, divided up into separate compartments pursuing our own blinkered paths. We learn separate subjects which do not make an education. We produce for profit and not for the consumer. Divisions there are in hundreds and there are many bridges to be built. Happily there are some tiny beginnings which show that the growth of vandalism, the logical end of alienation, is not total. Consumer societies and environmentalists, ecologists, parent-teacher cooperation, patients' associations etc. etc. I welcome Arthur Scargill's opposition to the promotion of nuclear energy, no matter what vested interest he may have in the coal industry and wish that more trade unionists would move out of their own particular battlefield. As long as the work is done for wages and not for the welfare of the community nuclear energy will always be a danger.

The wages struggle is obviously not enough. It is not just a trade union struggle. It concerns the building of a wider unity for the creation of a better world. And a unity, this time, not imposed from above, but built up from below.

FRED YATES

## An Anarchist Peasantry?

From page 10



from the Third World, produce hybrid, high-yielding varieties, prone to disease and rely on expensive chemicals for success. The report goes on:-

"Because of their involvement in several phases of the system agribusiness plant breeders look to profits from several sectors. This enables them to breed seed suitable to their chemical, processing or retail interests, but not necessarily suitable to the profitability of the farmer or the nutrition of the consumer."

The report concludes that the activities of these companies is a threat to the long term food supplies of the world. The rulers of the third world, largely western educated, western orientated, are bent on industrialisation as a means of power and still reduce their agriculture to western dependent cash cropping.

### CONCLUSION

The pressures to change our farming practices are now very great. There is an unease abroad as people begin to recognise the fragility of our urban civilisation. The problems can be solved for us unpleasantly by nuclear war or nuclear accident, by collapses caused by the destruction of the biomass through various commercial agencies. They can be solved by violent upheaval resulting in an accentuation of existing totalitarian tendencies. They can be solved by a sudden growth of awareness that hierarchical society, with its inbuilt divisions, is no longer up to the task of finding the techniques that will enable us to live within the compass of our environment. People are becoming more aware and in an isolated sort of way, here and there; the techniques to achieve a balance are there. The number of people actually engaged in the vital tasks of growing food and building houses is ridiculously small, but I am sure that given the opportunity many more would be at it, not as serfs but as free people with the real economic freedom that cooperative use of land can give.

ALAN ALBON

# GENETICS AND FREEDOM

Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature by Mary Midgley.  
Harvester £6.50 377p.

MAINSTREAM anarchism has produced only two thinkers of the first rank: Proudhon and, of course, Kropotkin. Consequently, the simple truths of anarchism are not assembled convincingly and lack a developing theoretical superstructure. This means that anarchism must often borrow ideas and notions from competing and inimical traditions, like Marxism. However, as Marxism dies 'the death of the thousand qualifications', it is encouraging to note the continuance of what can be referred to as 'the Kropotkinian tradition'.

Mary Midgley's book unwittingly lies in this tradition. It provides a feast of factual information, argumentation and conceptual clarification which should be of interest and use to anarchists, ecologists, feminists and animal liberationists. The range of the book is prodigious, but it is conveniently broken down into five parts. Nevertheless, the book is difficult to summarise briefly and I shall have to confine myself to the most salient points made in a complex argument.

The central contention of the book is that humans differ from animals in degree rather than in kind and that there is such a thing as 'human nature' - our animal inheritance. Mary Midgley proceeds - quite rightly - to castigate 'the Blank Paper theorists' - the behaviourists, the Marxists and the existentialists - for maintaining that we are totally the products of our social conditioning. Human beings are not indeterminate, ready to be poured into any social mould; genetic 'programming' is the precondition of - and sets the limits for - social conditioning. The Blank Paper theory cannot satisfactorily explain such persistent and universal human behaviour patterns as dancing, singing, pair-bonding, and playing etc. If all such behaviour is entirely the result of social conditioning, then who started it and how? How do, only and isolated, children learn to play? And why is the social conditioning process so ineffective as to permit innovation and rebellion? Furthermore, if there is no such thing as human nature, then what grounds can there be for criticising certain forms of labour, housing and social organisation as 'dehumanising' or 'inhuman' or 'unnatural' - especially if, since there is no such thing as human nature, human beings are infinitely malleable?

Mary Midgley is more than fair to Edward Wilson's Sociobiology, but this is justifiable. (After all, Wilson has had to suffer the vilification of the more traditional Left; and such is the level of stereotyping in their thought that they cannot see that genetic explanations do not necessarily spell fascism!) The main error in Sociobiology is, she argues, that he has succumbed, like Freud and like Marx, to the temptation to try to explain all social phenomena by reference to one type of level of explanation. Types of explanation can be related to one another without being reducible to one another, or to one basic type of explanation - eg. the sub-atomic. Consequently, we can explain phenomena without falling for "the tantalizing notion of a single cause" (p. 22).

