

POLAND AND THE POLITICOS

WE opened our last editorial (last year!) by sniffing the 'great sigh of relief ... exhaled by all the world's right-thinking people over the ... declaration of martial law in Poland'. And we have been gratified to see the word 'relief' used by other commentators since — not least by E P Thompson in *The Times* just before Christmas, and surely, as an ex-Stalinist, he must know the value of 'knowing where you are'.

The trouble for most people, both of Right and Left, is that Poland's Solidarity movement was rocking a boat, the stability of which outlined in grand terms their own political positions, which between Right and Left, are not all that different in fundamentals. It was precisely fundamentals that Solidarity was challenging.

A working class in a dictatorship is supposed to be helpless — because both

Right and Left believe that the working class can only act through leaders. When they are being led astray, they are falling for the blandishments of agitators, terrorised by terrorists, deluded by idealists, hounded by hooligans, taken in by tricksters, fooled by foreigners, zonked out by Zionists, etc, etc.

When the people are being led properly, however, then it is just and proper and correct that they should follow their Emperor, King, Prince, Czar, Fuhrer, Duce, Caudillo, Colonel, Commissar, Mahatma, Ayatolla, President, Pope, Chairman of the Party, Chairman of the Board, Managing Director, Prime Minister of the Day and Father of the Chapel. And, oh, sorry, we forgot: God.

Follow any one of these and you are automatically expected to reject all the others, while at the same time accepting

the correctness of being a follower. You may even, at times, respect those who follow any one of the others, while knowing that they are wrong. What you are usually asked to respect among the others is their strength. And if they ever look like getting to be stronger than you, you must do something about it. It's OK for them to be strong — but not stronger than you. Unless, of course, they happen to be, temporarily, in cohorts with you against one of the others.

When everything is going as it should, everybody knows their place. Basically, one way or another, it's on your knees, keeping your head down. Then, everybody knows where they are and, as every good child guidance adviser will tell you, this is what every child wants to know. You may recall that the Czar always referred to all the Russian people as 'My Children' and the Bolsheviks have taken great care to continue the great Russian concern — though, of course, with different jargon. The Pope, though, as temporary representative of an eternal organisation, sees no reason to change the words.

You may be thinking that we have wandered from the point. Weren't we talking about Poland? Yes, we were — and still are. For what has happened in Poland is that a working class which has been moulded by socialist centralism for 35 years has broken that mould (if we may coin a cliché) by building their own organisation *without a vanguard* telling them how to do it, and without an ideology, without an analysis of the correct position, without giving a monkey's for materialistic determinism or the historical role of the working class.

What the Polish working class has had is 35 years of a squalid perversion of socialism forced upon them by a State which declared itself to be operating Marxist principles — and to the extent that it was statist, replacing the capitalist bourgeoisie by 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', it was Marxist — at least as interpreted by

continued over



SLITZ

the Bolsheviks, the most successful of the squabbling cults of the Marxist church, in terms of gaining and holding *power* — by the most ruthless use of state terror.

Stalin has been dead now for nearly 30 years, but Stalinism lives on and not only in the countries where the Bolsheviks, directly or by proxy, still hold sway. At the CND rally in London last October, a Marxist sect, with its eyes on more fundamental issues than the Bomb, was selling a paper called *The Spartacist*, bearing a headline calling for the crushing of 'The Solidarity Counter-Revolution'. Questioned on its meaning, the seller said that they opposed Solidarity because it was working for the Catholic Church!

Presumably the Spartacists are now delighted at the establishment of martial law by the State's forces, led by a dedicated Communist leader, who had escaped to Russia after the German invasion of 1939 and came back as a leader of a Polish army formed by refugees in Russia, fighting alongside the Russian army in 1944 — and presumably waiting outside Warsaw with the Russians while the Nazis wiped out the partisans of the Warsaw uprising and destroyed the old city — leaving a power vacuum for the Soviet Government to fill with Poles of its own choosing — Jaruzelski among them.

If the Spartacists seem extremists, however, within the Marxist spectrum, we must not forget that for all Marxists the establishment of a Marxist State is more important than the wellbeing of individual workers — albeit *millions* of individual workers! The working class only truly becomes the proletariat when it is organised for revolution by a vanguard of politicians who really and truly *understand* its historic mission and can see when the time is ripe for the anti-thesis to join the thesis in the synthesis, or the socialist state in its first transition stage is on the way to eventual communism. Got it?

On this rocky road there may be many hold-ups, breakdowns, obstructions, and other reasons for not letting the reins of power change hands. But most important of all is to prevent the proletariat itself coming into control of *anything*. That, direct workers' control, after all, is their final goal — after the State has withered away, the Party becomes redundant and the privilege comes to an end. A prospect they can't abide!

Although Marx himself might have said something about the emancipation of the workers being the task of the workers themselves — *all* Marxists are agreed that this can only come about through the guidance of a party that not only *understands* the game, but can change the rules as it goes along. And thus ensure the state doesn't wither away.

Direct action on the Solidarity model, therefore, is unacceptable, except for upstart Trotskyist parties who strive to be populist — supporting any cause which

can bring them in members, help them build up an organisation which, sometime, through whatever means, will enable them to challenge the existing establishment — and become the establishment themselves. Like the SWP, which can find Solidarity acceptable as a means to an end — like the Anti-Nazi League, Right to Work, etc, etc.

Certainly we must be on our guard against the reactionary organisation which is the only powerful ally that Solidarity has — the Catholic Church. Eternal enemy of human freedom, many times in its history the Roman Church has had to play a waiting game while more temporary rivals have strutted the stage of history, while at the same time very happy to use equally temporary forces as levers against the main enemy.

When engaged in a power struggle, the Church uses exactly the same kind of tactics as its enemies. Hence we see in Poland now, General Jaruzelski pronouncing fervently on the radio that his brand of martial law entails no shooting of workers — while on the streets and in the factories and mines, workers are killed by his rank and file soldiers.

But at the same time, Archbishop Glemp, the Catholic leader, appeals for calm and no resorting to violence by Solidarity — while in village pulpits and city churches, the footsoldiers of the church preach hate against 'Godless communists' and their 'atheistic materialism' — and, on the other side of the power fence, the Party's radio stations are discovering Jewish capitalists and Zionist plots behind Solidarity.

Poland is a country where 95% of the population are born Catholics. It also has an unsavoury reputation with regard to anti-semitism — as, indeed, has Russia, where the Communist Party has never hesitated to use Jews as scapegoats when the situation favoured that. Anti-semitism therefore, is something that both Church and State could agree upon when the haggling begins, just as they have in fact agreed to live side by side for many years — many Communist Party members being practising Catholics also.

In the circumstances it would be very odd (nice, but odd) if many members of Solidarity were not Catholics, too. We have remarked before on the embarrassment we feel on seeing all those films of Lech Walesa taking communion, attending mass, consulting with the Archbishop and so on. No doubt those among our comrades who believe in the revolutionary potential of the IRA are equally embarrassed by that organisation's obvious and close connections with the Irish Church.

What matters to us is the way these Polish workers behave as *workers*. Just as Catholic workers in Northern Ireland have had decades of oppression by Protestant bosses, so the Polish Catholic workers have had decades of oppression by Communist bosses — and have found a

way of resisting which does not entail the indiscriminate slaughter of fellow-workers.

Much more than the struggle in Ireland, Solidarity's struggle has been a *class* struggle, just as the struggle in Kronstadt in 1921 was a class struggle against Bolshevik tyranny. The similarity doesn't end there, either, for the demands made by Solidarity (which have brought down the wrath of the State upon them) are surprisingly similar to those of the Workers' Soviet of Kronstadt, which had the same result, only worse.

It was worse then, because the whole of Russia was a closed society. Today, the spread of mass communications has made it more difficult, not less, for dictatorships to keep their misdeeds to themselves — but still those who close their minds by ideology will see what they want to see and will believe what they want to believe.

This applies of course not just to those of the hard Left, who still cannot see what harm Stalin did to their own cause and to the cause of world revolution in general, but also to those of the hard Right who betray their own hypocrisy by picking and choosing among the tyrannies of the world no less than the Marxists.

Thus at a recent press conference, US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, announced that his mind 'was boggling' when asked how he could denounce the military actions in Afghanistan and Poland, while supporting those in Chile and El Salvador. And what made his mind boggle, he said, was not the dilemma this presented to him — but that anybody could ask the question itself!

Clearly for Alexander Haig, just as for the Marxists (or Catholics) for whom theory is more important than working people, it is a matter of 'My State right or wrong!', or is it 'My power right or wrong?', or 'My orthodoxy right or wrong?', or 'My religion right or wrong'?

For anarchists, the Polish question is straightforward. Here is an entire working class fighting a totalitarian State for its freedom — and for its responsibility. It is fighting for workers' rights which we have always considered essential to our own: the right to organise their own affairs, their own communities, in their own places of work and of living. The right to elect their own delegates in their own organisations — and so on.

Governments in some so-called democracies have been forced to yield some of these rights — and the workers haven't even started struggling for others. In so-called socialist states, *none* of these are granted. Only hypocrisy, fed by power-lust explains support for Solidarity by democratic governments and its denunciation by Marxists. For anarchists, our impotence to *do* anything in support of Solidarity, our total lack of organisation, our inability to express our own internationalism in practical terms, should be a source of shame.

