

PORTUGAL — Revolution or Reaction?

IT IS DIFFICULT to know exactly what is going on in Portugal. In a situation so ringed with Portuguese censorship and security, and British and world press bias, the very fluid events of the last weeks are capable of several interpretations according to one's political predilections, optimistic hopes or gloomy forebodings.

It is easy to make historical parallels with Kerensky, Prince Lvov, the Russian Revolution or the Spanish Civil War or even, in more recent history, with the unfortunate Allende. But a major fact is that there are no absolute historical parallels. History does not repeat itself, men only try to repeat history.

Neither are there any geographical, social or political parallels. It is impossible in England (or in America) to think of an army as a revolutionary or even as a reforming institution.

Indeed, embarrassment has been caused in international Communist circles by the suppression of the Christian Democrats' party in Portugal at the precise time that the Italian Communist Party has re-affirmed its alliance with the Italian Christian Democrats. Political parties of the same name and tendencies are not the same in all countries. Not even all anarchists are alike!

Although we hold no brief for democracy (as normally defined) or elections, it would seem to be a bad omen for freedom of political thought in Portugal to ban political parties, whether or right or left, no matter how extreme.

The reason has been put forward that the attempted coup d'état (if such it was) made it necessary to be more vigilant. Predictably, revelations of a C. I. A. plot have been unearthed and the sceptical anarchist may query why this has been so long delayed.

The even more sceptical (and there are some in Portugal) may even query if the reported coup took place at all, or in the form reported. It may be, as has worked before, that Government agents were planted in reactionary circles and instigated an ill-prepared attack which could easily be nipped in the bud and justify the subsequent repressions which are only a logical development of that which has gone on for some time.

Coupled with this suppression was the imprisonment of two newly-elected officials of the Chemical Workers Union

who happened to belong to the wrong left-wing political grouping. A group of London Portuguese saw the military Minister of Labour in London last week (when he was en route to enquire about Swedish shipping orders) and complained about the party suppression and imprisonments. They got no change from the military.

One of the evidences of revolutionary intent by the military government (what's Portuguese for junta?) is the nationalization of the banks and insurance companies. Even a pink British Labour government under Attlee could (and did) do more than that. The military hint that they will remain in power (to guide) even after the proposed election.

We know too that this Government has not yet put on trial its political opponents or members of the secret police. What has it to fear from such trials, and would it not mark some distinction from the previous regime for a semblance of justice to be offered?

The people have not spoken yet. They believe they will speak through the ballot

box - even in spite of the 57 varieties of communism, maoism and trotskyism which all taste the same. Some peasants here and there have seized land to make sure of their future.

Meanwhile we have some indication of the revolutionary promise and intent of the new Portuguese Government by the following from the New York Times Service (reprinted by IWW Industrial Defense Bulletin, Ontario):

— PACT WITH SPAIN

"Portuguese Foreign Minister Mario Soares revealed in an interview published here yesterday that his Government had an understanding with the Spanish Government to restrict the activities of each government's opponents in the other country.

"The existence of such an agreement was acknowledged by Mr. Soares in an interview given in Lisbon to Marcel Niedergang of the Paris newspaper, Le Monde.

"Replying to a question about the cancellation of a meeting in Lisbon to protest against the Spanish Government, Mr. Soares said: 'Our good relations with our Spanish neighbours could have been hampered by that meeting.'

"The Foreign Minister, leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party, added: 'We have reached agreement with the Spaniards that each side proceed with the maximum of realism and cautiousness. An escalation of violence could lead very far and be very near dangerous for Portugal as well as for Spain. We agree on this with Madrid,' Mr. Soares said, adding that in the instance

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DISOBEY! — DEFLATE!

IN ROME THE OTHER WEEK a new call to civil disobedience came from the recently formed group of trade unionists, the "Committee for Fiscal Justice". The Committee urges husbands and wives not to comply with the rule on the declaration of joint income, which it considers to be one of the many unjust aspects of a tax system "clearly anti-social and anti-worker". (Corriere della Sera, 6th March).

Camillo Benvenuto, one of the Committee members, admits refusal to declare joint income could well be interpreted as an act of civil disobedience. But he quickly alludes to the abuse of power by government corporations and administration, the clientelism, the cheating of the public over food prices, the bureaucratic obstructionism, the pollution, the building speculation, etc. The workers, he says, have no part in all that. "But if our action is one of civil disobedience in the sense that it's a revolt against injustice, then all the other actions I've just mentioned are forms of uncivil disobedience."

The most striking outburst of civil disobedience in Italy took place last autumn in Turin and Milan, where as much as 30 per cent. of the working population refused to pay fare increases on public transport. Sheet metal workers and commuters joined in the campaign.

Many who took part were old hands at "blocking trains at dawn in stations lost in mist between Crema and Lodi, with a police-force that dares not interfere, since two thousand workers lined up defensively on railway ballast, strike fear into the hearts even of those with shields and cudgels" (L'Espresso, 6.10.74). That same autumn the local inhabitants of the Como region, incensed with the weekend visitors from the city who drove blithely down into the Val Cavargna to make off with the mushroom harvest, blew up the valley's bridge and slashed sixty car tyres. In Naples unemployed people occupied public buildings (as is now happening in Sardinia where fishermen have been put in jail for fishing on a lake the State, the Sardinian Region and the local barons all claim is their own!) and in the suburbs of Rome, autonomous workers' collectives and area committees began fixing their own rents and slashing prices (autoriduzione). In fact, this kind of thing has been going on for about three years in the poorer quarters of the city, especially where rent fixing is concerned. Some people began printing their own newspaper. On the walls slogans read "We'll pay the light bills at eight lire per kilowatt like the bosses!", referring to the electricity com-

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of the banned protest meeting, 'Spain didn't brandish any threat, did not put pressure on us, only informed us discreetly of its preoccupation. We took note of this.'

"In the background of the Portuguese-Spanish agreement to minimize friction between the two countries is the fact that the new Portuguese Government that took over last April is still fragile!

We can hear hisses of 'C.I.A. inspired', but it all rings true to the form that we anarchists expect of States and Governments - right, left and centre.

Jack Robinson.

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panies who charge private users 45 lire per kilowatt but the big companies only five or eight lire. In Turin groups of people cut their own electricity, heating and water bills sometimes by 50 per cent. without awaiting the cautious advice of their trade unions or the Communist-run area committees. The Turin Camera del Lavoro was obliged to support some of the spontaneous new groups of militants and workers by accepting the reduced bills.

Referring to "autoriduzione" in Umanita Nova of 15th February this year, a group of Turin anarchists attacks the centralised trade unions for making their members now pay the overdue differentials together with a new lot of rises without even consulting them. The workers feel a "confused love-hate relationship with the trade unions who, before the betrayal, were still thought of as the indisputable reference points of the working class." The Turin anarchists hope the trade unions' actions will accelerate the formation of autonomous groups throughout the city. At the same time, to judge by the new call to disobedience by the Committee for Fiscal Justice, some trade union members seem to be changing their minds about civil disobedience campaigns.

In Britain squattings and occupations have been among the commonest forms of civil disobedience, but have been carried out in general with little public sympathy, let alone participation. This, of course, is partly due to the remarkable achievement of our "liberal democracy" in lulling the majority into a persistent, Panglossian assumption that we live in the best - and freest - of all possible worlds. How many people have we not heard drawing that incorrigible Doctor's conclusion that - with apologies to Voltaire - if you didn't work on the assembly line for x hours a day, and if you didn't welcome with cries of joy the construction of a petro-chemical plant or motorway in your back garden, and if you didn't accept enforced scientific experimentation with your fellow creatures, human and non-human, and if you didn't let the Army spray all those nasty blackbirds with detergent so they'd freeze to death, and if you didn't go into the Common Market, and in short if you didn't put your faith in the businessmen, the scientists, the planners and the politicians who always know what is for the best in this best of worlds, you wouldn't be sitting here now eating candied fruit and pistachio nuts in freedom!

Yet Parliament has been living off its democratic reputation since Magna Carta, even though, television cameras or not, its facade has long grown wafer-thin, if not painfully transparent. (Any naive person or persons who have tried to stir the consciences of our ruling class by the law-abiding means of letter-writing

SQUATTING IN EAST LONDON

THE All London Squatters GLC Action Group says:

"Recently the GLC (Greater London Council) has mounted a large scale publicity campaign against squatters, who are of course just homeless people who have been forced to take action by the housing crisis. They created the label 'smash and grab squatter' which associates squatters who stand up for their right to a home with destructive vandals. . . We believe that some aspects of the GLC's own housing policy shows a record of destructiveness and failure, for which it would be glad to find a scapegoat in squatters. However, there are thousands of homeless and yet more empty dwellings in London; so it is reasonable to see the squatting movement as a constructive movement, and squatters as the unfortunate victims of a housing system which has inbuilt homelessness, rather than as the cause of the housing crisis."

EAST LONDON VANDALS

Tower Hamlets, the London borough where are own premises are, is the working class area where the working people and poor immigrants who from the beginning of this century, and before, manned the docks and treadled out the production of the sweat shops against which Rudolf Rocker inspired and helped organize the workers' resistance. Despite material improvement and large rebuilding projects since the devastation of the Second

AS A POSTMAN, I hope the public will boycott the 7p letter post. If they do they will turn the second-class mail service into a first-class one.

I cannot imagine any postmaster allowing his postmen to stand idle while he has mail in his office. So if all the letters are 5½p ones, they will go out straight away like the 7p ones do now.

Postman (Stafford)

-- Letter in The Sun

only to receive cold and polite - or not so polite - acknowledgements in return, or to protest to their local "representative" only to be confronted with a vague and condescending assurance that their views will be "noted" - or even with an honest warning that he cannot promise to be in the House at the right moment to make their protest known, will be tempted to think again about those tired old arguments against civil disobedience).

Direct action and civil disobedience on a large scale, on the truly civil issues of conscience and freedom, provide the only effective method of challenging our democratic despots from their committee rooms and laboratories into the severe light of day. Where, though, are the Londoners of yesteryear who, through open disobedience to government played so vital a part in securing our liberties (and not least freedom of the press) in the age of Wilkes? Did they emigrate to Italy perhaps?

G. F.

World War, the borough is still dirty, poor, and with a large population of people who need homes. For long years the council has had an unshakable Labour majority, plus a couple of Communist members.

The borough contains many blocks of flats and streets of houses scheduled for demolition. And several groups of squatters who have been occupying these in the last few years. On Monday, March 3rd the council's demolition contractors arrived in Corfield Street, Bethnal Green with a bulldozer the scoop of which was loaded with bricks, and deliberately smashed the mains pipe conducting water to the block of flats occupied by squatters. A local newspaper (East London Advertiser) reported this as "the latest in a series of flashpoints between squatters and demolition workers. There were ugly scenes when squatters tried to prevent workmen from smashing up empty flats three weeks ago."

The squatters challenged the council on the legality of depriving them of water, and we understand they did get the water supply repaired.

Another local paper this week (Stratford and Newham Express, 21 March) carries a two-page sympathetic feature on squatting in Newham, where, they say, "All over Newham houses are standing empty - some for reasons of redevelopment, others for reasons of profit. . . The council has ten families squatting on its property" -- but in the editorial paragraph introducing the feature they say "their exact number is not known - much of the success of squatting depends on its secrecy. Some are in council property, others in private."

The Newham council has not come to the modus vivendi with squatters that operates in several other boroughs. Its policy is "We would go to court to repossess the house. Once that order came through we would look at the families to see if they could be rehoused. If they couldn't, and that would depend on their circumstances, we would try and be as helpful as we could."

About privately owned property, a spokesman for the community action group, "East", said "A lot of property is left empty by private landlords who want to sell at the right time. It's amazing. You never see these people from one year to the next, but as soon as they get a squatter in they suddenly take an interest in that house." He also said that the council have started smashing down houses very quickly now, rather than leaving them empty.

All London Squatters GLC Action Group has started an Inquiry in order to "investigate the mechanism of this housing crisis (especially the role of the GLC - the largest strategic hous-

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MEXICAN HUMBUG

"Latin America cannot remain indifferent to foreign intervention in its internal affairs," said President Luis Echeverria in his opening speech at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City, where the third session of the Helsinki Commission is being held, and he offered the commission, on behalf of Mexico, "a headquarters and full freedom for its deliberations" aimed at investigating the crimes of the Chilean military junta.

(Reported in Gramma 10.2.75)

Politicians are renowned for their short and rosy-tinted memories (of their years in office, that is, of the crimes of their opponents). Nixon is perhaps the epitome of that quality for our time, but Echeverria must run him a close second.

The man who was Secretary of the Interior when over 300 students were gunned down by the authorities in the middle of Mexico City for daring to protest against the spectacular waste of resources involved in the staging of the Olympic Games in 1968, recently had the effrontery to imagine that he could address a large body of students at the beginning of a new term as a gesture of reconciliation.