Mary Midgley deals very well with the problem of egoism. (She makes the interesting suggestion that egoism is a predominantly male-linked doctrine; and also locates the fountainhead of morality and its sentiments in the intimacy of the relation between mother and child). More importantly, she argues that "motivation is fundamentally plural" (p. 168) and that "there are simply far too many possibilities to be included in a single way of life" (p. 306). This means, of course, that as a species we are prone to both inner and social conflict, but this should not precipitate us into moral pessimism or 'romantic individualism'.

"In social animals, such as ourselves and the wolves, there must be natural affection and communicativeness, and, in spite of our evolutionary gaffe in inventing weapons, it is plain that we are much better fitted to live socially than to live alone.... Rousseau's or Hobbes's

state of nature would be fine for intelligent crocodiles, if there were any. For people it is a baseless fantasy. Nor does our richness in aggression disprove this". (p. 47)

Beast and Man is a fine and stimulating blend of philosophy and science. Its author is no anarchist, but her conclusions are of relevance to anarchist theory and practice - not least because she debunks a muddled concept of freedom so popular with the authoritarian Left. Perhaps the anarchists she is closest to are Paul Goodman (cf. the introduction to Growing Up Absurd) and Kropotkin.

If anarchism is to maintain continuity with its own traditions and to develop a corresponding theoretical superstructure, then anarchists could do a lot worse than read books like this one. As Mary Midgley says: "for reforming and revolutionary purposes, we need to understand our genetic constitution". (p. xix)

PAUL ROWNTREE



# THE POLITICS OF PERMANENT PROTEST

Anderson's Social Philosophy, by A. J. Baker. Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1979, \$12.50 (Aust.) Hardback.  
\$7.95 (Aust.) Paperback.

THOSE who call themselves 'anarchists' have usually been convinced that an anarchist society is possible. There have been a few, however, who have had no such conviction - certain European individualists, for example. And among this few must also be numbered the Sydney Libertarians, who took their name from the Australian city where most of them lived and studied.

The Sydney Libertarians held that any society is composed of many differing and sometimes hostile interests. One of these interests is that of anarchism or anti-authoritarianism. This interest is in perpetual conflict with authoritarian interests, but will never vanquish them, nor be vanquished by them. Anarchism, in other words, will always remain a 'permanent protest' against authority. It will never become a general way of going on.

One of the main sources for this forthright pluralism and well-grounded realism was the social philosophy of John Anderson, professor of philosophy at Sydney university from 1922 to 1958. Until now his social views were only available in scattered essays and critiques, but with this book they are now presented for the first time in a coherent fashion.

Writing in a clear and readable style, Jim Baker, himself a leading Sydney Libertarian and former pupil and colleague of Anderson, outlines Anderson's theory in the first part of his book and in the second part details Anderson's political activities and public controversies. Despite the various shifts in his political sympathies - ranging from pro-Communism in his youth to anti-Communism in his old age - Anderson always vigorously defended the liberty of the individual against

## FABIAN FALSITY

Community Socialism Fabian Tract no. 4.4 by Giles Radice

THE most distinctive feature of this pamphlet is the lack of cohesion in its arguments. Despite producing several clear and satisfying analyses of, for example, the classical philosophical debate over equality, the author pushes his thesis through a series of logical errors: most of these are symptomatic of the Labour Party's acceptance into, and support of, the authoritarian establishment. It becomes apparent that his view of 'community' is completely opposed to the real communitarianism of Tolstoy: he proposes them not to create greater liberty but to reinforce the State by including within it those groups who might otherwise be a threat to its safety. He would end the alienation of the minority groups inside society by giving them a 'stake' in it, thus tying their loyalty to the organism which they might destroy. Furthermore, the principle of community socialism is proposed as an election winning strategy, a false restructuring of society to ensure long term Labour domination of the political system. He begins:

"My purpose is not merely to consider how best Labour can win the next general election but also to explore how to create a new climate of opinion... which will sustain a Labour Government beyond the life of a single parliament..."

the invasions of authority. As one of his most characteristic statements reads:

"... the measure of freedom in any community is the extent of opposition to the ruling order, of criticism of the ruling ideas; and belief in established freedom, or in State-guaranteed benefits, is a mark of the abandonment of liberty. The servile State is the unopposed State". (The Servile State, 1943)

One big disagreement I have with Anderson is over his quasi-mystical belief that 'we should think of social movements not as formed by individuals but as passing through individuals, 'catching them up' as it were'.