Solidarity

'The future of Poland is being decided this month, not by the Kremlin, the Polish Communist Party, or the militant trade union Solidarity — but by a handful of western bankers.'

Sunday Times, 13 December 1981.

OF course, *Sunday Times* feature articles are written at least a week in advance, but their forecast came true on the day the paper was published.

On 13 December, 1981, the military took over in Poland and since then have ruled the country with martial law. The reports of those arrested and detained since then range from the official figure of 5,000 to the unofficial of 50,000.

By 31 December the military government was to pay 500 million dollars, the interest 'due' to the bankers on vast loans lent by the 'West'. Although Poland was forced back to work at gunpoint, despite harsh weather, the flooding of the Vistula and general hostility to the regime, the banks have not been paid.

If further reprisals are threatened by Western Banks against the entire Soviet bloc, which is reputed to owe them 80,000 million dollars, the only course of action which the banks can possibly suggest is for the Soviet Union to occupy Poland for, as a London banker declared, (*Sunday Times*, 13 December) 'It would be a good thing if Russia invaded because then she would be obliged to honour Poland's debts.'

What can anarchists do? We must look to our own organisation first, for anything we might wish to do very much depends on our available numbers and specific organisation.

Nevertheless, anarchists did gather spontaneously (how else?) in recent London marches and demonstrations, forming a very lively contingent on 20 December.

The march itself needs to be described in some detail. In the driving snow there were about 10,000 people there. Red and white Polish flags outnumbered all others, the procession was led by an East Brent Conservative Association car, not far behind trooped world war veterans, medals on their chest, saluting what I took to be the doorman at Selfridge's, an extraordinary looking person with white plumes on his tall black hat, then there were women holding large ornate crucifixes, Solidarity organisers with their identity discs — it was an emotional scene worthy of Bunuel. Nevertheless I was glad to see the anarchists there, cheerful and brave, singing 'Solidarity for ever' and 'What shall we do with Jaruzelski — early in the morning'.

The route of the march was craftily planned by the organisers to avoid going past the Polish Embassy.

The anarchists noticed this and they made a stand at the nearest corner to the Embassy in Portland Place, which was heavily protected by police cordons and

steel barriers. As the rest of the marchers began to realise what was happening it was amazing to see the numbers that joined the anarchists until the entire march ground to a halt. This in spite of the pleas of the organisers and Ground Control's casual gift, a Polish speaking police officer with loud hailer. 'This way marchers', they shouted. 'Stand still', the anarchists replied, 'the Embassy is right here.'

Here was a small but impressive reminder of people's resentment at being manipulated.

The tragedy in Poland suits the Soviet rulers, as the success of Solidarity began to threaten their own structure; the Western governments are also pleased for the defeat of the workers anywhere keeps their own subjects in check.

When Mutual Aid raises its head, it frightens the rulers everywhere. Tyranny will never succeed against people who have begun to organise for freedom. But people who have never tried, might think that it is impossible to dismiss their rulers.

The Polish people pressed hard, now they are a subject people again, but they will succeed in the end. If we can we must help and *that means helping to organise our own movement right here and now.*

JOHN RETY

WILDCAT



SENEGAL

BIRTH OF ANARCHISM

THE libertarian movement has never managed to exist easily in the countries of black Africa. The economic, social and cultural context has rather favoured the implantation of diverse varieties of marxism-leninism. Is this situation changing now? Yes, if we are to believe the text published here, whose very existence is an event in itself.

In June a number of Senegalese met in Goree (an island off Dakar) and decided to create a legal association (anarchist 'party'), since, in theory, the presidency of Abdou Diouf (Senghor's successor) has introduced total political pluralism. They published their first declaration in a more or less satirical journal called *Le Politicien*,

or the Senegalese version of *Canard Enchaîné*. We reproduce this declaration here.

The instigators of this 'party' are basically intellectuals (hardly surprising in an African context of illiteracy). Among others is Mam Less Dia, director of *Le Politicien*.

Certain turns of phrase, expressions and certain aspects of the list of signatories could surprise our European minds. We will return in the next issue of *Agora* with more information on this eventual birth of anarchism in Senegal.

Agora

ANARCHISTS ORGANISE Declaration of the anarchists of Senegal

The anarchists of Senegal, irrespective of nationality, after a rigorous analysis of the political, economic and social situation of our country, as well as of the actual Senegalese political formations of a more or less antagonistic nature, which tear each other apart in endless theoretical wranglings, which are hollow, more anaesthetising than mobilising, and which have only a minimal hold on the broad masses, came to the following conclusions:

- The existing economic and social structures block the social mechanisms and human progress of Senegal. In light of experience, the structures and plans for society envisaged by these parties and groups which are agitating at present, have every chance of exacerbating this blockage, but by other means, by simply replacing one group or class of exploiters by another.

- The parties that compete with and rile each other in the Senegalese political arena have paradoxically no other axe to grind than the details which allow them to create for themselves their individual image. This deficiency helps to explain their artificial divisions and their current and future weaknesses before the common enemy: western imperialism, Soviet social imperialism and the hegemony of the superpowers.

- The clear deficiency of Senegalese political groupings, their persistent tendency to believe that only they can claim the monopoly of truth and progress, when the programmes they put forward and their political practices are almost all alike, gives an indication that, once power

has been 'acquired', they can only re-establish a totalitarian state of right or left, or else blind obedience will be demanded of the popular mass to bureaucratic chiefs who are more conspiratorial than democratic.

- Considering the hegemonistic vision which marks them, not one among the various parties which are agitating at present (in power or in opposition) is capable of promoting the kind of direct democracy where the broad masses and free workers would be in a position to have their claims and their just needs respected by their 'directed' directors/leaders.

From the various conclusions of their analysis, the original anarchists of Senegal (from various countries) decided to pass

from the stage where they were evolving like a fish in the tank of the Senegalese universe, to the stage of organisation.

The major constant preoccupation of the anarchists of Senegal is not to take power but to struggle persistently at both practical and theoretical level against all essentially infernal (manifestations of) power, and against the private appropriation of the means of production.

We are struggling for the establishment of a decentralised and federalist self-determining socialism. In our programme we will explain in detail the fundamentals and contents of this socialism, which has nothing to do with imported 'socialisms' and other 'African', demagogic and authoritarian 'socialisms'.

We are struggling for the advent of a society in which the means of production will be communally exploited by Senegalese workers organised in associations of direct democracy.

In the conception of our projection of society, we have kept our distance from foreign theories and models for our inspiration, but without denying them totally, however. We have done this particularly in respect of the content and form of Senegalese and African social formations analysed in their historic evolution and taking account of their specific historical context.

In this regard our projection of society takes its inspiration from the organisation and fundamentals of Lebous village federations, and from the social formation of the Ballante people of Casamance (Southern Senegal) and Guinea Bissau. These social formations, which were by no means primitive, were organised in such a way that the societies concerned had neither dominant classes nor exploiter chiefs. Besides, there prevailed a direct type of democracy which was not imposed from above. This form of organisation could, in our view, be perfectly will adopted even with the current state of our productive forces, if only the exploiting classes could be unseated, and if the possibility of the appearance of totalitarian leaders could be removed. This would be the model to guide our

Attentat in Paris

THE *Imagine* anarchist collective in Paris report that:

- After numerous attacks against militant bookshops, *Imagine* has been struck in its turn.

The *Imagine* bookshop which has been running for a year (it opened on 15 November 1980) was totally destroyed on 19 December 1981 by a fire (doors broken, traces of petrol). *Imagine* was run by anarchist activists, and was a place for the distribution of libertarian thought without copyright.

Now the whole of the stock, the material, the archives have been entirely burned. We

don't intend to stop work, our projects are unchanged, but in the immediate term we can't start off again without the practical and financial solidarity of all the comrades.

Contact address:
Librairie '1984',
22 Boulevard de Reuilly,
75012 Paris.

Tel 628 - 08 - 01.

NB We are taking part in the coordination of bookshops which are the victims of attacks and are preparing a dossier.

steps. It is a model where passivity and blind obedience to exploiting anti-democratic bosses would not figure.

To bring about our projection of society, we, anarchists of Senegal and our sympathisers, whom we believe to be numerous, will centre our struggles equally to fight against all the following pernicious phenomena:

- the advent of a heavily statist or bureaucratic society
- obscurantism, fanaticism, pedantry, hollow speeches having no links with objective reality; reduction of individual rights
- antagonism of rich and poor
- ethnocentrism of a hegemonistic nature
- chauvinist nationalism
- pseudo-democracy veiling an unjust economic organisation
- democracy imposed from above.

The anarchists of Senegal, irrespective of nationality, at a meeting on Saturday 13 June 1981 at Goree Island, future statutory base of their movement, also instituted a Committee of Reflection on Statutes (CRS), which will formulate their juridical statutes, to comply with the constraints of the laws of the bureaucratic Senegalese state. The Committee will also formulate their political, economic and social programme, and THE STRATEGY FOR THE STRUGGLE TO NOT ACCEDE TO POWER.

As a result of their meeting, the anarchists of Senegal created their instrument of combat: the 'Anarchist Party for Individual Liberties in the 'Republic'.