The scales of benevolence fell from Echeverria's eyes at the end of his speech in the Salvador Allende (!) auditorium, when he was driven from the place by hundreds of enraged students throwing bottles and other missiles. Perhaps his cut head brought home to Echeverria the reality of 1968, and the humbug of his speeches about Chile.

(For further information on Echeverria's regime see FREEDOM 22.2.75 p.4)

D. L. M.

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ing authority in Europe); to contribute to the efforts of the broad housing movement to create a solution; and to defend squatters from the absurd charges of vandalism." They ask particularly for information on (1) needless or premature destruction or gutting by the GLC, (2) GLC property lying empty, (3) GLC treatment of tenants; failure to do repairs, harassment, lack of consultation about housing and estate plans, (4) The Waiting Lists, how long are they, who gets housed..., (5) the economics of GLC housing and its social consequences (This should include a study of the crisis in the building industry and its relationship to housing,

Those interested in helping the Inquiry should ask for information about meetings etc. from ALS GLC Action Group, c/o 59 Welby House, Hazelville Road, London N. 19.

M. C.

ITALY THE APPEAL of Giovanni Marini against his sentence of 12 years' imprisonment for the "voluntary homicide" of the fascist Falvella has been set for 2nd April in Salerno. The defence will appeal on the grounds of distortion of the facts, hiding of the truth and predetermination of the sentence. Fienga, the judge in the case, (an ex-fascist policeman) ruled as 'irrelevant' all the facts circumstantial to the fight in the via Velia, which resulted in the death of Falvella. The whole history of fascist provocation and aggression in Salerno was deemed "out of court"; and the declarations of witnesses, both written and verbal, were distorted by omissions and rulings of "inadmissible".

Finally Fienga only took minimal account of the extenuating circumstances when passing sentence, and it was obvious that Marini's resolute behaviour in court was the major factor in his being given a twelve year sentence.

Law, like medicine, is "iatrogenic", that is, the cure is not only worse than the disease, but provokes new illnesses. In Marini's case this has meant that as a result of his behaviour in his various long trials, he has been charged with other offences, mainly under the head of "vilification of institutions and of the State".

Two of these cases have recently come up for trial, but both have been postponed, one for lack of evidence, the other on a technical point.

In the meanwhile, the comrades of Le Refractaire in Paris have produced two printed postcards (in Italian), one to send to the president of the appeal court in Salerno, demanding Marini's release, and the other to send to Marini as a gesture of solidarity. These will be available from Freedom at 10p for two cards (including post) - lower rates for large quantities.

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The Italian anarchist Belgrado Pedrini, imprisoned for thirty years in 1945 for crimes committed against the fascist dictatorship before the liberation of Italy (see FREEDOM 4.1.75, p.3) was finally released on parole on 4th March, thanks to pressure put on the authorities by anarchists and anti-fascist Resistance Veterans groups. But his release is only provisional and he may have to go back to jail.

* * *

PORTUGAL Hundreds of young people took part in a demonstration organised by anarcho-syndicalists in Lisbon, on March 3, to protest against the Franco regime and the imprisonment of the four anarcho-syndicalists, Burro, Edo, Urbano and Ferran (see FREEDOM 8.3.75, p.1). The protests were particularly vigorous in the vicinity of the Spanish Embassy, and the seat of the Armed Forces Movement government. Windows of the building housing Iberia, the Spanish airline, were smashed.

D. L. M.

* MARINI POSTSCRIPT

WE READ in today's (24.3.75) papers that Italy's magistrates and judges have decided to continue their 22-day old "work to rule" (for higher salaries and judicial reforms), which has practically paralysed the country's courts. This may affect the timing of Marini's appeal, which may in turn allow us more time to send our postcards of protest, and of solidarity.

C.I.A. in NEW ZEALAND

THERE IS a furore at present over the local branch of the CIA (known locally as the SIS) created in 1956 by the "National" Government to save the country from "subversive" elements.

The present uproar is over the arrest, trial and subsequent acquittal of Dr. William B. Sutch for meeting a Soviet Embassy member at night in strange places. He was charged under the Official Secrets Act which apparently is supposed to make it difficult to prove yourself innocent. However he was found Not Guilty and later in a TV interview, in which he sounded rather like a pedantic and self-opinionated patriot, he said he was not surprised to get off.

One of those charged was found not only to work for a government department (he had worked there for 15 years) but he was also a member of the Communist Party and had stood for parliament twice. A National MP wanted to know why the Labour government let commos work for them in state jobs, and the Minister in charge replied that as the National government had been satisfied with the man's work for the 12 years he had worked while they were in office he didn't see what their point was.

Last week a left-wing publisher named one of the security agents, on an independent radio station. Now he and the announcer (who stood as Labour candidate for Wellington Central in the last election and lost by about 100 votes) are being charged with contempt of court or something.

S. H.

BULGARIA

On 26 April 1974 many searches were made among the old and long-standing anarchist comrades in Kustendil, Pernik, Stanke Dimitrov, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Hascovo, Plovdiv, Varna and in many villages in the country with the sole purpose of seizing old pamphlets, issued thirty and forty years ago. About 25 comrades, of whom twelve are from Pernik (metallurgical centre near Sofia) were interrogated.

After three weeks' detention, the following comrades were condemned to five years internal exile under strict police surveillance:

- 1) Alexandre M. Nakov, from Pernik, a railwayman and an Esperantist, banished to the village of Khouma in Razgrad district.
- 2) Athanase Kuceuv, from Pernik, a teacher, banished to the village of Cermerdjievo in Rousse district.

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ANARCHISM & ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

PARIS, it has been said, would scarcely seem to be Paris unless there was revolution in the air. But after the downfall of the Paris Commune in 1871 the revolutionary spirit was forcibly subdued and it was not until a law was passed on March 21, 1884 that workers were permitted to form open associations of a temporary or permanent nature "for the defence and study of their professional, economic, commercial and agricultural interests." French industry at this time was backward, with small-scale workshops predominant and less than 7 per cent. of workers organised, but even at this date the old craft guild system of organisation had been on the decline for decades, the basic unit of organisation being the syndicat, a local union of workers employed in the same trade (1). There is an important distinction to be made between the guild system and the later development of syndicalism: the guildsmen had struggled within limited horizons, largely content to improve their working conditions; but revolutionary syndicalism had wider horizons and aimed at the eventual overthrow of the capitalist system.

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3) Loubmir Ivanov Djermanov, from Pernik, a highly qualified mining engineer, banished to the village of Okorg in Silistra district.

(The reason for these comrades' banishment was their attendance at the funeral of Dimiter Vassilev, from Pernik, and collecting funds to erect a monument to him.)

4) Sacho Guigov, a sculptor, banished on 25 July to the village of Letnitsa in Lovetch district; then transported to the town of Loukovit where, deprived of cultural life and separated from his friends and relations, he died on 8th September, 1974.

Guigov was the sculptor who carved the bust of Vassil Ikonov, the great fighter for liberty. He had intended also to create a work on comrade Tino Simov.

5) Gantcho Damianov, an accountant from Kazanlak, removed to a village in the Sliven district.

6) Athanase Artukov, sent to Rousse district.

7) Cristo Kolev Joranov, whose deportation to Pet Moguili had already been reported, was arrested and interrogated by the "people's militia". He was sent to the village of Balvan in Tarnovo district, where he is unable to find work and has to live on a miserable pension hardly enough for him to buy a kilo of bread a day.

Our comrades have been forced to make declarations in which they agree not to undertake anarchist propaganda. This has happened to Deltcho Vassilev, from Hascovo; Boian Mangov, from Varna, and other comrades in Kustendil, Plovdiv and other parts of the country.

(Information transmitted by Bulgarian comrades, December, 1974 and translated here from the Cahiers de l'humanisme libertaire.)

This is not to imply that syndicalism was simply a fresh idea emanating from the minds of a few academics and theorists, and passed on to the untutored masses. On the contrary, syndicalist theory has constantly evolved from practice, and is mainly a product of experience gained on the industrial battlefield: the living movement has to exist before the theorist can attempt to explain it. Attempts have been made to trace the origins of syndicalism back to the ideas of the philosopher Bergson, or the intellectual Sorel, but such attempts fail to take into account important economic and political factors. Without briefly considering the conditions necessary before a syndicalist movement could come into existence we shall not progress very far in an understanding of syndicalism.

1. Industrialisation; syndicalism is a child of the industrial revolution.
2. Large numbers of workmen concentrated in large towns.
3. Freedom for workers to combine legally in trade unions. (The second and third factors are a consequence of the first.)
4. A settled social order with sharp class distinctions.
5. A leavening agent, in the form of an intelligent and politically active minority, at work within the mass of workers.

These are the necessary pre-requisite conditions for the growth of syndicalism and the last one is very important. In France, this politically active minority consisted mainly of anarchists who had traditionally scorned parliamentary activity and favoured the use of "direct action", a term which is by no means synonymous with violent action. But the new movement was not a purely anarchist movement, containing as it did rebels and revolutionaries of all shades from deepest red to palest pink. The anarchists included Emile Pouget, who had been active as a propagandist in the working class districts of Paris along with his girl friend, Louise Michel, the heroine of the Paris Commune. There was the carpenter, Joseph Tortelier, an anarchist orator and advocate of the general strike; Emile Pataud, later to be known as the king of electricity after he had organised a successful strike against the Edison Company; Yvetat, Monatte and Delaselle were other prominent anarchists, but the foremost of all was Fernand Pelloutier who is regarded as one of the most able exponents of anarcho-syndicalist ideas and whose name is synonymous with that of the C.G.T. (Confédération Générale du Travail), the title later adopted by the organisation.

The anarcho-syndicalists believed that the syndicats, when organised along the right lines would constitute the nuclei of the future society, and in their emphasis upon the necessity for organisation they differed sharply from adherents to the individualist school of anarchism. The thin but sharp edge of the wedge is revealed in the following from the pen of Pelloutier:

"We must carry on more methodically and more stubbornly than ever the work of intellectual, administrative and technical training necessary to fit a community of free individuals for existence... We must demonstrate to the workers by a series of experiments conducted in their midst, that self-government by themselves is possible and also give them weapons against the corrupting suggestions of capitalism, by instructing them as to the necessity of a revolution."

Edouard Berth is more explicitly critical in his 'Les Nouveaux Aspects du Socialisme', when dealing with anarchist responses towards

the system of coercion employed by the state:

"Against that system of coercion, anarchism has constantly protested; it curses civilisation which demands so much effort and gives us so little happiness in return; we might say that this protest of the anarchist merely voices the revolt of the lazy individual, of the primitive savage, of the mature man against a system which tried to break him to the discipline of labour... Such a protest is purely negative, nay, reactionary... For society is a co-ordination of efforts, not just a juxtaposition of egos seeking mere enjoyment... An anarchist is often a decadent bourgeois; his eagerness for a return to nature is very similar to the tired bourgeois craving for a fresh air cure in the country."

There is a good deal of truth in this if we consider the shafts to be aimed at the individualists, but similar criticisms could hardly be applied to Peter Kropotkin (or other anarcho-communists) who had been consistently constructive in his analysis of society and had foreseen the need for an international labour union and advocated the international general strike. His experience of the Russian revolution later convinced him, as he told Emma Goldman, that revolutionaries must prepare thoroughly for the organisation of the economic life of the country, everything else being of minor importance; syndicalism and the co-operative, he thought, would save other countries some of the blunderings and sufferings Russia was going through. (The C.G.T. had earlier advocated that the industrial syndicates should form agricultural alliances).

The gap between the individualists and the syndicalists is very clearly marked in what Frederick van Eeden wrote in the Syndicalist (London) and nothing more needs to be said on this issue:

"Anarchism neglected the immense importance of organisation, and supposed the workers to be capable without leadership, without discipline, of achieving the tremendous task of creating a well-organised commonwealth. This was Utopia in its worst sense. It jumped long periods of slow and difficult education. It did not teach the workers the terrible strength of their opponents, the exploiters. It did not realise how the intricate structure of modern society demanded great organising capacities, scientific knowledge, economic insight, first-rate leadership, and strict discipline, in order to replace the old order by a new and better one."

The necessity for long periods of slow and difficult education, as van Eeden puts it, was clearly recognised by the revolutionary wing of the C.G.T. and this evolutionary side of revolutionary syndicalism is all too often ignored. Ironically, it was often the reformist wing of the C.G.T. which chose to launch ill-timed strikes, a fact which was deplored by the syndicalist militant, Pierre Monatte. "We need another fifty years of struggle to reach the final hour," declared one of the militants in 1901. And Pouget, himself the organizer of the successful strike against the Edison Company, was a capable exponent of strike strategy and not an unthinking advocate of wildcat strikes. Against present society, said Pouget, which only knows "the citizen", a new society is rising made up of "producers", and the producers realising that the social body is shaped by its system of production, intend to transform entirely the capitalist mode of production, to eliminate the employers and thereby to conquer industrial freedom.

The syndicalist strike strategy involved the organisation of workers into industrial unions, the frequent use of the sympathetic strike and allied with these an intensive anti-military campaign in which the anarchist, Yvetot, author of the "Manuel du Soldat", played a prominent part (an attempt by Tom Mann to copy the C.G.T.'s anti-militarist tactics landed him in an English jail.)

