

CORRUPTION

A Game of Billiards

THAT IT WAS to autodidactical China that so many of the western left turned for inspiration and leadership in recent years, may strike one as odd and ungrateful considering the periods of self-mortification to which the West has been prone, long before even the sado-masochistic excesses of the Christian church!

"So farewell Rome," said the sour and sulky satirist. "I leave you to sanitary engineers and municipal architects, men who by swearing black is white land all the juicy contracts just like that - a new temple, swamp-drainage, harbour-works, river clearance, undertaking, the lot - then pocket the cash and fraudulently file their petition in bankruptcy..."

Juvenal, of course, would have felt no less satirically at home in the Rome (or London or Washington) of today, among the fraudulent bankrupts and legacy-hunters, the scheming priests and politicians of Sciascia's brilliant novels and a very definite reality; in a Rome whose time-honoured techniques of occasional public confession by the ruling class via a superficially critical press, has brought it smoothly through successive crises of oil-money, United Brands-money, CIA-money, Lockheed-money, etc., etc., and will no doubt continue to do so for some time to come. . . For both fascist and communist parties, only governing alternatives to centre-this and centre-that, have been as well and truly bribed as those old corruptibles the Christian Democrats and the Vatican, the occu-

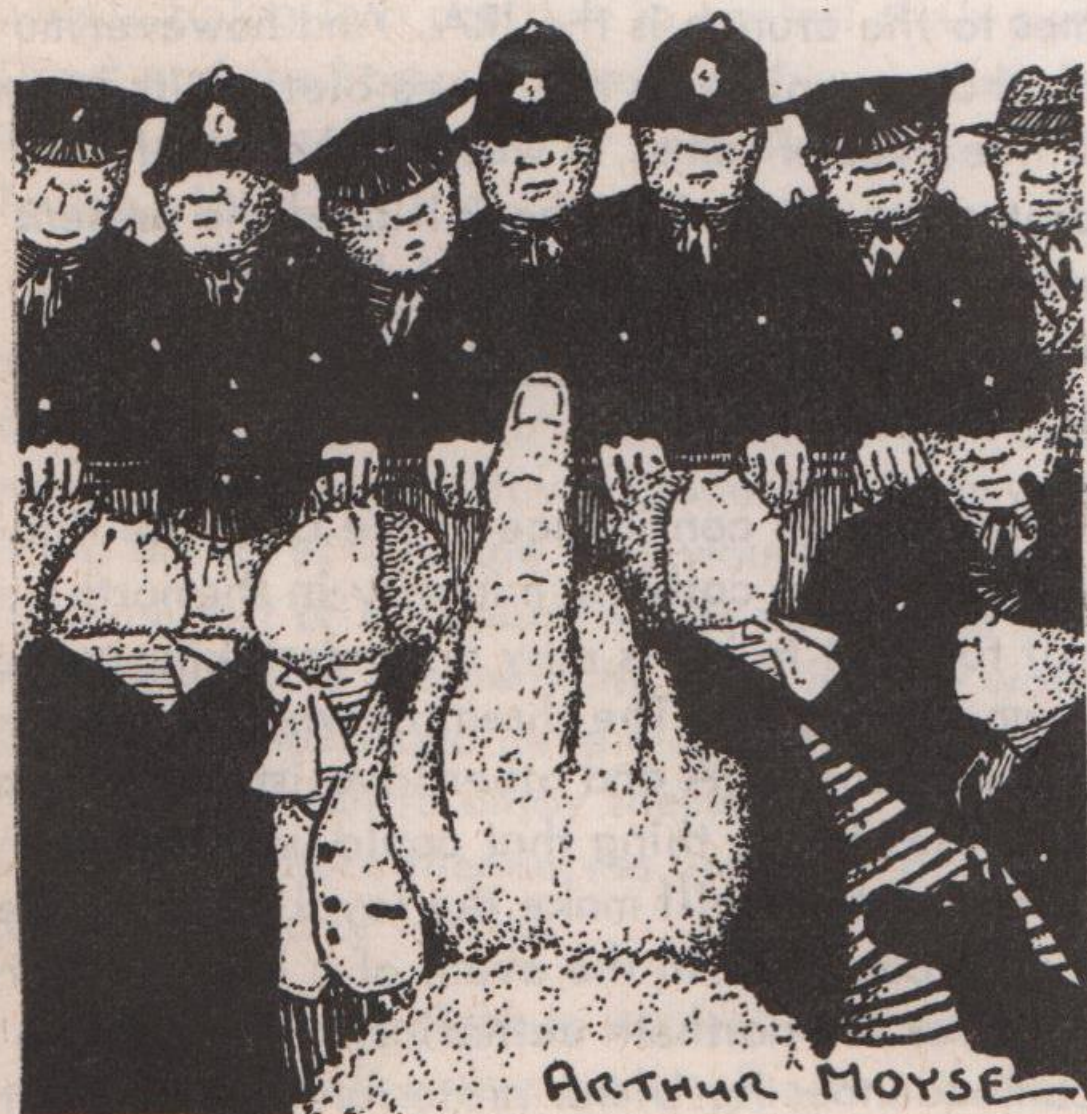
pants of which establishment Dante had long since confined to infernal flames.

Meanwhile, in the U.S.A. autocriticism has become highly fashionable and is indulged in with zest and zeal. The evidently addictive excitements of Vietnam and Watergate have, of course, been followed by the purges of the secret services (both FBI and CIA), which are still there, and still secret, and the multinational corporations like Lockheed. No presidential candidate can now escape charges of bribery and corruption, or even of straightforward tax evasion, considered until recently to be the duty of every superior citizen and self-respecting state governor. But the presidential office is as heavily supported as ever by the millions who read Burr and 1876. And Gore Vidal waxes rich on the fruits of his cynicism, scouring the past for unsavoury characters in high places, questioning the true motives of the founding fathers, posing as a new Gibbon to suggest that the American empire, unlike the Roman, will collapse through its internal barbarism. ("Supposing we are the barbaric hordes?" he asks with indulgent self-deprecation.) But his "People's Party" was a non-starter.

Compared to the high-class rivalry between the United States and Italy (not to mention Holland and its tottering throne) France has simply not been living up to the standard set by the Third Republic. Its last scandal, a kind of Lockheed in miniature, was a wretched and paltry affair, vulgarly culminating in the death of its central character, who was knocked over by a bus. And the recent revelation of the government's assassination squad was not considered to be scandalous at all.

Britain too lacks the American sense of drama, the Italian sophistication. Recent fusses over the lucrative interests of MPs (Honest Jim Callaghan, for instance, who was recently spotted by FREEDOM contacts haunting the City banks, found himself up before the Committee of Privileges where he "gave a swift and complete retraction, after he had told his constituency dinner that he did not think a member spoke for such and such a constituency, but rather for such and such a business interest".) -- fusses, I say, over the interests of MPs and the fleshpots of local government, though important, cannot really be said to have caught the media's attention; and with the arrest

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"WHICH ARE THE ACCUSED?"

Running on Wrong Lines

WHILE WE are all being requested to restrain our greedy desire for pay rises, the cost of some basic needs is still rising fast. Not least is the cost of railway travel; once upon a time, one could expect to afford to take a train somewhere, but now this form of travel has to be considered a luxury. Next month, passengers will be subjected to another price increase of around 17½ per cent. As a railway worker myself I am fortunate in that I pay only a quarter of an ordinary rail fare. At last, though, it seems that the rail unions are realising that fare rises will make present manning levels precarious. Some top nobs of my union, ASLEF, have even gone so far as to "appeal to the booking office clerks not to accept the increased fares". ASLEF is well known for its militancy in looking after the interests of its own members. One of these days, and it's beginning to happen now, they will have to realise that it is only through direct, concerted action with other grades and with passengers that pressure can really be brought to bear on the government.

Concurrent with increased fares, British Rail has the gall to start cutting back on services, especially on the suburban runs. With Marsh making noises about identifying the 'Basic Railway' and Crosland, the environment secretary, raving that any talk of serious cuts in the railway network being codswallop, the rail unions are now seriously worried that we may face by the 1980s a cutback from the present railway network of 11½ thousand miles to a mere 4 thousand. This would naturally mean that the only people who would use trains would be those that would want to go from one big city to another, and could afford it - i.e., business people.

The problem is, of course, that the
(Cont. on P. 2)

The railway system, which is expected to show a profit not expected of private enterprise is constantly cut down, and more jobs have been shed alongside increasing staff shortages. For a long time, therefore, the attitude towards the person who, for some "unimaginable" reason did not want to buy and use a car for ever and a day, has been "sod you, 'cos I'm alright!" Under the excuse of non-viability, fares kept going up and up, and are still heading that way. The result is always the same - less trains, less passengers, and less revenue - leading to even less viability. Nobody in power, of course, lifts a finger to alter the situation, since their pockets are probably lined with car-makers' money, and their arms are probably being wrenched off their shoulders. How else to explain the massive inputs into the car industry in the form of nationalisation here, and bailing out there?

RUNNING ON THE WRONG LINES *cont. from P.1.*

railways are expected to run as a viable commercial enterprise. Both Marsh and the unions say that we need an integrated transport policy, 'Road and Rail, not Road versus Rail'. But since such a policy would be government decreed, kept in force by management and unions, it is difficult to see how this could actually benefit workers and passengers alike. There are always interests to be looked after, profits to be made, efficiency to be increased, workers to be sacked, control to be centralised. Most people, I think, feel that the railways are a desirable transport system, as, especially with increased electrification, they pose least threat to the natural environment. People prefer to travel by train than by car, yet, if it weren't for the great increase in oil prices, car travel would be much cheaper than rail.

For the railway to function efficiently it has to be used to its full capacity. Where efficiency means losing jobs, workers are not interested. Transport can only be used properly when it is under the complete control of the workers and passengers and is run as a free service.

You don't have to ponder on this proposition for long to realise that for anything like that to happen we must have a general revolutionary movement, one which will break capitalism, the state and authority; one which is committed to complete social revolution.

Adam Flowers.

CORRUPTION *cont. from P.1*

On Saturday of several police chiefs on charges of corruption, this word continues obstinately, where Britain is concerned, to preserve its predominantly sexual, apolitical, connotations.

However, it will not escape us that the police's latest exercise in autocriticism is mainly designed to improve its image, and that the raking up and ritual persecution of those three peacefully retired gentlemen - Virgo, former head of Scotland Yard's murder squad, Drury, former commander of the flying squad, and Moody, former head of the obscene publications squad - himself once in charge of an enquiry into police bribery - is being done with the primary purpose of impressing people with the integrity of the British police force at a time when, under Mark, it is actively engaged in increasing its powers.

In the same way the Watergate sackings and jailings and the perusal by the Church committee of the uncensored worksheets, mistakenly sent to Washington by Lockheed's auditors' lawyers, have led many impressionable Americans not to call for the sacking of the multinationals, the secret service or the presidency, but on the contrary to boast of the basic openness and honesty of a political system which permits of such public criticism. Revelation of corruption, in other words, may harm

the individuals at its centre -- the hapless Nixons, Agnews, Bernhards, Virgos et al, who are offered up upon the altar of public relations for a time -- but it does wonders for the system as a whole! And this is, of course, because accusations of corruption have always been limited to certain aspects of a system, studied in isolation, and never involve the questioning of the system itself. Despite all the enthusiasm, what cultural purge, parliamentary committee or government inquiry will ever sit in cross-examination and in judgement upon, not just the honesty of its personnel, but the necessity for its existence?

"Power corrupts" says the anarchist, "because man is corruptible." Others have often agreed. Yet none but anarchists can bring themselves to accept the logic of this statement, and none therefore but anarchists will see that the real corruption lies in the institutions themselves.

In railing against the corruption of his day, Juvenal denounced with equal bitterness all who opposed the establishment. Catullus before him had come closer to describing what we mean by corruption when he identified "loot, lechery and the political game" with imperialism and war. But he still ended by misjudging his target.

"First his inheritance, second the Pontic loot, third, your own war with Spain (the Tagus where you washed for gold has a story of that), and now Gaul, and now Britain shake in their shoes. Why keep him? What is he good for -- beyond treating the fattest endowment as a comestible? Is this the reason Rome's topmost tycoons, father-and-son-in-law, have been playing billiards with the world?"

Why keep him? the poet asked and to this day the question has been the same - Why keep him? What is he good for?

But the billiard table remains intact.

G. F.

Ulster Doomsday

WHEN THE IRISH THREATEN TO KILL EACH other, they usually mean it, and as I write this the radio is reciting the details of how yet another catholic victim has been found with his throat cut in an alleyway off the Shankill Road. And the wholesale slaughter of catholics in the event of a civil war in the North has been promised by Sammy Smyth, a leader of the UDA, in an interview originally published in the student magazine, Gown. The provincial newspaper, Republican News, (14/2/76) has republished the report of the interview and the Provo leadership must silently be congratulating Smyth for this piece of work. What follow are some quotes from the interview between J.D. (the interviewer) and S.S. (Sammy Smyth):

J.D. In a possible loyalist offensive agai-

nst republicans, who are the legitimate targets?

S.S. People who act against the State or give passive or active support to those who do.

J.D. Of course, your knowledge of who the Republicans are isn't good. That means that your offensive will probably involve the deaths of innocent catholics. Would that deter the UDA?

S.S. War exists in Northern Ireland, and in a war situation there are no innocent people. Those not actively involved and who are killed happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Every citizen has a stake in the community. No one can abdicate responsibility, cannot stand aside, we do not accept that anyone has the right to opt out.

J.D. Can anyone surrender?

S.S. We cannot take prisoners. They are a liability.

J.D. What will be the conditions under which Catholics will stay?

S.S. There will be no room for RCs in a new state.

J.D. None?

S.S. None.

J.D. Why hasn't civil war been more fully discussed in the papers and television?

S.S. The media conceals the horror of civil war by editing the interviews to suit their own purposes. For instance, the Sunday News left out in an article of mine that no prisoners would be taken.

Smyth also expects the Eire army to remain in the South in the event of civil war, a logical enough conclusion in view of its past record. In any event the promises of support from the Eire army is unlikely to bring unqualified relief to northern catholics who might feel apprehensive. During the affair in the Congo, where it formed part of the UNO force, one of its armed units was taken prisoner by a few Congolese tribesmen armed with blowpipes. And the few fishing smacks that make up the Eire navy are unlikely to be of much assistance.

But what else is to be expected from a country where the major political parties bear titles like Warriors of Destiny (Fianna Fail) or Tribes of Ireland (Fine Gael)? Where the capital city was originally built by Danes; the national religion imported from Rome; the national political policy, Sinn Fein, imported from Hungary at the turn of the century when it was called correctly the "Hungarian policy"? The only native products in plentiful supply are bombast and blamey.

On reading the interview in Republican News catholics might easily be persuaded that the only people they can really rely upon when it comes to the crunch is the IRA. And however much that organisation may have blotted its image in the eyes of some, it was not they, but the protestant extremists who initiated the present round of violence, as an article in an earlier issue of Republican News has been reminding its readers.