This is a translation of an article which appeared in *Agora* No 7, 1981.

Mirrors for princes

RECENTLY an anarchist group has begun to meet in Manchester University; this follows the two years or so since the earlier group ceased to exist.

In the course of the discussion at our last meeting we turned our attention to the question of revolution and, more particularly, how to work towards the time when the State would be weak enough for it to be overthrown. It occurred to me that part of the method has been given us by States themselves. I refer to the writings in Persian known as *Mirrors for Princes*; these books were written by kings for their sons or by viziers for sons, who stood a good chance of wresting the power out of the hands of the dynasties which they served.

Many of these give advice to the effect that the ruler must not place the army over the people nor unduly burden the people with taxes lest they, being unable to put up with too much oppression, move away from their fields and homes and go to live in other areas. In the context of Iran in the eleventh and twelfth centuries depopulation meant no revenue for the treasury; this, setting aside the fact that kings would no longer be able to indulge in banquets and numerous pageants, precipitated the collapse of the dynasties, since they could no longer pay their armies.

In our situation where most people believe that they are not being overly down-trodden, it is necessary to turn the advice given to budding tyrants on its head. Rather than wait for a State to force us into a corner, should we not find imaginative ways of ~~preventing any~~ bureaucracy, of making ever increasing demands, in this way we could not only cause them to become inefficient by over-burdening

their system, but also force them to back down, yielding to popular pressure.

You will have noticed that this follows neither the spirit nor the letter of warnings offered to the famous monarchs of Iran, and yet it runs along the same principles. Iran is now in the twenty-sixth century of the calendar based on the founding of monarchy by the well known Cyrus, however the rulers of the eighteenth century of that era understood, arguably better than the late Reza Pahlavi, that in order to remain in power one has to allow the ruled certain concessions and not exceed the limits of extortion demanded by the laws of divine right.

Let us therefore make incessant demands to any member of any hierarchy which affects us directly. If such people are addressed politely they may spend hours attempting to solve spurious questions.

It seems that the plot could win the hearts of both pacifists and others due to the scope of its possible expressions.

I finish with an example, which demonstrates that concessions can be gained along the way, namely that of votes for women. This is not a perfect example for we see now that it has no real effect on the existence of the State, and that those involved were not fighting against the State but rather for the right to play a part therein; however the government of the day hoped for a long time to deflect the aspirations of the people involved.

It may transpire that many other anarchists have already thought this, in which case my lack of reading is entirely ~~to blame for wasting your time~~

RODERIC VASSIE

IN BRIEF

POLICE in Devon and Cornwall are 'weeding out' files collated by the local Special Branch. This has 30 members and has built up several hundred files in the past 15 to 20 years. A senior officer estimates that about 20 are necessary. Sample entries include 'X had meal with Wedgewood Benn'. As yet, no other local Special Branches have leapt forward to join in. For instance, the Metropolitan Special Branch, which has 400 members and over one million dossiers.

'POWER poisons blood' was the dramatic headline. However, the link was a bit more tenuous. A prominent French doctor pointed out that a number of powerful leaders have recently died from the same disease, a form of leukaemia. The victims are identifiable as President Pompidou of France, the Shah of Iran, Bournedienne of Algeria and Golda Meir. The link seems to be that these megalomaniacs could not accept their own fallibility and so neglected treatment.

INTERESTING presentation of data. According to a survey in Preston, one patient in five does not collect the medicine the doctor has prescribed. Best take up is in middle income groups. The explanation, according to the doctor involved, is that better off people don't collect because they are well educated and therefore worried about the side effects of drugs. Low income groups don't collect, because they only went to the doctor to get sick notes.

WORLD spending on armaments is at a record level. Military spending in 1981 will be at least 550 billion dollars, of which about one fifth is on nuclear weapons. The five countries with acknowledged nuclear arsenals have stockpiles equivalent to one million Hiroshima sized bombs. (The new report compiling these figures is available from WMSE publications c/o CAAT, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.)

THE age of consent between male homosexuals in France has been lowered to 15. The right wing opposition said that the previous law protected young people from adopting 'bad habits' and that the new reform would favour 'dirty old men who sodomised kids of 15.'

THE Home Office is to test a new form of high powered strobe gun for riot control. It produces a range of effects from momentary distraction to severe nausea and headaches. In some people it can produce epileptic-like fits.

ITALIAN para-military police shot and killed a ~~shopper~~ who reached too quickly for his identity card at a road block in Turin.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTER

IMAGINATION

Dear FREEDOM,

When I first became an anarchist, 'power to the imagination' was one of our slogans and we used to stress 'creativity'. Days long past, judging from the letters you've published from comrades who failed to shout down speakers at the CND rally in Hyde Park.

I was in Hyde Park, but out of earshot of the speeches, with most of Bradford Nuclear Disarmament Group. We propped our inflatable Cruise Missile up against a tree and used our portable public address system (wheeled along in a pram) to advertise an alternative attraction. By selling our 'citizens' survival kits' (brown paper bags to wear on your head, bearing instructions of what to do in the event of a nuclear attack), 'portable fall-out shelters' (umbrellas with those words stencilled on them) and song-sheets, we helped top up the group's coffers. More important we were able to show people from elsewhere the props we've been using in campaigning locally and hear some of the things they've been doing.

We gathered a reasonable crowd, as did the musicians and theatre groups also outside the solid mass of the rally. Above all, we went away feeling that we were participants and not, like some of your correspondents, as disgruntled members of an audience.

Love and strength,
HOWARD CLARK

Bradford.

REPRESSION

Dear Friends and Comrades,

We feel that the vicious repression of working class people in Poland necessitates revolutionaries everywhere doing what we can to aid workers in Poland. We've outlined here some of the activities we're doing or are considering doing — we'd be glad to hear of your activities. In particular we'd like your views on the proposed calls for blacking of Soviet and Polish goods, as we think this is an activity which would only be worthwhile if pushed for in at least several different places.

What we're doing/considering doing at present:-

- 1) A general leaflet on the current situation in Poland, for widespread distribution. We would very much like to see leaflets anyone else does. We will send out copies of ours when we get it done.
- 2) Encouraging blacking of Polish and Soviet goods being imported into Britain (and other countries). The aim would be to show solidarity with Polish workers by stopping the USSR and Polish state's selling their products. This is a tentative

proposal and we would like to know how worthwhile people think it is. Is it too symbolic and reformist, should we exclusively call for workers to undertake the same sort of generalised strikes, occupations as Polish workers? Or, while not diluting our revolutionary viewpoint, should we simultaneously propose a more immediately realisable activity which would generalise the struggle in a practical if small way? We've been told that a Solidarnosc spokesperson in Switzerland was reported on BBC TV news as calling for a boycott of Polish/Soviet goods, and we've heard that the Polish Solidarity Campaign in London have been discussing approaching workers/trade unions about blacking. On a practical level, we got info about Polish and Soviet ships calling in at Aberdeen simply by ringing the Harbour Board.

3) Action against Soviet and Polish Embassies, consulates, airline offices etc... This could include pickets, occupations, late night 'secret actions', encouraging workers to refuse to deliver supplies and mail. Concerning possibilities in Scotland, we've looked up the phone directories for Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Clyde Coast and the only E European consulate/airline office whatever we've been able to find is — Polish Peoples Republic Consular Office, 27 Buckingham Terrace, Glasgow 12. Tel 041 334 4264 or 041 339 7781.

4) Preparing leaflets in Polish (and if possible Russian) to distribute to Polish and Russian sailors calling at British ports.

We'd be very interested to receive other people's publications.

Hope to hear from you. All the best.
SUBVERSIVE GRAFFITI

Subversive Graffiti/Aberdeen Solidarity
c/o 167 King St
Aberdeen.

OPEN COLUMNS

Dear Friends,

Jim Endersby (Letters 20th Dec) castigates what he calls 'the average British anarchist' who couldn't 'argue with a four year old child' and compares him unfavourably with the 'militant Jehovah's Witnesses', or the Christians, Marxists, SDP and BM who 'gain support while we lose it'.

These Statists and religionists are despised by most: their gain in support is from each other or (at best) by persuading other Statists that their alternative is better. Endersby has a clear admiration for them. It is noticeable that, though he tries to identify with the anarchists (presumably for the purpose of his forthcoming book — what a piece of trash that will be!) and claim to make a connection between anarchism and everything trendy — feminism, ecology,

nuclear disarmament 'and others' — he will abandon and betray them all, if need be — after reading Black Flag he will vote Tory!

This, even if humour is pleaded, means only one thing: that paper presents anarchism in so clear a light and also so sectarian a form that Endersby runs from anarchism so fast he out-distances every other social interest he has; or (alternatively) his pacifism is so rightist he wants more police repression to stop the wicked anarchists.

FREEDOM suits him because it is prepared to open its columns to anyone who chooses and thinks nothing of putting a letter from Endersby in the same issue as a tribute to Miguel Garcia.

The state of our movement therefore seems chaotic, if like FREEDOM you include everyone who chooses to use the Name 'anarchist' when it suits them; it seems even more chaotic, if like the media, you include Irish nats and Mystic nuts, Marxists and what else. If like Endersby you include the whole of the non-revolutionary but anti-authoritarian left in your definition, it is also chaotic. But if you reserve the name 'anarchist' for anarchists they cease to be contradictory.