Social revolution was the long term aim of the revolutionary syndicalists but the methods of direct action were widely employed in the course of the necessarily long drawn-out struggle towards that objective. And they saw themselves not as a revolutionary elite leading the mass of workers towards a visionary utopia, but rather as a leavening agent at work within the mass, their ideas and methods slowly permeating the mass and in course of time bringing about a transformation. As they saw it, the emancipation of the working classes was a task that would be carried out by the working classes themselves - or not at all. No political elite which claimed that in some mystical fashion it had substituted itself for the working classes could do it for them. As to the notion that this social revolution would simply be a spontaneous happening occurring sometime in the future without any need for organisation in the present, they might well have told those who held this notion to watch the night sky on the eve of the dawning of this happy day - in order not to miss the sight of the cow jumping over the moon.

H.B.

"Largely in reaction against the notorious policy of "propaganda by deed", many of the younger anarchists, led by the redoubtable Fernand Pelloutier, joined the syndicates with the object of developing their revolutionary potentialities. Such work seemed to them to offer a constructive alternative to a policy of negation and destruction which, however justifiable it might be in theory, had done much to discredit the anarchist movement in the sight of the world at large."

(Anarchism & Trade Unionism, by Gaston Gerard, in *Anarchy* 40).

"No destruction, no waste, no return to barbarism. A higher plane of civilization is to be achieved. When the workers understand how the the industrial system of today has developed, how one industrial pursuit dovetails into another, and all constitute an indivisible whole, they will not wantonly destroy what generations of industrial and social forces have brought forth."

(Bill Trautman, IWW organiser, quoted in *The New Unionism*, 1913).

"At the anarcho-syndicalist conference held in Moscow in 1918, Maximov had attacked the Marilovs (day-dreamers) in the anarchist camp as 'romantic visionaries who pined for pastoral utopias, oblivious of the complex forces at work in the modern world. It was time to stop dreaming of the Golden Age; it was time to organise and act.'"

(*The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control*, p.48, *Solidarity*, 1970).

(1) Prior to the passing of the law in 1884 these local syndicates were constantly harrassed by the police. Andre Tridon says, "This law merely sanctioned an order of things established in the teeth of ferocious reaction. While it recognised the legal existence of the syndicates or trade unions, it aimed in reality at damming up the revolutionary current in motion among the labouring masses." (*The New Unionism*, New York, 1913).

Letters

LISTEN, SOLDIER

Dear Editors,

M.C. (FREEDOM 15.3.75) appeals for the 14 charged with sedition or whatever of the grounds that "imprisonment...will not change their minds, as their leaflet could not change the mind of any soldier who believed in his calling". The former statement cannot be disputed. The latter is dubious, to say the least, if there is such a thing as a soldier's "calling", it is probably the lure of plenty of money and no responsibility, everything laid on (including widows' pensions and military funerals) with no need to think. Very few, even in an army of volunteers, have a specific "calling", such as a Jehovah's Witness might have.

Because of this the 14 are being prosecuted. It is precisely because they, in their leaflet, have attempted to make the soldier think for himself instead of "just obeying orders" like Eichmann, that the authorities have deemed them a threat. The trial will continue, and the 14 will languish in jail somewhere despite M.C.'s appeal. The authorities know that literature which will make their minions question their role as functionaries at the bottom of the line of command must not be allowed to reach them, and must be suppressed with maximum speed and efficiency. They know, even if M.C. does not, that leaflets such as this do have an effect. If they did not, would these people have risked their liberty and livelihood just to hand out a useless piece of rhetoric?

Yours etc.

Nigel Pennick

on DESCHOOLING & ALL THAT

Dear Comrades,

Your writer D. B. (issue of 1 March) does Illich less than justice in suggesting that he does not realise that deschooling implies restructuring of society. The Illich criticisms of institutions in general have been levelled by anarchists for many years.

Obviously institutions in general reflect the society in which they exist. An article in *New Society* of 6 March entitled "Illness is created", shows how institutions not merely fail to deal with problems but actually create them. Its writer, John Sanger, says, "The schools of inner cities are positively manufacturing mental illness. Worse still, this is happening because of muddle, because of lack of will to help the children, and because of fear."

Institutions become powerful in their own right, reflecting the growth and size of power in society generally. Such institutions become vehicles for the ambitious and powerful, and inevitably the needs of the power-structured institution and basic human needs diverge. The administration becomes divorced from the field, and economically the higher echelons live in a different world from the patients, clients, pupils.

There is in the current issue of the

magazine *Anarchy* a criticism of the social services, much of it of course true. However, the writer refers to the "taking away of our children" (my emphasis). This of course assumes that children are the property of the parents, which must be rejected; the family is also an entrenched institution and probably the source of most child suffering, particularly when combined with poverty and ignorance, although ignorance is certainly not confined to the poor. There remains the problem of dealing with the suffering prior to the restructuring of society.

The institutional treatment of social problems divides the problem from the cause and professionalism tends to reduce human involvement in human problems. This treatment of human and social problems keeps human physical contact to the minimum and separates caring from sharing. Problems become the health of institutions, as criminals are the health of the law and police, sick people necessary to the medical establishment, and social deprivation to the social services.

Here Illich's ideas of self knowledge and self help are very much in line with anarchist thought. There is very much to be done in this area in the fields of health, housing, transport and food production. The administration and centralised control of society is very resistant to the revolutionary reorganisation of society necessary to deal with the insistent problems of our times. Today is a time of danger, challenge and opportunity in which the existing organisation of society has shown itself incapable of coping. Therefore the anarchist concepts of do-it-yourself organisation of society are very relevant providing anarchists descend from the realm of theory to practical cooperation.

Alan Albon.

POLITICAL PRISONERS

Dear Editors,

Michael Tobin (FREEDOM 15 March) protests quite justifiably about the maltreatment of West German and Irish 'political prisoners' (when are any prisoners not political prisoners?), and argues passionately against the 'materialist' society (so do some Conservatives). But what does it all amount to? What answers does he suggest?

"The present struggle of the German and Irish prisoners is also our struggle". Which prisoners? All of them, including bombers and assassins? What struggle? That of the IRA, UDA, Second of June Movement, and all the rest? Who is the struggle against? "The creeping fascism" of the modern state. "The time for reflection on abstract theories is over. The time for action is here." What abstract theories? And what action is it time for?

Of course it is shameful that men resort to imprisoning other men, and the legal system, certainly, is fraught with hypocrisy and double standards. The treatment of the "Baader-Meinhof" group, for example (as detailed in the *Sunday Times*, 23 February), obviously deserves more than savage condemnation. But generalised critiques are as in-

Continued on Page 6

excusable as mere condemnation is impotent. Until we can propose practicable alternatives to the system as it is, let us at least recognise emotionalism in argument, and try to temper, if not replace, it with rationalism. The rationalism necessary for genuine change for the better.

I am not myself aware of the "creeping fascism" of the state. Maybe I am deluded. It is arguable that economic measures are being implemented which compare with the characteristics of a corporate statism (re: Pahl and Winkler, *New Society*, 10.10.75), but I'm sure that Mr. Tobin was thinking on a broader - and more superficial - level than that. Even if "the paranoid is the real-ist" (William Burroughs), can the cause really lie with the state? I do not think so. I would put it down to a number of factors, not the least of them being the size and consequent complexity of modern society, and not excluding subjective psychology. (Such views are not original: as long ago as Marx, Weber and Durkheim, sociology examined the concepts of anomie and alienation).

Do all of us not desire some sort of social order? If, as I believe, we do, then the utmost care (yes, conservatism) needs to be taken in even contemplating drastic change -- unless, of course, one is content to fantasise about the big street fight of revolution, which so much of such talk amounts to. In short, a dangerously utopian projection of problems of an ultimately psychological, and not political, nature, with as much relationship to the real world as masturbation has to sex.

If this sort of rhetoric is indicative of the action suggested (but not stated), with a defence of violence in the pursuit of chaos, then give me the status quo, with all its imperfections, every time. It is not, I fear, the shortcomings of man, that are to blame for the violent and unjust society.

Brian P. Boreham.

ONE MORE of the colourful characters of the radical scene has slipped his moorings. It gets a bit lonely out here.

George Foulser died from natural causes about two weeks ago. He was living alone in a London squat and it was not known by his many friends that he had died. The cremation took place at Kensal Green last Saturday.

GEORGE SHIPS OUT

He had not been to sea for some time. He had spent some time in hospital and was very happy and grateful to nurses and doctors when he was discharged, cured.

We do not know, but expect that he was black-listed as a seaman, which he probably merited by his agitation. In his only book, *Seaman's Voice* (1961) he wrote: "It was in Swansea that I endured much which has impressed indelibly on my mind the reason why a black-listed seaman not infrequently sinks right down into the community of drinkers of surgical spittits, methylated spirits, Brasso, or any

Dear Fellow-Workers,

May I dissent from Henry Bell's "Workers' Control of Capital" (FREEDOM 1.3.75) in which there is no specific advocacy of the workers' acquiring (by whatever means) capital in order to take over and run industries; but there is an obvious concern by Henry Bell for the workers to understand the workings of the financial system, including, apparently, the need for capital and profit (as in the authorities he quotes).

I do not know if H.B. is an advocate of 'syndicalism' or 'anarcho-syndicalism' since there are, of course, some differences. Syndicalism may believe in the necessity for profit and the accumulation of capital but I should have thought that - assuming the monetary system is retained - that any achievement of savings in production would be passed (in a free society) to the consumer (who is also a worker) in a reduced price. One assumes that since the wage system is being retained a fair wage (whatever that is) is already being paid. Questions of reserve funds for expansion and depreciation are a matter of routine book-keeping and have nothing to do with the classical idea of capital.

For myself I believe that retention of the monetary wage-profit system is a barrier to the production of welfare for all. The anarchist (or anarcho-syndicalist) revolution must be total or not a revolution at all.

Finally, might I add that many pre-1920 syndicalist ideas (blighted no doubt by Sorel) were malformed by Mussolini's syndico-corporate state for which he stole many syndicalist ideas.

Yours fraternally,
Jack Robinson.

other commodity which gives a man's heart surcease from suffering, at the same time as it destroys him mentally and physically."

Besides his only book (which George always hoped would be reprinted as a paperback), George contributed as a free-lance to *The Observer* and (too rarely) to *Freedom*. His real love was his own publications, *Seaman's Voice* and *East London Speed-Freak* (a revelatory title) which George not only edited but usually wrote single-handed in his free-swinging, humorous style.

Politically he was somewhat of a maverick. An ex-member of the Communist Party, he was repelled by its authoritarian nature and was attracted by the Industrial Workers of the World. He stated, "After Baltimore, I shall always have a weakness where the Wobblies are concerned; they are on the level, and people can't come any better than that." He was active in the 1960 Seamen's Strike (his pamphlet of this title is published by the SWF)

George was latterly his own worst enemy and wearing on his friends, but reading of his life and his ideas, all pervaded by his impish sense of hum-

News from N.Z.

AT PRESENT all is reasonably quiet in New Zealand on the industrial side, with this being election year and with most of the Unions being merely subsidiaries of the "labour" party which is at present attempting to keep a good image in election year. This "help the government" attitude by the unions has enabled Fletcher Holdings to close down a Christchurch plywood factory that wasn't making them enough profit.

I was interested in the reaction of the union* (N.Z. Timber Workers) as I worked in the factory for six years and shortly before I left was elected union delegate (unpaid) on the job. This would be one of the weakest unions in the land, with the Christchurch full-time secretary, Martin Drake, being the epitome of the Gutless Corps bureaucrat who is completely out of touch with the actual members of the union. Many of the men who work in this factory (at least 60 per cent) have worked in this plant for six or more years up to 25 years, and all have watched the management drive the factory to ruin over the past 7 years while treating the workers like simple children. At one stage the workers were asked to give up their bonus (\$10-\$15 a week) for six months because their profit was down \$20,000 over six months; this was when the Fletcher Group had still realised \$526,000 profit over that six months. Anyhow the total of bonus saved would have amounted to approximately \$16,800.

We refused the offer!

*A local newspaper reports: "The decision was attacked by the N.Z. Timberworkers Union, which accused Fletcher of closing one unit when it should have taken its New Zealand-wide profitability into account."

S. H.

COOPERATIVE WORKSHOPS

OPEN MIND is a cooperative workshops in central Liverpool. At present there are 12 of us (hard core) engaged in furniture, electronics, screen printing, leatherwork, and running various things such as the Open Gob food co-op, Open Ear info service, festivals and events, etc. We have just put a roof on two-thirds of our building which had previously been very wet, and have room for lots more people. Anyone interested should either be skilled and looking for working space or be interested in projects - in particular we are about to convert the ground floor into a coffee bar and exhibition area, and we are about to put on a Mayday festival.