Despite the confidence of the UDA the liquidation of the catholic minority in the north may not turn out to be as easy an undertaking as they seem to imagine. The threat of wholesale slaughter by the UDA and other loyalist paramilitary bodies is one thing that could unite all catholics and they will make the loyalists pay a heavy price. Even in the event of a loyalist victory over the northern catholics, the long term consequences for Ulster protestants would be grim; such a victory could well mean the beginning of the end for the protestant community in Ulster.

H.B.

ARMING THE BOYS IN BLUE

A Labour M.P., Mr. Molloy, member for North Ealing, has given the public a warning about the dangers of arming security guards of the Department of Energy and Atomic Energy Authority. A bill to legalise this has been given its first reading.

Mr. Molloy said the bill will "create for the first time a force who are going to be permanently armed. No-one's permission will be required for them to carry or exhibit their arms. And it undermines all the arguments we have been trying to sustain against the arming of policemen."

But what is really disturbing is the fact that the Department considers the bill just as a formality to make what is already regular practice legal. At present the Atomic Energy Authority has a permanent armed guard on four nuclear establishments and the security guards are not allowed to carry arms more than 15 miles from the establishment. The transportation of nuclear materials is an exception.

If the bill goes through parliament virtually all restrictions will be lifted and as long as there is proof that security man is "guarding nuclear matter, or pursuing persons he believes to have removed or attempted to remove nuclear matter unlawfully."

Such wide ranging powers - and remember, strictly according to the law they shouldn't be armed - go beyond even those of the police. At the moment arms can only be issued on the orders of chief constables. But even here there are exceptions because certain specialised units of police are armed permanently. Partly this is because of the nature of their specialised function but it creates a precedent whereby other units can be formed to perform special duties. Three of these specialised units are nearly always permanently armed. They are the Diplomatic Protection Group who guard London's embassies and who were

involved in the one-sided shoot out resulting in the death of an Indian at his High Commission. Then there are the familiar figures of the Special Branch and their Personal Protection Squad whose task is to protect ministers and any VIPs who the authorities feel are in danger of attack. Finally there is the Special Patrol Group whose role is ambiguous, but they seem to be a back up group either for the other units or to operate on a seek and find basis, patrolling the streets with a ready made arsenal of weapons at their disposal.

The police have always had access to weapons and it was only in 1973, for instance, that they gave up issuing the Webley .38 revolver after more than 50 years, but now the range of weapons and the numbers of trained police are more sophisticated and numerous. These include two types of Smith and Wesson revolvers, one of which has what is called a "big punch". The other four inch barrel version increases "hitting power by about one third at longer ranges and penetrates light screening at shorter distances." They also have CS guns and the L39A1 rifle fitted with an image-intensifier night sight. This sight shows up persons in virtual pitch darkness. What is even more alarming is that the bullets can penetrate clean through concrete walls. If used in crowded streets "innocent" people could also be killed by ricochets since these can travel up to a 1000 yards. Even police experts have said it is overpowered and it has been condemned by the International Committee of the Red Cross. This is not surprising since the impact of the 7.62 mm. round inflicts the same lethal wound as the banned dum-dum bullet.

Some of the police forces in Britain are disturbed by this and would prefer the Parker-Hale .222 high velocity rifle, which has better accuracy over longer distances and a big punch but far less "over penetration". Well it's nice to know that some policemen are thinking about us and why we might be killed.

When, after years of gruelling training, the robots appear on the "sports" field, they gain the medals, the flags wave and the national anthems issue from the brass bands. Little of the so-called Olympic Spirit is visible. Fanatical nationalistic drive causes the "impartial" judges to mark their compatriots higher than the other judges, and when a competitor loses, to undergo protracted postmortems and recriminations. British competitors usually lose, owing to the law of averages. When this inevitably occurs, we hear and see pleas for more cash to be extorted from the taxpayers in order to finance the construction of more sports-halls, tracks, gymnasias etc., and to set up schools for infant athletes to be slave-driven to medal-winning standard.

Competition destroys. It can be seen on the faces of the losers, who ran the mile in a thousandth of a second longer than the winner. Winning, the overcoming of others, is held to be the sole state worthy of achievement. The loser is despised, his/her qualities considered worthless. Anarchists must surely oppose such spectacles, where abilities which exist within many people are refined to absurd levels, with the sole intention of flag-waving and propaganda.

Nigel Pennick.

What we the public should realise is that the man and woman in blue are in fact an armed force ready to defend the ruling class of this country. This of course has always been the case, but nowadays arms are being used on a much larger scale. It's the old story of once they have obtained these weapons in any number the circumstances will be found to use them. Is the day so far off when we shall see the police shooting down striking workers? Will London become the nightmare New York is at night?

This unnecessary use of weapons by the police and other uniformed organisations gives the state more power over people. An armed police force would carry out the orders of whoever is in power. And so if a more authoritarian government came to power they would do their bidding. There is probably no danger of this, but the real danger is the creeping authoritarianism this represents to our hard won liberties.

P.T.

Demo

Freedom report

Criminal Trespass Demo

LONDON on Saturday 28th February saw several unusual events. The afternoon was sunny (a rare occurrence so far this year), groups of football supporters from Manchester and Newcastle celebrated their respective teams' appearance at Wembley, and a great number of squatters, anarchists, libertarians and socialists assembled at Belvedere Road for the demonstration against the proposed Criminal Trespass Law.

Great amusement was provided whilst the marchers were waiting to start by a huge dummy of a judge (His Honour Judge Nigel-Bonkers) threatening all the assembled with jail (and worse) for trespassing (i.e. getting in his way). Other marchers brought along bongoes, guitars, saxophones, trumpets and banjos to keep the marchers tunelessly entertained. It was regrettable that the noble judge disappeared by the time the march got under way. This was either the result of the dummy being too heavy to carry or, more probably, he was forbidden from carrying on by the police.

The march progressed southwards from Waterloo, almost up to Elephant and Castle, and then north again across Lambeth Bridge, along Whitehall to Trafalgar Square for a rally.

Very intelligently, the marchers only slightly raised the level of noise whilst passing the Houses of Parliament, since there was no point shouting too much at an empty, useless shell. However, on finding Downing Street barricaded and guarded by massive numbers of police, the anti-state feelings of the marchers were heard by the deafening boos and hisses let out whilst passing the street of crookedness and shame.

A substantial proportion of the marchers remained in Trafalgar Square to hear the monotonous, repetitious speeches. Some went to one side of the Square to attend the performance of "What a Cop-Out!", by an amusing street theatre company. The police, however, stopped the performance on the grounds that they did not have permission. The actors shouted over the megaphones that it's now against the law to have fun and this was greeted by shouts of "encore!, encore!, encore!" from the, unfortunately, relatively small audience. If the company had been performing to the whole demonstration the police would doubtlessly have been unable to stop the performance. I hope that on future de-

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OLYMPIC SPIRIT

ONCE AGAIN we are presented with the spectacle of the Winter Olympic Games, forerunner of the full-scale Olympic Games later on this year. As usual, the subjects of the more authoritarian regimes are reaping the medals, to the chagrin of the British Press, which bleats platitudes about greater expenditure on "sport". In countries like the Soviet Union, whose "sportsmen" are idolized by the British media as models to be emulated, "sport" is merely another function of the military machine of the state. From an early age, the individual is regimented by the authorities into being a useful tool of the state, and "sport" plays its part in training soldiers, sailors and policemen, mindless in healthy bodies. Anyone who shows exceptional abilities is put in compulsory training, and forced to excel in the field he or she is thrust into. In East Germany, selection of potential athletes is computerized, those with certain types of musculature, certain lung capacities, etc., being forced into varying forms of athletic training.

SOVIET'S RULE...

On the first day of the 25th Soviet Communist Party Congress, Leonid Brezhnev rambled on for what must have been five and a half very tedious hours to say, "Soviets Rule OK?", but "the commitment to detente remains undiminished". Just before this marathon balloon-blowing session the 103 foreign delegates were presented to the Congress and this produced some interesting reactions.

The most enthusiastic applause went to the Portuguese delegation led by Alvaro Cunhal. This was clearly intended to be a pat on the head for their "correct" (i.e. Stalinist) stance, unlike the Italian delegation which got a very cool reception for their Italian way to socialism. Indeed, Brezhnev later pointed out in his speech that "proletarian internationalism" is of prime importance, and that anything other than the Soviet way of doing things merely amounts to opportunism and is ultimately counter-revolutionary, etc...

All the Muscovite daily papers carried drawings and poems dedicated to the Congress. In "Pravda" (i.e. "truth") the following poem by Nikolai Dorizo appeared: "O Party, you are the only one for us, like truth, the only like life". This was followed by another, even more ludicrous attempt by Petru Brouka: "Lenin, warmed by the love of the people, lives in Red Square, amongst his faithful children and comrades... I see him, Lenin."

Even more disturbing were the views expressed by Brezhnev, in his speech, on such topics as detente, the Helsinki accord, disarmament, and so on. The views expressed on disarmament are worth taking note of because of their peculiar familiarity. The USSR is apparently against military blocs, but "as long as the NATO military bloc continues to exist, and as long as militarist elements continue their arms drive, our country and the other signatories of the Warsaw Treaty will continue to strengthen this political-military alliance." It seems almost as if world politicians get their speeches from the same script-writer.

Just like the Americans, Brezhnev favours detente because "the main element of our policy was and remains the consolidation of the principles of peaceful co-existence, to assure lasting peace, to reduce and later also to eliminate the danger of another world war." Also, just as American and Tory politicians use the USSR bogey to justify their distasteful actions, so the USSR has the American bogey and "fascism": "Some of the difficulties stem from those aspects of Washington policy which jeopardize the freedom and independence of people and constitute gross interference in their internal affairs on the side of the forces of oppression and reaction." The reason for this paradox is that whilst the two sides sincerely do not wish to go to war with each other, they both also need the threat that they pose to each other, which provides the *raison d'être* for the economic/political domination of the other nations inside their respective areas of control.

"Super-powers" are apt to look dimly upon attempts at real "independence" and freedom of action within their respective movements. This is the reason for the openly hostile words Brezhnev had for the Chinese and the disguised reproach against the moves towards autonomy on the part of the West European Communist parties.

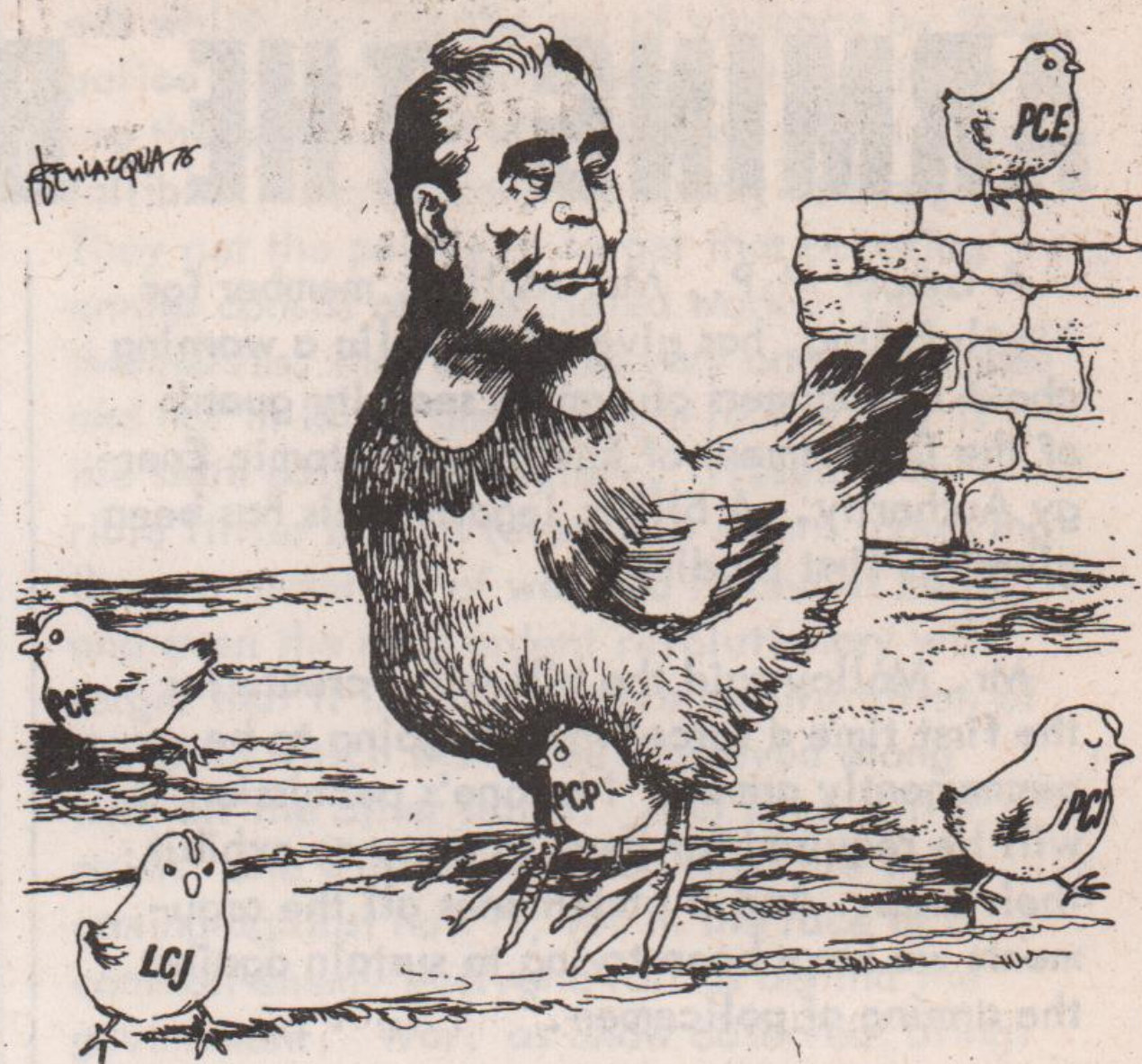
"Peking's frantic attempts to torpedo detente, to obstruct disarmament, to breed suspicion and

hostility between states, its efforts to provoke a world war and reap whatever advantages may accrue, present a great danger for all peace-loving peoples... We shall continue to repulse this incendiary policy and to protect the interests of the Soviet State, the Socialist community, and the world Communist Movement."

Hardly sweet overtures from Brezhnev!

Then speaking of the West European Communist Parties, he said, "One can say with confidence that even if a concession to opportunism might bring some short term advantages, it would harm the party in the ultimate analysis." Russia's mild reproach of parties like the Italian or the French is almost visibly supported by the actions of the Americans. After all, is Kissinger that thick that he cannot figure out what a "status-quo" party the PCI (Italian Communist Party) are that he pretends they are the puppets of the Russians? The smiles and hugs when Kissinger and Gromyko get together temptingly suggest otherwise.