For those who believe that teleological forces are at work in the universe this belief may be acceptable, but if one does not believe - and I certainly do not - in the Will of God, or History of the People, or some other spook, the question remains: If individuals do not form 'social movements', then what or who does? Anderson does not say. It seems to me that he replaces the Marxist belief in a monistic historical process that operates singly, with a concept of plural social forces that operate severally. However, other than referring to the 'unintended' results of historical movements initiated by some individuals (which would appear to indicate that 'social movements' do not simply 'catch up' individuals) Anderson is as vague and as mystifying as the Marxists regarding the origin and composition of these 'social movements'.

Jim Baker's book is a good start to what I hope will be a series. I know he wants to write one about the Sydney Libertarians. If he does this study of Australia's maverick philosopher, John Anderson, will provide a useful complement to it.

S. E. PARKER

Radice bases his demands for a strengthening of community on the observation that acceptance of established authority and participation in elections are declining. He notes that:

"... the number of days lost through strikes has increased substantially since the 60s, there is a greater resistance to managerial authority while trade union leadership is challenged by shop floor groups".

He must then be proposing the growth of communities as a 'cure' for it: this places his ideas on the level of those by the police to restore the local police to more effective control of affairs and ensure 'law and order'. His communities would effectively become units of local government, although he concedes the need for greater public participation in the running of schools, etc. The emphasis placed on the development of 'tripartism' in industry, an effective arbitration system so that precious production need never be disrupted by trade unions, and the adherence on an outdated Keynesian model for economic growth, all underline the Labour Party's total lack of imagination and commitment to the maintenance of capitalism and the class system in the UK. Radice includes a section on the 'Meaning of Freedom'. Typically, it repeats the old utilitarian precept, the old lie that:

"... in order to preserve or increase the liberty of the majority the liberty of some has to be limited", for

"... clearly freedom can never be absolute".

Anarchy is not chaos, but in an anarchistic society order is derived from below, from within the people who make up the society themselves. Thus, no real, free community could come about through the strategy of a power-hungry 'Democratic Socialist' government.

FRANCIS SPUFFORD

# ART AS SOCIAL CRITIQUE

After Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman were expelled from the U.S., then from the U.S.S.R., they were bounced around Europe and Canada by government bureaucracies, while fascism gradually rose to dominance. Although Berkman and Goldman publicized the betrayal of the Russian social revolution by the Bolsheviks, the international left did not like to hear about it and waited until the 1950s to admit that there were problems with Soviet "communism." In the 1920s and 1930s, Berkman and Goldman had to reevaluate their anarchist politics because clearly historical events had gone beyond their theories. Goldman concluded that the problems were not simply economic exploitation and government power because such could not explain why so many working people were supporting fascism, why so many workers had supported World War One. In 1927 she wrote to Berkman, "The entire school, Kropotkin, Bakunin, and the rest, had a childish faith in what Peter calls 'the creative spirit of the people.' I'll be damned if I can see it. If the people could really create out of themselves, could a thousand Lenins or the rest have put the noose back on the throat of the Russian masses?"<sup>20</sup> The problem, then, was authoritarianism, the willingness to accept political authority, the inability to pursue self-determination. (This too is the topic of Rudolf Rocker's classic study, *Nationalism and Culture*, published in English in 1937, and recently republished in the U.S. by Michael Coughlin; Rocker was good friends with Goldman and Berkman.) Before both members of the Frankfurt School and Wilhelm Reich had begun their studies into the psychology of fascism, Berkman and Goldman were trying to analyze the problem of domination. Nineteenth-century socialism from the utopians to the Marxists and anarchists had constructed a movement and set of theories concerned primarily with the dynamics of exploitation; the utter collapse of the workers' movements during World War One, after the Bolshevik seizure of power, and the rise of fascism made necessary a revolutionary theory that would take domination as its point of departure.

Emma Goldman was extraordinarily sensitive to the problem of domination and the importance of individualism and avant-garde art.<sup>21</sup> The Mother Earth Press published Oscar Wilde's "Soul of Man Under Socialism," promoted the avant-garde theatre of Ibsen and Hauptmann, and sympathetically introduced readers to the thought of Nietzsche. Goldman was beginning to formulate a theory of domination when the Spanish revolution occurred; although she disagreed with many of the anarchosyndicalist decisions, especially the one to participate in the Popular Front government, she continued to work for the Spanish revolution.