We need people now. Anyone coming will need to be impervious to financial crises, cold, dirt, noise, etc., and interested in cooperatives. Address: Open Mind, 39/41 Manestys Lane, Liverpool 1. (Phones, both phones frequently cut off): 051 709 0264 and 708 7174 (projects).

Rick Walker.

our, one can forgive him much. He was not a character to be forgotten.

We hope to publish something more of his soon.

J. R.

STINKING FISH

AT THE moment a series of blockades of ports is being staged by boat-owning fishermen to protest against foreign competition in the fish market. It is said that Norwegian fishermen, eased out of the American market by the Japanese, are capturing the British fish market.

The men's leader makes a pious exception of E. E. C. countries; although France bars British fish -- how the E. E. C. loves one another! It is also significant that the threshold of Easter is chosen for the blockade. For some inscrutable reason the demand for fish is greater at this time.

Whilst one can have sympathy and understanding with the struggles of workers no matter how clumsily expressed and misdirected, one can instance this as an affair leading to the exploitation of the consumer (who is a worker too!) and to the profit of British wholesalers and middlemen. It will exploit the unnatural selfishness and chauvinism of the fishery workers. It was pointed out some time ago in Anarchy (April, 1968, No. 86 - some copies still available 15p + 5½p post) that the only hope for the fisheries was co-operatives.

The lessons of the cruel sea and the crueller profit system are the same. Co-operation must be truly international (between workers, not between exploiters), as set out in the following extract from Peter Howden's article.

"Co-operatively owned fishery industries are to be found in every part of the world, from the Eskimo fishing co-operatives to the Nigerian community of Aiyetoro, where the boats are communally owned and the proceeds of the catch shared out among all members. In Iceland, where most of the population depend in one way or another on the fishing industry for their livelihood, there are co-operative freezing plants as well as co-operatively owned trawlers. The whole of the catch in Norway is marketed co-operatively, as it is in Labrador and Nova Scotia. In Japan, the foremost fishing country in the world, the co-operatives, according to Hebe Spaul, "work closely together, and if a fishing fleet is away from home waters it can land a catch at the harbour nearest to the fishing grounds, and the value of the catch will be credited to the fleet's home society. The societies not only own and control the markets but they also act as wholesalers... Some of the co-operatives go in for fish-processing, and a number join together to operate joint processing factories. All these societies are joined together in the National Federation of Fishing Co-operatives. Among other services which the Federation carries out on behalf of its member societies is to operate ice-making and freezing plants. Both produce ten tons of ice daily, as well as providing cold storage between them for several hundred tons of fish. As with co-operatives of all kinds in Japan, the fishing societies consider that social

IN BRIEF

THE FOURTEEN accused in the case of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland leaflet (which they were accused of 'possessing' and only 'conspiring' to distribute) were committed - on bail - for trial at the Old Bailey; probably sometime in the autumn. By which time the British Army will probably have cleared out of Northern Ireland!

AN EXPLOSION wrecked the unoccupied weekend home of a Bilbao (Spain) Firestone Hispania factory public relations director. There has been, said The Times, "labour unrest in the factory".

Spanish police clubbed mourners at a Requiem Mass for six miners killed in a Pamplona mine accident. Police alleged that mourners shouted 'subversive remarks'. * A Pamplona labour court rejected the plea for reinstatement of four workers on the grounds that they had organised a strike. * In Bilbao the police announced the arrest of fourteen people for painting 'subversive' slogans on walls, and nine arrests were made for attending an illegal meeting.

THE UNITED STATES Army dropped charges against Lt. Matthew Carroll who grew his hair in an 'Afro' hairstyle in defiance of military regulations. He claimed that the regulations were a violation of his constitutional rights.

FREE SCHOOLING

THE A. S. NEILL TRUST exists to support any projects which promote freedom for children. The Trust is particularly keen to support Free Schools and educational-commune ventures like Life Span in Yorkshire. Money will also be sent to the Stepney Basement writers. It costs only 50p to join the Association and the next meeting will be a weekend at Monkton Wylde School in Dorset (bring sleeping bags and food). Write to Ray Hemmings, 7 Manor Road Extension, OADB, Leics.

During this month the Trust has paid out money to Leeds Free School, Bermondsey Lampost School, Kirkby House, North Kensington Free School, Delta Free School, Southampton, Life Span, and Little Digger Book.

Val.

welfare schemes for the members are very important and much of the profit is used for such schemes. Fishermen's co-operatives are in an underdeveloped state in this country, and cater only for inshore fishermen. The Fisheries Organisation Society has, over the years, assisted in the establishment of societies supplying nets, gear, paint and sea-clothes, and marketing fresh fish. In Scotland the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society has set up fishery co-operatives in Shetland and in the marketing of lobsters from the Western Isles. There is no co-operative organisation in this country owning distant-water vessels."

MC & JR

A CORRESPONDENT to Tribune is seeking help with writing a book dealing with 'the imperialist stage of the second world war (Sept. 3, 1939 to June 22, 1941)'. No prize for guessing what happened June 22nd 1941 to entirely change the war.

THE NATIONAL Union of Journalists voted to tell its magazine branch that it was wrong in rejecting a membership application from a worker on Britain First, the National Front newspaper.

THE KURDISH nationalists, deserted by their ally Iraq who has made a pact with Iran, are taking refuge in Iran. The former leader, who told the partisans "the fighting is over", is seeking refuge in the United States. According to the Save the Children Fund thousands of Kurds face death from starvation and disease.

A FRENCH journalist in Saigon was shot dead by police as he left police headquarters after an argument. There is conflicting evidence on the circumstances of the case but the journalist's widow has lodged a complaint of premeditated murder.

ACCORDING to Soviet News, Pravda refuted the allegation that the Soviet Union welcomed the economic difficulties of the capitalist countries. Pravda for March 9 said "The builders of a new society are true to their international solidarity with the workers of the capitalist countries which [sic] are suffering severely from the crisis. This is again convincingly illustrated by the constructive participation of the delegations of the socialist countries in the work of the European trade union conference devoted to labour safety measures. As for the policy of international detente, this is principled Leninist policy of the U. S. S. R. and of other socialist countries, a policy which is not subject to circumstantial changes."

THE CELEBRATED Mr. Justice Melford Stevenson of the Cambridge 'Garden House' trial fame attacked defence lawyers in a case of IRA men on trial who were sentenced to twenty years for bombings. Mr. Justice Stevenson said it was a sad day for the Bar of England when defence lawyers were prepared to make insulting suggestions about police-men, and to conduct a 'mud-slinging' defence. Evidence had been given that it is perfectly possible to transfer a fingerprint from one object to another. The Scotland Yard fingerprint expert at the trial, Mr. Barrington-Smith, felt that such revelation and demonstration was "not in the best interests of justice".

FOLLOWING his attack upon demonstrators, Sir Robert Mark, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, accused criminal lawyers (for the defence?) of being mercenary. He also said "the criminal trial today is more a test of tactics, eloquence, expertise and self-control than of guilt or innocence". Sancho Panza

PRESS FUND

Contributions 6 - 19th March

LUXEMBOURG: B. S. £5; GRAZ: G. A. £1.20; CARDIFF: R. A. £6; LONDON E4: S & A G: 50p; WHALLEY: P. G. £1; BRIGHTON: D. F. £2; GAINESVILLE, Fla. A. & R. S. 40p; LONDON SW7: D. L. L. £1; WOLVERHAMPTON: J. L. 90p; J. K. W. 10p; SAN BRUNO Calif.: L. M. £2; WAINUI-O-MATA, N. Z.: C. & G. E. £2; NEWCASTLE: G. D. 25p; ENFIELD: Z. J. £1; LONDON NW2: D. S. £2; SYDNEY: C. & R. P.: £4.06; LONDON N10: A. W. £16; SACRAMENTO, Calif.: R. F. £1.37; CORINTH Vt.: V. & T. R. J.: £3; GLASGOW: A. J. 20p; WOLVERHAMPTON: J. L. 50p; J. K. W. 10p; CHRISTCHURCH, N. Z.: S. H. £2.05;

TOTAL: £ 52.63

Previously acknowledged £ 340.25

TOTAL TO DATE: £ 349.88

ERRATUM

The lines missing from the article "Letters from Exile" of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman (this issue, Anarchist Review, bottom of Col. 1 P.5) are:

It has dehumanized the German masses and completely robbed them of all revolutionary spirit and libertarian feelings. It is no exaggeration to say that the German Social Democracy has throughout its existence been training slaves, and that particularly...

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THE NEXT ISSUE OF FREEDOM'S ANARCHIST REVIEW WILL CONTAIN AN ARTICLE BY PAUL AVRICH on Makhno and his Biographers.

Out on 12th April, 1975

MEETINGS

WOMEN'S LIBERATION National Conference MANCHESTER April 5/6 at Abram Moss Centre, Registration fee £2.50 to 218 Upper Brook St., Manchester, 13. (Say if bringing children, how many and what ages.)

LONDON Saturday May 3. ANARCHIST GALA (Anarchist Black Cross.) Details to be announced.

CONCERT MAY 3 (Sat.) Large & Small Conway Halls. Details to be announced. Keep the date free. In aid of anarchist prisoners everywhere

MANCHESTER SWF weekly meetings. Enquire Secretary c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester M7 2DU.

NEW YORK Libertarian Book Club Lectures, every second Thursday at 7 pm at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 Eighth Avenue (SW corner 29th Street)

April 10: Paul Berman: Anarchism and the American Novel.

April 24 Robert Barnes: Class, Culture and Revolt

CONTACT

W. E. A. Central London. 6-meetings course, fee £1. "Modern Radical Movements"; Anarchism, Communism, Trotskyism. Tutor: Sheila Rowbotham, B. A. Mondays 6.30. Start April 7, at 29b Torrington Sq. WC1

PUBLICATIONS

NEWSLETTER for all anarchists, subversives etc. in the North West. Send a few 9" x 4" SAEs to Andy Sidwell, 14 Tulketh Avenue, Ashton, Preston, Lancashire.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) for information read Industrial Unionist from Freedom Bookshop 10p + 5½p or from Organising Committee, 116 Chadderton Way, Oldham, Lancs. (Greater London local ring Watford 39124)

THE MATCH! U. S. Anarchist Monthly. News, reviews, history, theory, polemic. P.O. Box 3480, Tucson, Arizona 85722, \$3.00 per year - or try Freedom Bookshop for specimen copy, 13½p including post.

Recevez journal individualiste La Feuille. Ecrivez a M. Stephane Lefort, a/s Monde Libertaire, 3 rue Ternaux, Paris 75011, France. North American Individualist paper soon off the press, The Vulture - write to C.P. 95, Stn. Place D'Armes Montreal, P.Q., Canada.

Direct Action No. 6 out now. Obtainable from Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester and Freedom Bookshop (5p + 5½p post)

Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists, by Makhno, Arshinov, Mett, Valevsky, Linsky An Anarchist Workers Assn. pamphlet, 20p + post from AWA, 13 Coltman St., Hull.

POEMS & SONGS WANTED from all over the world, for Abolish War Encyclopaedia/Anthology. Pacifist, Anti Militarist, Anti Racialist, also Conscientious Objectors' Tribunal Statements, any language, all welcome. Mark Wm. Kramrisch, 55 Camberwell Church Street, London, S. E. 5.

GROUPS

CORBY Anarchists. For activities write to 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

COVENTRY. Peter Corne, c/o Union of Students, University of Warwick, Coventry.

EDINBURGH. Contact Bob Gibson, 7 Union Street, Edinburgh (tel. 031-226 3073)

GLASGOW. Contact Gerry Cranwell, 163 Great George Street, Hillhead, Glasgow.

PORTSMOUTH. Write to Rob Atkinson at 29 Havelock Road, Southsea, Hants.

N. London Anarchist Workers Association for working class anarchist activity in N. London. Write: BCM-N. Lon. AWA, London WC1V 6XX.

NEW ZEALAND anarchists contact Steve Hey, 54 Bucanans Road, Christchurch 4. Phone 496-793.

PRISONERS

PAUL PAWLOWSKI, 219039, H. M. Prison, Heathfield Road, London SW18 3HS. Letters & postcards please

DUBLIN ANARCHISTS Bob Cullen, Des Keane, Columba Longmore. Address for letters and papers: Military Detention Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, Eire.

STOKENEWINGTON FIVE Welfare Committee, Box 259, 240 Camden High St., London, NW1. Needs donations to supply books for these long-term prisoners.

GIOVANNI MARINI Defence Committee Paolo Braschi, C.P. 4263, 2100 MILANO, Italy.

NOTE: Latest date for receipt of items (news, contact, letters, articles) for inclusion in our next issue is MONDAY 7th April

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CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

THERE HAVE been those, particularly among social democrats, who have argued during the last thirty years that a slump similar to that of the 'thirties would never happen again. They are beginning to have second thoughts.

Despite Keynesian, neo-Keynesian and other "dirigist" and statist economic policies, disorganisation of the capitalist system has been growing apace over the last two years. The era of the "Permanent Boom" is over. In almost all the developed capitalist states economic expansion had largely stopped by the early summer of 1973. And 1974 witnessed not only a slowing down of economic expansion, or even a cessation, but a reversal - a downturn of economic activity. At present, there is, in many countries, industrial inertia.