Both these "super-powers" attempt (and succeed) to manipulate our allegiances on issues arising all over the world. We are told that we are either for progress and liberation (i.e. USSR) or we are for freedom (i.e. USA). In the fight which ensues between the different factions, the local people kill each other whilst the USSR and USA accuse each other of intervention, and then



visit each other for cocktails and talk it over amicably (all in the cause of detente).

We are after progress, liberation and freedom, and a whole host of other things, none of which will be allowed us by any of the superpowers. Our world is a world without the superpowers. The 25th Soviet Communist Party Congress tried to impose the slogan "Soviets Rule OK!" on their hypnotized followers. The implication as always is that if we do not support the Soviets (and hence, they insist, international proletarianism) then we are in favour of the reactionary and fascist USA. If, however, we do not support freedom-loving USA, we are in favour of the dictatorial USSR ("and what about Solzhenitsyn, then?").

Francesco.

DEATH IN JAIL

FOLLOWING HIS arrest on Wednesday January 28 this year, an 18-year old man named Paul Simon was held in Tucson, Arizona jail for one week, and was murdered on Thursday, February 5 in his cell.

Paul Simon was an anarchist.

He was arrested following a minor altercation in a billiards room at the local university campus, and was charged with disturbing the peace, a misdemeanor. Why Simon was still being held in jail after a week had elapsed, considering the minor nature of the charge against him, is still a mystery. No one in the local radical community, nor any of Simon's close friends, had been aware of his incarceration. Apparently he was not permitted to make the telephone call that the law supposedly permits.

Simon was known to us as an anarchist; he had expressed interest in the various publications and periodicals of our movement, and had borrowed a couple of books about the 1886 Haymarket Affair to use as references for a university class paper. He was a rather quiet and soft-spoken person. According to reports heard here, he had been experiencing some kind of emoti-

onal upset prior to his arrest, which may account for the altercation that resulted in his being taken to jail.

Simon's death is being blamed on a fellow prisoner named William Crouch, who, to all appearances, probably did kill Simon himself. Crouch and Simon had been placed together in a tiny maximum-security cell for a day prior to Simon's being found by jailers in a highly bruised, lacerated condition, strangled, with toilet paper stuffed down his throat, dead.

Although a number of unanswered questions about Simon's tragic death remain, we believe at this time that this killing has no political overtones or motivation, but is, rather, an instance of that usual kind of police callousness and jail horror which goes without press mention whenever the person victimized is unknown or friendless. However, following some agitation in two local anarchist papers, the issue has been kept alive and a citizens' commission of inquiry has been formed, consisting of friends of Paul Simon and outraged local residents.

This sad affair underscores the pressing need of creating a free social system in which people who experience transient emotional upsets are not unfeelingly caged in preposterous "cells" but instead receive the warmth and help of a concerned, comradely populace.

Fred Woodworth
(Editor, The Match
Tucson, Arizona.)

NIXON'S RADICAL PALS

IT IS A CURIOUS fact, insufficiently stressed by Sinologists, that the announcement of Nixon's invitation to visit China should have been made public a matter of hours after we were also told officially that there was a renewed attack on "moderates" in China.

It is plain if one examines the story that the "radicals" in the present controversy in China are not those who wish for more equality but those who want to industrialise faster, to build up bureaucratic collective capitalism faster. Since the needs of emergent Chinese state capitalism in the Sixties forced a breach with Russia, under whose tutelage Chinese capitalism had previously been, this has - from the point of view of conventional stereotype concepts - the somewhat ironic effect that the "moderates" are pro-Russian (or at least less anti-) and the "radicals" are pro-American.

The rapprochement between America and China came about because America, seeing she was excluded by politics from numerous world markets, nevertheless wished to limit Russia's monopoly within these. Russia was the main capitalist rival; China was not in the same league, therefore America was prepared to encourage Chinese expansion in Afro-Asian markets where American capital was unacceptable.

This has another interesting sidelight. It is generally agreed that Russia's policies towards the West have become more aggressively revolutionary. Those who read correspondents like Victor Zorza are treated to detailed analyses of articles in weighty Soviet periodicals castigating this or that revisionist for moving away from belief in a revolutionary policy. Zorza believes, or perhaps more probably pretends to believe, that Russia is swinging back to a primitive bolshevist belief in world revolution; I think it unlikely that readers of FREEDOM share this delusion. What then is happening? At first blush the evidence suggests that there might be a return to a Third Period type leftism when the world communists denounced all other socialists, paid great lip service to revolution, denounced all forms of reformism, but where at the time in Russia, liquidating the soviets and the last elements of autonomous workers' organizations.

That theory, however attractive it may be at first blush, will not really stand examination. Russia is not calling all and sundry social-fascists (that is a term the Maoists use for Russians in countries like Portugal where the Russian-oriented parties were active); there is no insistence on a policy of class against class, no shunning of alliances with reformists or petit bourgeois liberals.

If we wish a parallel with the Thirties the Russian-oriented parties seem to be pursuing what one might call the aggressive Popular Front tactics of the late Thirties. Russia, menaced by Germany and having alienated people with Third Period policies, now urgently wanted allies, was none too choosy about who she got (Eden and Churchill were desired in Britain) but was in an hurry to get them and to mobilise masses for radically activist campaigns on very reformist demands. Thus we see now in Angola, and earlier at one stage in Portugal, the C.P. taking a very bullying line towards social democrats, who might share their economic aims but not their international connections, but were perfectly prepared to make pacts with rightist groups such as the PDP in Portugal and to broadcast an appeal to UNITA and FNLA leaders to go over to MPLA and share in building the new state, only a matter of months after dissident MPLA leaders had been brutally driven out of the movement.

The parallel is not surprising. Given China's alliance with the USA, Russia is now once again surrounded, as she was at the height of the Cold War by a ring of rockets aimed at her. China's defection more than offsets Russia's comparative economic and technological advance. She has to break the chain.

This makes the French Communist Party conference mean something other than has been assumed. It has been suggested that Russia's aggressive return to revolutionism has meant that Western C.P.s have been alienated. All very well if one accepts the Cold Warrior propaganda - on either side - at its face value, and really believes that Russia is sincere in wanting world revolution (if it were so, I would not be so critical of the Communists, however mistaken their methods, and would have to regard them as some sort of ally). What would seem more likely is that as Russia wants allies fast, wants the anti-Russian (rather than anti-Communist) block in the West weakened, she is prepared to sacri-

fice the last vestiges of proletarian internationalism - just as in 1943 she wound up the Communist International - telling the French and Italian parties to make the historic compromise and get themselves, as quickly as possible, accepted as coalition partners in bourgeois governments, if necessary dropping all alliances with social democrats and left reformists in so doing.

Northern Ireland provides an interesting sidelight to this. A couple of years ago, the Derry branch of the Official IRA was visited by a "Czech" offering to supply them with arms independently of the command structure of the IRA. There were two factions in Derry at the time, that led by John White, and a rebel faction which was disturbed by the inactivity of the IRA. Nevertheless it was not the rebel faction that later broke away to form the IRSP, but the leadership faction, and though the latter organization at first attracted quasi-Trots and other, ex- People's Democracy activists, it soon lost them. The line that had come from the "Czech" (who, incidentally, my informant tells me though very fluent in English was unable to understand when introduced to a Czech emigre) was socialist in name, but it involved a definite turn towards alliance with the Provisional IRA and the use of Provo methods.

The fact that a "Czech" should actively promote a split in an organization which is controlled by the C.P. certainly suggests that there's some truth in the assumption that Western Communism is breaking with Russia because of its aggressive policies; but if this were really so would we not also read that outside the French C.P. conference, militants were picketing in large numbers denouncing the bourgeois corruption of their party. No doubt there will be dissidents, but not in large numbers as one would expect.

History of course shows us numerous examples of ideologies which started off as theories and desires for human liberation and ended by serving the particular interests of emergent ruling classes. Stalinism is by no means original in this. Throughout we see in such cases, as the short term interests of the new ruling class change, the beliefs being rapidly reinterpreted so that the propagandist may bless yesterday's enemies and curse yesterday's friends. No doubt it is possible that a movement might in some cases have a genuine conversion, genuinely seeing that their yesterday's interpretation of their belief was erroneous, and changing a line out of conviction rather than at the behest of leaders to fit the selfish interests of these latter. The touchstone would appear to be: how consistently is the new line applied?

If a movement sincerely believes a former belief to have been error, sincerely changes, then all applications of the former belief must be changed, and changed in the same direction. The proof that each of the successive Stalinist policies was insincere was always to be found in its readiness to make exceptions. The fact that at the height of the Cultural Revolution Mao was friendly with Ibn Saud (and later Faisal), with Ayub Khan (and later Yahya) and their ilk showed the self-interest overcoming the supposed belief in world revolution.

Can we then find a probable exception to Russia's new aggressive popular frontism? I predict we will in the USA. Curiously it was not only Mao that liked Nixon, Russia did too. Apart from racist contenders for the Democrat nomination, two of the leading candidates are fierce cold warriors, and yet another is Hubert Humphrey, the ex-socialist who sanctioned LBJ's war in Indo-China. The probability is that Russia would sooner Ford were re-elected (assuming - perhaps unjustifiably - that he and not Reagan gets the Republican nomination) than that Jackson, Humphrey or Carter should be elected.

The American C.P. can hardly be told to campaign for Ford - though they were prevented from making the most of the Watergate debacle - but Russia which in 1952 and since (with the exception of 1960's New York election) has directed the CP USA to avoid impairing the Democrat Party's chances, might well tell the CPUSA to remember that it once advocated the formation of an American Labor Party - now advocated by the New Left - and order it to support this again and so split the vote; breaking its existing popular front position amongst Democratic Party liberals.

L. O.

... changes go on continually in Russia... They mean that the dictatorship is changing its organisation to suit different circumstances. But the one encouraging fact remains that humanity should, after thirty years, be so untrustworthy that purges are still the order of the day. All opposition groups have long since been crushed, and yet, even in the party itself, unreliable elements continue to appear, and this fact encourages one to believe that, when the dictatorship becomes sufficiently corrupt and vitiated, there will be enough desire for liberty in people's minds to unseat it, just as Fascism in Italy was destroyed by the people after twenty years of power.

M.-L. Berneri (March, 1947)
Neither East Nor West

LETTERS

'OIRISH' SOCIALISM

I find the statement of your correspondent Séamas Cain (7.2.76) incredible. If, as he claims, the mainstream of Irish socialism is libertarian direct-actionist and industrial unionist, then we are not only not living in the same country but hardly even living in the same universe. He is factually incorrect, incidentally, in stating that the C.P. in Ireland was dissolved at Stalin's directions; the Eire section simply adopted a new title while the Northern Ireland section became the CPNI. I was a member of the Young Communist League at the time as I have lived most of my life in Ireland and I can assure readers of FREEDOM that it is quite unlike the 'Oireland' that Séamas Cain seems to know so well.

To begin with, the Jim Larkin who lived in the real Ireland was never a member of the IWW. And the IRA came into existence as a result of the proclamation of 1916 in Dublin, regardless of the activities of Irish immigrant groups in the US; Séamas Cain is at liberty to trace its origins back to the frolics of a few shillelagh wielding spalpeens if he so wishes, but it would be more helpful if he could provide us with the name of this "wider Irish freedom movement" that he refers to (FREEDOM 10.1.76). Most people would associate the mass of the Irish workers in America with the growth of Roman Catholicism in that country, with bootlegging and gangsterism or the political jobbery and corruption of Tammany Hall. Or with the injection of the element of religious sectarianism into the Laurence mill strike, or with people like Gurley Flynn who was one of those later expelled from the IWW.

There is precious little evidence of this direct-actionist, industrial unionist mainstream among the Irish-American working classes in the 1920s when Peter Larkin was appealing for funds to assist the release of Jim Larkin from Sing Sing. Addressing the New York Irish, he had this to say: "I would like to know where are the Irish working classes I have heard of so often in this country, what are they doing and why have they nothing to say in answer to the despairing cry coming from the finest section of Irish organised labour in its extreme agony?" Where indeed, what indeed and why indeed? As to the where and the what and why of it, the Irish "industrial unionist mainstream" simply did not exist either in Ireland or America.

So far as Jim Connolly is concerned, his indebtedness to De Leon is unquestionable. He was introduced to industrial unionist ideas through the medium of De Leon's *Weekly People* (New York) to which he contributed articles on the Kerry famine of 1898, and in 1902 he first visited the US at De Leon's invitation and spoke on behalf of the De Leonite SLP. The following year he declared his own Irish Socialist Republican Party to be the Irish section of the SLP and later helped form the SLP in Glasgow.

Far from learning anything about industrial unionism from the Irish in America, he founded the Irish Socialist Federation in an attempt to educate them in the principles of industrial unionism and Gurley Flynn, in her autobiography, relates how she met him, shabbily clothed and

in poor circumstances, trying to sell his little paper, *The Harp*. The "Irish direct-actionist and industrial unionist" mainstream could not even provide adequate funds to sustain publication of *The Harp*, nor could it provide him with his fare home when he wanted to return to Ireland. This was a repeat of his experience in Dublin where the mainstream of "traditional Irish socialism" couldn't afford to pay him a wage and he had to work as a labourer and edit the *Workers' Republic* in his spare time. Of his own grim experiences in Dublin he once wrote, "I don't want to go back to the Dublin slums again. One experience of that is enough for a lifetime." Of America (where, according to Séamas Cain, he ought to have been at home within the Irish direct-actionist, industrial unionist mainstream), he wrote to William O'Brien in 1908, "I may confess to you that I regret my emigration to America as the greatest mistake of my life, and I have never ceased to regret it."

The Knights of Labor to which Séamas Cain refers was not founded by Irish-Americans nor was it even an industrial union. I advise readers to look up Connolly's article on "Industrialism and the Trade Unions" in the *Pelican*, 1973 edition of his writings. In it he emphasises the important differences between the K. of L. and the IWW and not once does he claim that the K. of L. was either Irish or industrial unionist.

Is there any point in continuing? Suffice it to say that the "mainstream" is simply a product of Séamas Cain's imagination and that the Irish socialism he is writing about has just about as much substance as one of the mists drifting over the Irish bogs. It is "Oirish" with a capital O. About the only contribution that libertarians in Ireland can make at present is to help in the process of demystification in Irish politics, to tell the truth even if it hurts and hope that in so doing we may be helping to lay sounder foundations for a libertarian movement in Ireland than exist at present. People like Séamas Cain could not be of any possible assistance in that task.

H. B.

THE LUXURY OF VIOLENCE

Dear Friends,

I am grateful for the lengthy review, by Arthur Moyse (21.2.76) of my book *Make Love, Not War*, and I hesitate to ask for more space, but there are two points which are vitally important.