If the primary factor of oppression is exploitation, then it is plausible to relegate art, especially avant-garde art, to a lowly position, subordinate to the class struggle. If, however, domination is at least as important as exploitation, then art, especially avant-garde art, gives one a way of comprehending experience. The avant-garde, always working at the limits and extremes of consciousness, makes possible libertarian ruptures with established reality. To understand experience, so much of which is shaped and determined by factors outside one's control, one must go beyond the consumerist entertainments served up by the culture industry. One must also go beyond the anarchist and Marxist theories formulated in the nineteenth century on assumptions that are no longer adequate. Every aspect of modern life has the imprint of authoritarian design inscribed on it. One is taught from the earliest age to submit to authority, to accept bureaucratic procedures, to defer one's judgment to the experts, to limit one's desires. The social world which men and women confront every day is totalitarian; totally organized from top to bottom, from

left to right, without any free zones within which one might formulate a counter-cultural opposition.<sup>22</sup>

One of the most discouraging aspects of the 1970s' left has been its resurrection of exploitation-based politics and its revival of cultural conservatism. Exploitation-based politics can and will be coopted by liberals, social democrats, union bureaucrats, or Marxist-Leninist parties. In the West it is not economic exploitation as such but the entire culture that deprives us of creative autonomy. Since domination is the experience which defines our modernity, we should look to avant-garde art, not theories about the working class, in order to find libertarian points of departure. Although rank and file worker initiatives and autonomous working-class movements are anarchist possibilities, they are only possibilities; if they are not to be coopted and assimilated, then the anarchists must also provide insights into authoritarianism and domination. Unless anarchism is linked with the attempt to build a counter-culture, a living alternative to the culture industry and its consumerism, then it will merely be the left-wing of a reformist effort to patch up the irrational breakdowns of the capitalist system. Along with a 1930s' style politics has come cultural conservatism, a reaction against the 1960s. The major problem, according to people like Christopher Lasch and Richard Sennett, is what they call narcissism, which they identify with the 1960s' counter-culture. Although the many critiques of the counter-culture contain useful insights, their purpose is not to reconstitute a counter-culture at a higher level, but to demolish it. Lasch, for example, considers the avant-garde historically obsolete and presumably prefers "The Waltons," where the family is clearly a haven (in between the commercials).<sup>23</sup>

A libertarian counter-culture has to be avant-garde to maintain its critical perspective on capitalist exploitation and modern domination. The avant-garde, however, must be challenged at all times because, like everything else in a capitalist society, it tends toward commodification. There is a sense in which the avant-garde's innovative fervor corresponds not only to the capitalist fashion industry but to an essential feature of modern capitalism; the accumulation of capital depends on the perpetual destruction of old patterns of consumption and the creation of new needs which only the new and improved commodities can fulfill.

The avant-garde has always dramatized the desire to overcome the dichotomy of art and life, to counteract audience passivity, to demystify aesthetic creation, to insist upon a participatory art. The avant-garde, however, must go beyond the stage of merely making a gesture in this direction and start seriously implementing this aesthetic program. The next stage has to be aesthetic education, the proliferation of aesthetic skills and training so that former audiences can create their own art (or at least become more critically aware participants in aesthetic experiences). Unless people participate in experiences outside those initiated by the culture industry (whether it is PBS operas or "Charlie's Angels," "Superman," or "Coming Home," Jeannie C. Riley or the Rolling Stones), they will never learn to be self-determining, confident of their ability to create alternatives to the society controlled by government, big business, bureaucracies and the experts. If people are to free themselves from authoritarianism, then they have to begin creating their own culture. I think the libertarian socialists associated with the journal *Root and Branch* are whistling to the wind when they dismiss as irrelevant the issue of culture. What matters, according to them, is the economic crisis which will force workers to create a new society. At present, however, an economic collapse would bring only authoritarian alternatives because people are not accustomed to cooperating, making decisions collectively, initiating and carrying through policies. If a crisis were to happen tomorrow, people would turn on the television to find out what they were supposed to do. Far more appropriate to a relevant anarchism is Franklin Rosemont's article in the most recent *Industrial Worker*, the IWW paper, where he links the goal of worker democracy with surrealism.<sup>24</sup> During the May-June days in France, 1968, one of the famous slogans was "All power to the imagination." I cannot think of a better slogan for a contemporary anarchism which seeks counter-cultural initiatives within the aesthetic avant-garde and which makes theoretical advances starting from the problem of domination.

20. Richard and Maria Drinnon, eds., *Nowhere at Home, Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman* (NY, 1975), p. 82.

21. See for example her superb essay, "The Individual, Society, and the State," reprinted in *Red Emma Speaks* (NY, 1972).

22. Recent authors I find sensitive to domination and useful in analyzing it are Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. See especially Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Sheridan (NY, 1977), and Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Hurley, Seem, and Lane (NY, 1977).