* * *

DURING the first eight months of 1974, the total volume of industrial production in the United States fell by around three per cent, which has inevitably resulted in a fall in the Gross National product. The AFL-CIO News has reported an unemployment rate of over eight per cent. There are "officially" at least seven million unemployed in America. Industrial production is also declining elsewhere at a similar pace.

Unemployment in France at the beginning of last year was under 300,000. By September, it had risen to 630,000; by November, it was 800,000. It is now more than one million. In Italy, unemployment is running at about one million; in Western Germany, it is probably 800,000, and in Britain it is very much the same. And tiny Denmark reports that over ten per cent of its working population is now unemployed. Official statistics are not kept in the so-called Communist (i.e. state capitalist) countries of Eastern Europe, though, unofficially, unemployment has been reported to be on the increase in Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia. Again, the Soviet authorities deny that unemployment is even a possibility in the Soviet Union (Russian friends of this writer - who was actually threatened with violence by dubious "friends of the Soviet Union" - were, in 1965, in correspondence with unemployed Russian farm workers).

Politicians and "economists" try to explain the ever-deepening depression as an "energy crisis" caused by the Arabs' increase of the price of oil. This has, of course, had its effect on what was already happening before that increase. But the real cause of the crisis, with the decline in production and the inevitable increase in unemployment, stems from the nature of the existing capitalist system. Production is geared, not for the satisfaction of social and individual needs, but for the "market", for profit. Put simply and somewhat crudely: no profit, no production! The means of producing and distributing the things necessary to human sustenance are owned, not by society as a whole, but by a small minority (less than five per cent of the population) who monopolise them for their own private profit. The vast majority neither own nor control the means of life in which they toil. Their mental and physical energies are merely bought by the employers, most of whom do not themselves produce or have to produce in order to live. They - the capitalists - are, in the main always, "unemployed", but they do not suffer from it - except when a crisis deepens so much that even they find it better to throw themselves from skyscrapers rather than queue up for relief!

It is, therefore, the chaotic (not anarchic) nature of capitalism, with its multi-national monopolies, which every few decades inevitably gives rise to the kind of crisis we are witnessing today. Capitalism is merely a crisis-ridden society. It is also very wasteful, but that is not the subject of this article.

ONE important feature of the present crisis, absent from previous ones, is the chronic and, at the moment in Britain at least, worsening inflation. The increase in the price of oil has also been blamed for much of the inflation in recent years. The workers' wage claims ("wage-push") have been blamed by governments and "economists" alike for causing or exacerbating price increases.

Both claims are, in the main, wide of the mark. Inflation was spreading well before the Arabs started increasing the price of their crude oil in 1973-74. The present inflationary spiral became apparent, at least, by 1970. According to the OECD, the price of oil (up to the beginning of 1975) was responsible for only 1.5 per cent of the average of 14 per cent inflation. The workers' continual struggles are largely a rearguard action to retain their existing standard of living, though some workers, in some industries, in some countries, have managed - through their struggles - to marginally improve their position; more often than not, this has only been temporary. Some sections of the British working class have, because of their class-consciousness and solidarity, been more successful than workers elsewhere and in other countries.

Some capitalist concerns, particularly multi-national monopolies, have been able to put up prices and, thereby, increase inflation. But, again, they are not the cause of inflation. What, then, is the basic cause of inflation?

In the main, higher prices are caused by an over-issue of inconvertible paper money. Inflation is caused by a steady (and, in many instances, not-so-steady) increase in the circulation of currency relative to the increase (or lack of) in the Gross National Product. Put simply: if production does not increase while more money goes into circulation, then those commodities which find their way on to the market will cost more. The value of the money will, however, have depreciated. Who, then, "creates" this depreciated currency? Some have argued that it is the banks. Others, such as the neo-Douglasites of the National Front, blame the "International Financiers". Actually, inflation in this and most countries, is caused by the government, through the Bank of England. The government is an enormous debtor; and, by and large, increased, but steady, inflation serves its interest. In Britain, before the war, the amount of notes in circulation was about £500,000,000. Today, it is more than ten times that. Translated into real terms, one can say that take-home pay in 1939 was about £4 a week; today it is £40. A cheap Ford car cost £120; today it costs £1,200. In 1939, a bicycle cost about £3.50; today, one costs £35. And so on. . .

One of the reasons that governments have deliberately caused inflation is because, by increasing the money supply, they hope to increase investment and capitalisation, thereby reducing the risks of economic crises and subsequent unemployment. This worked to some extent - but only because of the dislocations and disruptions caused by the Second World War, the "Cold War", resulting in such "minor" conflagrations as the war in Korea and Viet Nam. They are now behind us. Truly has it been said that capitalism "needs" a war, or wars! Perhaps a new conflict in, say, the Middle East might "solve" the present crisis. Capitalism, at least at the present time, also appears to "need" inflation. And the workers can always be blamed for causing it.

* * *

CRISES and inflation are, therefore, merely aspects of a society which is, economically-speaking, based upon wage-labour and capital, production for profit and the subsequent enslavement of the vast property-less majority, the working class.

Capitalism can be - and is continually being - reformed.

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HERE AND THERE

NATIONALISATION

WITH MONOTONOUS regularity, most of the "left" have been extolling nationalisation and state ownership as being in the workers' interests as well as having something in common with socialism and/or communism. To some, nationalisation is socialism.

Surprisingly, however, some do not agree. Read this:

"Nationalisation is the cure-all held out to workers by the Labour Party... Workers learned long ago what this cure-all really is... If nationalisation does not serve the people, then who does it serve? Not only does it not serve the working class, but it is an actual burden to us, it serves the capitalist class at the expense of the working class. When an industry essential to capitalism is losing money and would close down under private enterprise, or is inefficient, it is nationalised in order to service the rest of capitalism. The railways were nationalised at a time when capitalism needed faster and cheaper transport. The railway companies were unwilling to pay for the standardisation, investment and integration necessary for efficiency..."

And who says this? The Worker (7.3.74), published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), a pro China group. Anarchists and libertarian communists have always said that nationalisation is against the interests of the workers. But what does Mao say? The Worker does not tell us that. After all, most of China's industry is nationalised!

THE "DEMOCRATS" (1)

Mr. Max Morris, a leading Communist Party member and past president of the National Union of Teachers, accuses the Trotskyists (IS, WRP and IMG) in the NUT of being undemocratic, and of "working to overthrow democracy in the union". (The Guardian, 14.3.75)

Those in glasshouses. . .

THE DEMOCRATS (2)

In an unsigned article ("How to Deal with Red Tyrants") in the March, 1975 issue of Spearhead, the writer claims that three NF members in Preston, who were giving out leaflets, "were set upon and beaten up by a large gang of International Socialists and International Marxists". According to Spearhead, their members, which included a 19-year-old girl, were kicked and punched.

So what did the law-abiding defenders of law-and-order of the National Front do about this? Call the police?

No, they waited to the following Saturday; then sent the three youngsters to leaflet the same place. The "red gang" again appeared, and, again according to Spearhead, "charged into what

they thought was going to be another easy smash-up". Thereupon, reports the Spearhead writer gleefully, "They should have looked before they leaped, however, for as they moved in, a large number of tough Preston members who had hidden themselves, moved in behind them and gave the cowardly Reds (who still had the numerical advantage) the thrashing of their lives. A specially good pounding and kicking was given to the IMG organiser and he had to be carted off to hospital."

Shades of the 30s. . .

MILITARY "INTELLIGENCE"

Though the information has been published before, the Socialist Worker (15.3.75) gives its readers the addresses of MI5's three (main?) headquarters. It says that "Leconfield House in Curzon Street in Mayfair is believed to be the

MI5 filing centre. The files are known to run into millions... Then the "operations centre is in Barnard Road, Battersea, a quiet suburban street - but there, at the bottom of the street is a ramshackle three storey building". And, lastly, there is Floor 16 of Euston Tower, at the top of Tottenham Court Road,

No doubt, a polite enquiry at Leconfield House, Barnard Road or Floor 16 of Euston Tower should confirm the truth of these allegations...

WHO IS IVOR BENSON?

ACCORDING to The Observer (16.3.75), the South African government and a number of pro-government newspapers are apparently losing patience with Rhodesia's Ian Smith for dragging his feet over a "constitutional settlement" with Britain.

Three pro-government Afrikaans newspapers have complained that Rhodesian organisations, such as the Genootskap van Rhodesiese Afrikaners (the neo-

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FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

The old adage about Kronstadt - "tell me where you stand on Kronstadt that I may know who you are and what you are", could as well be applied to the Spanish Revolution (even terminology - "Revolution" rather than "Civil War" is sufficient to label one); therefore I make no apologies for the blatant sectarianism of these "notes".

First of all - of course - lest I be accused of bias, our own publication, Vernon Richards' "Lessons of the Spanish Revolution" (hardback £ 1.50 + 24p post; paperback £ 0.75 + 18p post), which both narrates and analyses the path of the Revolution from 1936 to 1939 and draws important conclusions and parallels not only to later developments in Spain but also to what has happened or may still happen elsewhere.

Franz Borkenau's "Spanish Cockpit" (£ 1.50 + 17p post) is an eye-witness account of the political and social conflicts of the Spanish Revolution in its earlier years, 1936-1937, as well as an extensive historical background to it; Borkenau was one of the few writers who managed accurately to discern the very complex web of intrigue surrounding the events in Spain both inside and outside Spain at the time of the events themselves rather than with the aid of hindsight. Another such was, of course, George Orwell whose "Homage to Catalonia" (£ 0.45 + 10p post) is still available - a beautifully written book - vivid, accurate and dispassionate, a memorable achievement for one so close to the events of which he writes.

Gerald Brenan's "The Spanish Labyrinth" has just been reissued for the umpteenth time (£ 2.40 + 18p post) and though written as long ago as 1943, it is still probably the best book on the historical background to the Revolution.

More recently, Sam Dolgoff's "The Anarchist Collectives" (£ 2.00 + 17p post) contains extracts from the writings of Gaston Leval, Augustin Souchy, Jose Peirats, and others as well as Dolgoff himself on the complex and vitally important issues involved in the collectives in Spain, and the progress of workers' self-management at that time.

Pierre Broué and Emile Témime's mammoth work of scholarship, "The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain" (£ 6.00 + 46p post) provides important insights into the growth of the working class movement in Spain immediately prior to the revolution, as well as a perceptive analysis of the events of 1936-1939 and the respective parts played by the multitude of groupings involved in those events. There is also a clear and concise account of the military history of the Civil War and its outcome.

Two pamphlets:- José Peirats' "What is the CNT?" (10p. + 5½p post), a concise and clear statement of the nature and role of the CNT in Spain from its inception in 1911 to the Revolution; and George Woodcock's "The Spanish Collectives" (5p. + 5½p post), originally published in his "The Basis of Communal Living" and later reprinted in "Collectives in Spain"; a very limited number of this are available as a duplicated pamphlet.

Perhaps one may be forgiven, in conclusion, a slight digression to include Miguel Garcia's memorable book, "Franco's Prisoner" (£ 2.25 + 17p post) a very moving and inspiring account of twenty years in Franco's jails, as well as Miguel's two short pamphlets, "Looking back after twenty years of jail", (10p. + 5½p. post) and "Spanish Political Prisoners" (10p. + 5½p post); and also Cienfuegos Press's new Book Club edition of Stuart Christie's translation of Sabate: Guerilla Extraordinary, by Antonio Tellez (£ 2.35 + 17p post), an important work on the resistance to Franco in Spain in the 40s and 50s.

J.H.

(All the titles in this article are available from Freedom Bookshop, at the prices - plus postage - mentioned.)

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'AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'

FILMS SHOULD be related to a particular cinema. The ancient for the Everyman, the avant garde for the Academy and the solid pornography for the Soho fifty seater. Just as beer, wine and spirits demand their own vessel, a film must be savoured in its own cultural environment if one is to absorb the pure intellectual or emotional value (and if that is not worth a £1 in Private Eye's Pseuds Corner then one can only assume that the thing is a private racket worked by the Greek St. boys for the benefit of their associates in the Scotch pub). The Curzon cinema squatting like a broody concrete hen in Michael Arlen's fashionable Mayfair is the only cinema wherein one can believe that one is struggling for ownership of the armrest with a female relation of the Royal Family distaff side and the manager hands out the tickets with the solemn dignity of a Harley Street specialist dishing out sick certificates to Belfast brigadiers who have overstayed their leave, while within the lavatory English sporting prints take the place of the standard graffiti. I pay my 90 pence and join the female baton sinister in the struggle for the armrest and we are ready for Bunuel's 31st film, Phantom of Liberte.

Phantom of Liberte, Curzon Cinema : Aint Misbehavin',
Focus Cinema : The Great McGonagall, General Release :
The Prisoner of 2nd Avenue, Warner Cinema : Flesh for
Frankenstein : Casino Cinema.