Some people find that they cannot accept the pacifist ideology because they realise that in certain situations they would use violence to solve their personal problems, and therefore I thought it important to show in the book that there is nothing illogical in refusing to make war while still being willing to protect one's females. One can object to making war on behalf of the state - or on behalf of a revolutionary group for that matter, but that is another story - and yet still believe that violence is useful in certain personal situations. Why not? Just because I refuse to eat a Mars Bar, it does not mean that I must refuse to eat every other kind of chocolate. Only a Tribunal Member would believe that.

The second point is one which I feel very deeply about because unless it is understood and accepted by both anarchists and pacifists there will be no future for mankind.

Governments are able to rule inefficiently and unjustly because they obtain obedience from the people by using various power meth-

ods which include the use of violence by their police and army, and when all else fails they use the one method of persuasion which is infallible: they present the enemy at the gate. They get the people to forget that opposing armies consist of conscripted workers like themselves, that all states vary only in degree and not in kind, and that the real enemy is the state pattern of society. Present a terrible Hitler regime (even if it means supplying the raw materials of war and financial help), and even the most ardent revolutionary will forget that it is but one more manifestation of the state which should be destroyed along with all the other states. And if no Hitler exists, one will be provided (who are we arming against now?), for in the face of a common enemy everyone rallies behind the government. War, as Shaw observed, brings every dog to heel. In fact, without war, and the preparation for war, no government can exist; a government needs war as a man needs air.

And that, I would like Arthur to know, is why anarchists should be pacifists: because if they are to destroy the states they must withdraw their support of war which keeps those states in existence.

Faternally,
Derrick A. Pike.

Alternative to the Right to Work.

That may be a misleading heading, but there is a very valid alternative to the current campaign, The Right to Work.

My main criticism of it is that it isn't in any way beneficial to the working person.

It seems to be a campaign which is designed to perpetuate and clarify the class structure in our society, and to bolster the structure of the system that now exists.

It seems, in a sense, that it demands THEY be here to give us employment, thus preserving such things as bosses, corporations, union executives and the structures and powers that surround such bodies. Structures and powers that should have been taken from them by the people long ago. Also by making such a demand it is strengthening the class lines with which the capitalist system uses people to keep its power by vying them against each other.

I think that all it's designed to do is to persuade employers not to lay people off, and create a lot of noise to convince workers that someone is seen to be shouting for them, perhaps a pacifying measure, but it doesn't stop the bosses laying people off in deference to their sacred cow...profit.

I don't think the bosses mind if it gets drummed into people that they demand the right to work, especially if it's under their conditions. By accepting the norm, work, they are accepting all that goes with it. So it seems to me that it isn't changing, modifying or breaking it down to the working person's advantage, but merely preserving the status quo, which is to the bosses' advantage.

If it was a campaign to demand the right to control our own places of work, or our own means of production, then I feel I could fully support it. To me that would make much sense. It would mean that workers themselves would control their own production, hours and lives. It would also mean the end of the capitalist system which exists solely on its ability to manipulate the most from the least...and people are in-

(cont. on p.7)

Alternatives

SOLAR ENERGY FOR BUILDING

UNDER EXISTING conditions the cost of energy has become a serious social problem; social arrangement, transport, building, have all been geared to cheap energy.

At the North East London Polytechnic there was a seminar on 26th February in which many aspects of the use of solar energy in Britain were discussed.

The British government has not thought it worthwhile to put resources into a programme to research the possibilities in this field and most of the development work has been done by private individuals and companies.

However, probably the largest experiment has been done in a most unlikely area -- a school, St. George's in Wallasey, near Liverpool. The whole building has been designed to be heated primarily by solar energy supplemented by the heat derived from the lighting system. There is a back-up conventional radiator system for extreme conditions but this has been rarely used and the cost of providing conventional energy has been substantially lower per child per annum than in any other school, even including capital costs of the solar heating installations.

There are now some 30 commercial firms producing solar panels and there are many houses now being built incorporating such features. The cost of solar panels is high - in the order of at least £50 per square metre, as the ideal material, copper, is scarce and expensive. Therefore to convert an existing building is quite expensive. This is substantially reduced when, as

ALTERNATIVE TO THE RIGHT TO WORK (cont. from page 6)

cidental to profit. It would mean the end of unemployment as such, because such things as deliberate investment and financial strikes by the bosses, which is mainly the reason for the soaring unemployment, because there wouldn't be any bosses.

The shit about falling markets is exactly that. I don't think it takes too much to understand that investment stimulates a market (and I am not arguing for it, because I personally wish to see people being in a position to control their own lives) and the bosses control the investment, so what is the real reason for unemployment? Intriguing, isn't it?

Because workers would control their own means of production it would mean they could consistently lower their, or do whatever, hours were needed for whatever production they wanted to achieve. Because they would in essence be some sort of co-operative or collective they would probably create many more jobs by working shorter hours and have a lot more leisure time with which to enjoy themselves, and at the same time ensure themselves and each other a good standard of living.

So why not the right to control our own means of production. It makes more sense to me. Perhaps the T.U.C. are frightened of losing their power to the people they represent (supposedly).

Stan.

at St. George's, the building is designed to prevent heat loss and part of the structure has the double function.

Under social conditions existing in Britain today, the new technology, because of the expense, is unlikely to affect the underprivileged who are finding the cost of energy so onerous. For instance, solar energy is particularly useful in the case of swimming pools, which can be completely heated by this method. So the already privileged will doubtless benefit. With the clamp down on public expenditure it is unlikely that public amenities like swimming pools will figure very high in priorities.

One of the lecturers pointed out that this technology could benefit third world areas of low income, because generally speaking low income coincides with high solar energy. Personally, I would have thought that the problem here was lack of water; a problem which should be receiving the most attention. Water is generally necessary to enable people to use solar energy. Inadequate water supply was one of the problems the 'Street Farmers' found in Portugal in rural areas (see FREEDOM 7.2.76, pp 6-7).

An interesting paper was given by Clive Latimer on a low energy open system house built from prefabricated parts and amenable to self building. He pointed out that in Britain the tradition of self-building is practically non-existent, whereas in the U.S.A. one-fifth of building is done this way and reflects a net saving of 50% of cost. In fact in Britain self-building has been actively discouraged, as anyone who has tried it will have experienced. Now, of course, high cost of land and high interest rates add considerably to the difficulties.

This seminar added to my knowledge of the problems of using solar energy. I did however come to the conclusion that its universal application depends on keeping things as simple as possible, for that gain in energy could be lost in the cost of collecting it. It also occurred to me that there is a valuable source of energy of which there is now a vast amount in the world which if used economically, non-exploitably and joyfully could replace a lot of uneconomic fossil fuel. That energy is human energy, much of which is used wastefully, not at all, or destructively. A lot of this energy could be used along with the most effective form of solar energy use, which is growing things -- in smaller units than is done in most of agriculture today, where the energy produced is exceeded by the energy consumed.

Many of the equations discussed at the seminar were the equations of an obsolete financial system and these sorts of equations restrict the benefit of technical knowledge, as ever, to the privileged.

Alan Albon.



"M'LUD, HE'S BEEN CALLED AS AN EXPERT WITNESS."

The Salarial

YEARS AGO - in novels such as those of Sinclair Lewis - socialist propagandists used to assume that no-one spoke more like convinced socialists than top captains of industry when amongst themselves.

When they did not have to fool anyone they could admit that it was all a racket. I have no idea if this is so, I would doubt if they could carry on without fooling themselves at least partially into the belief that capitalism works for the good of the many; but nevertheless it holds true that at that level the top man is out purely for himself and is not bound by the constraints of worrying whether the system will survive as a whole. It is the people a rung or so below on the ladder (and specifically those that have no ambition or no illusion that they will ever make it to the top) who would think of the capitalist/bureaucratic/managerial system as an whole, and wish to preserve it as such. Not merely them of course, it extends quite some way down from them.

Under different labels this has been the case under many social systems. It has been at times the source of divisions between the rulers of the first rank and their immediate subordinates. If you are an executive in a multi-national company just below the top rank, this is led by an erratic genius who is trying to destroy all your rivals so as to aggrandise his own power and in so acting threatens to destroy the fabric of the whole system -- or at the very least, destroy any possibility of alternative employment -- then you will be likely to counsel a different policy.

This difference, mild under normal circumstances, could in a crisis prove effective. During slumps the preservation of the system becomes for middle classes the paramount issue.

This is how varying streams of "bureaucratic collectivist" thought come to the fore (social democracy, Stalinism, Keynesianism, fascism, are all attempts to discipline the top capitalists in the interests of the system as an whole) and how these are thrown into action, often in dispute with more traditional parties or with total

(Cont. on P.8)

THE SALARIAT *(cont from P.7)*

laissez-faire-isme.

The "Marxists" - using an analysis far removed from that of Marx - generally describe the bureaucrat the member of the learned profession, the civil servant, the military castes and so forth as petit bourgeois. Certainly untrue, many of them may indeed be in jobs which are the remnant of feudalism and it would have been fair to call them petit-feudal, others may be landowners (ditto), a few minor rentiers in terms of having a thousand or so in shares but they rarely attend shareholders' meetings and have a minimal influence on the running of business. The managerial caste in industry is of course not drawn entirely, perhaps not even primarily, from these castes, but the interpenetration of these with self-made technologists risen from the supervisory ranks of the "Labour aristocracy" provides the dominant ethos of management.

It is a class that of its nature has to refresh itself every so often by replacing its sources of recruiting personnel with more up to date and efficient sectors. It has to reconcile overwhelming belief that our system is the only possible one that could exist, the natural product of human nature (a view flying in the face of history, since social systems change fairly frequently to marked extents) and yet show an ability in other matters to weigh evidence dispassionately. This means that it has to educate its youth in ways designed to make them rebel for a time, even at the risk that some of them might take that revolt seriously and never revert to conformity.

L. O.

Criminal Trespass Demo *(cont from P.3)*

monstrations the organisers of the Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law (CACTL) will keep this in mind, and give full support to the street theatre rather than "deviating" the majority of the marchers from supporting the helpless theatre company against the robots in blue.

Demonstrations, however, whilst they are good fun (and this one was) must only be a small part of the Campaign. It is up to all squatting, anarchist and libertarian groups to propagandise and resist the proposals by other methods. When the proposals become law (almost inevitably) the task of anarchists and libertarians will be to resist and defy the legislation.

PRESS FUND

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NEXT DESPATCHING DATE of FREEDOM is Thursday, 18 March. Come and help from 2pm onwards. You are welcome each Thursday afternoon to early evening for informal get-together and folding session.

WE WELCOME news, reviews, letters, articles. Latest date for receipt of copy for inclusion in next Review section is Monday 8 March. For news/features/letters/announcements &c is Monday 15 March.

CONTACT

MEETINGS

WEST LONDON Thurs. 11 March. Brunel Anarchists. "History of Anarchist Practice" with Nicolas Walter. 7.30 pm Library, Basement, Brunel University, Uxbridge. All welcome.

SOUTH-EAST LONDON Libertarians Group meets Wednesdays. Contact Georgina - phone 852 6323

WEST GERMANY. 9-11 April. Film review on Spanish Civil War at SCHWABISCH HALL. The communal cinema "Kino im Schafstall" will show documentary films, Augustin Souchy will speak on "The Social Revolution in Spain". More details from Paul Zimmermann, 717 Schwabisch Hall, Johanniterstrasse 17.

NEW YORK CITY. Discussion-socials "It's My Life, or Don't Tread on Me". March 12: David Rosen 'Revolution & Counterrevolution in Portugal: a personal experience'; March 19: Barbara Goodstein Slide-talk on Agostini's sculpture & film by L. Horowitz; March 26: United Farm Workers folm 'Why We Boycott'; April 2: 'S-1, the New McCarthyism'; April 9: Edna Zimmermann 'The Struggle for Human & Civil Rights in N. Ireland'; April 16: Ralph Fucetola et al 'Libertarian Practices in Tax Resistance'; April 23: 'Forced-Labor Camps in the People's Republic of China'; April 30: Jim Peck 'FBI Witch Hunts from the Freedom Rides to Today'.

At Freespace Alternate U, 339 Lafayette St. N.Y.C. (tel. 228-0322).

LONDON Hyde Park Speakers Corner, Anarchist Forum alternate Sundays 1 pm. Speakers, listeners & hecklers welcomed.

PEOPLE/PUBLICATIONS &c.

Does it really matter where our kids learn to read and write? We're torn between hatred of the existing set up and not wanting to isolate them. We're interested in hearing from people with big kids who've already made the 'big decisions' and anyone who is thinking about it now. Our kids are 2½ years and 14 months. Joan Harmer, 6 Melbury House, Fentiman Road London S.W.8.

FULHAM area. Are you interested in trying to get off the ground an Arts Centre or in forming a group of dissidents amongst the people who feel oppressed artistically? Contact John St. Claire, 43 Tynemouth Av., London, S.W.6.

R. I. PAVIGNANO, NEW YORK. PLEASE SEND FREEDOM YOUR ADDRESS FOR SUBSCRIPTION

WANTED: Books on Utopias past, present & future. Also Rickards "Posters of Protest and Revolution" and "The Fringe of British Politics" author unknown (George Thayer?). Bob James, Hemingfold Farmhouse, Telham, Battle E. Sussex.

GROUPS

BATH anarchists & non-violent activists contact Banana, c/o Students Union, The University, Claverton Down, Bath

BIRMINGHAM anarchists contact Bob Prew, 40C Trafalgar Rd., Moseley, Birmingham 13

BOLTON anarchists contact 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516).

Anyone interested in the Syndicalist Workers Federation contact or write SWF same address

CORBY anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants NN1 211

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

DUNDEE Alistair Dempster, c/o Students Union, Airlie Place, Dundee.

DURHAM. Martin Spence, 17 Avenue Street, High Shincliffe, Durham.

EAST London Libertarians write c/o Ken Weller, 123 Lathom Rd. East Ham, E.6.

EDINBURGH. Bob Gibson, 7 Union Road, Edinburgh

GLASGOW group c/o A. Ross, 17 Bute Gdns, Hillhead. Libertarian Circle last Tuesday of every month.

HARROW. write Chris Rosner, 20 Trescoe Gdns., Rayners Lane, Harrow, HA2 9TB.

IRELAND. Libertarian Communists contact A Alan MacSimoin, 4 Ard Lui Park, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

LEEDS. anarchists contact Cahal McLaughlin, 15 Brudenell Grove, Leeds.

LEICESTER anarchist group contact Pete & Jean Miller, 41 Norman St.. Tel. 549 652.

LEICESTER Libertarian Circle Thursdays at Black Flag Bookshop, 1 Wilne Street.

OXFORD anarchist group c/o Jude, 38 Hurst Street.

PORTSMOUTH. Rob Atkinson, 21 Haverstock Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants.

STIRLING write Nick Sherington, 25 Churchill Drive, Bridge of Allan, Stirling

OVERSEAS

AUSTRALIA - Canberra anarchist group 32/4 Condomine Court, Turner Camil 2601.

Melbourne. Martin Jones Peters, c/o Dept. of Philosophy, Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria.