Once FREEDOM accepted this; in those days it would have been unthinkable to have an editorial admission that at the recent Anarchist Book Fair, Freedom Press's contribution to anarchist publishing at the present was insignificant. Clearly something went wrong when you let in the Endersbys.

Yours sincerely,
ESTHER SYMONS.

PS But I must admit I did enjoy his demand that we 'THINK' and, asking for 'witty, eloquent, popular and incisive expressions' he contributed the phrase 'fucking nowhere'. What clarity of thought! What witty eloquence!

NONVIOLENCE

..... only WE make peace!

Today we are standing nearer to the real possibility of nuclear war than all the other peace movements in the past.

Nothing shows us more drastically the impotence of our strains for peace than this confession. The movement's quantitative energy is as indisputable as its qualitative frailty.

The peace movement is more and more involved in hair-splitting between 'gradual disarmament' and 'armless peace'. Only the most perverse masochists can perhaps enjoy the gradual anomaly between the deformation by a hand grenade and the ~~deformation by a nuclear bomb~~ or between the death by a shot in the heart and the death by nuclear radiation. Every arm, even wooden club or neutron bomb, is directed against life!

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LET

Every war, whether for defence or offensive, aims at conquest and destruction! After all the crazy notions of a 'human arm' and of a 'fair war' denature the feeling and thinking of mankind. We are still standing far away from the general knowledge about the enforced fusion of power and violence. At no time on our planet has there existed a system of dominion that would have refused to convert its demand for power, with the physical and psychical use of violence, to oppression and exploitation. As power is based on violence, so dominion leads to war without fail.

This misunderstanding of the relationship between power and violence does not show us the peace movement as a revolutionary opposition today. We are missing the social-revolutionary pacifism as a driving force for our activities in order to stand up for peace also against every form of dominion — individually or collectively practised. Because militarism finds its foundation in every single individual, here we have to eliminate the demand for dominion just as the bondage of dominion. In place of them we must settle independence and responsibility in human thinking and doing. Only these are able to carry a social-revolutionary movement.

We have to protect the peace movement from breaking down in choosing the smaller evil.

PETER

Mulheim.

POLAND

Dear FREEDOM,

Referring to your Editorial on Poland (19th December, 1981) here's what anarchists can do as individuals:

1. Send a £5 sub (£2 unwaged) to Giles Hart, Treasurer, Polish Solidarity Campaign, 69 Edinburgh Road, London E13. PSC produces the highly informative PSC News, which covers events in Poland and highlights the hypocrisy of British politicians and media of left and right. Up until the imposition of martial law it was also sending printing equipment to Solidarity.
2. Write to or vote for at the relevant student, trade union or professional meeting that one's organisation issues a statement unequivocally condemning martial law in Poland, and that it sends messages of support and material help as soon as practicable to its equivalent in Poland.

In my case that means ACTT, the film and TV union, whose General Secretary, Alan Sapper, is also Chairman of the TUC this year. Letter writing and resolution making is not a waste of time — it keeps these people on their toes, many of whom are pro-USSR.

As I write (22nd December, 1981) there has been a one hour general strike in France. The PSC march to the Polish Embassy last Sunday managed a measly 12,000, whilst in Paris 50,000 marched soon after the announcement of martial law in Poland. This is comment enough on the British Left. The anarchists needn't crow either — there has been little reference to or analysis of events in Poland in FREEDOM in the last 16 months, with one or two exceptions, and the current Editorial is, to put it as nicely as possible, wet.

By the time this letter appears events in Poland will be a fortnight into the new year. Whatever will be happening by then, as anarchists we should be getting our message over that the repression in Poland is the consequence of folk trying to take their lives and collective destiny into their own hands, and that this lesson has applications in every single state, East and West; and positively we should be highlighting the extraordinary achievements and organisational methods of Solidarity — direct action, decentralist autonomy and a concern for social as well as economic questions, even if events prove these achievements to be short-lived.

All the best,
PETE GRAFTON.

FOR THE BOMB

Dear FREEDOM,

As a former supporter of CND in the sixties who once saw it as a 'Good Brave Cause', to use Osborne's phrase from the derelict play *Look Back in Anger*, I suggest the time has come to re-evaluate anarchist attitudes towards the Bomb.

Once I wrote; 'The answer to the Bomb is Anarchy'. It seemed quite good as we were always stereotyped as Bomb-throwers — in fact I think that my phrase still holds. But I have noticed over the years that there has not been a nuclear war. Why not? Because the American and Russian States are unwilling to use their weapons as it would result in Mutually Assured Destruction. In other words the balance of terror works in maintaining 'peace'.

The distinct contribution anarchism makes to philosophy is its clear criticism of the role of the State. The acute problem for human society is hierarchy, not patriarchy or racism since we can suffer (and do) from women rulers and black rulers. Hierarchy represents a way of ruling which gives those on top more; much more, than the majority who are kept down by a variety of pressures. There are no real signs that this method of organising society is going to end — it is also arguable whether the anarchist vision of a State-less society is a realisable proposition. Given the character structure of nearly everyone and the impetus to-

wards hierarchy in any organisation that attempts to provide the basis of a libertarian alternative anarchism seems remote.

What are we left with? Life and all the pleasures of 'a wonderful world' (to use a trite but warming phrase from one who represents some of the chief reasons for living, Louis Armstrong). Life in hierarchic society is maintained because the two major state bodies face each other with mutual terror.

The answer that it is better to be red than dead is obsolete for us. If Britain was red, we, dear comrades, would be dead. Now we are at least allowed to survive.

So I am for the Bomb — tactically it provides the protection that can allow the modicum of a civilised life which we are able to enjoy. Is there any morality in this position? It is not simply the end justifying the means. There is no justice, no justifying. Self-protection only has the ethic of survival, of life. Like all the arguments about pacifism, to maintain one's own life and/or the lives of those we love shows a respect for life, even if it requires the destruction of another life. The morality of this position seems clearly one related to practicality — if there is no life the discussion is over, we have a-morality. Thus, I think we can posit that being for the Bomb is both a moral and a practical stand for anarchists.

The State has the weapons. We are for them because we would be dead without them. We are against the State and wish an anarchist alternative could be engendered — but this is not feasible for the eye that sees and does not simply 'wish to see' things.

It is unlikely any move of anarchists away from CND would be of great significance — it might however result in us having an honest debate.

So: the answer to the Bomb remains anarchy — a stateless, libertarian society. Yet we can never achieve anarchy if dead and at the moment anarchism is not a practical proposition. Remaining intact, possibly for more propitious days, becomes essential. A world kept in the present imbalance by the balance of terror is our delicate means of survival with everyone else. Our added factor, with several other groupings, is that any Communist take over in Britain would lead to our destruction: red is dead.

In shaky, paradoxical posture we take our stand with those who wish to keep the Bomb.

J W

Subscribe

FREEDOM CONTACTS

NATIONAL CONTACTS

ABERDEEN

Solidarity, c/o 163 King St, Aberdeen.

BARRY

Terry Philips, 16 Robert St, Barry, South Glamorgan.

BELFAST

Anarchist Collective, Just Books, 7 Winetavern St, Belfast 1.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Bedfordshire and isolated Anarchists, write: John, 81 F, Bromham Rd, Bedford MK40 2AH, Beds.

BRIGHTON

Libertarian Socialist group, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.

BRISTOL

L Bedminster, 110 Grenville Rd, Bristol 3. Box 010, Full Marks Bookshop, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Anarchists, c/o 186 East Rd, Cambridge.

CANTERBURY

Alternative Research Group, Students Union, University of Kent, Canterbury. Canterbury Anarchist Group, meets every Monday 8 pm, Jolly Sailor, Northgate, Canterbury. Contact address is: Andrew Savage, 177 Old Dover Rd, Canterbury, Kent.

CARDIFF

Write c/o One-O-Eight Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Rd.

CIRENCESTER AND THE COTSWOLDS

c/o Andrew Wilkie, 7 Sperrington, Cirencester, Glos.

COVENTRY

John England, Students Union, University of Warwick, Coventry.

CUMBRIA

12 Bath Terrace, Drovers Lane, Penrith.

DUBLIN

Love v Power, Whelan's Dance Studio, 51 South King St, Dublin 2.

EAST ANGLIA

DAM, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Safton Walden, Essex.

EDINBURGH

c/o Box SLF, First of May, 43 Candlermaker Row, Edinburgh.

ESSEX

Oral Abortions, The Catskills, Maldon Rd, Gay Bowers, Danbury.

EXETER

Anarchist Collective, c/o Community Association, Devonshire House, Stocker Rd.

GLASGOW

Glasgow Anarchist Group, c/o Box 3, Glasgow Bookshop Collective, 488 Great Western Rd, G12. Practical Anarchy (Clydeside Paper) out October from Box 3, Glasgow Bookshop Collective, 488 Gt Western Rd, G12.

HASTINGS

Anarchists, 18a Markwick Terrace, Saint Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex. (0424) 434102.

HULL

Libertarian Collective, 70 Perth St, Hull HU5 3NZ.

KEELE

Anarchist Group, c/o Students Union, The University, Keele, Staffordshire.