THE TITLE Le Fantome de la Liberte is taken from the opening of Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto - "A Spectre is haunting Europe" - and Luis Bunuel offers us the illusions of liberty in a loosely connected series of Lewis Carroll logical inversions. They are foolish who try to read too much into Bunuel's film for it is not particularly profound. It is a good example of well tailored surrealism in which the rational is inverted as in Magritte's paintings. There is a greater distance than time between the Fantome de la Liberte and Un Chien Andalou of 1928 or L'Age d'Or for Bunuel has been accepted into the very establishment that with Dali he once sought to shock, but as with Orson Welles his work demands respect and Le Fantome de la Liberte is a well made, vastly entertaining film that has less shock or social or political protest than at least six nameable American films of the last two years. Bunuel said, while shooting the film, that "it is no longer possible to scandalise people as we did in 1930. Today, you have to do it with sweet subversion. The idea of Le Fantome here is to make people laugh and, when they leave, apprehensive". As the world now knows, the opening scene is of a group of Spanish guerrilleros being lined up to be executed by Napoleon's French soldiers and before the guerrilleros die they chant 'Long live chains' while in the police station scene a copy of Goya's 'Fusillade du 3 Mai' hangs on the wall behind the commissioner. It would be wrong, Alexander Walker of the Standard take note, to reveal too much of the film but a scene wherein a fashionable group of people having first dropped their trousers and panties sit down at table on lavatory seats and talk of the world problem of human shit until one man politely leaves the table to sit in a small room, and having eaten a meal in private rejoins the dining table. This is Bunuel's scatological inversion of normal human behaviour but in 1975 the old shock treatment no longer works. Bunuel has said that "There are those who say I'm cruel and per se. I'm exactly the opposite. I'm ridiculing the fetishes that cause cruelty and perversion. I hate violence and pornography." If you wish to have a heady explanation of Le Fantome de la Liberte then I offer you Serge Silberman's version, and as the producer of Bunuel's last four films he states that Le Fantome is about "le hasard des rencontres - chance meetings", while Jean Claude Carriere who co-scriptwrote Bunuel's last five films says that Le Fantome is "about improvised connections, about escaping the freedom of choice". My advice is simply to enjoy the film as a series of good solid surrealist gags using the same idea but in a different context and then to surrender the armrest to the baton sinister.

Yet for pleasure I joined the dirty mac brigade in Brewer Street in the Soho back streets to enjoy Aint Misbehavin'. At £1.20 a bucket seat one was conned but in that beautiful sleazy atmosphere it was worth it with an all male audience of heavy breathers. The film itself is a cheap commercial job of old film extracts strung together for a collective mental wank but it was good to see and hear Sophie Tucker, Elsie Carlisle and Fats Waller and all those sad people posturing for the

early camera. What makes the film worthwhile is a few genuine pieces of solid hard core pornography from the days of the early cinema, and these must be genuine film rarities. The golden days of good clean honest filth are gone forever for in those days a youth stumbling into manhood could take a simple honest pride in owning a filthy postcard or of being able to produce a tatty stencilled copy of an obscene ballad, but the middle class have for commercial reasons destroyed this working class folk culture in their mass production of technically efficient erotic magazines. It is for this reason that Bunuel fails and Aint Misbehavin' succeeds. For brief moments we can watch these ancient examples of the lewd and the filthy in all their primitive splendour as we watch a flickering image of a girl masturbating with a banana, a nun being mounted by a randy priest and all at running speed before the film ran out. Pornography must contain a guilt complex to separate it from the erotic and Mary Whitehouse has done more for this only genuine underground art form than all the directors of all the state art galleries, for like the politics of protest it can only survive on the defensive.

The lights went up and I counted sixty men in the small theatre, there in the tiny foyer a well dressed Soho boy leaned against a wall that carried a sticker advertising a George Melly record of "Aint Misbehavin'" and against the other wall were three coin-in-the-slot sex film machines and the rain drizzled onto Soho's streets. The Great McGonagall has now one hopes disappeared into that limbo of vulgar snobbish bad taste where it deserves to lie.

William McGonagall was born in 1830 and he was a poet. He churned his doggerel out literally by the yard but he believed he was a poet of talent and in the working men's clubs he was accepted as such. They for their part collected their pennies and McGonagall honoured their gifts. His poetry was bad because he believed that every following line should end in a rhyming word and he lacked the pedant's small craft to make his monumentally bad poetry fifth rate acceptable poetry. The middle class mode of communication has always been the printed word or the public address, and the working class when practising this method of communication always fell into the error of aping the language or the style of the middle class writer or speaker. And this was McGonagall's fault and crime, and for this he has always been held up to public ridicule by his social superiors but visionary inferiors. If he had painted primitive paintings as 'Grandma' Moses, Alfred Wallis the junkman or Henri Rousseau those who jeered would have patronised and accepted him but his crime was to move into their kultural pigsty and they have never let us forget this, from the students of Glasgow University who in 1891 sent McGonagall a nasty, pisstaking letter, to this mean and vicious film directed in the worst possible taste by McGrath and with Spike Milligan the Court Clown as McGonagall. In Christ's name McGonagall wrote much bad poetry but lost within the man was a working class poet of some small talent, as one verse among so much rhyming rubbish shows - for his "The Rattling Boy from Dublin" begins "I'm a rattling boy from Dublin town, / I courted a girl called Biddy Brown, / Her eyes they were as black as sloes, / She had black hair and an aquiline nose." If McGonagall had stopped using words like aquiline and simply fallen

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RUNNING OUR OWN ESTATES

TENANTS TAKE OVER, by Colin Ward. (The Architectural Press Ltd., £ 3.95)

HOUSING IN THIS country is divided into three main groups, public, private, and owner-occupier. The third group has, in recent years, expanded while the number of houses owned by the private landlord has been decreasing. Public ownership has also increased. If we compare figures for the year 1914 to those of 1974 we find that the owner-occupier has increased from 9 per cent of the housing stock to 53 per cent, publicly rented housing has increased from 1 per cent to 33 per cent, while the privately rented has decreased from 90 per cent to 14 per cent.

These figures come from Colin Ward's very informative book, *Tenants Take Over*. Under the chapter heading of "The Three Estates" it is shown that in Britain we have a very limited choice of ways of seeking a home. The three listed above are your lot, whereas in other parts of Europe and in America other means of tenancy and ownership are available. These three groups roughly reflect the class and social divisions which we have in this country. As such it divided people: "each category feels that he is subsidising another".

Certainly nowadays it is the owner occupier who receives the tax advantages, while families and single people living in privately rented homes get the worst of all possible worlds. As Colin Ward points out, one of the purposes of the Housing Finance Act was, by increasing council tenants' rents, to get the better off families to become owner-occupiers. After all, who could blame them. Considering the enormous increases under the Act, the same monthly rent could be paid out on a mortgage, and when it was paid off the bricks and mortar would be your own. However, the Act came into force just as house prices went up "far beyond the mortgage-eligibility of the most affluent council tenants. Inflation, which benefits the owner-occupier, penalises the man who rents his home".

So families, whether private or council tenants, are caught up in a trap of ever increasing rents without any chance of ownership and in most cases with no say in the management of their estates or streets. This with the added indignity of no security of tenure. This equally

FILM REVIEWS / Arthur Moyses ... from Page 3

back on his native working class speech: "She had black hair and a bonny nose" then he might have made it as a working class ballad maker and there would have been no supercilious laughter in the suburbs. But Milligan, the poetry and you, comrade, are no longer funny.

But we must learn to live with life's small evils and in *The Prisoner of 2nd Avenue* Jack Lemmon and Anne Bancroft fail to come to terms with life in the Big City. It is a film that we can all enjoy for the wit of the writing and the acting of the two leads. It is storywise the old cliché of people failing to come to terms with all the alleged horrors of city life but I believe that there are neurotic cows in this world and the brooding peasantry have provided half the world's literature, so I hold that when you flip it can be the Concorde flying over the high-rise or the buttercups banging together in the field down the road. I respect actors all the more since they have become a common sight in the Town standing in small lonely isolation waiting to kove in for their tiny film role in the TV commercials, and Anne Bancroft and Jack Lemmon gave a good workmanlike comedy performance as the husband and wife breaking up in the complex libing unit that they called home. The film is pure and happy escapism with a happy ending of the two waiting for a snowfall so that they can shovel it onto the neighbour's roof, and the only danger is that it might degenerate into a TV comedy series. But to hell with Bunuel and culture and see the Prisoner of 2nd Avenue. As for *Flesh for Frankenstein* directed by Paul Morrissey as an Andy Warhol presentation, it is definitely not for the vegetarians with all those guts in 3-D and all those corpses so. . .

Arthur Moyses.

applies to those tenants who rent from the old charity associations whose paternal attitude towards their tenants is a source of frustration, fear and annoyance equally with that of the remote and bureaucratic approach of the borough councils.

An example of this frustration and the stupid approach by the Lewisham council was recently given to me. A women told me of the experience of her daughter who wanted to adopt another baby. The adoption society had agreed, except that their present council flat was too small, and the council wouldn't give them a larger flat because they didn't have enough children.

It is this crazy bureaucratic world that people have to deal with that gives tenants an incentive to take over their estates. Such a take-over would give the necessary control which could very easily sort out the problem I have mentioned.

It could, as Colin Ward shows, improve the services and maintenance ("the most bitter complaints from tenants arise over matters of maintenance, repair and renovation. In rented housing, maintenance is the landlord's responsibility, in owner-occupied housing it is, of course, that of the occupier"). As a maintenance worker on a local authority I know from experience that tenants have to wait a long time to have their complaints rectified. The councils just cannot cope and no amount of work-studied schemes on organisation and bonus will put this right. More workers and better quality materials are what is needed.

The book gives a number of examples abroad where tenants have successfully taken over the management of their estates. While in this country, with its high proportion of municipal housing, there are no estates where the "tenants have any control over and any responsibility for the administration of their estate". However in Oslo tenants did take over their estate. This was done with a holding company which secured favourable terms from the municipality and the banks. Tenants became shareholders "in the formation of a tenants' co-operative society". A lot of suspicion was encountered from tenants as many thought the Oslo council just wanted to get the estate off its hands.

In the United States the government is the biggest slum landlord. However, America also provides "an immensely rich variety of housing experiments and experiences. Co-operative, co-ownership or 'condominium' housing projects are successful and important and one remarkable and little publicised fact about American housing is that owner-builders are responsible for 20 per cent of new single-family dwellings constructed annually in the United States and for 12 per cent of all housing begun each year".

This is done in a number of ways from actually doing the building themselves, or acting as general contractors, seeing to the design and financing. Others work alongside hired builders, while some just supervise. Obviously these people would fall within the "middle-income" bracket. Those less well off have taken over on a co-operative basis properties which their landlords have abandoned, or were "unable or unwilling to carry out their maintenance obligations or meet their tax liabilities".

In this country we have a basis for organisation for similar schemes of self-management of estates, namely the tenants' associations. These organisations could carry out these take-overs to give their members the ownership and self management of their homes and estates. Of course these solutions are not revolutionary but they do give tenants control of their environment. It could bring self confidence and a co-operative spirit, instead of the isolation and frustration one encounters today.

Colin Ward in his introduction claims just this for his book when he writes: "This book is not about a radical solution to the class division of property. It proposes a much more modest and more easily obtainable reform, but one which would enhance the real value of one third of the nation's stock of housing by arresting the cycle of instant decline which is the predictable fate of most council housing."

To prevent this, tenants' self management is an answer within our present society. This reform is a worthwhile one which should be considered by tenants. It is a do-it-yourself reform which anarchists should welcome.

It is a pity this book is so expensive, but certainly every tenants' association should have copies which could either be passed around their members or its contents summarised in their bulletins.

Letters in Exile

NOWHERE AT HOME : Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, edited by Anna Maria and Richard Drinnon, 273 pp. plus index. Schocken Books, New York, \$12.95.

THESE LETTERS should best be read as a supplement to Richard Drinnon's excellent biography of Emma Goldman, *Rebel in Paradise*. The story of these two anarchist rebels is too rich and full to be compressed into any one book, and reading the selection of letters alone leaves one feeling that much seems to be lacking. Whether or not any book of selected letters can or should be more than a supplement, perhaps an appendix, to previously published biographical works is a question to be considered. *Nowhere at Home* presents a wealth of information, intelligently categorized, that is very, very welcome. But I can't escape the feeling that it doesn't quite make it completely on its own.

Perhaps I'm at a disadvantage, having just read through all the letters in the Berkman and Goldman archives at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam (from which all the letters in the book were culled). It would be good if someone else, not working so intimately with the same material, were also to write a review of this book. My perspective may be a bit distorted.