NEW ZEALAND Steve Hey, 35 Buchanans Rd., Christchurch, 4 (tel. 496 793).

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Published by Freedom Press, London, E.1. Printed by Vineyard Press, Colchester.

WHY MAY '68?

THE TOPIC HAS SCARCELY BEEN RAISED...AND WE HAVE TO GO INTO SHADES OF MEANING. FOR WHAT DOES "RECUPERATION" MEAN, AND WHY PRECISELY MAY 1968? Certainly a good number of the students who challenged the university and society, totally and radically, are now assistant-lecturers in sociology, or engineers with economic prospects, a good number of the workers who had demonstrated a categorical rejection of their condition and had criticised the role of the trade unions, have gone back to their old jobs and have, sometimes, joined the union. And so on.

But is that a specific feature of May 1968? All things considered, all revolutionary movements from the 19th Century to our days have been either recuperated or crushed. The Paris Commune, Kronstadt, Catalonia, the Budapest Commune, etc...have been crushed militarily. I'm not dreaming. That's a fact. And all the other movements, all the other great strikes, whether we're talking about the factory committees in Turin, the strikes and factory occupations in France 1936, have they not all been "recuperated"?

And I'm not even talking about the most serious setbacks to the ideas of freedom and socialism; that is, the fake victories which have led, from October 1917 onwards, to Stalinism, then to the imbecilic, bureaucratic, police dictatorship of Brezhnev and friends, or from the Long March, through successive purges, to the hysterical dictatorship of Mao. The most serious because there are still many people who do not have a clear idea of the nature of these dictatorships which thereby, besides their powerful armies and omnipotent police forces, benefit from a screen of accepted lies.

We too often forget that the rights we consider "normal" today, and which we even scorn a little - the right to strike, the right to organise unions, social rights, the vote for women, for young people, the list is long - are the result of long and hard struggles carried on by workers and the forces of the "left". Capitalist society has perfectly recuperated, integrated and assimilated these acquired or conquered rights. But in doing so, it has changed. It has evolved. Moreover this is one of its strengths, because it is well known that a society which does not evolve is in mortal danger.

Why should things be otherwise with May '68? At least with that which was, to a certain extent, "recuperable" in May '68: for example, the relative liberalisation of the Pill, abortion, etc.

What has to be "interrogated" then, is the very nature of revolution in 1976; what has to be analysed is today's world, which is no longer exactly (to say the least) Bakunin's or Marx's. What we must attempt to see are the consequences of its evolutions, and how, for example, forms of action, and types of organisation which say they are, and occasionally desire to be, against the system, in fact participate in it, and constitute one of its specific mechanisms for integrating opponents and getting them to participate in its survival.

So why not start this "interrogation" with May '68 amongst others? For in my opinion, the May movement constitutes a specifically modern, contemporary crisis. This decidedly does not mean, of course, that it will furnish us with the ring of master keys that will open the gates of Revolution, so obstinately locked against us right up to the present.

The Recuperation of Mai 68

DEAD REVOLUTIONS AND OTHERS

THE REVOLUTIONARY explosion of May 1968 against the established order, hierarchic capitalist power, political, social and cultural institutions; against all forms of repression whether economic, political, social, family, sexual, all included in the same refusal, derived its singularity and its importance from the fact that it involved every individual as an individual, and could not therefore be limited to one particular social category. Everybody who, in our repressive societies collides at every instant of their daily life with the social hierarchy, felt themselves to be directly concerned by this revolt. Students revolted against the institution of the university, against the mandarins, the academic "master minds" and their lousy teaching; the workers revolted against their exploitation by bosses and their status as robots eternally performing the same gestures, the citizens revolted against the State and its police forces, women revolted against dictatorship of males adding to all the rest, young people revolted against all that and against the family besides. And so on. But everyone by struggling against the repressive hierarchy which affected her/him most intimately, struggled at the same time for the destruction of all hierarchies.

That is why the May movement constitutes the archetype of the revolutionary crisis in the modern world. And that is why almost nobody understood what was happening. Too new. Impossible, in any case, to reduce this explosion to a formula, a schematic representation, in which everybody could recognise themselves, because May speaks in the first person singular. And it is not the least of its merits that the language of May, the common, libertarian, anti-hierarchical dialect should be made up of a multitude of individual voices speaking for themselves.

Except for the wooden language of the party machines, speaking the language of the dead. The notorious "weight of the dead on the brains of the living", verified once more. And yet, if the majority of the members of the trade-union and political organisations understood strictly nothing about the May movement, desperately searching it for signs of the repetition of former or distant events -- as varied as October 1917 or the Popular Front of 1936 -- without seeing what was radically new in it, the party machines did realize that the movement was directed against them as well, and acted accordingly. The objective and subjective alliance of the left-wing political and trade-union machines with the powers-that-be, has never been so obvious.

The quality press, sociologists, political scientists, and the bureaucrats and apprentice-bureaucrats of the leftist sects, proposed, during and after the "events", explanatory formulas that make us die of laughter nowadays! For instance: May was due to the influence of the Chinese "cultural revolution"; to spin-off from the campaign against the war in Vietnam; to an economic and political crisis -- invented to meet the needs of the case; to the profound conflict between the generations. Others stated that if "it" started at the University, that was because the university is the weakest link in the chain of capitalist society (!), and finally, May was the dress-rehearsal of the revolution which would sweep Alain Krivine and Pierre Franck [Trotskyist "superstars" -- translator] to power !!!

Then, at the time of disillusionment and the settling of accounts, the May movement, reduced to a political movement in the narrowest sense (which it never was, but what else can they see?) became for certain people no more than a kind of miscarriage, because, well, it hadn't even succeeded in changing the government. And, as well, there's no way you could call May a truly working-class movement, is there, so ... Just a lot of kid's stuff. Not serious. Oh, where are the good old struggles of yesteryear. . .

Before we can measure the importance and role of the proletariat in the May movement, we have to come to an agreement on the very concept of proletariat.

I am one of those who do not believe in the charismatic role assigned to the proletariat by Marx: the socialist revolution bearing class which by liberating itself liberates/destroys all classes - and itself as proletariat - so as to establish the good, classless, society. One of the reasons for our rejection of this thesis is that it has never been borne out anywhere.

Classes are not unidirectional, stuck for all time with their historic destiny. The working class is composed - the marxists always forget this - of individuals. It changes, it evolves, as societies change and evolve. Their common condition of being exploited in no way prevents the workers from having different ideas, and from behaving differently. There are religious workers and atheist workers; there are workers who followed Hitler and Stalin and workers who fought them; there are workers who vote Right and workers who vote Left and workers who don't vote at all. There are rebellious workers, and "domesticated" workers proud of their fifty years of "good and loyal service" in the same jobs, etc. To the Marxists all this is secondary, because what unifies the proletariat, besides its historic role as the class bearing our socialist future, a role to which experience gives the lie, but in which they continue to believe, beside this role, therefore, and linked to it, there is the role of

the proletariat in production, which makes it the class called on to take the reins of power and establish its dictatorship. And to them the divergences in ideas and behaviour are only the reflection of the influence of bourgeois ideology. But in this case where does bourgeois ideology end? What, for instance, is more bourgeois than the marxists' ideas on production?

Nobody would deny the situation that is common to all workers in all modern societies - from the red East to the christian West - that of being exploited operatives, but how do people fail to see that the workers very often react in radically different, and even opposed, ways to this situation?

Moreover, as time passes and things change, as Lenin replaces Marx in the Pantheon, the thesis about the unified historic role destiny of the proletariat evolves as well. The marxists who deny the workers their individuality, who only conceive of them as a monolithic class without differentiated desires or internal contradictions, with no consciousness other than their "class consciousness", and of course with no unconscious, end up by denying that the proletariat is an autonomous, revolutionary body. No, the marxist dialectic is not close to a contradiction. For these gentlemen the class is nothing, without its party.

Lenin's opinion that the working class alone - left to its own devices - cannot get beyond "trade-unionism", that is the struggle for wage claims and others, and is incapable of being "revolutionary", that is of struggling for the conquest of power, is well known, and is still an article of faith. Hence the necessity of the vanguard party to lead - and in fact to substitute itself for - the class.

It's not difficult to imagine how the combined opportunism and dogmatism of Lenin and his partners, faced with the difficulties springing up against them in their attempts to recruit and control the working class, gave rise to this audacious theory - as well as the one which holds that revolutionary ideology has to be introduced into the proletariat from outside, by means, no doubt, of some syringe clutched in the lily-white hands of party leaders. Since the proletariat had shown itself to be recalcitrant putty in their hands, the party had to be substituted for it, to be made the historic representative of the class, the only one in which the "potential strengths" of the class could be expressed, the proprietor of the revolution, the historic leader of the proletariat. It was only one step from there, with the victory of "socialism" in numerous countries, a step lightly taken everywhere, for Marx's thesis on the dictatorship of the proletariat to become the reality of the dictatorship of the party over the proletariat, of Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Rakosi, etc.

Besides, it's equally important to note that there has been an appreciable evolution in both the proletariat (wage-earning workers in industry, transport, services, agricultural workers, etc.) and the workers' movement (parties, unions, various associations, etc.). Whilst it is impossible to confuse the one with the other, it is just as impossible to deny the evolution of each. The nineteenth-century proletariat, formed, in the main from peasants fleeing the poverty of the countryside and from ruined artisans, penned in prison-factories, suffering wretchedness and exploitation sometimes from the age of eight or ten, with no rights, lived in a kind of ghetto of misery and an abyss separated it from the rest of society. Today, a good part of the working class in the modern industrialised countries has integrated itself into the values and taboos of the so-called consumer societies and, too often, forms the hard core of the silent majority. As for the parties and trade-unions, they have become, down the years of struggle and the evolution of modern societies, the instruments for integrating the workers into these societies.

I will give just one example directly linked to May '68: the strike. In the 19th century, the strike was considered the scandal of scandals by the bourgeoisie. If one admitted that the labourers had stopped work (that sacrament!), one admitted the worst: anarchy, the social edifice was about to crumble. So, one sent the army against the strikers. The cemeteries are full of them.

Today most bosses continue to consider a strike as a personal insult, as well as a loss of earnings. But they don't have to scrutinise their souls. In fact, capitalist society tolerates strikes, and even manages to benefit from them in the long run. It can benefit from practically anything.

Anybody endowed with a modicum of intelligence recognises today that the workers' movement (the workers as well as "their" organisations), with its struggles, particularly its strikes, its social demands and its wage claims, has been one of the most formidable of the motive forces of the modernisation of capitalism, and the privileged agent of technical revolutions. Assuredly, the workers' struggles did not have this aim, the most revolutionary sectors of the proletariat wanted to change life (as they say these days, but in reference to a change of government, a strange idea of

life these gentlemen have). We know we haven't got there. On the other hand, the workers have wrested, step by step, struggle by struggle, conditions and hours of work which are less crushing, and less low wages. Marx and the capitalists thought that wage increases were impossible; by obtaining them in struggle, the workers have ended up showing the capitalists that their interest is served by a "high" wages policy, which allows the mass of wage-earners to become a mass of consumers, thereby considerably enlarging the internal market and the sale of increasingly sophisticated objects. In the same way, the reduction in working-hours, in comparison with the past, has obliged industrialists to increase productivity, and hence to rationalise and modernise their enterprises. Of course, such a policy is subject to random factors in the conjuncture, as they say, but it is the general tendency of modern capitalism.

In this new capitalist perspective, the trade-unions are called on to play a primarily collaborative role with the management. Previously forbidden, clandestine, hunted, repressed, nowadays they are social partners. For this collaboration to be effective, for the unions to be credible in the eyes of their members - otherwise, they are nothing - it sometimes has to take the appearance of confrontation, sometimes that of negotiation.

Of course, in this matter as in many others, things are frequently complex, and the regulatory role of the unions can only really be proved as a general tendency, and not necessarily step by step. On the one hand, there are wild-cat strikes which momentarily break the union-bosses collaboration; on the other, there are the attempts made by managements and certain unions, to plan worker discontent one or two years in advance, fixing the rate of wage-increases and other benefits so as to suppress strikes or reduce them to the minimum. But these kinds of planning of discontent quite often fail and the performance of the regulatory role is given to the good old wage strikes managed by the trade-unions, which force the workers not to demand too much, and the capitalists to concede more than they wanted, and thus to resort to invention to recoup their losses. Small industrialists very frequently cannot follow this process and get crushed, and so the workers' struggles contribute, in their way, to capitalist concentration.

If these struggles have resulted in the integration of working class parties and trade unions into capitalist society, in a share-out of roles and responsibilities which in fact reinforces this society, they have also resulted in the considerable modification of capitalism which is becoming more and more bureaucratic, and in which the State, the former "arbiter" (gendarme, rather), is becoming more and more, as everyone knows, of an interested party in the country's economy, State-boss, State-entrepreneur, State-bureaucracy. And, still, gendarme.

Experience has given modern capitalist countries great objective (i.e. not necessarily obeying a pre-established plan, nor always clearly perceived by the protagonists themselves) skill at feeding off its contradictions and oppositions, at first admitting and then - partially - resolving social conflicts and struggles.

Social crises - like that of May '68 - are for the most part - and this is the specific role of the working-class parties, beyond their collaboration with the trade-unions in the integration of workers into society - diverted into the political arena, recuperated by the parties and unions and end too often in "new elections", a change of Government, etc. That is, in the perpetuation of the system, sometimes with a few retouches, sometimes not even that.

If May '68 ended in new elections, they did not exactly, it may be remembered, lead to a new and different majority. But the question should be: even if a different government had arisen from these elections, what would that have had in common with the profound May movement whose primary originality was precisely its refusal of any government in the country as much as in the factories, the Universities, etc... What would it have changed in the workers' position as paid-operatives, for example?

Society in modern capitalist countries has several trump cards it can play, and one of the most used is this method of channelling revolts, and this "political solution" to revolutionary crises which, whilst modifying certain obsolete economic, social or political structures, conserves the essential, that is, the repressive social hierarchy.

Of course, all Governments are not identical (it would be ridiculous to deny the differences there are between the francoist government, for example, and other European governments), but the questions raised so immediately by the May movement could not have "political" answers, for the movement was so anti-political.

If we do not see the proletariat with the visionary eyes of Marx, as a "whole" historically predestined to achieve a very precise type of rev-

olution - defined by him - and we take account of its evolution which, despite the continuation of its exploitation, has led certain sections of the working class to identification with the "model of civilisation" imposed by the bourgeoisie in power, the American or the German or the X way of life; whilst other sections seem not only to have become radicalised, but also to have attained a more total, more critical, more libertarian perception of their action, we should not, in any case, be surprised by the diversified behaviour of the proletariat at the time of the May-June '68 movement. The revolutionary crisis of May '68 was indeed the most important of recent years in Europe, and the proletariat as a "revolutionary vanguard" was absent. The proletarians, themselves, were quite often present. This proves, quite simply, that we must have done, once and for all with nineteenth century ideas on this question, as on others and this too proves the modernity of May '68.