23. Lasch attacks the avant-garde in the *Salmagundi* issue discussed in note 15.

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"The form of government that is most suitable to the artist is no government at all." Oscar Wilde

"The anarchist painter is not he who does anarchist paintings but he who without caring for money, without desire for recompense, struggles with all his individuality against bourgeois conventions." Paul Signac

"Musicians can do without government." John Cage

# An introduction to An Anarchist Aesthetic by Michael Scrivener

## Introduction

Although the phrase "Marxist aesthetic" is far more familiar than "anarchist aesthetic," the connection between anarchism and art has generated a rich diversity of both art and theory. William Godwin, the first anarchist philosopher, was an innovative novelist who influenced Percy Shelley, probably the first anarchist poet. Thoreau, Tolstoy, Octave Mirbeau (French novelist), Gustav Landauer (German novelist and anarchist revolutionary), the French symbolist poets of the 1890s, Pa Chin (Chinese novelist), B. Traven, Paul Goodman, Ursula LeGuin, Philip Levine, and Beck and Malina are some other anarchist writers—poets, novelists, dramatists. There are numerous other writers who have been influenced by anarchism or whose aesthetic theories and practices parallel anarchist ones: William Morris, Oscar Wilde, Eugene O'Neill (who sent Emma Goldman a volume of his plays while she was in prison for anti-war activities), William Blake, Franz Kafka (who was arrested in Prague for attending anarchist meetings), D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Robert Creeley, the Dada poets, the Surrealist poets, Gary Snyder, Grace Paley, Ibsen, and many others. In painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts anarchism was the dominant influence from the 1880s to the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia.<sup>2</sup> In music, Bakunin's friend and comrade-in-arms, Richard Wagner, exerted considerable influence on anarchist ideas concerning socially integrated art and revolutionary culture.<sup>3</sup> In the twentieth century, however, anarchists have repudiated Wagnerian authoritarianism, so that now John Cage is the representative anarchist in music. With the prevalence of avant-garde art in every field in the twentieth century, from poetry to dance, one could argue that experimental art itself is anarchistic at least in tendency, if not always self-consciously.

Along with anarchist art, there is a rich tradition of anarchist criticism of the arts. From Godwin and the romantic poets to contemporary theorists, the anarchist aesthetic has three major aspects: (1) an uncompromising insistence upon total freedom for the artist, and an avant-garde contempt for conservative art; (2) a critique of elitist, alienated art and a visionary alternative in which art becomes integrated into everyday life; (3) art as social critique—that is, since art is an experience, it is a way to define and redefine human needs, altering socio-political structures accordingly.<sup>4</sup> I want to analyze each aspect of the anarchist aesthetic with a special emphasis on the tension between artistic autonomy and the social ideal of unalienated art. I also want to suggest ways in which art and aesthetic theory are relevant to contemporary anarchist politics.

Important authors include: Dwight MacDonald, Kingsley Widmer, Paul Goodman, Herbert Read, Alex Comfort, and Art Efron.

2. See Herbert, above; also, Rennato Poggiali, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Fitzgerald (NY, 1968), p. 99: "the only omnipresent or recurring political ideology within the avant-garde is the least political or the most anti-political of all: libertarianism and anarchism."

3. See Reszler, Chapter III, for the Wagner-Bakunin relationship.

4. Although not an anarchist work as such, or even consistently libertarian, John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (NY, 1934) is richly suggestive of anarchist aesthetic ideas.

# The AVANT-GARDE

For the sake of time and space I will limit myself to literature, even though the other arts are just as important, each one requiring its own avant-garde history. When the word "avant-garde" was coined in 1825 by Saint-Simon to refer to the artist-engineers he designated to govern the new socialist society, there already existed in England an avant-garde literary movement: romantic poetry. Art is avant-garde which makes radical innovations in either the art's form or content or both.<sup>5</sup> Both the artist and the audience acknowledge the deviation from the norm so that either the audience changes its expectations to accommodate the new art or the audience rejects the new art in any number of ways: censorship, repression, unpopularity, ridicule, refusing to call it art. The first literary avant-garde appeared in England during a period of extreme social uncertainty, when the political institutions were archaic in relation to the actual social relations.<sup>6</sup> It was not until the 1830s that the bourgeois institutional apparatus had been fully created for controlling a society shaped by industrial and agricultural capitalism. The destruction of the peasantry by the enclosure movement, the contradiction between the middle class's growing social power and its political disenfranchisement, the emergence of democratic and secular ideas from the Enlightenment and French Revolution, all contributed to making the romantic avant-garde possible. From Blake, Godwin, the early Wordsworth, and Shelley, there came an aesthetic and political ideal of creativity. Blake described social domination and exploitation as effects of the enslaved imagination, whose mind-forged manacles had to be abolished. Blake also attacked the repression of sexuality and feeling, the liberation of which would transform every social institution. Godwin's insistence upon creativity was so stubborn that he deemed oppressive and authoritarian performances of other people's art. Wordsworth's innovation was to situate poetry closer to everyday speech and daily life. And Shelley argued that perception itself was a creative, constitutive activity; therefore, both perception and aesthetic creation involved a radical questioning of established social concepts. Furthermore, Shelley's reliance upon inspiration helped distance poetry from neoclassical technique and placed it closer to experiences accessible to everyone. The particular strain of romanticism I am briefly alluding to here based a radical politics on an aesthetic foundation. To create and perceive in new ways that transcend the established aesthetic norms is to question the legitimacy of the socio-political order which upholds those norms. This radical romanticism was stridently attacked and rejected by the cultural guardians of law and order. While Blake was too uncompromising for the cultural establishment to even bother with, Wordsworth's ideas on poetic diction were ridiculed; Godwin became so unpopular after the 1790s that he had to adopt a pseudonym to continue publishing; Shelley was not just unpopular, but his most radical works were suppressed, censored, and left unpublished in his lifetime. Even John Keats's deliberate aesthetic withdrawal from socio-political concerns did not save the poet from reactionary attacks because his new imagery, as well as his paganism and friendship with Leigh Hunt, placed him in the "Cockney School," as they contemptuously called it. Whether the innovation is in form or content, the avant-garde arouses the same anxiety.