To the book itself: I had hoped that a book on their life in exile would correct the weighting of *Rebel in Paradise*, which I felt skipped too quickly over their personal lives in those latter years. To some extent, that was due to the structure of Drinnon's dissertation which had focused on Emma's life up until her deportation from America. Yet in *Nowhere At Home* I don't find the same desperate sense of being smothered by tragedies, both the personal and the "political", which I felt so acutely in going through the IISH archives. To be sure, there exist in the archives over 500 letters which Berkman had written to various officials, lawyers and friends relative to his three expulsions from France in a 15-month period, and one can't expect to see them all reproduced in any book. Nor would one expect the hundreds of letters on the severe financial plight, the hopes to eke out a fee for translation, typing, or ghostwriting. Maybe these letters just begin to oppress due to their very bulk, the repetitive monotony of them all. A fuller narrative account could have tried to get some of this insistent, nagging misery across better than any selection of letters could. The pure physical agony which seems to have been a constant in the existence of both Berkman and Emmy Eckstein is covered better, but the letter of Berkman to Stella Cominsy of June 10, 1936 digs deeper in one way than any of those included: "During ten days I was in convulsion and kept shouting almost continuously. I don't remember any previous occasion when I had yelled with pain, but those ten days I certainly did, and it seemed that the whole ward, patients and visitors alike, were hushed in awe..." It is characteristic of Berkman that in this same letter he immediately goes on to enthusiastically discuss the then-current strike wave in France. Two weeks later he shot himself because of a recurrence of the pain.

Longer introductions to each of the major sections of the book -- "Communism and the Intellectuals", "Anarchism and Violence", "Women and Men", "Living the Revolution" -- could have helped flesh out the book better. The numerous, well-informed footnotes provided do just that. It is disappointing that much more narrative is not provided. The Drinnons know so much but give us frustratingly little of their own knowledge here. The love Drinnon felt for Emma and Sasha and which was manifest in *Rebel in Paradise* is not to evident here. I think allowing the letters to "speak for themselves" was an unwise decision.

In the book's treatment of political themes I also find some shortcomings. The "Anarchism and Violence" chapter I feel was mislabelled. Some of their strongest statements against Communism are not included; they consistently held that Bolshevism was more disastrous than fascism or nazism, though both sprang from the same roots. Along this line, an interesting item can be offered from one of Berkman's letters to "H.W.G." in March, 1933:

One wonders how Hitlerism is possible in a land containing millions of alleged revolutionists. Could there be a more convincing demonstration of the reactionary character and spirit of the German Social Democracy--the Party that has for more than 50 years 'trained German generations' in Marxism? Could there be a better proof of the effect of Marxism itself that has disciplined its followers in blind obedience and worship of the State, of legality, of Law and Order?

since the Revolution of 1918 it has been preparing the way for Hitlerism and a bloody dictatorship.

As to the Communists, poor mouthpieces and dupes of Moscow that they are, they have helped to destroy the initiative and independent activity of the workers, and now they must reap the bitter fruit of their own planting. They have helped create disunity and chaos among the labor elements, they have disorganized the masses, they have trained their followers in the spirit and practice of suppression and taught them to rely implicitly on their Communist leaders, and now their leaders have betrayed and deserted them, as "leaders" usually do in the hour of test and peril.

The greatest tragedy of their lives was not just in seeing the "progressive forces" succumb to the Bolshevik "myth" (this has been well covered by the Drinnons with regard to the intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s). The greater tragedy was in being unable to even begin to do anything about it. Berkman in exile in France was not permitted to engage in any political work, and was even forced to give up his non-partisan relief work for political prisoners in Russia as a condition for his stay in France, which itself was so shaky that as later as 1934 he had had to ask comrades in Belgium not to issue a French translation of his 1922 pamphlet on Kronstadt (in French, Cronstadt). Internal squabbles within the anarchist movement itself (the Arshinov "Platform" group's behaviour, the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* vs. *The Road to Freedom* controversy, and other unpleasant incidents) did not help. The seamy side of the "movement" isn't really dealt with in the letters chosen, but certainly added heavily to the discouraging futility which Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman felt oppressing them.

Some previously unpublished photographs do add a good deal to our appreciation of their lives, and the printing for the first time of Berkman's own aut biographical synopsis is of prime importance. The very brief, 3-paragraph, "Emma Goldman Chronology", intended to bring her life up to 1919, indicates that the Drinnons may well have intended *Nowhere At Home* to serve only as a supplement to the earlier biography of Emma. It is invaluable as such, and constitutes an important addition to our knowledge of two very important anarchists.

Bill Nowlin.

CRISIS OF CAPITALISM. . . Continued from Page 1

But, generally speaking, it cannot be reformed in the interests of the majority. Most reforms enacted by Parliament do not benefit the workers. Some are harmful; most are irrelevant. Social democrats (of the "leftist" variety), as well as a motley crew of Stalinists and Trotskyists, argue that state ownership and control will solve, or help solve, the crisis of capitalism. History should have taught them that it will not. State ownership leaves the workers in the same position as they were previously - still propertyless wage-slaves and, in many ways, virtual slaves of an all-powerful state. State ownership is merely another "reform", though it may be an inevitable trend within capitalism.

Is there, therefore, no solution to the crises of capitalism?

In the long, and short, term there is but one solution: the overthrow of the present "system" of society, and its replacement by a new classless, stateless society based upon free access, and common ownership and control of the world's resources. Whether such a society is brought about sooner or later depends, not on any working-class "leaders" or political "vanguards", but upon the mass of the people themselves. "The emancipation of the working class must be the task of the working class itself". Nevertheless, reliance on some mystique of spontaneity will, in my view, achieve very little - except a reactionary, or "fascist" backlash. If the workers are to achieve their freedom, they will have to prepare for it; they will have to organise themselves, otherwise they will most certainly fail. The word "organisation" seems, for some inexplicable reason, to upset some "libertarians" or "anarchists", possibly because, in fact, they are not really libertarians at all, but merely anarcho-rebels or inverted authoritarians. But to achieve a successful revolution (if that is what they want), libertarians will have to organise for the abolition of our present crisis-ridden society. And the sooner the better. There is no evidence that capitalism will, of itself, collapse, as has been claimed by Bolsheviks and others in the past. It will merely stagger from one crisis to another.

Peter E. Newell.

This article is reprinted from the January, 1975 issue of THE MATCH! where it originally appeared.

IN THE FALL of 1971 Schocken Books of New York reissued Peter Kropotkin's In Russian and French Prisons for the first time since its original publication in 1887, and I contributed an introduction. A few months later, Schocken called me to say that a television network, impressed by Kropotkin's ideas, wanted to invite him to a round-table discussion on prison reform. How delighted Kropotkin would have been, and how amused! I volunteered to put on my false beard and Russian accent, but too late -- they had already gone on the air.

What this incident reveals, apart from the appalling ignorance of the press, is the continued vitality of Kropotkin's ideas almost a century after he expressed them and more than fifty years after his death. Nearly all of his major works - Memoirs of a Revolutionist, Mutual Aid, The Conquest of Bread, Fields, Factories and Workshops, The Great French Revolution, Ethics - have been recently reprinted in several languages. Beyond this, Schocken has reissued the 1950 biography of "the Anarchist prince" by George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic; Dover has reissued Roger Baldwin's useful collection of Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets; Nicolas Walter is preparing the first full English edition of Kropotkin's first collection of anarchist essays, the Words of a Rebel; and Marti Martin Miller, an American historian who has had access to Kropotkin's archives in Moscow and who put together a new Kropotkin anthology in 1970, has completed a new full-length biography which is likely to appear in print before long.

More surprising, however, has been the Kropotkin revival in the Soviet Union, with scholarly articles on his geographical discoveries, his views on economics and revolution, and his history of the French Revolution. A scholarly (though abridged) version of his memoirs has been edited by Valentina Tvardovskaya (is she related to the late courageous editor of Novy Mir?), with a number of fascinating photographs - Kropotkin as a young officer in Siberia, Kropotkin in Clairvaux Prison (taken by the famous French photographer Nadar), Kropotkin in England, Kropotkin and his daughter Sasha - that were previously unpublished. Tvardovskaya, who praises Kropotkin for his "vast almost encyclopedic erudition", reveals that his archives in Moscow (largely appropriated from the Kropotkin Museum, closed on Stalin's orders in 1939) contains not only the childhood journals of Kropotkin and his brother, but but also his English translations of Tolstoy, Pushkin, Ryleev, and Griboedov, and of the famous mediaeval epic, The Song of Igor's Campaign (of which there is a remarkable modern translation by Vladimir Nabokov), as well as other important materials.

One is struck by Tvardovskaya's frank appraisal of Emelian Yaroslavsky's Stalinist history of Russian anarchism as "an accusatory rather than a scholarly" work. Most startling of all, however, is her remark that Kropotkin,

KROPOTKIN LIVES!

from his house in Dmitrov, wrote "many letters to the highest organs of Soviet authority, some twenty of them addressed to Lenin personally". Hitherto we knew of only three letters from Kropotkin to Lenin; one of March 4, 1920, which criticized (among other things) the subjugation of the local soviets by the Bolshevik party; a second (the date is not to hand) which protested against state censorship of literature; and a third, of December 21, 1920, which condemned the taking of hostages. Now, however, it is revealed that he wrote some twenty letters to Lenin, not to mention those to other government officials. These letters were written between the summer of 1918, when Kropotkin moved from Moscow to Dmitrov, and January 1921, when he suffered his fatal illness and his strength finally gave out. That means a letter every two or three weeks (how one would like to see them!). No wonder, according to some reports, this unceasing barrage caused Lenin to ask impatiently when the "old fool" would stop pestering him. (To Kropotkin's criticisms during their meeting in May 1919 Lenin replied: "You can't make a revolution wearing white gloves.")

Natalian Pirumova also mentions these letters in her new biography of Kropotkin, but tells us little else about them. Kropotkin, she says, wrote to Lenin "several times", criticizing the use of terror by the Bolsheviks and calling for greater independence for the local soviets and for the encouragement of a mass cooperative movement. She refers to a previously unknown letter of September 17, 1918, without, however, divulging its contents. She also cites the famous letter of March 4, 1920, but without going into the details of Kropotkin's arguments. Some of these are worth quoting at length (the emphasis is Kropotkin's):

"One thing is certain. Even if a party dictatorship were the proper means to strike a blow at the capitalist system, (which I strongly doubt) it is positively harmful for the building of a new socialist system. What is needed is local construction by local forces. Yet this is absent. It exists nowhere. Instead, wherever one turns there are people who have never known anything of real life committing the most flagrant errors, errors paid for in thousands of lives and in the devastation of whole regions

"... Such construction from below, it would seem, would be best undertaken by the soviets. But Russia has already become a Soviet Republic only in name. The influx and bossism of party men, predominantly fledgling Communists (the ideological old timers are mainly in the large centres), have already destroyed the influence and creative strength of these much-vaunted institutions, the soviets. At present it is not the soviets which rule in Russia but the party com-

mittees. And their constructive ability suffers from all the inefficiencies of bureaucratic organization.

"To escape from the existing dislocation, Russia must rely on the creativity of local forces, which, as I see it, can become a factor in the building of a new life. The sooner this is understood the better, and the more will people be inclined to adopt social forms of life.

"If, however, the present situation is allowed to continue, the very word 'socialism' will become a curse, as happened in France with the idea of equality for forty years after the rule of the Jacobins."

Not a word of this in Pirumova's book. Nor is this an isolated example of her failure to tell the whole story. She relates for instance how Lenin sent a team of doctors to Dmitrov when Kropotkin fell ill with pneumonia in January, 1921, but makes no mention of Dr. Atabekian, Kropotkin's faithful disciple, who stayed by his bedside until the end and was afterwards imprisoned by the Cheka. Similarly, she dwells on Lenin's admiration for the history of the French Revolution that Kropotkin had written (a subject previously dealt with in Soviet academic journals by E. V. Starostin and V. G. Revunenko). In February of 1919, we are told, Lenin sent an emissary to Dmitrov to propose the republication of the great anarchist's works - Memoirs of a Revolutionist, Mutual Aid, and especially The Great French Revolution. "excellent books", Lenin called them - in an edition of 60,000 copies. At their meeting in the Moscow apartment of Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич alluded to above (which, as Starostin has established, took place on May 3, 1919 and not between May 8 and 10, as Bonch-Bruевич wrote) Lenin again broached the subject. (On yet another occasion, according to Woodcock and Avakumovic, the Commissar of Education, A. V. Lunacharsky, offered to pay a sum of 250,000 rubles to publish Kropotkin's collected works.) But Pirumova does not tell us Kropotkin's reply: that he had not taken a copeck from the state in the past and did not intend to do so now. His works were reissued instead by the anarchist publishing house of Golos Truda (The Voice of Labour), with The Great French Revolution appearing in 1922, the year after Kropotkin's death.