KEIGHLEY

Anarchists, c/o Simon Saxton, 1 Selbourne Grove, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD21 25L.

LAMPETER

Anarchist Group, c/o Adian James, SDUC, Lampeter, Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.

LIVERPOOL

Anarchist Group, c/o Hywel Ellis, Students Union, Liverpool University.

LEAMINGTON

and Warwick, c/o 42 Bath St, Leamington Spa.

LEEDS

Leeds Anarchist Group, Box LAP A, 59 Cookridge, Leeds LS2 3AW

LEICESTER

Blackthorn Books, 7 Highcross St, (tel 21896) and Libertarian Education 6 Beaconsfield Rd, (tel 552085).

LONDON

Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Ave, N5 (01-359 4794 before 7pm). Meets each Thursday at Little @ Press, C1 Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, Wapping E1. (22a bus or Wapping tube).

Anarcha United Mystics meet each Thursday at 8pm, Halfway House Pub, opposite Camden Town tube.

Autonomy Centre, 01 Warehouse, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, E1.

Freedom Collective, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High St, E1. (01-247 9249). Aldgate East tube, near Whitechapel Art Gallery.

Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh St, WC1, Meet Thursdays 7pm.

Kingston Anarchists, 13 Denmark St, Kingston upon Thames, (01-549 2564).

London Workers Group, meets Tuesdays 8pm at Metropolitan Pub, 75 Farringdon Rd, EC1.

Middlesex Poly Anarchists, Students Union, Trent Park Site, Cockfosters Rd, Barnet, Herts.

121 Bookshop and meeting place, 121 Raiton Rd, Herne Hill, SE24 Xtra! Structureless Tyranny.

West London Anarchists contact John Sanders, 4 Naylor House, Mozart Estate, W10.

MALVERN

and Worcester area, Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storridge, Malvern, Worcestershire.

MANCHESTER

Chorlton Anarchists, Louise and Larry, 162 Egerton Rd North, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 ODB. Tel: 061 881 9553. Solidarity and 'Wildcat'

The main local activity of the majority of people who pre-

viously made up the Manchester Solidarity group is now the production, in co-operation with others, of a free bulletin called 'Wildcat'. Both 'Wildcat' and the remaining active members of Manchester Solidarity can be contacted by writing to either 'Wildcat' or 'Solidarity' at: Box 25, 164/166 Corn Exchange, Hanging Ditch, M4 3BN.

NORWICH

Anarchists, Student group and town group and Freewheel Community Bookshop Collective, all c/o Freewheel, 52/54 King St, Norwich. Tel 21209.

NOTTINGHAM

c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St, Tel 582506.

OLDHAM

Nigel Broadbent, 14 Westminster Rd, Failsworth.

OXFORD

Anarchist Group and Solidarity, c/o 34 Cowley Rd.

PAISLEY

Anarchist Group are unfortunately contactable through the Students Union, Hunter St, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

PLYMOUTH

Anarchists, 115 St Pancras Ave, Pennycross.

PORTSMOUTH

area anarchist group, c/o Garry Richardson, 25 Beresford Close, Waterlooville, Hants, or Duncan Lamb, Nirvana, Chichester Yacht Basin, Birsham, West Sussex.

READING

Reading Anarchist Group, Box 19, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St, Reading. Meets once a week.

RHONDDA

and MidGlamorgan, Henning Andersen, 'Smiths Arms', Treherbert, MidGlamorgan.

SHEFFIELD

Anarchists, c/o 4 Havelock Square Sheffield S10 2FQ. Libertarian Society, Post Office Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE.

SOUTH WALES

DAM, c/o Smiths Arms, Baglan Rd, Treherbert, MidGlamorgan, South Wales. Write for anarcho-syndicalist contacts in Treherbert, Rhondda, Pontypridd, Penarth, Barry and Cardiff areas.

SWANSEA

Black Dragon, Box 5, c/o Neges Bookshop, 31 Alexandra Rd, Swansea SA1 5DQ, W Glamorgan.

SUSSEX

anarchist group, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Brighton.

SWINDON

area, Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon.

TAYSIDE

Anarchist Group, 3L 188 Strathmartine Rd, Dundee.

WAKEFIELD

Anarchist and Peace Group, c/o E Fazackerley, 36 Bowan St, Asbriq, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

DESIRES

ANYONE interested in making an intervention at the founding conference of the 'Socialist Society' at the Institute of Education 23 — 24 Jan, meet outside 9.45 am Sat 23 Jan or phone Freedom.

ANY libertarians living in the Ipswich area? Contact Paul Anderson, 53 Dorchester Rd, Ipswich, and maybe we could form a group?

CRAWLEY Anarchists, please contact Freedom with your address. We have some correspondence for you.

MEETINGS

POLAND — Solidarity begins at Home. Speakers include Solidarismos Campaign supporters. Jan 24th: 1 pm

DIRECT ACTION for Beginners, Creative Destruction for the Advanced. Contributions Welcome. Jan 31st: 1 pm

At 121 Anarchist Centre, 121 Raiton Rd, Brixton. (includes cooked meal — approx £1)

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DADA FESTIVAL

At Tabernacle Community Centre Powis Square, Notting Hill, London W11. Jan 30th 1982 — 18.00-24.00 £2.00

EAST MIDLANDS CND Conference 6th Feb. Queens Walk Community Centre Nottingham. Contact your local CND group for details.

Is there any East Midlands Anarchist willing to lead an anarchist workshop?

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Marx and the anarchists



BOOK REVIEW: *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* by Paul Thomas (Routledge 1980, £15.00).

PAUL Thomas, as it says on the dustjacket of this extremely expensive volume, is Assistant Professor of Political Science, specialising in Political Theory, at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also a member of the editorial board of *Marxist Perspectives*. The first sentence written in the book states that its aim is to 'help us understand Marx's stature and importance as a theorist and as a revolutionist'. Given all this, it is perhaps unsurprising that *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* has received scant attention in the anarchist press since it was published some eighteen months ago; first impressions give the libertarian reader the idea that Thomas is the worst kind of ill-informed academic Marx worshipper, and goodness only knows that we need such types like a proverbial hole in the head. Having struggled all the way through some four hundred pages, I would like to be able to say at this point, 'Ah, but first impressions are often mistaken'. Unfortunately, I cannot, for although much that Thomas writes is interesting and provocative, in the final analysis *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* suffers from being profoundly misinformed on a number of crucial topics.

Before discussing these crucial weaknesses I shall, however, give an outline of what I take to be the core of Thomas' approach. Essentially, what he does is to argue that the view of many commentators¹ that the fundamental difference between Marx and the anarchists was a largely tactical one, rests on a misunderstanding of the incompatibility of the two intellectual traditions to which Marx on one hand, and Stirner, Proudhon and Bakunin on the other, belonged. Specifically, he attempts to show the origins of anarchist anti-statism in the theories of 'natural rights' put forward by Locke and others. Such theories are based on a vision of 'man in the state of nature' as a being fundamentally free from interference by others, the implication being that liberty is maximised if certain obstacles are removed. It is from this source, according to Thomas, that the anarchist conception of revolution as a destructive process, sweeping away impediments to the achievement of 'naturalness', stems; and he quotes a number of sources to back up his thesis.

By contrast, Marx belongs to a tradition with its roots in Rousseau and Hegel. From them both he takes a conception of liberty which is based not on mere absence of constraints upon individuals, but rather on the power or ability of individuals to achieve certain ends. It is through active participation in a community, rather than by being left to his own devices, that the individual attains freedom and individuality. This leads Marx to see revolution as an essentially creative process, and to attack the anarchists for their inability to perceive the superiority of achievement of individuality through community, as compared with the unfettered individualism implicit in the anarchist's aims. From Hegel alone, Marx takes two strands; firstly an opposition to what he sees as the hopeless sentimentality of views of 'man in the state of nature', and secondly a concern with the relationship between the state and civil society, or more crudely, politics and economics. The latter is central to Thomas' argument, for it is the lack of such a concern which, he believes, characterises the anarchists with whom Marx dealt so severely. Put simply, the anarchists with their belief that 'the basic source of social injustice is the state', have been unable to grasp the fact that the modern state is very much the servant of economic interests, whereas Marx had come to precisely this conclusion in the course of his critique of Hegel (who had argued that the institutional framework of the modern state provided the community so absent in the self-interestedness and atomisation of civil society).

Now the problem with all this lies not with Thomas' characterisation of Marx's development: the chapter on

Marx and Hegel is a superbly clear exposition of the relationship between the two. Rather it is a question of his notion of 'anarchism', which is, it seems to me, fundamentally flawed. Perhaps the most glaring error is his repetition of the hoary old chestnut that anarchists insist that 'the basic source of social injustice is the state'. This is quite simply untrue — Bakunin and Reclus,² to take only two examples, explicitly deny this thesis, arguing that the state itself rests on the existence of class society, and while neither can be said to investigate the dynamics of the state-economy relationship in any depth, there can be no excuse for misrepresenting their views. This is not to claim that *no* anarchists have put forward the idea that the state is the root of all evil; what I am saying is that anarchism in general can be accurately characterised as advocating nothing more than the thesis that the state is a source of social injustice. This seems to take quite a lot of wind out of Thomas' sails — the worst that can be said of the anarchists, if the 'primacy of state oppression' notion is dropped, is that they didn't fill out their analyses of the nature of the relationship between the 'economic' and the 'political' in a sufficiently detailed way. Since this fault is shared by Marxism — witness the tortuous evasions which characterise contemporary Marxist discussions of 'base and superstructure' — we really do seem to be faced with a case of the pot calling the kettle black. However important the issue might be, it is facile to pretend Marxism has any easy answers.