For it is a fact that the proletariat did have a revolutionary specificity which it has no longer. If it was never the predestined monolith, the exploited, rightless, pariah proletariat for most of the time acted, in social struggles, in any case, from the beginnings of capitalism up to Spain in 1936/1939, as the principal creative, daring model for revolutionary movements.

I am speaking of the proletariat. As far as the organisations claiming to be its representatives are concerned, they too have undergone, down the years, an evolution which has led them to become repressive bureaucracies - mechanisms of the system - which they are today.

This is why the ridiculous parade of Alain Krivine and partners, leading several thousand students, as if it were a procession to some holy place, towards the locked gates of a Parisian factory, so as to place them "at the service of the workers" (to derisive shouts of "le service n'est pas compris"), not only demonstrated their pseudo-bolshevik mythology - from which they have not deviated for an instant - but revealed besides their reactionary mentality, because they tried to place the student movement at the service of the "working-class" bureaucracy.

Jean-Marc Coudray was perfectly right to write: "It is essential to say this strongly and calmly: in May '68 in France the industrial proletariat was not the revolutionary vanguard of society, it was the lumbering rearguard". ("La Brèche", p.116.)

To put it briefly, the "working-class" bureaucracy (the P.C.F. and the C.G.T. primarily) which first of all wanted to remain on the margin of the student disorder (which it criticised fiercely), was subsequently forced to make a symbolic gesture, with its attempt at a first class interment by means of the 13th May demonstration*, only to find itself completely overwhelmed immediately afterwards by the unleashing of strikes, in many areas, not only without but often against their advice. The movement had produced such an impact on opinion that it could no longer be limited to the student sphere, as was in the interest of the powers-that-be and the bureaucracies together. The revolt spread to the whole country - and to all spheres of society - like wildfire. The bureaucracy had to fling itself headlong into the general strike, to take over the command, to channel it, put the brakes on it, to stifle it. No point in deceiving ourselves, in general terms the bureaucracy pulled it off. For a very important sector of the working class, the May-June '68 movement was, therefore, no more than a general strike, like other general strikes, managed and led by bureaucracies, for economic demands, with, towards the end, narrow political implications: new elections, new majority, and so on. And the headlines in "Humanité" on the "victorious return to work" give the measure of their panic and their role. But if the "working-class" bureaucracy could play this role of guardian of order at a time when all hierarchies, all powers, all "in the know" were being challenged everywhere, it is because an important number of workers accepted that they should "remain in their place" not go beyond the strictly negotiable, economic limits of their action and the protection of the "Working-class" parties and trade-unions. As Coudray said, they were happy to be the lumbering rearguard.

But the attitude was not the same everywhere; the working class did not draw itself up unanimously behind "its" bureaucratic representatives. In working-class circles, as in student circles, and, in fact, in practically all the circles at the base of the social pyramid, in more or less explicit, more or less violent, ways, original demands, new forms of action, ideas practically unknown until then were put forward and fer-

ociously defended. On the Latin Quarter barricades, in the demonstrations and fights, in the network of action committees of all kinds which sprang up everywhere, there were naturally students, but also manual workers, clerks, housewives, technicians, "cowboys", etc. And the visionary prophecy of Max Stirner could be verified daily: "Whatever you give them, they will always want more, for they want no less than the suppression of all gifts."

I am myself deeply convinced that the importance, the topicality and the originality of May '68 resides precisely in the absence of a sociologically defined "avant-garde" to which all the other social layers interested in "change" had to entrust the management of the struggle. From now on, it is clear, no more "avant-garde", no more historic leaders, no more predestined class. Everyone for himself, and all for all. The individual at last mounts the throne of history.

For, of course, it is not the students who are going to become the new historical avant-garde. The few hypotheses tending in this direction have sunk of their own accord, in ridicule. Neither is it the "new working class", dear to Serge Mallet*, which has taken the place of the old one. This is merely a mechanical displacement of marxist theory which would like white-collar proletarians (technicians and cadres) to take the place of boiler-suit proletarians.

It is also, of course, the recognition of a fact: the diminution in modern societies of the "classic" industrial proletariat (after that of the agricultural proletariat) and the growth of the role and importance of the tertiary sector in the economy, along with that of technicians in modern industries. It is also a fact that these technicians often have a more innovative and more rebellious mentality than some very conservative sectors of the industrial proletariat. But to place the fate of the "world revolution" in their hands would be to relapse into the marxist schema, that experience gives the lie to, for even less convincing reasons. For if it is true that some groups of technicians and highly specialist workers did play a notable role in the May-June '68 strike, particularly by posing clearly the problem of self-management (they were not the only ones), in other places and at different times, in the aftermath of May, it was immigrant workers, or other categories of labourers, who played a major role in their turn.

What is important about May, then, is that all, or nearly all, layers and groups in society were shaken by it. In modern industrial societies little can be done if a single layer of society is affected by revolt.

What happened in May, and for many people it was the first time in their life that this had happened to them, was that men and women, young and less young, came out of their social "ghettos", out of their "isolating cells", where the Powers-that-be place us and keep us by force. Society is like an immense chain gang in which everybody, for his entire life, repeats the same meaningless gesture, without being able to speak to his neighbour, not knowing what other people are doing in the nearby workshops, nor what use it all is. Smashing their iron collars, the social, cultural and political barriers and frontiers, the people of Paris, of Nantes and elsewhere for several weeks found themselves together in the street, for a sort of libertarian festival, in which the arbitrary, repressive barrier between daily life and political activity had flown into pieces. For let us not forget that it was in May that the unity of individual desires and the common struggle against authority and exploitation was most vigorously declared.

Of course, I am only pointing out here what seems essential, new, revolutionary to me, in the May movement and which, alas! too often coexisted with the old world at the very heart of the movement. It was thus, possible to light candles to Stalin and Mao in the courtyard of the Sorbonne. The religious ritual of the bureaucratic (big or little) organisations did not completely disappear. Rituals that demanded, among other things, parades with portraits of the saints to demand Peace in Vietnam, as other people in other places organise processions to demand rain from the Holy Virgin. It was possible to witness odious and ridiculous quarrels between apparatuses of different brands of marxism-leninism for "control of the movement", a quarrel which expressed itself, of course, in the continual reinforcement of the "services d'ordre" and of militant discipline. It was possible for the gentlemen of the advertising trade, who had set up an "action committee" to hold a meeting to discuss seriously "the role of advertising in the socialist State" (sic!). It was also possible for film-makers and theatre people to hold a meeting to talk about the profession. And so on.

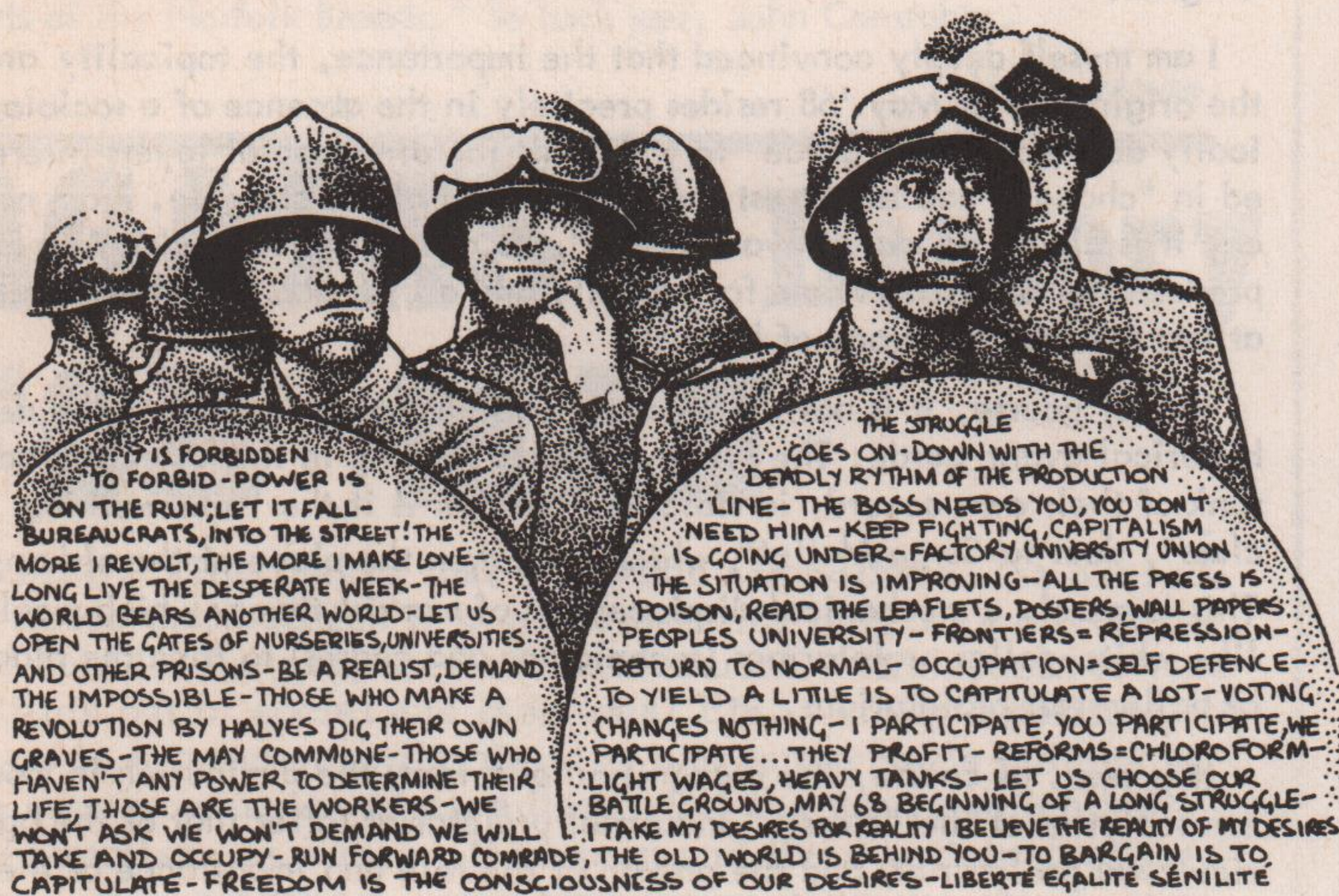
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*Serge Mallet, leader of the Parti Socialiste Unifié, recently killed in a car crash. The author of several works, including "The New Working Class", in which he theorises in the way schematically indicated here.

*We should point out, for those readers who do not live in France or who were only 10/12 years old in '68, that on the 13th May the Left parties and unions called for a day of strikes and a demonstration to protest against "police brutality" in the Latin Quarter, with the obvious aim of doing no more after the ritual "day of action". They were greatly overrun by events.

(Cont. from P. 11)

At a moment - assuredly too short - when one could come out of one's own particular wretchedness, of one's ghetto, one's job, etc. to melt into the crowd, whilst remaining oneself, and participate in the uprising, some people preferred to remain locked in their trades, as before, as after, as always. They thus proved not only that they had understood nothing about what was happening, but that they were afraid of it.



THE MAY MOVEMENT REVEALED WITH A HITHERTO UNKNOWN FORCE, the reactionary content of "revolutionary" ideologies. One can sum up the marxist-leninist scheme of revolution (but this ideology covers far more than marxism-leninism properly so called) as an attempt to gather together shock-troops of professional revolutionaries into a disciplined army provided with leaders, banners and a mystique, which hurls itself (I almost forgot: in the name of the working class, of course, and representing its "historic" interests) against the bastions of bourgeois power, to smash it down and establish...what? Let us close the holy books and call things by their name: a bureaucratic, police dictatorship like those which exist in the USSR, China and elsewhere.

Sixty years ago, long before all this experience, it was profoundly reactionary to demand of militants that they sacrifice themselves to ease the delivery of the future society, the good one without injustices or contradictions. But when we see what these "future societies" are, it's really perverted!

If one goes beyond appearances and the lying weight of words (socialism, revolution, avant-garde), one is obliged to state - though many refuse to do so still because it would shake their faith - that the marxist-leninist movement has imitated its apparatus of references and myths, its system of values from those of the dominant classes with the variations and occasionally the contradictions which are part of it. The bourgeois spirit of profitability and productivity, the religious spirit with its notions of sacrifice, its morale, its ritual, its saints and martyrs, and the military spirit with its hierarchy, its discipline, its leaders, its warrior mystique. They have only left out - is this really accidental? - the spirit of enjoyment, which is a controversial, but nevertheless real characteristic of a good part of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeois spirit: An efficient party manages itself like a business, with its investments and its profitability. No action has value in itself, it is only an investment which must be profitable, that is, return profits of all kinds to the party. The party manages its struggles, it is the historic proprietor of the revolution. The end justifies the means is not an invention of Lenin's. Besides, what is the essential critique that the Leninist parties make of the bourgeoisie, if not that it manages the economy badly, is incapable of increasing production, etc.? They thus present themselves as alternative managers and entrepreneurs. The marxist-leninist ideologues, like the bourgeois ideologues have consecrated Work.

The religious spirit: Was not Stalinism a religious phenomenon? Is not Maoism such a phenomenon in our day? Do not the charisma of leaders, infallibility, dogmatism, blind faith in sacred texts, constitute a specific form of religiosity, with a ritual also inspired by the churches, demonstrations-processions, meetings-masses, the cult of hero-saints and of martyrs? Didn't the unspeakable Régis Debray say that Che Guevara was a new Christ? And besides, are not holy images of Che - amongst others - sold at the innumerable proletarian shrines? For commerce always gets on well with faith. We live in mercantile societies.

The military spirit: Depending on the time and place, this characteristic takes precedence over the others - and vice-versa - but it is without doubt bolshevism which incarnates the military spirit best. Lenin wanted to make the party a real army with a general staff in supreme

command, imposing its strategy on the troops who had only to obey without discussion. Discipline is the principal strength of this type of militarised organisation. Of course, this has not been obtained anywhere without resistance, but to break this resistance use has been, and is, made of the corollary of the military spirit: repression. The police spirit - and its practice - in the marxist-leninist parties are so well known that there is no point on insisting on it.

The reactionary character of "revolutionary" ideologies is revealed and confirmed spectacularly when these parties have conquered power. It is then of course, that they give the full measure of their reactionary character and practice.

Marxism has thus given birth to the monsters we know. Of course, it is sometimes said that the bureaucratic dictatorships have "betrayed" Marx. But that is an idealist attitude separating a theory from its practice, which reduces the theory to a simple ideological reference, to a quasi religious resource. The analysis of marxism is inseparable from its outcome: the bureaucratic dictatorships in power in a large part of the world. Of course it has been distorted, every theory put into practice undergoes shocks, a change. Even if libertarian ideas do not constitute a closed body of doctrine, like marxism, it would be perfectly ridiculous if, to analyse their role yesterday and today, we contented ourselves with performing exegeses of the work of Bakunin or of Kropotkin, without analysing as well - or rather above all - the concrete experiments where it was attempted to put these ideas into practice, whether in Russia in 1917 or Spain in 1936/7.