The romantics, however, weakened the effectiveness of their counter-cultural attack in several ways. First, as a defense against their unpopularity and failure in the marketplace, they suggested that the romantic artist was a Genius, whose nature was different from other people's;<sup>7</sup> this reinforced audience passivity and mystified the concept of artistic creation. Second, so troubled were the romantics over their unpopularity that some became politically conservative (like Wordsworth and Coleridge), while others posited poetry as a special form of wisdom that could be acquired only under special conditions, thus excluding almost everyone except a

privileged coterie. The romantics did not understand fully the avant-garde nature of their art and often merely elevated it above what they perceived as popular art. Even though the romantics were the first avant-gardists, they also formulated ideas which would domesticate the avant-garde and integrate it into the established culture in the form of "high art."

The cult of the Genius came to a romantic culmination with Wagner, who wanted singlehandedly to create a new culture. Late-romantic sentimentalism, flamboyance, and hero-worship of charismatic artists, like Liszt, carried to logical extremes audience passivity and mystified art. The cult of the Genius effectively undermined the idea of participatory art and generated instead the crucial importance of criticism to mediate between creator and audience, to separate the good from the bad, the high from the low.

The anti-romantic avant-garde, however, not only repudiated the Wagnerian artist-as-hero, it also formulated a theory and practice of art with a different set of assumptions. The new avant-garde, as Ortega y Gasset noted, refused to play the role of religious leader, trying to guide the masses toward wisdom. The new art was playful and ironic, refusing to set itself above the audience as a moral authority.<sup>8</sup> The main problem with Ortega's theory is the opposition he draws between realist and nonrepresentational art, calling only the latter avant-garde. In fact, the collapse of romanticism stimulated two avant-garde currents: symbolism and realism? The avant-garde realists shocked audiences with new content (sexuality, poverty, anti-militarism, labor struggles, political corruption), while the symbolists outraged the audience with their form and technique. It is not even always useful to distinguish between form and technique because when one approaches a writer like Kafka or Celine, one needs to formulate a different vocabulary; nevertheless, there has always been a recurrent tension between realist and symbolist ideas.

When one examines the literary phenomenon known as modernism, one sees the ambiguity of the literary avant-garde in clear terms. One tradition issues from Flaubert, Henry James and Matthew Arnold, extending to T.S. Eliot, Pound, Yeats and Joyce, and more or less ending with writers like Mann, Bellow, and Stevens. Although the modernist tradition is critical of twentieth-century society, it carefully distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate kinds of criticism; it fastidiously separates high art from low art; dismissing into the hinterlands literary productions that are too obscene, too political, too incomprehensible, too simplistic, too rough and unwholesome. Modernism and its critical schools, which have dominated the universities for decades, are the filter through which avant-garde literature passes.<sup>10</sup> If an author cannot be dismissed outright, then s/he is domesticated with a barrage of irrelevant and pedantic criticism, burying the author's rebellious art underneath a rubble of words. Modernism has also promoted a certain kind of sensibility which the avant-garde has always attacked and which came under effective attack in the 1960s by critics like Susan Sontag.<sup>11</sup> This sensibility cultivates seriousness and a certain kind of (serious) irony, values the importance of complexity, is uncomfortable with spontaneity and sincerity, discourages levity, playfulness and propaganda, stresses the importance of aesthetic unity and insists upon discrete boundaries between art and society. The modernist can tell good from bad, high from low, and will never lose control when experiencing an artwork; the modernist is one who can never be fooled—or if s/he is, s/he will never let anyone know about it.

There is a crisis in modernism today because not only does hardly anyone produce modernist literature (most of the interesting literature today is adamantly avant-garde), but modernist criticism has been subjected to several decades of devastating critiques. There is no doubt that bourgeois ideology will reconstitute itself in some form or other to substitute for the discredited modernist creed, but today it is unclear what exactly that substitution will be.<sup>12</sup>

If in the bourgeois democracies the battle is between modernism and the avant-garde, in totalitarian regimes the writer who deviates from the party line is silenced, censored, jailed or exiled, sometimes even killed. One tends to forget that the avant-garde is a possibility for a minority of writers, the rest of whom, the

5. Ortega y Gasset's essay, "The Dehumanization of Art," (1925) has a brilliant theory of the avant-garde which is marred by the author's elitism. He confuses sham democracy with real democracy, the culture industry with participatory art. Ortega would not accept my calling romantic poetry avant-garde, which he dates much later and which he sees as essentially anti-romantic.