Pirumova, the author of previous biographies of Herzen and Bakunin, adds little to our knowledge of Kropotkin's life. She completely ignores Western scholarship on Kropotkin and on the anarchist movement as a whole. She has, however, examined Kropotkin's papers in the Soviet state archives, citing his Canadian diary of 1897, his Russian diary of the revolutionary period, his correspondence with Georgi and Lydia Gogelia, Jean Grave, Christian Cornelissen, and others, much

Continued on Page 7

of which is unavailable in the West. She also quotes extensively from his letters to Maria Goldsmith (the originals, she should have pointed out, are in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris). Among the illustrations in her book are three previously unpublished photographs of considerable interest: Kropotkin's wife Sophie as a young woman, Kropotkin and Sophie seated on a bench in a Dmitrov garden, and Kropotkin standing with the staff of the Dmitrov museum, which shows him to have been neither short nor stocky (as he is often described) but of medium height and build.

More significant is Pirumova's generally sympathetic attitude to her subject. She quotes Bonch-Bruевич's statement that Kropotkin's heart "beat for all humanity". She praises his research on ethics and natural science as well as on the French Revolution. She has further praise for Sergei Kravchinsky (Stepniak) and Dmitri Klements, Kropotkin's closest associates in the Chaikovsky Circle, as well as for Mark Natanson and Dr. Orest Weimar, who organized his sensational escape from the Saint Petersburg Military Hospital in 1876. She describes the French anarchist Elisee Reclus as "a philosopher and encyclopedist, geographer and biologist, traveller and thinker, a man of rare spiritual purity and great moral stature", and she calls his brother Elie "a man of great courage and lofty ethical principles". Again, she praises the Swiss anarchist James Guillaume as "a man of broad and diverse education", while criticizing Marx's supporter Nicholas Utin for being "prone to use intrigue and falsification" against his political opponents.

How refreshing this is coming from a Soviet historian! She tells us that the famous Populist Vera Figner corresponded regularly with Kropotkin after the Bolshevik Revolution, often visited his house at Dmitrov, once sending him, as a present, a hen. (After his death, it might be added, Figner attended Kropotkin's funeral and served on the committee of the Kropotkin Museum.) Pirumova even mentions that several anarchists were released from prison to attend Kropotkin's funeral "on their word of honour to return" (which none of them violated, incidentally).

Not that she is without criticism of Kropotkin's anarchist philosophy. She takes him to task for his "exaggeration of mediaeval liberties" and for adopting a utopian approach to society that was remote from the framework of "scientific socialism". She criticizes the vagueness of anarchist economic and political theory, quoting the following passage from Lenin's essay on "Anarchism and Socialism": "Anarchism for the 35 or 40 years of its existence has offered nothing but general phrases against exploitation." In doing so she commits a number of errors of fact and especially of interpretation, while employing her familiar device of distortion by omission. Yet her attitude throughout remains respectful and without the slander and vituperation of Stalinist historiography. In short, this is probably the most objective biography of Kropotkin that contemporary Soviet scholarship would allow and as such we must be grateful for its appearance.

To conclude, as I began, with an odd and amusing story -- in 1973, about a year after the television invitation men-

-tioned above, I received a card from the British publishers of *Mutual Aid* and *The Conquest of Bread*. It announced their removal to new offices in London and was addressed to "Mr. Peter Kropotkin".

Kropotkin lives!

Paul Avrich.

INTERROGATIONS

NUMBER 2 of the "international review of anarchist research" has come out on time. (Available from Freedom Bookshop 90p + 11p post.)

It contains articles by Jean Barroué (in French) on the revival of Saint-Simon's ideas of continual increase in production by modern "capitalist" and "socialist" technocrats, and an anarchist opposition to such ideas; by Fernando Gomez-Pelaez (in Spanish) on the falsification of history by Santiago Carillo, the leader of the Spanish Communists, in a recent book-length "interview" with two servile historians, Regis Debray and Max Gallo; by Carlos Semprun-Maura on the May '68 revolt in France, which he sees as "the best example of a revolutionary crisis in our modern world"; and by Nico Berti (in Italian) on how to understand anarchism historically. The magazine is again 132 pages long, and well worth buying if you're handy with a dictionary. Its editor is Luis Mercier Vega, son of a French father and a Chilean mother, two of whose books, *Roads to Power in Latin America* and *Guerrillas in Latin America* have been published in this country and should be available from your public library.

D. L. M.

Postscript to 'Tenants Take Over'

R A D I O

THE POSSIBILITIES put forward in *Tenants Take Over* have received some wider coverage than dissemination to the buyers of a book of this price. The BBC's new "This Island Now" series (Radio 4, Sundays, 10.15 p.m.) began with *Housing - Service with a stigma*. One of the least successful council estates, in Southwark, south-east London, was chosen, and some of the tenants voiced their unhappiness. Aylesbury Estate. is the outcome of an effort of heroic proportions by Southwark council to overcome a gigantic need. The size of it was the foremost cause of the tenants' depression - plainly aesthetically offensive to these ordinary working-class people - and one after another the few voices recorded from among the ten thousand people housed in this estate indicated the: mass anonymity of their population. "It cuts you off from people - neighbourliness is non-existent. You don't hear and you don't see people" (the flats are virtually sound-proof). "I feel sorry for old people who cannot get out, but the flats are very nice. . . If I had a nice house and garden - not that I could do much gardening, but you could go out and even see the next door neighbour in a garden." A man did not agree that the flats were all that nice. "We have got central heating but it's not always working, neither are the lifts. I find it impossible to clean my bedroom windows...you have either got to be a monkey or an acrobat" (hear, hear, from other tenants). "(The estate would not be too big) if they had built somewhere where you could go walking in the park. I am glad to get away from here for a weekend with my daughter in

Dartford... but I would feel sorry for the people whose daughters are in Australia."

Colin Ward defined the distinction between a house and a home as the home being a house which is loved by the people who are in it - a sign of the house which is loved is that it is not like the one next door. It was Colin Ward and the two architects on the programme who diagnosed the cause of the depressive symptoms as the fact that people do not house themselves, they are housed; they referred to the restriction on the freedom of even the planning local authority imposed by Whitehall cost limitations (and Colin Ward pinpointed the falsity of the economy in the case of the particular estate they were talking about, with a costly repair bill less than three years after its completion); one commented that some of the drawbacks and dissatisfactions specified by these council tenants were accepted by people buying their houses, having made their own choice and value judgement within the existing circumstances.

A cold draught was blown in by a Nottingham councillor who feared that handing over the management of estates to their tenants might not result in the lowering of cost of maintenance and repairs envisaged by the other speakers: the better tenants would carry out repairs but less able and 'problem' families would never do this. He also feared the exclusion of, say, coloured families and single-parent families from estates run by tenants' co-operatives. Possibly. There will be people with problems in any society and the working class is not necessarily freer from prejudice than the middle-class owner occupiers they might become. But it's a thin excuse for blocking the way to the very co-operation and self direction that could lead to release from prejudice through a measure of joy in living and a deeper understanding of problems in the sharing of resolving them.

M. C.

LETTER

OF MAN AND REVOLUTION
(The Nation State)

Comrades!

When I began reading in 8 February issue of your journal the comments of your correspondent, H. B., on my recent FREEDOM article on the Nation State, my reaction was one of surprise that such criticism could come from a fellow anarchist and I wondered what possible corn of H. B.'s I had trodden on. Then came the answer at the end of the letter. For to my even greater surprise I discovered that H. B. was not an anarchist at all but a statist and an "unrepentant workers republican" to boot.

The aim of a workers republic is indeed a praiseworthy one and if built by the masses in Ireland or England would indeed make these two nation-states far more progressive than they are at this moment in time. But, however praiseworthy the standpoint of H. B. is, it is at the same time a very limited one. And its inherent limitations are shown in the kind of criticisms made of my article.

For instance, H. B. says that "the nation state as we know it is a comparatively recent development", and then he flips back the pages of history to show how very different France, Germany and Italy were several hundred years ago. Leaving aside the fact that the European nation-states of today are technologically-advanced ones and are thus very different from their counterparts of the past, what H. B. fails to comprehend is that the nation-state is not a mechanical structure built like a skyscraper but is a bio-cultural organism which develops gradually over a long period of time. The France, Germany and Italy of several hundred years ago were undeveloped nation-states whose integrating bonds of mind, on the one hand, and national socio-economic systems, on the other, were at an embryonic stage of development. The nation-state belongs to an entirely different temporal dimension from ourselves. While the life of a man can be measured in a few score years, at most, that of a nation-state may endure for thousands of years. Old China and Ancient Egypt are two good examples of the longevity of such bio-cultural organisms. Furthermore, in spite of what H. B. seems to think, these latter societies were well-developed pre-industrial nation-states. While the technologically-developed nation-state is indeed a modern phenomenon and differs from the traditional state societies - particularly in its industrial capitalist (and state capitalist) socio-economic system and in its tightly organised and highly centralised structures, it is essentially the same kind of bio-cultural organism as former city-states and nation-states, and is even more of a social dinosaur because its capacity for destruction and repression is so much greater.

Contrary also to what H. B. asserts, I

have not "seriously underestimated the importance of the economic factor in history". But I do not exaggerate its importance as Marxists do to the neglect of other vital factors such as the psychological ones

World government organisations do exist. I was once an official of one called The Mondcivitan Republic (Mondcivitan is the Esperanto term for world-citizen) which has branches in some eighty countries. While no organisations of this kind have what could be considered anarchist aims, the mere fact that they are seeking to transcend the anachronistic political divisions on our planet give them a libertarian character. Their internationalism may be that of the liberal-bourgeois variety (and indicates the gradual formation of a world consciousness), but isn't this something to be encouraged since there is so little proletarian internationalism visible nowadays. (I am still waiting to hear the news of mass strikes of English workers showing their solidarity with Omanese and Irish workers and peasants struggling against British Imperialism, in general, and the imperialistic policies of the present British Labour Government, in particular).

As for my view of the "class struggle being utterly simplistic", perhaps it is. But then my revolutionary ideas were not got from detailed academic analysis but were born of the experience of real life struggles I and my fellow workers took part in over many years. And from the point of view of a manual worker, as I still am, the nature of our present social system can be described in very simple terms, and so being a practical person I tend to see the main outlines

HERE and THERE... Cont'd from P. 2

whites support them. One such person is Mr. Ivor Benson. In a recent television programme on Rhodesian TV, Benson interviewed a Mr. Mees Neethling, a leading member of the South African Verkrampste, the extreme right-wing, neo-Nazi Herstigste Nasionale Party.

Who, then, is Ivor Benson?

The Observer writer, Stanley Uys, says that he writes for the extreme right-wing newspaper, the Afrikaner, and is a "soul mate" of the American "John Birch Society". But he does more than that.

Ivor Benson, who lives in Durban, but has also lived in Britain as well as in Rhodesia, has written a number of books and booklets (such as The Opinion Makers and A Message from Southern Africa), has broadcast on South African and Rhodesian radio, and was employed, during Nazi Broederbond which has connections with the South African BOSS (secret police), have been inviting well-known South African right-wingers to Rhodesia to tell the Rhodesian whites that South African the 60s following UDI, by the Rhodesian government as Information Adviser. Mr. Benson also edits and publishes a

and am rightly indifferent to the irrelevant details which armchair radicals are so prone to discuss at length.

So far as a workers republic is concerned, what else would an Irish Workers Republic or an English Workers Republic be but another nation-state. While a libertarian socialist might use the image or notion of a workers republic as a propaganda tactic, it should never be seen as an actual goal. A truly libertarian (anarchist) revolution just cannot take place in one country. It must be both transnational in nature and multi-national in scope if it is to succeed.

Finally, we are much closer to a libertarian planetary civilization than H. B. realises. The economic and technological basis for a planetary society has already been created. The next step is for the working masses of the world to demolish the existing social superstructure and to build a new (anarchist) one in its place, a social superstructure suited to the requirements of our times. But before we can begin to even do this we must first get rid of our mental cobwebs (of which H. B. appears to have more than his fair share). And this is one reason why I wrote "Of Man and Revolution". Judging by the amount of comment it has already received, I think it is going to succeed in its aim of jerking socialists out of the ideological rut they have been in for far too long. (As a matter of interest, the full text of "Of Man and Revolution" with certain additions to the parts already published in FREEDOM is now being produced in (duplicated) pamphlet form and copies are available free from P. O. Box 10368, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.)
Fraternally,
Michael Tobin.

monthly newsletter entitled Behind the News. His newsletter is virulently anti-communist, anti-Zionist, anti-"international finance", and pro-Apartheid. It is a neo-Nazi newsheet.

Besides writing and appearing on Rhodesian TV, Mr. Benson also visits other countries outside Africa. He has travelled to Australia, the United States and Britain, where he has lectured to invited audiences.

And, in Britain, who arranged for Mr. Benson to speak?

When he lectured last in this country, in December 1972, the meeting was held at Conway Hall, and was organised and sponsored by Albion Press. And Albion Press? They are the publishers of Spearhead, who are, in fact, John Tyndall and Martin Webster of National Front notoriety.

Indeed, Tyndall and Webster appear to think very well of Mr. Benson and his views. His diatribes are regularly featured in the columns of Spearhead. One wonders whether readers of Spearhead and the ordinary rank-and-file members of the NF know about Mr. Benson's dubious connections in Southern Africa - or care, for that matter.