Thomas' second *faux pas* is his attempt to locate anarchism within a liberal individualist 'natural rights' tradition. Again, it is a mistake which is not unusual, and again there can be no doubt that some anarchists do look towards theories of 'natural rights' for inspiration. (Two such are Rudolf Rocker and Elisee Reclus.³) Many do not, however: the utilitarian Godwin considered rights to be 'superseded and rendered null by the superior claims of justice'; Stirner can under no circumstances be attached to a natural rights tradition, and Bakunin can only be understood as veering from one position to another. In other words, it is more than possible to be an anarchist without believing in some 'state of nature' as the aim of a destructive revolution, and this is borne out by the fact that few of the anarchists adopted a conception of liberty based on mere 'absence of constraint'. Kropotkin, for example, defined freedom as the opportunity to act without fear of social retribution and to participate in important decisions, while Bakunin believed that freedom depends on people having the opportunity to develop all their faculties and abilities.⁴ These views obviously entail a freedom to do things as well as a freedom from constraining influences, a *positive* as well as a *negative* conception of freedom, to use Isaiah Berlin's phraseology.

It would seem, then, that *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* doesn't convince at all in its attempt to uncover what was 'really at stake' between Marx and Stirner, Proudhon and Bakunin, largely as a result of Thomas' attributing an intellectual homogeneity to 'anarchism' which does not exist even at the most superficial level. This is a pity, because the issues he raises in his discussion, however inappropriate in the context of the specific task Thomas takes up here, are of vital importance to anyone interested in creating a free society. The relationships between positive and negative concepts of liberty, the individual and society, and economics and politics are all crucial areas for inquiry and debate, not merely for academics. What makes Thomas' failure doubly sad is the fact that his exegesis of the actual confrontations between Marx and Stirner, Proudhon and Bakunin is astoundingly clear; it's just that the conclusions he draws, particularly in the case of Bakunin, are far too expansive for the available evidence. In the end, his account does nothing to remove the idea that the essential difference between Marx and anarchism, at least after Bakunin, was a tactical one.

L ERIZO

For 'Notes' see page 16.

BOOK
REVIEW

THE BLACK FLAG



Sacco + Vanzetti

Fata Carlin '77

Brian Jackson: *The Black Flag*. Routledge, £6.95.

THE subtitle of this book is 'A look back at the strange case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti', and it is the most recent, the only British, and the least useful of all the many contributions to the vast literature on this famous subject. Brian Jackson is a sociologist and educationist, who is best known for his work at the Advisory Centre for Education and the magazine *Where?*, and he is now a research fellow at Bristol University and the director of the National Children's Centre. If it is difficult to understand what all this has to do with Sacco and Vanzetti, the answer is that he has been studying the social phenomenon of martyrdom and became interested in them as martyrs of political and racial persecution in the United States.

As the title indicates, Jackson tries to put them especially into their political context, but he fails because he knows far too little about anarchism in general or about their particular part in the movement. His chapter on anarchist thought and action, which has been praised in several reviews, is ingenuous and inaccurate, being based entirely on unreliable secondary sources, and anyway it is irrelevant to the specific milieu of the anarchosyndicalist groups among Italian immigrants in the United States at the time of the First World War.

As for his account of the actual case, this suffers from being too summary and too superficial to add or alter anything. Perhaps the best account of the subject which has yet appeared is Herbert Ehrmann's book *The Case That Will Not Die* (1969), which is three times longer than *The Black Flag*, as well as being far better informed and far better written. The only valuable contributions made by Jackson are the description of the contemporary official documents released under the Freedom of Information Act in 1977 and the transcript of the legal report to and formal proclamation by the Governor of Massachusetts in 1977, admitting after half a century that Sacco and Vanzetti had not had a fair trial and had to be regarded as innocent victims of a collective miscarriage of justice.

It is obvious to anyone who studies the case at all carefully that Sacco and Vanzetti were almost certainly not

guilty of the payroll robbery and murder in 1920 for which they were tried in 1921 and eventually electrocuted in 1927, whatever else they may have been guilty of. But there has been a persistent tradition that Sacco was guilty even if Vanzetti was not, and this is taken seriously by Jackson, though he eventually rejects it. In fact there is no good reason to accept a split verdict derived entirely from hearsay rumour of the kind which surrounds every such case from the Haymarket Martyrs in Chicago in 1886 to the Persons Unknown in London in 1980. An impartial examination of the historical context shows that they were really condemned for being foreigners and radicals, just like the Haymarket Martyrs and Joe Hill before them.

So the real interest of the case is how two anarchists could be openly murdered by one of the most democratic societies and through one of the most legalistic systems in the so-called free world. This is hardly considered by Brian Jackson in his romantic and rhetorical book, but it remains the true challenge posed by this martyrdom. Similar martyrdoms are still perpetrated in the United States and other Western countries, even Britain, so we still haven't properly received and understood the message that Vanzetti gave in April 1927:

If it had not been for these things, I might have lived out my life, talking at street corners to scolding men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by an accident. Our words, our lives, our pains — nothing. The taking of our lives, lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler — all. That last moment belongs to us — that agony is our triumph.

The Black Flag doesn't help us take this message, but once again confuses it with ignorance and prejudice. Paul Avrich, the leading historian of American anarchism, is completing a book on the Haymarket case; let us hope that he then produces one on the Sacco-Vanzetti case to supersede all these journalistic and legalistic studies.

The inadequacies of anarchism

BOOK REVIEW: Nikolai Bukharin, Luigi Fabbri, Rudolf Rocker: *The Poverty of Statism* (Cienfuegos Press, £1.50).

CIENFUEGOS Press have made a significant contribution to making early libertarian critiques of the Bolshevik regime in Russia available to contemporary English readers; their editions of Maximoff's *The Guillotine at Work* and Berkman's *The Russian Tragedy* were particularly invaluable additions to what has unfortunately been a sparse field. With this slim volume, which collects four hitherto untranslated essays, they take further steps in the right direction.

The bulk of *The Poverty of Statism* is occupied by a debate between the prominent Bolshevik Bukharin and the Italian anarchist theorist Fabbri, dating from 1922. Perhaps *debate* is the wrong word to use, since we are presented with only one piece from each contributor — Bukharin's 'Anarchy and Scientific Communism' and Fabbri's response 'Anarchy and *Scientific* Communism'. Nevertheless the exchange is an interesting one, and it deserves close attention. Bukharin puts forward two main arguments against anarchism. The first is that anarchists do not understand the necessity of centralised production for economic and social progress. 'Any new order is possible and useful' he says, 'only insofar as it leads to the further development of the productive forces of the order which is to disappear'. To develop the productive forces, centralisation is required: the small-scale production advocated by the anarchists is simply not up to the task. Indeed, the anarchists' aversion to centralisation is based on the mistaken equation of the miseries of large-scale centralised production *under capitalism* with large-scale centralised production as such.

Bukharin's second line of attack centres on the anarchists' antipathy to the theory and practice of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. Here he repeats the familiar Marxist argument for a transitional state to crush the bourgeoisie. The anarchists' failure to face up to this necessity may, he claims, be traced back to their dislike of any exercise of power; and this in turn boils down to the anarchists' unwillingness to engage in organised mass action, itself a product of anarchism, being the ideology of 'lumpen elements'.

By way of reply Fabbri first points out that Bukharin's talk of 'lumpen elements', unwillingness to engage in organised mass action and so on is nothing short of nonsense, and, moreover, that his elitist attitude to the lumpen proletariat is very dangerous nonsense. Anarchists come from all walks of life, says Fabbri, are continually engaged in organised mass action, and, unlike Marxists, do not treat the poor as almost subhuman. The last point reflects a concern about the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' — its effect of concentrating power in the hands of industrial workers — which hardly seems the most pressing in the light of the Bolshevik experience of 'dictatorship of the bureaucracy', though it is worth bearing in mind. Fabbri's remarks on the social composition of the historical anarchist movement are similarly less than crucial to the modern reader, though again his observations should be noted, particularly by those historians who continue to ignore the fact that anarchism was not an ideology of the petit bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

All this is, however, something of a sideline even to Fabbri and he quickly passes to a consideration of Bukharin's critique of anarchist views on the centralisation of production. Here he argues that a distinction must be made be-

tween political and economic centralisation. While anarchists are most certainly opposed to political centralisation, their position on economic centralisation is more flexible. Rather than taking a dogmatic stance, the anarchists advocate economic centralisation where it is the most efficient way of organising activity and de-centralisation in cases where it is not. It is notable that this approach, although attacking Bukharin's close association of economic centralisation and maximal development of productive forces, does not seriously question the primary importance of the development of productive forces; and this, while understandable in the conditions of scarcity prevalent in the early 1920s, seems from a contemporary vantage point to be a major omission.