6. See E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (NY, 1963).

10. See John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Thought from Eliot to McLuhan* (London and Boston, 1977), for an excellent discussion of literature's cultural domestication.

11. The important essay is "Against Interpretation," (1964) reprinted in one of the most important texts of 1960s' cultural criticism, *Against Interpretation* (NY, 1966). Significantly, she finds in Oscar Wilde's epigrammatic wit a real alternative to the modernist spirit of seriousness.

12. Witness the hysteria by liberal intellectuals who are desperately trying to undo the damage inflicted upon modernist assumptions by the 1960s.

A recent issue of *Salmagundi*, 42 (Summer-Fall, 1978), is entirely devoted to attacking what it calls cultural radicalism; contemporary modernists are trying to find an alternative not only to avant-garde literature, but also to literary criticism which refuses to play cultural policeman.

7. Raymond Williams, "The Romantic Artist," in *Culture and Society* (NY, 1958), analyzes the social dimensions of the romantic theories.

majority, live under dictatorships of the left or right. In countries where literature is taken seriously, rebellious writers are silenced or controlled, while in states like the U.S., where writers have the freedom to write whatever they want, the audience can be truly shocked only with great difficulty. When one examines closely the nature of artistic freedom in the U.S., then one sees why dictatorial methods are not needed. In addition to the universities and the critics, who promulgate the modernist ideology, there are the extremely conservative publishing companies, who never take a risk; so it is very difficult for avant-garde writers to get published by a major press. (I personally know of three excellent novels which are unpublished and which were rejected by publishing companies.) The freedom to write does not mean the freedom to publish and have an audience. Furthermore, in the U.S. people have such unsatisfying jobs that when they get home they do not want to be challenged in an aesthetic way, so that they accept the consumerist entertainment served up to them by the culture industry.<sup>13</sup> So, although the writer has freedom to write, most working people do not have the freedom to read avant-garde literature, because they are so dehumanized at the workplace and also because avant-garde art is not readily accessible.

One might think that unrestricted freedom for a writer to write whatever s/he wanted would be uncontroversial, but one need only look at the Marxist-Leninist tradition to see otherwise. In the 1960s some Communist parties finally accepted as legitimate art other than "socialist realism," not without, however, expelling two of the most vocal advocates of aesthetic openminded-

ness, Ernst Fischer, the Austrian critic, and Roger Garaudy, the French critic.<sup>14</sup> Stalinism is not solely responsible for Marxist aesthetic conservatism because neither Marx, Engels, nor Lenin appreciated the avant-garde at all; their taste was completely bourgeois. Although Trotsky was more receptive than the rest to new art, he still believed the party and the state had a right—a duty—to suppress all art that was "counter-revolutionary," that did not serve the interests of the "revolution." Mao's aesthetic conservatism was so extreme that an authoritarian "moderate" like Teng Shao-Ping appears to be a surrealist in comparison. Perhaps the most telling story concerning the avant-garde and Marxist-Leninism is that of Mayakovsky, the great Futurist poet who championed the Bolshevik revolution and linked it with avant-garde art. Progressively disillusioned by the Bolsheviks, cut off from a sympathetic audience, he took his own life in despair. Another interesting but much later episode was the jailing of the Cuban poet Padilla in 1971. After international protests, Castro was forced to release Padilla, whose two major crimes were homosexuality and avant-garde tendencies ("bourgeois individualism," as they call it). In a shocking article the editors of *Jump Cut*, a leftist film journal, said that it was wrong to jail Padilla for homosexuality, but they agreed with Castro that the "revolution" had a right to tell artists and intellectuals what to do; the editors sanctioned the repression of Padilla for being an individualist and an avant-gardist.<sup>15</sup> I thought that this kind of thinking had died out long ago but I am wrong; the article was signed by ten editors. Clearly the idea of artistic freedom is still radical and needs to be defended.

story, as is well known, condemned almost everything ever produced by artists, including his own novels, because such art was decadent, unethical, irreligious.<sup>17</sup> Godwin, Bakunin and Stirner, I am happy to say, were aesthetic libertarians, but the fact that three of the major anarchist theorists were not deserves serious analysis.