Or, why not, in May '68. For the deepest note of May '68 was obviously libertarian (anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchical) but libertarian in a new way. One is obliged to record that the "orthodox" anarchist groups were practically just as outstripped as the others by the depth and novelty of the movement. One of the things that remains from May '68 is this extension of libertarian ideas and behaviours, which went far beyond the different groups which lay claim to the anarchist tradition. A new libertarian activity was born in Europe which owes little or nothing to this tradition, even if there is, on occasion, contact.



This is the first part of an article by CARLOS SEMPRUN - MAURA. It first appeared in "Interrogations" no. 2, March 1975, and was intended to open a debate on the extent to which capitalist society and its institutions can recuperate movements of revolt, especially spontaneous ones. The second, concluding, part of the article will appear next issue.

UPON THIS BRICK

The mob have an understandable right to bay outside the closed door, when there is no break in the charmed circle or when the laughter of the esoteric joke becomes a little too shrill. When the clique forms in the corner of the room and the voices drop and the single high-pitched female giggle becomes a valedictory hoo-ha for a secret society without a secret. And it was a good week for the Philistines, and in club and bar, in canteen and cafe, they howled their mockery because of the creation of the American sculptor Carl Andre. 120 bricks neatly laid out on a gallery floor in a neat oblong. This type of art is so trivial that lost in some small back-street gallery it is not worth the raising of an eye-brow, but over the years I have protested it. Not because it is produced, nor because galleries exhibit it, not because the wealthy buy it, but because of the dishonesty of the art establishments of the West in giving this minor work a value and a credence it does not deserve. All the painted industrial girders in the Kasmin Gallery in lush Bond Street, all the Action Painting by tasteless pot pourers, all those All Black canvases, all those beautiful empty galleries with a single pile of sand as a valid contribution to the art of our time.

And in my mind I see that unfortunate art teacher leading her dreary gaggle of students through some provincial Town Art Gallery and pausing, nay halting before a painted girder, a pile of sand, or a set of house bricks, trying to explain why this piece of industrial junk is a worthwhile work of art. And the reason he/she is forced to offer an explanation is all too often because this aesthetic rubbish has been donated to the hicks by one of the London based Arts Councils, so therefore, the logic of it must be that being so, it must be a valid work of art, and not to be able to appreciate this marks one out as a slob unworthy of an A level for Art. Yet having blown my primeval raspberry at the dying gardens of the West, I will defend the work of the sculptor Carl Andre, the gallery owners who show that type of work, and the decision of the Tate Gallery Trustees to buy this particular style of art. Not to the death, but to the extent of a minor punch up in some off Soho saloon bar. There are a dozen plush galleries in Bond Street catering to conservative tastes. Around St James Palace are a swarm of art galleries exuding the stench of wealth so much so that one feels one should genuflect and wave a cheque book before entering and within are the conventional landscapes, sea scapes, Dutch and Italian primitives and costly Victorian, and wealthy Young England buys them and they never make a headline for they are no more than the records of a dead craft. Pleasant as wall decoration, but none the less mind rejecting wall dross.

If in this moment in time there is no talent, then the vacuum must be filled, or we all go home. What Oldenburg, Warhol and his pop art factory produced, silk screens, Caro with his painted strips of metal, Malevich with his white painted on white did was to breath life into the debate on what is art, its function, and its price, and while their work can be dismissed with one wave of the angry hand, without their work our culture would be no more than a dead past for they are the ferment of ideas within a culture. Carl Andre lays out 120 bricks so that as low sculpture "they complement the environment" and because it is bought by the State Tate Gallery it makes the front page of the whole of our national press, just as comrades the CND marches and the Grosvenor Square demonstration did, and the reason, apart from the Establishment hate, was as is, that a society found itself forced to examine and challenge its own moribund values. Botticelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo or a Rembrandt offer us the finished work to which the spectator can add nothing, for it is the end of imagination for all has been said by the artist, but within the Town itself, I can point to the cenotaph in Whitehall, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey, Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames embankment, and place them alongside Andre's 120 bricks, and ask the Philistines which one will they now fault, for like the pyramids of Egypt their very simplicity is the beginning of imagination for the spectator. That ghastly ten year old child that the Telegraph and the other national gutter press continually drag down from some reader's attic, with the wail that this brat could have produced Andre's 120 brick flat sculpture could, with little mental effort, reproduce Andre's work, but then this ten year old brat could also reproduce the cenotaph, the flat Low Sculpture of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Cleopatra's Needle and the pyramids of Egypt, having been shown them once, for their key to the hold on our universal imagination over these long years is their very simplicity. Stripped of all decoration, as stark and as fundamental as a rock in a desert they are the silent pool, the Zen Garden of flat sand, the bare wall, that green painted factory lavatory door at which we gaze and brood on our position within a

society that we profess to hate and despise.

Lost in time is the man who all those years before Christ was called upon to design a tomb for the Pharaohs of Egypt, and one doubts if he ever lifted one stone into place, yet that simple design has dominated the world's imagination for 3000 years, for what could have been added or subtracted to the creation of Michelangelo's Pieta, or to the simple sketch for the first pyramid. Each man in his own fashion created a work of art according to his own creative ability, and both succeeded, and in judging the trustees of the Tate Gallery, and the 120 bricks of Carl Andre, judge them in relation to these two artists, and not to the voice of the sub-kultured mob dragging some snivelling brat to a weekend reflected immortality. The trustees of the Tate Gallery have just so much sticky loot to spend and the only question that is relevant in this context is did they pay too much, or too little? I personally think it was too much, but then with the price of Guinness being what it is, and Healey going tory berserk in Fabian Hampstead, does it really matter?

Our reason for attending the Tate Gallery, and I use the imperial We, was for the press showing of the mass ranks of the paintings, drawings and watercolours of John Constable. It is an impressive display by virtue of numbers, but Constable lacks the poetry of Turner and most of his work is once seen readily forgotten, for it has a claustrophobic air about his landscapes, in that the cloudy skies dominate the lush green lands. His major paintings give one the feeling that they have been painted with coloured salad oil, for they have a repellant greasy sheen that is not noticed in reproduction and one notices how badly his figures within his landscapes are painted. Much of his portraiture is just bad, while his huge altar painting of The Risen Christ is sad rubbish, but having said that, one must pay homage to the man's greatness as demonstrated in work such as Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Ground or Malvern Hall for I hold that Constable's greatness as an artist found its full flower not in the cramped and crowded canvases of the Haywain, or the Leaping Horse, but in clear, clean and uncluttered panorama when the sky found its true role as a subdued evocation of space beyond the canvas and not as a broken lid upon a stew of greasy greens. But it was an age when metropolitan man was returning to nature as a tourist, and the sea as in the great Dutch sea scapes was alien and feared, so for me the beautiful, lonely and haunting paintings of sea, coast and clouded skies are Constable's finest work, but the old perennials will continue to be reproduced.

Therefore it is back to Soho and Angela Flowers Gallery for the exhibition of the paintings of Patrick Hughes, and we drank of the wine and joined in with the fashionable small talk for Patrick Hughes has reason to be pleased, for with this exhibition he has his prints on display at Camden Lock's Jordan Gallery, and the review copy of his and George Brecht's book Vicious Circles and Infinity arrived by the morning post. Like Magritte, Hughes deals in visual illusions, and like Magritte he is no master painter, yet his use of the double take, the absurd offered as reality, the illogical carried to its logical conclusion, is a return to the literary excitement of the pre war surrealist movement, wherein the artist would be called upon to illustrate a verbal paradox. Hughes lacks Dali's skill as a painter, but his ideas are new and freshly presented, and as long as he has this gift he can rightly command an audience. And of the book, what dare I say? Published by Jonathan Cape at £ 2.50 it claims to be "for the first time, the world's greatest paradoxes, long short and visual as well as verbal, have been collected together..." As a gift by all means give it but as a work of authority it fails. Isaac Asimov loved it, but in a 100 pages there was no Chesterton, no reference to Catch 22, and this in a book that included Groucho Marx's script writer's saying that he would not join a club that would have him as a member. Included are the visual work of Escher and Magritte and Meret Oppenheim's fur covered cup and saucer, but I hold that most paradoxes are no more than an essay in semantics. Where is the hole when the cheese has gone, Brecht...what happens to your fist when you open your hand, Zen...God is not all-powerful as he cannot build a wall he cannot jump, Pascal...I can end my existence, God cannot, I can assemble a weight I cannot move, therefore I am more powerful than God, Moyse...not included but true?

Included is the old semantic gag, "What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?" and foolishly an answer is given, "an inconceivable disturbance", and whoever answered that paradox was wrong, for an inconceivable disturbance presupposes that the irresistible force moved the immovable object, but as Kelly said to Prentice, that's politics.

With Tom Phillips still pulling them in at the Serpentine Gallery in fairy land, and Ivor Abrahams rock garden style sculpture at the Mayor, Barry Green's pleasant camp style work at the Piccadilly and Creo's lovely, childish and so very gentle Welsh scenes at the Portal, the Town lives, and I shall make my way to the Guildhall where the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, Sir Lindsay Ring, G.B.E., D.Sc will have the honour of meeting Arthur Moyse at the 28th annual City of London Art Exhibition, where together hand in hand we will view

(Cont. on p.14)

work that is pleasant, academic and forgotten by the 29th ann. exh. But for those who love to suffer for a cause forget Carl Andre's 120 bricks at the Tate and think on this, that Suffolk's River Stour, "immortalised in many of the paintings of John Constable" is to become a segregated area, in that the Water Authority wish to drown the 1705 Navigation Act giving YOU right to the river, for as C.V. Winn, the Anglian Water Authority's recreation officer said, "surely no one wants the Stour to become another transistor-set, fish-and-chip area like parts of the Norfolk Broads." So fuck you, John Constable.

Arthur Moyse.

AGAINST History FOR MAN

AGAINST THE theory that everything is political the anarchist holds that politics is enslavement for purposes of conflict, and conflict for purposes of enslavement. His aim is to take politics out of social and individual life. Today's politics, it is said, are tomorrow's history, and tomorrow's history is the secular version of paradise. But the future which history promises is a lure; it is seen and lived anticipatorily as past. It engenders a hurry towards posthumous glory, and the conflicts it kindles are a hurry to commit rivals to ignominy, and much human raw material to dark oblivion. Politics are life-negating, and it is a very summary and short-sighted concept which prompts the statement that all life is conflict. Life is growth, and growth, for one thing, is survival of the past into the present. The notion of progress, too, so dear to politicians and would-be makers of history, is life-negating each time it implies a decapitation of the past, and a relish in finishing off the old and weak. Progress too often implies that the old and weak have no right to live, no right to hope.

Anarchism is not against what is historically oldest and weakest, but it is rather for what has suffered, and is still likely to suffer at the hands of history. It is not against those who are out of tune with their time because their time is telling them they have lived enough, and for the wrong reasons. That is not to say that anarchism is particularly fond of the decrepit, or that decrepitude is its main concern. What is weaker and older than a new-born child? With thousands, even millions of years of evolution behind him, everything in him is old. Only as he grows up does he assimilate the more recent fruits of civilization, and is shaped by the fearful and rapacious powers of the day, made the favourite target of the colonists of time to be. That anarchism should appeal to the young and strong is a healthy omen. It testifies to the filial piety for the passion and suffering of men gone before them, and is a tacit pledge on their part that the meek will not for ever be ground into oblivion and contempt, that all the just of the past will not have fought and fallen in vain. It also testifies to their nobility, for it is easy, common and mean for the strong to choose to be wicked; it is despicably cowardly for the strong to join together to crush the peaceful and weak.

The distinction between biological and historical man cuts very deep. The two are not contrasted by different sets of values, but by a completely different feeling for the meaning of value. As Eric Fromm might say, the values of historical man are instrumental and conflictual, those of biological man effective and creative. Biological man wants to grow and develop, and is for rhythms and flow; historical man wants to destroy and reform, and is for floods and droughts, for breakages and brakes. The future-builder wants to destroy the past. Those who are rooted in the past, because of their age, their upbringing or their choice, are for him no longer part of humanity, but walking corpses, living fossils, whose place is the grave or the museum. So, if he can, he will push them into the grave and, if he cannot or if some use can still be made of them, he will wait unfeelingly for their demise. In contrast with this attitude, only too apparent in the practice of all revolutionary parties without exception, anarchists of the Proudhon, Tolstoy and Kropotkin type, are respectful of the past, for the past is present in every man alive.

For all their sound and fury, the idolators of history are

themselves creatures of the past. They can conceive and begot revolutions, promise new eras and a brighter race, but all they do in actual fact is to perpetuate some of the ugliest and dullest features of the human past, namely killing, torturing, imprisoning, defaming dishonouring, disinheriting and outcasting their fellow-beings. If self-styled anarchists perpetuate these same features, they also in the name of a new era and revolution, if for some hypothetical man of the future they are prepared to make shambles of men living today, and at the same time proclaim their love of humanity, they are as hypocritical and compartmented in their consciences as those parties, ruling cliques and governments they so rightly accuse of being murderous and false.

It is a victory of fact over imagination, of force over reason and of will over feeling, when in the process of desacralisation of society not a few pronouncements by reputed anarchists reflect the point of view of history divinized.

There anarchists prisoners of a complex of emotions centred round such words as Left and Right, progressive and conservative, revolutionary and reactionary, which make them painfully and outrageously neglectful of the human realities which in each particular instance these words are called to describe.

The worst piece of deception wrought by the surrender of judgement to historical criteria is the identification of good and bad with the victorious future and the doomed past respectively. Thus the bourgeoisie, however vaguely defined, is evil because fated to disappear, and anyone belonging to it, suspected or alleged to exhibit bourgeois traits, is also tainted as evil. The same applies, though to a lesser extent, to the peasant class, considered as potentially bourgeois. Religion, feudalism and tribalism have likewise become symbols of a doomed and therefore wicked past, the more evil the more reluctant to be despatched. The human beings in whom these symbols are supposed to survive are dealt with as cruelly and summarily as circumstances allow. By a refinement of the same process, ironical but in no way consoling, and to make hypocrisy more hypocritical, the stickers of such hateful labels do sometimes get them stuck on themselves, and go to join their former victims in the same pit of opprobrium and death.