Fabbri next takes up the problem of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The danger of the Marxist 'transitional state', he says, is that state power created for the task of suppressing the bourgeoisie will, through the acquisition of privileges and interests by state officials, become a power over the proletariat. 'The new government will be able to expropriate the old ruling class in whole or in part, but only so as to establish a new ruling class that will hold the greater part of the proletariat in subjection Capitalism would not cease to be, merely by changing from 'private' to 'state' capitalism'. To avoid this degeneration, the expropriation and suppression of the bourgeoisie should be the work of the proletariat's own organisations — no separate state power is either necessary or desirable. Indeed, the fact that non-statist struggle involves 'active participation of all members of the collective unit', rather than passive trust in leaders, ensures that it is the most efficient possible means of organising the expropriation and suppression of the bourgeoisie.

This is a familiar anarchist argument: Fabbri is echoing themes which are present in Bakunin's confrontation with Marx, and which characterise the work of Kropotkin, Malatesta and many other anarchist theorists. The message that socialism cannot be achieved by capturing the heights of state power is an important one, but it seems to me that it does not really go far enough as it stands. For the bureaucratisation process has its roots not merely in 'statist' theory and practice, but also in 'vanguardist' organisation in the pre-revolutionary period; and here the anarchists are ambiguous, to say the least, about their proposals for the relationship between themselves and the mass of the proletariat. Fabbri, for example, sees the anarchists linking 'the broad collective action of the great masses' with 'the more restricted activity' of their own groups, with the intention of giving the masses 'the proper revolutionary sense of direction'. It would not be impossible to interpret this as meaning that organised anarchism, however *internally* un-hierarchical, is an alternative leadership for the working class, and it would seem that many anarchists historically saw themselves in precisely such a role. (I am here thinking particularly of the practice of the Iberian Anarchist Federation [FAI] in Spain during the 1930s.) Now I am not denying that 'vanguardism' comes in varying degrees, and it would be foolish to claim that anarchism and Leninism are identical in this respect. Nevertheless the question of the extent to which the emancipation of the working class must be the task of the workers themselves is not satisfactorily answered by traditional anarchism; the dangers of vanguardism on the one hand, and the potential for self-managed workers' action on the other, are never truly grasped.

A similar weakness occurs in anarchist responses to the Marxist claim to be establishing a science of society. Few of the anarchists adopted the view that society, by its very nature is not amenable to the methodology of natural science: Bakunin did warn of the danger of a scientific elite wielding power in a post-revolutionary society, a view taken up and developed by Machajski into a critique of Marxism as the class ideology of the intelligentsia (for which see the appendix to the Solidarity pamphlet *Czechoslovakia 1968*), but this isn't quite the same thing. Far more typical of the anarchists in any case were the likes of Kropotkin and Reclus, who adopted a version of social Darwinism as the 'scientific justification' of their anarchist communism. If anything this is even more mechanical and reductionist than 'historical materialism', a fact which a number of commentators seem to miss. Some anarchists did of course go as far as denying the very possibility of explaining the social world as if it were an extremely complicated determinist infernal machine — a particularly good example is the German anarchist Landauer — but Fabbri is not one of them. His rejection of Bukharin's claim to be putting forward a case for 'scientific communism' is based rather weakly on the assertion that 'scientific' communism is merely old-fashioned 'authoritarian' communism under a new and misleading name. His argument does make the implicit assumption that communism is an *ideal*, that it is essentially a moral aim rather than the inevitable result of the workings of scientific social laws, but this is nowhere developed. Fabbri does not seem aware of the implications of 'scientism', not only in terms of its role in legitimating the power of intellectuals, but also in its reduction of active, responsible human agents to manipulable repositories for 'social forces', incapable of creative action. If we are looking for the most powerful possible libertarian socialist critique of Marxism, this is a serious omission.

Rudolf Rocker, whose essays 'Anarchism and Sovietism' and 'Marx and Anarchism' (both of 1920) form the remainder of *The Poverty of Statism*, has been recently described by Noam Chomsky as 'the last serious political thinker'. In making this judgement Chomsky was doubtless referring to Rocker's massive and brilliant *Nationalism and Culture*; the two pieces presented here are mere rough notes by comparison. All the same, they do give us a taste of Rocker's predilection for uncovering the broad sweep of intellectual history — the stunning generalisations which both excite and infuriate the reader of *Nationalism and Culture* are very much in evidence in 'Anarchism and Sovietism' and 'Marx and Anarchism', if in a somewhat crude form.

The first, 'Anarchism and Sovietism', begins with a rather tedious historical trudge through the anarchist theoretical 'greats' from Godwin to Kropotkin, but it goes on to provide an interesting account of the origins of the idea of the workers' councils in the libertarian wing of the First International. Rocker is right, I believe, to argue that the wave of workers' councils which swept over Europe just after the First World War was not a completely novel development, but he does slightly overstate his case; in particular he seems to overestimate the influence of revolutionary syndicalism upon the council movement. He similarly exaggerates the importance of 'Jacobinism' in attempting to account for the authoritarianism of the Marxist notion of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', which he counterposes to the 'workers' councils' idea as representative of a totally different, and ultimately bourgeois, revolutionary tradition. This is perhaps more excusable than the efforts made by many anarchists to 'prove Marxism authoritarian' by reciting Marx's Machiavellian deceptions in the struggle with Bakunin over the First International, but it does seem unnecessarily blind to a wide range of 'authoritarian' influences on Marx, notably those of Hegelian holism and (again) nineteenth century ideas of the possibility of an all-embracing science. Rocker does, it must be said, take up these themes in *Nationalism and Culture*; their absence here must nevertheless serve as a warning to anyone who is tempted to claim the essays in *The Poverty of Statism* as the definitive libertarian response to Marx and Marxism.

The other Rocker essay, 'Marx and Anarchism', is an attempt to trace Marx's growing authoritarianism after his early contact with Proudhon and the French Utopians. Unfortunately it is none too successful, partly because Rocker did not have access to much of Marx's early work (since it had not been published in 1920), but also because he doesn't manage to get to grips with the reasons for Marx's break with Proudhon. This is far too complex a matter to discuss here — it suffices to say that Rocker's interpretation of the break as a manifestation of the division between 'authoritarianism' and 'libertarianism' is grossly simplistic. There is also more than a hint of 'ad hominem' argument against Marx in Rocker's account, which gives the impression that Marx changed his mind about Proudhon and the Utopians solely to kick over the traces of his plagiarism. If this were true (and I personally doubt it), we might have a nice bit of intellectual history, but I don't think we'd have a contribution to the libertarian critique of Marxism as a *theoretical corpus*.

This might seem to be an inordinately long and detailed review of what, after all, were originally propagandist tracts. While admitting this to be the case, I would defend myself by pointing to the fact that Fabbri's and Rocker's crucial weaknesses — particularly those surrounding the issue of 'vanguardism' — are characteristic of the traditional anarchist movement as a whole, and must be seriously considered by any libertarian trying to learn from the history of anarchism. It is quite simply irresponsible for the modern libertarian to merely repeat the formulae of sixty years ago as if nothing had happened in the meantime. I am not saying that Rocker and Fabbri have *no* relevance today, just that their relevance must be significantly qualified by reference to their (understandable) omissions. To forget these — and I have mentioned only a few in this review — is to slip dangerously close to a sentimentality for the good old days which offers little more than an inside view of the proverbial 'dustbin of history'.

L ERIZO



FARES FAIR M'LUD

A NATION is waiting, mostly at bus stops, for the Law Lords to decide if Dave Wetzel and the Labour Party controlling the Greater London Council can surge forward and into the greatest revolutionary breakthrough in the history of these small islands since Chester Armbellow turned his fish and chip shop into a Chinese Takeaway shaking the Blackburn Establishment to its conservative core. The major plank, and with hindsight one could say the only splintered plank, in the manifesto on which the Labour Party fought and won control of the Greater London Council was that they would reduce the public transport fares by twenty-five per cent. I have a right to declaim for night upon night I leaned on the pub counter protesting this betrayal of the people. I was there in those small bleak rooms when various committed interests called upon the populace to hearken unto the political siren voices and I stood and hammered out the simple and logical method to run a transport system is; not free, for nothing is free to the labouring working class, but non paying. I was not breathing air onto a beer swilling captive pub audience, for over the months before the GLC election I made the simple and obvious points that small economic reductions are quickly forgotten in a matter of weeks after they take place but the rise in local taxes will be remembered with hatred and I made those simple points time again to Dave Wetzel and for my pains he called me a 'cynical sod'. I made those points to every one of the political riff raff that I became involved with as I watched them rummaging for political office and each and every one of them breathed that sacred phrase, 'I am in favour of a 25% cut in public transport fares'. I argued for a non paying public transport system and most of them did not seem to have even a limited idea of the socialism that they pretended to advocate and those who did, said that they believed in a non paying public transport system, but, and I quote, 'in four years time'.