In Ursula LeGuin's utopian novel, *The Dispossessed* (1974), her protagonist, Shevek, is an innovative scientist whose uncompromising originality disturbs the egalitarian ethos of the anarchosyndicalist society. Her novel suggests that any society, even one organized anarchistically, with the ideals of mutual aid and solidarity, will view with suspicion any expressions of avant-garde individualism.<sup>18</sup> The avant-garde seems to be anti-social even when it is not. The problem, as the novel demonstrates so well, is this: libertarianism cannot exist for long without individualism. When Shevek's society persecutes him for his scientific theories, it discloses its authoritarian features; although the society exists without an institutional state, the authoritarianism exists nevertheless inside the people. The aesthetic conservatism of Tolstoy, Proudhon, and Kropotkin suggests the possibility of a regime of authoritarianism implemented not by a state or a capitalist ruling class, but by an egalitarian society. Does society, as distinguished from a government, have the right to regulate artistic production? An anarchist must answer with an unequivocal "No" because without unrestricted artistic freedom a libertarian society will not for long remain libertarian.

The dichotomy which Kropotkin, Proudhon, and Tolstoy make between avant-garde and engage art is an unfortunate one. There have not been many anarchist engage works as such,<sup>19</sup> but the few that have existed were avant-garde by virtue of their content. Unless art is unacceptable to the cultural establishment for either its form or content or both, it can be of little interest to anarchists anyway, so that Kropotkin's dichotomy is in fact a spurious one. There are kinds of avant-garde art, some of which might be called engage. The problem with most engage art, the kind usually produced by Marxists, is that it does not tell us anything we did not already know. Avant-garde art, on the other hand, is an aesthetic adventure, trying to discover new realms of experience, making new departures.

Although the utopian vision of unalienated art is an indispensable feature of anarchism, it should not be used as a club with which to strike down the avant-garde. I am not saying that everything which calls itself avant-garde is therefore good, but unless art breaks new ground in content or technique then it is no different from bourgeois art or totalitarian art.

14. For the gloomy history of the Marxist-Leninist aesthetic, see George Bissel's uncritical but informative *Marxist Models of Literary Realism* (NY, 1978). For a tragic-comic account of the Communist encounter with Franz Kafka's literature, see Tom Morris, "From Liblice to Kafka," *Telos*, 24 (Summer, 1975); Morris also shows the influence of anarchism on Kafka.

15. For this shameful article, see *Jump Cut*, No. 19, pp. 38-39.

16. Bob Newman pointed out Ursula LeGuin's novel to me and suggested an authoritarianism within anarchism that I had never considered before. He has written an essay on *The Dispossessed* which should be published soon. See also the article on LeGuin in *Cienfuegos Review*, #2 (the entire issue is relevant to art and anarchism).

17. See Tolstoy's *What Is Art?*

18. See also the article on LeGuin in *Cienfuegos Review*, #2 (the entire issue is relevant to art and anarchism).

## UNALIENATED ART

Utopia as a place where art is unalienated, reconstituted along egalitarian lines, is a commonplace idea in nineteenth-century socialism, from Fourier to Marx, from Godwin to Ruskin. Morris and Kropotkin, however, gave the most complete and interesting visions of a new art in a society which had conquered alienation. Kropotkin had, in *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, praised the medieval aesthetic of an organic, participatory, collective culture. Just as Shelley and Nietzsche had idealized Hellenic culture's high degree of social integration, so Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris and Kropotkin idealized the social culture of the medieval city, run by guilds and artisans. Kropotkin refused to accept as normal art's alienation into so many specialized fragments, all of which were kept apart from politics, the economy, and social life. Kropotkin and Morris envisioned art as something that permeated social life in all its aspects. Homes, streets, gardens, rooms, villages and cities would be constructed with a sense of beauty as a primary concern. The things of everyday life—kitchen utensils, curtains, rugs, tables, furniture—should reflect the aesthetic values of the society. Not only should the environment be shaped according to the logic of beauty, but productive activity itself should be animated with aesthetic concerns. In the anarchist society, one would learn a variety of skills and participate in a variety of useful activities, concentrating on whatever is most interesting. Tedious labor, performed collectively, loses its oppressive burden; furthermore, since no one does such labor all the time, people are free to develop in different areas.

There is, however, something disturbing in Kropotkin's aesthetic ideas, because he used the ideal of unalienated future art to discredit the avant-garde. Nietzsche, the aesthetes, the symbolists, the new anarchists in France sympathetic with the avant-garde, were all labeled by Kropotkin as bourgeois individualists, self-indulgent and irresponsible.<sup>20</sup> Although Proudhon, earlier, had defended Gustave Courbet's realistic paintings against the academic establishment in *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale* (1865), the later influence of Proudhon's ideas was antagonistic to the avant-garde and encouraged instead an engage art, one closely aligned to the aspirations of the social movement. Tol-

16. See George Woodcock and Adam Avakumovic, *The Anarchist Prince* (Cleveland, 1971), pp. 280-282.