The reasons for this deception are obvious; so are those for the accompanying self-deception. If anarchists are men of truth, and if they are to be faithful, at least in word, to the principles they profess, they must guard themselves against any ideology, and bits of ideology, meant to rationalize destructiveness and hate. They must never resort to any label that judges of an individual by anything other than individual. By making religion, feudalism, tribalism, peasantry or bourgeoisie an incarnation of evil, one implicitly makes angels, albeit avenging angels, of any power organized for their destruction. Evil, such as the suppression of freedom and the taking of human life, is evil under whatever circumstances and name. The suppression of freedom and the taking of human life are equally execrable, whether they are done by a fascist to a communist or by a communist to a fascist, by a policeman to an anarchist or by an anarchist to a policeman. Even assuming that a man may deserve to have his freedom suppressed or his life taken away, he will deserve it on account of the harm he has actually done himself to others, not because of his being reckoned as a fascist or a communist, a policeman or an anarchist. Labels of this kind only help to sanction violence, rapaciousness and deceit. They give a blank cheque and a clean conscience to those who itch to inflict suffering of some kind. It is power organizations which are evil, not faiths, classes, races or nations, and the anarchist should be alert enough to see and denounce power organizations, whatever the entity on whose behalf they claim to act and fight. Though they may seek each other's destruction, power organizations are all allied in their oppressive and parasitical behaviour towards society, and in their intolerance of individual freedoms.

Giovanni Baldelli.

CORRECTION

In the piece by Malatesta in the last Review section a typing error made him say "defend even with force if necessary and possible, our anatomy against any government provocation...but command - never". For anatomy read autonomy.

THE IRON HEEL

A WELL-READ man is what he reads. One's mind is an amalgam of notions, feelings, emotions communicated to some extent by the written word. Like a coral island built up fragment by fragment by industrious polyps; and sometimes washed away by great tidal storms. Opinions and outlooks are formed over the years by the slow building up of the contributions of other minds to what we have grown to think of as our individual mind.

Too rarely do we recollect in tranquillity what we painfully absorbed in the storm of intellectual ideas. It is only by taking up and re-reading those far away books that we can see and honour what their contribution was, what great arches they built, what foundations they rammed home, what they shored up and, sometimes, what a false meretricious facade they were. They do not have to be the Hundred Best Books or 'the precious lifeblood of a master spirit'. Indeed they may be 'bad books' or as George Orwell described them, 'good bad books'.

One such is *The Iron Heel* by Jack London. Taking it up again one realizes that here is a good bad book. Jack London was an extremely popular writer. Many of his books were frankly pot-boilers; in fact it is recorded somewhere that he authorized George Sterling, the poet, to 'ghost' manuscripts for him if there was a demand from magazine editors for 'Jack London' stories whilst Jack London was travelling the world or at sea, as he frequently was. Jack London's books are most frequently found in an excruciatingly small-print pocket version on poor 1914-18 paper which seems to have a high obsolescence rate.

Amidst the adventure stories of the Klondyke, the high seas and the South Seas, one finds books which are the expression of the socialism in which Jack London believed. He joined the American Socialist Party in 1896 and left it in 1916 shortly before he committed suicide. He joined under De Leon and left under Debs, 'because of its lack of fire and fight, and loss of emphasis on the class struggle. . . Since the whole trend of socialism in the United States of recent years has been one of peaceableness and compromise, I find that my mind refused further sanction of my remaining a party member'.

As usual, critics, notably Upton Sinclair, ascribe his deterioration and suicide to the effects of alcoholism. Jack London knew of his weakness and wrote a book, *John Barleycorn*, about the effects of drink. Sinclair, who holds what is probably the world's record of being wrong on major public issues, was an ardent Prohibitionist and has written an amazingly wrongheaded book on great writers who were ruined by drink (*The Cup of Fury*, 1957). He does not realize that the same thing that made them drinkers made them writers. If they had not the sensitivity and awareness that makes a writer they would not have the necessity to occasionally blunt that sensitivity or shroud that awareness in some form of escapism. Occasionally, as with Jack London and many others, suicide was the only solution to that gnawing contradiction of a life oscillating between concern and forgetfulness. Alcoholism, after all, is only a delayed suicide.

One sees this contradiction in Jack London. Indeed there is a remarkable short story, *South of the Slot*, in which a scholarly sociologist

lives a dual life as a rugged two-fisted worker into which he transforms himself during research. He gets involved, in his professional role, in a convoy of strike breaking scabs. At the crisis-moment he throws off his professional role and garb and wields a shovel and huge lumps of coal to rout the scabs and the police and to clasp his real (proletarian) girl friend to his coal chest.

The Iron Heel is shot through with the same contradictions. It is deplorably written, and over-written as many of London's book are. The earliest and most shocking line which a good editor would have cut, is in the beginning of chapter two, which opens: "After the guests had gone, father threw himself into a chair and gave vent to roars of Gargantuan laughter. Not since the death of my mother had I known him to laugh so heartily."

The book is published supposedly after the Second Revolt against the tyranny known as the Oligarchs or 'The Iron Heel'. It is written by Avis Everhard, wife of Ernest Everhard (the names themselves are highly evocative) and tells the story of her - and her father's - conversion to socialism by Ernest Everhard, an agitator and member of the American Socialist Party. It goes on then to describe the rise of the Oligarchy (the capitalists) despite a successful international General Strike which has prevented a European war. The crushing of the Grange Party (farmers and small businessmen) by the Oligarchs and the buying-over of the skilled Trade Unionists by the Oligarchs. It finishes with the crushing of the revolt of the Chicago Commune despite a widespread conspiratorial underground movement of the Socialists.

The Iron Heel is generally accredited with being the first forecast of Fascism. Arthur Calder-Marshall in the *Pan Jack London* (1963) manages to drag in, most inappropriately: "It survives as a denunciation of the dictatorial powers of communism". However, if one examines this dystopia (or non-utopia) closely one finds several interesting mistakes in forecasts. There is no forecast of concen-

tration camps or racial persecution. The counter-revolution is almost entirely thought of as being of upper-class origin, with some assistance from skilled and favoured trade unionists and the regular army. The middle-class adherence to Fascism is not taken into account. In the book, the Grange movement (the farmers) wins an election but is denied access to power; its members crushed economically, as forecast by Ernest Everhard, and conscripted into the military.

Jack London succeeds in his most didactic style in explaining Marx's theory of surplus value. Whatever one may say, and one may say much, about the propagandists for Socialism they certainly knew how to put over their case to working men. That working men at that period in history were ready and eager to take up new ideas was a help. The work of the De Leonists, the I.W.W., and Kerr's little buff books (to name but an American few) laid the foundations of thought but unfortunately the building of Socialism in the United States was never erected. But the thirst was there and was satisfied.

The deep pessimism of *The Iron Heel* has its modern parallel in 1984 with its vivid imagery of a heel stamping on the human face, but its roots can be found in the duality of London's nature, and indeed in the nature of 'Socialism'. There is, running through Jack London's work, a concept of the super-man, the leader, a love of action -- gold prospecting, boxing, war reporting -- there is even a racist strain directed against 'the yellow peril'. The same dual strain runs through 'Socialism' once it loses its libertarian echoes and loses, as London did, its faith in the human need of and perpetual striving for freedom.

Arthur Calder-Marshall in his introductory essay to the Bodley Head *Jack London* finds it significant that London in his suicide sought to make doubly sure by taking two poisons, but which counteracted each other and gave him twenty-four hours of additional agony. This over-reaction was typical and fatal.

Jack Robinson.

A fairly recent reprint of *The Iron Heel* (Journeyman Press) is available from Freedom Books price 75p (paperback)

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ANARCHIST XMAS

PONTIFEX, by Theodore Roszak. (Faber & Faber, £ 3.25).

IN THE FIRST scene of this "revolutionary entertainment for the mind's eye theater", an excessively large, wild and hairy character, cross between Bacchus and Pan, awakes from drunken slumber in a public park. He soon outrages the respectable passers-by by snatching someone's breakfast, pissing on the statue of a great national leader and biting off the park attendant's nose. By some unexplained process, his acts spark off a mass orgy and insurrection that engulfs the city and draws into its pleasurable chaos a number of individuals, groups and organisations, each trying to exploit it in their own way. The People's Art Co-op, including in its ranks an exotic black woman's libber, a "transracial" individualist and a situationist "street-freak", see it as the chance of a lifetime to turn the lampposts and fire hydrants into pink phalluses and the subway entrances into crimson vulvas. The ageing members of the IDRWWPW or International Democratic Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of the World (Marxist-Leninist), disapprove of the infantile disorder lustfully raging outside, and after failing to beat it into the "unalloyed cream of revolutionary doctrine", cooperate with the police and army in trying to crush it. The drug-pushing Mainline Transport Syndicate, which manages and manipulates the population through the mass production of instant pleasure, attempts to buy up the whole affair to its own infinite profit. Various pressure groups (Alliance of Authoritarian Personalities, Compulsory Nudism, "Give Stupidity a Chance", Movement for a Democratic Mafia, etc.) and revolutionary guerrilla groups like People's Righteous Fist and Creative Intolerance, start seizing platforms by dint of well-practised guerrilla stratagem; and the scholarly soldier and dashing gentleman Pizzle begins ostentatiously parading his bunch of professional killers before the cameras while airing his great knowledge of Greek philosophy and lecturing the city manager on Clausewitz and war. ("War is the continuation of politics by other means", or in contemporary jargon, the way "to secure from the population at large voluntary acquiescence in majoritarian or quasi-majoritarian political processes leading to routinized, appropriately canalized, and malleably differentiated social change compatible with the long-term stabilising interests of responsible leadership...").

But the insurrection takes on an unforeseen dimension. During a night of growing turbulence, Orcish dragons appear, terrible and beautiful symbols of the repressed subconscious broken free. They are the same dragons of Roszak's previous book, *Where the Wasteland Ends*. Then they were "buried beneath our cities" by "two thousand years of Judaeo-Christian soul-shaping and three centuries of crusading scientific intellect". Now they are heard and seen once more among the burning ruins, and the mysterious Old Boy is noticed capering after them across the rooftops...

Throughout his writings, Pontifex included, Roszak's main concern has been to replace Marx with Blake as a symbol of liberation and to substitute for the class war, the "mental fight" against the psychology of science - the

cold god Newton/Urizen who seeks to bind the winds and imprison the waters, to hatch "eggs of unnatural production". Conscious of the possible charge of quietism and the irritation of the left - for whom, as for politics in general, he has clearly little time - Roszak insists that he doesn't wish to "dull the edge of anyone's revolution", that on the contrary "the world cries out for revolution - for the revolutions of bread, and social justice, and national liberation". But Roszak looks ahead to the "next revolution too, which is the struggle to liberate the visionary powers from the lesser reality to which they have been confined by urban-industrial necessity". He looks to the disciplining of science-based industrialism, to drastic decentralisation and a "renunciation of the excesses of power and production". But how is this to be brought about?

Anarchist pacifist, Roszak doubts that liberation can be achieved through "violent militancy". The force behind Old Boy/Pontifex's insurrection is mystical and sensual, extravagantly hippy and unapologetically utopian. There is something disturbingly complacent about Roszak's statement at the end of scene 21: "In the spell of utopian cities we build the revolutionary commune. Again and again and again. Our labors fail a million times. Very well, very well. But each time brings us back to the imagination (or is it the mem-

ory?) of our original splendor. How else to endure - and in time to make good - the unpitying evil?"

Given this view it is not surprising that Roszak's theatrical entertainment ends with a question in no way resolved. Where is the bridge between "the city inside our heads/And the city outside our skin"? Where does one start? To my mind, Roszak's mistake is one common to those "gentle" anarchists who rely exclusively on education as a weapon, only to find - as Woodcock said of Read - that their ideas suffer "the ironic fate of being used in Mithridatic doses to prolong rather than bring an end to the old system". To withdraw from the possibility of violent clashes with authority where the bridge stays intransigently barred, is to withdraw into a form of dogmatism not far removed from that seems to confuse "violent militancy" with terrorism and murder (which, after all, it can, but by no means has, to be!) yet more apparent is his dislike of organisational methods. This prejudice, so clear in *Pontifex*, adds paradox to unreality, for outside the framework of careful organisation, the risks of bloody failure are far greater; the chances of finding - let alone crossing - that bridge between sun and shadow, matter-of-fact and imagination, are far more remote in the pandemonium of the "anarchist Christmas". . . . G. F.

THE DISPOSSESSED

THE DISPOSSESSED, by Ursula Le Guin

ANARCHISM HAS NOT been very significant in mainstream Science Fiction. I do remember a horrendous novel about a prison planet called "Anarchaos" (get it,) and there were always droves of "individualistic" frontierperson-types jetting around the galaxy, if you want to include that sort of thing. The genre did produce some good social criticism, for instance by Fred Pohl, but this is hardly enough from our point of view. *Agent of Chaos* by Norman Spinrad actually had the authorities setting up an underground organisation to create the said Chaos, and so prevent fossilisation. Of course, it didn't occur to them that it would be far easier just for them not to exist in the first place. The more inwardly looking "New Wave" is, perhaps, closer to our point of view. It depends on your attitude to vague bohemianism, self-realisation is not necessarily the same as self-indulgence.

However, a new (well, relatively) novel actually takes anarchism as its theme. Ursula Le Guin has written good books before. Her "Earthsea" trilogy, written for children of course, ranks with the best fantasy. And she wrote a fine novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness* based amongst other things on sexual roles. The inhabitants of the planet in question spend most of time effectively neuter, but at intervals become sexually active, developing the characteristics complementary to those of the most dominant individual present. (If this sounds far fetched, limpets do it all the time, and oysters alternate sexes each year.) Le Guin takes the opportunity to examine some of the consequences in personal relationships, philosophy (less dualism) etc. She also contrasts two nations on the planet, one monarchical and feudal, the other bureaucratic and grey. Neither comes off well.

Her latest novel works around such a contrast. The inhabitants of Annares are the descendants of revolutionaries who were shipped there several generations before. The home planet, Urras, still has nation states, some capitalist, some state socialist and some "undeveloped". The two planets now have little contact, except for a limited exchange of raw materials, information etc. The hero, Shevek, is a theoretical physicist (when he is not involved in desert reclamation, famine relief and similar projects) and he has a major breakthrough, which is wanted by the "propertarians" of Urras. His own people just aren't interested. Annares has tended to become conformist, the old worry about the restrictiveness of public opinion. Work rotas have tended to become semi-compulsory and the central co-ordinating machinery has developed bureaucratic tendencies. Shevek and his friends are unpopular for stirring things, so he decides to break the accepted ignoring of Urras to go to work there. Perhaps he can bring the two planets closer together. The novel is based on the contrast between his attitudes (and conditioning) and those of the wealthy authoritarian Urrasti. Eventually he becomes involved with the local underground, who look to the myth of Annares for inspiration, and after an abortive revolt returns optimistically to what is, after all, home.

I disagree with much in the book. For instance the computer which invented the new language for Annares, being logical, did not include any swear words. So they use Urrasti leftovers such as "damn" which have no real meaning for them, and terms like "propertarian". This means that the local equivalent of fuck means rape and in these liberated conditions one would just invite "Shall we copulate". I don't believe it, a much less clinical, at least shorter, term would have appeared long before. However points like this do not detract from the overall quality of the book. I don't know if Le Guin is a libertarian but she understands it better than many who label themselves as such and the book remains well worth reading. As it has won various awards no doubt a paperback will appear soon. In the meantime there's always our ever-obliging library service.

D. P.