There are three reasons why the London Labour Party did not go forward for a non payment public transport system and they are first that the right wing members of the GLC Labour Party would not support a socialist measure, hence the reformist 25% cut in fares; second, in the battle for office a non payment social service would alienate the middle class voters and third that the 'union would not agree to it' which I hold is complete rubbish. Dave Wetzel, the Chairman of the GLC Transport (public for the use of), is an honest, sincere and pleasant man but he is a different man from the ebullient leftwinger of a few months ago, the man who ended his letters with 'yours in socialism', for now this week he talks of suggestions that the GLC Labour Party in this Year of the Rat could let itself be forced out of office and then appeal to the people as to who was to blame for the glorious fuck up of London public transport system. At this moment in time the fall guy is deemed to be my Lord Denning who, with his two legal side kicks, maintained that the GLC 25% reduction in transport fares was illegal under the Act, the Charter and or the Powers given to London Transport, for, stated Lord Denning and his two mates, it clearly states that the London Transport system must be run 'economically' so therefore if you cut fares as a political promise and then raise local taxes to pay for the cut then you are not running the transport system economically. But ah cry the legal powers employed by the reformist left wing we do run it economically within the framework that we set up. And so the battle rages. It has now become a matter of Wittgenstein semantics in that the course of history is to be decided on the interpretation of a single word. There is sad talk of mass resignations of Ken Livingstone and his happytime revolutionaries to show their displeasure at the way My Lord



Denning has thumbed his legal nose at the Labour Party manifesto and brave talk of the need, come the revolution, for 'socialist law' in the interest of the working class, but the saddest cut of all is the knowledge that when those in high GLC office decided to take adverts in London Transport buses and trains to tell the toiling masses who is to blame for the fuck up and the transport and economic carnage that will result if the House of Lords Law Lords uphold My Lord Denning's decision, the London Transport Executive said no no no you can't put that type of advert on our transport.

So the Town and his dripping frau wait hand in hand at the bus stop for the bus that does not come and wonder if after a few weeks of mild and miniscule revolutionary fervour more transport will be slashed, more fares will go up up up and rates and taxes stay at the new high level. I do not sneer at the behaviour of the London Labour Party and the transport mess for I personally believe in a socialist society. I know it is a completely materialistic society WITHIN which the anarchist and his and her struggle for individual liberty must still continue but it is foolish to stand on the sideline when the wealth, in some small measure, is returned to the mass of the people. From each according to their ability and to each according to their need. The Post Offices are State capitalism in action but with all their faults and failures the Health Service, the public libraries and the non payment by the old and the sick on the public transport system were small areas of human sanity in a society based on men and women's exploitation of their fellow men and women. This is why the London Labour Party failed the people, as every major political party will, in that for the sour fruit of office they betrayed the idealism of the unrecorded dead. Dave and Ken, you could have put into operation a non payment public transport system and then stayed in office until you were physically dragged out on the orders of the 'Wittgenstein' Law Lords; but instead of being blown out in glory they will now retreat as with McDonald, Attlee, Wilson, Callaghan, Foot and now Dave and Ken, full of apologies and complaints that it was not their fault but next time fellow voters next time

Literally sexism

SEXUALITY AND POWER: THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

H St John Philby, *The Queen of Sheba* (Introduction by Gerald de Gaury) Quartet Books, London, Melbourne, New York, £12.50, 141pp.

HARRY St John Philby produced more than British master spy Kim. Diplomat, eccentric, and above all Arabia scholar, traveller and writer, Philby (born 1885) produced numerous books and articles on Arabia until his death in 1960. Some idea of the adventures of this restless, gifted man until 1948 is given in Philby's autobiography, *Arabian Days*. The most comprehensive study of Philby's character, work and activities to date is Elizabeth Monroe's *Philby of Arabia* (Quartet Books, 1980). Of particular interest is Philby's remarkable relationship from 1917 with Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia.

Philby's last Arabian journey was in 1956, across partly unknown territory once inhabited by Sabeian, Minaean and Qatabanite peoples. One result of this expedition was the hitherto-unpublished manuscript of *The Queen of Sheba*. If Quartet Books deserve our thanks for making available Philby's speculations on Sheba, the same cannot be said for Gerald de Gaury's Introduction. This is a dead loss. Skip straight to Philby. For all its uneven style and organisation, Philby's account directs us straight to the heart of the mystery surrounding Sheba. In doing so, it raises basic questions about the relations between Mythology and History, the real and the symbolic, sexuality and sexism.

The story of Sheba's visit to Solomon has deservedly captured the imaginations of many artists. It has been celebrated in works of great beauty and diversity — the paintings of Paulo Veronese, Claude Lorraine, Edward Dulac and Piero Della Francesca; the carved panel of Lorenzo Ghiberti; in Oriental manuscripts and paintings; in biblical texts; in pre-Islamic poems; in stained glass at Canterbury Cathedral; in traditional Ethiopian paintings; and in ancient temples. All the examples mentioned here, and more, are beautifully reproduced in this book. This alone is sufficient reason to recommend it.

Never has a woman about whom so little is known (with the possible exception of The Virgin) occasioned so much commentary and myth-making. Why? This is the key paradox about Sheba in need of explanation. The mysterious Queen has entered advertising and the vernacular ('Who do you think you are, the Queen of Sheba?'); the Women's Movement has given us Sheba Feminist Press. If Freud could deduce far-reaching consequences from 'symptoms' such as slips of the tongue and pen, can we unravel something of the knotted mysteries of History and Herstory, Sexism and Sexuality by successfully 'interpreting' the 'symptomatic' significance of this interest in Sheba — an interest which transcends class, sex and age? Freud, after all, spoke of his 'scientific' theory of instincts as 'mythology', and always insisted (above all in *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*) on the Historical significance of the Mythical, on the intimate symbolic, 'symptomatic' relations between past realities and present myths.

Perhaps this is hoping too much. Philby's own fairly cautious, non-dogmatic approach to Sheba is itself a 'symptom' of the problem. Central to the mystery of Sheba is her relationship with Solomon, in Philby's words, 'one of the most famous romances of antiquity'. If sexism is the warping of sexuality by power, the perversion of sexual



relations by power relations, then Sheba's affair with Solomon would seem to be Sexism personified. The questions are: who was screwing whom, and why? Who was Sheba? Who was Solomon? Why did she pay him that famous visit? Did she? Or did Solomon visit her? The striking fact about commentaries on Sheba-Solomon is their deliberate or 'unconscious' unwillingness to confront the essential problem of Sexism. Instead, we have had suppression, distortion or falsification of the 'facts', 'deliberate self-deception on the part of scores of generations of Arab scholars', in Philby's words. Yet Philby too, for all his careful criticism of other commentators, perpetuates and collaborates in the same Literary Sexist project. For what else is the deliberate or unwitting failure to address the Sexist character of the Solomon-Sheba relationship?

Consider first Sheba. Who was she? Philby insists that, despite efforts by scholars to identify her with such later figures as Bilqis of Arabic history, nothing is known of her, not even her name. But there is every reason to believe that this extra-ordinary woman, is in 'fact' closely related if not identical to each of the Three fundamental mythical embodiments of Female sexuality and power. These are: the Christian Virgin (Latin: Vesta, Greek: Hestia, Hebrew: Sabbath, Jehovah's bride-lover); Lilith, dark demon Goddess of violence, free sexuality and blood (Robert Graves' White Goddess); and the wise black Shulamite (Solomon's beloved) in the Song of Songs, which has been described as 'one of the most urgent and beautiful statements of equal love between the sexes' (Shuttle and Redgrove, *The Wise Wound*).

Philby's failure to draw on the extant literature of Mythology concerning Sheba demonstrates a general failure to see in Sheba the contradictory embodiment of these fundamentally different but related conceptions of female sexuality and power in the context of male-female relations. The Virgin is Woman de-natured, de-sexed, passive. Sheba as Lilith is a conception of female sexual dominance, an inverted sexist ideal: Sheba as super-woman. Sheba as the wise free- and equal-loving Shulamite (Graves' Black Goddess) embodies an anti-sexist norm of the unity of female power and sexuality.

What commentaries on the Sheba legend have in common is a failure to recognise that Sheba is a non-separable unity of these three models of sexuality and power. She is Wisdom, Passivity and Superior Dominance all in one. Women have internalised and practiced some combination of the three since Men first projected them onto us. This is the key point. These are male projections. We have yet to hear Sheba tell Herstory herself, in her own terms.

It is, we suggest, these facts which explain both the continuing power and fascination of the Sheba legend and the Sheba-Solomon relationship for men and women, no less than the perpetuation by (male) scholar-commentators of the sexist project. At issue is Sexism itself. For Solomon represents in (Male) mirror-image the same three conceptions of sexuality and power as Sheba; Dominance, Submissiveness and free loving Equality. In some of the Solomon-Sheba legends, Solomon recognised Sheba when he saw her hairy legs and cloven animal hoof reflected in a looking-glass floor. Was Solomon wise enough to see in Sheba his projected mirror-image? Until Sheba tells her own tale, we shall never know.

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NOTES TO MARX AND THE ANARCHISTS (from page 10)

1. For example: Daniel Guerin, *Anarchism and Anarchism and Marxism*.
2. See: G P Maximoff (ed), *Bakunin's Political Philosophy pp 358-367*.
Marie Fleming, 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of a Natural Order: The Anarchism of Elisee Reclus' in *Social Anarchism vol 2, no 1*.
3. See: Fleming (op cit), *Rudolf Rocker, Nationalism and Culture*.
4. See: Maximoff (op cit) p 271.

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