

the enemy
within.

VIRUS

NO.8

25p.

SPAIN 1936

FIFTY YEARS SINCE: FASCIST UPRISING AND WORKERS REVOLUTION

contents:

psychiatric
struggles

trotsky and
workers control

child sexual abuse

royals and
republicans

letters/reviews

etc.



THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION :



As all anarchists are aware, this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the uprising by Franco and the revolutionary response by the Spanish working class.

We are in no position to congratulate ourselves over the revolution, even if the collectivisations which took place marked the most advanced form of proletarian revolution which has ever taken place. Anarchism faced its greatest test in Spain, and it failed to deliver the goods. Partly, this failure can be attributed to the overwhelming nature of the military opposition but also anarchists often proved to be disorganised, disorientated and ill led. The decision by leading anarchists to enter the government must count as a great betrayal of the anarchist idea.

Also, the extreme duplicity of the Stalinists was almost beyond belief. The message of history is clear. Revolutions are necessarily far more complex and difficult than the classic anarchist thinkers imagined. We must be adequately equipped both theoretically and organisationally, to defeat an extremely able and powerful ruling class, and we must be ready to oppose Leninist counterrevolutionaries (for that is what they are with their intention to create the so-called workers' state).

Despite moves in the past year or so by many anarchists towards federation based upon a class struggle approach (British Anarcho-Syndicalists have had this perspective for years) the movement remains a mish-mash of individualists, pacifists, liberals and greens. If anarchism is ever to be taken seriously, revolutionary libertarians must unite and grow beyond our present marginalisation.

Where We Stand

We believe that:

1. Capitalism and other social systems, in which wealth and power are the property of a ruling class/elite, must be destroyed.
2. Reformist and statist solutions will necessarily fail and therefore revolution is the only possible means of achieving anarchist-communism. How far such a revolution will be peaceful depends upon the degree to which the ruling class clings on to power through violence and state repression.
3. Genuine liberation can only come about through the self activity of the great mass of the population. We regard parliament, representative democracy and political vanguardism as being obstacles to a self-managed society. Institutions and organisations which attempt to mediate in the fight against domination cannot succeed. Trade unionism, as it is presently constituted, plays an important part in maintaining class exploitation, insofar as it regulates and justifies it through collective bargaining and bureaucratic structures. Nevertheless, it is important to work within the trade union movement, in order to build up a rank-and-file workers' movement which encourages workers' control of struggle and cuts across sectional boundaries.
4. Workers and other oppressed sections of society will, in times of revolutionary upheaval, create their own democratic institutions, whether they be based on the workplace or the community. To this end we encourage the creation of organs of struggle based on the rank and file, independent of political parties.
5. Pure spontaneity is unlikely to be sufficient to overthrow entrenched class domination. Anarchists must indicate the libertarian alternative to class societies, participate as anarchists in struggle and organise on a federative basis to assist in the revolutionary process.
6. Capitalism is international and needs to be fought internationally. We therefore try to maintain contact with as many anarchist-communists as possible in overseas countries as the preliminary stage to the creation of an anarchist international.
7. We do not simply seek the abolition of class differences, for inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, age, sexuality and gender. Personal relationships are now often based on domination and submission. We seek not only an economic revolution but a social and cultural revolution as well, involving a thorough-going change in attitudes and organisation of everyday lives to free us in our social and personal interactions.
8. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

READ LIBERATION

20p

Paper of the A.C.F.

As we mentioned in the last issue of VIRUS the ANARCHIST-COMMUNIST FEDERATION has been formed with the aim of building a federation of class-struggle anarchists in Britain. The organisation is based upon individual members and groups. At the present moment there are groups in London, Newcastle, Stafford, Medway, Canterbury and Brighton. Individual members are to be found in many other towns throughout Britain.

We publish two papers, VIRUS and our agitational paper, LIBERATION. Subscriptions to VIRUS cost £1 per year, whilst LIBERATION subscriptions are £1.50 for six issues.

If you are interested in joining the A.C.F. or wish to take out a subscription to any of our papers, contact us C/O 84B, Whitechapel High Street, Angel Alley, London. E.1. 7QX.



LETTER / REVIEW

Dear VIRUS,

I agree with most of the points in the article British Anarchism Surveyed. Where I would like to draw issue is on the subject of science and anarchism.

To quote from the article: "But anarchism is, above all, a scientific approach to socialism. That is, all our theories must start from material fact, from the lessons of real experience".

I must disagree with this in the strongest terms. Perhaps I'm over-sensitive to this kind of claptrap (I was a member of the SWP for two years, and did a psychology course at the poly), but it is an important area; where do our ideas come from etc.

Of course our theories come from the real world - the material world. Also, they come from ideals - which may not be expressed in the real world at all. Generally speaking though, the writer is correct.

The failure in this quote is the one that Marx made. In fact it sounds very much like the SWP's line, except it substitutes the word anarchism for 'revolutionary socialism.'

1. It is impossible to equate a study of human society with science. Science is specific - it deals with simplistic abstractions in order that we can glean some information that may help explain the world. This is impossible in human terms. Too much is going on at one time - even the most simple psychological experiments are not 'scientific' by any stretch of the imagination, simply because of the raw materials not being conducive to reduction.

2. Why try and repeat Marx's attitudes? He was overly concerned with proving his theories (ideas) scientific - he had a reductionist view of man not entirely equatable with concept of free will. This attitude saw itself expressed in Russia.

Lenin adopted Taylorism in the factories because it was "efficient" - it was proven scientific, method. To hell with humanity!

There is nothing wrong with calling oneself a materialist, But that is not the same as a "scientific approach", or "reductionism". Economic "facts" (whatever the hell they are) are important, as too are ideological and social ones.

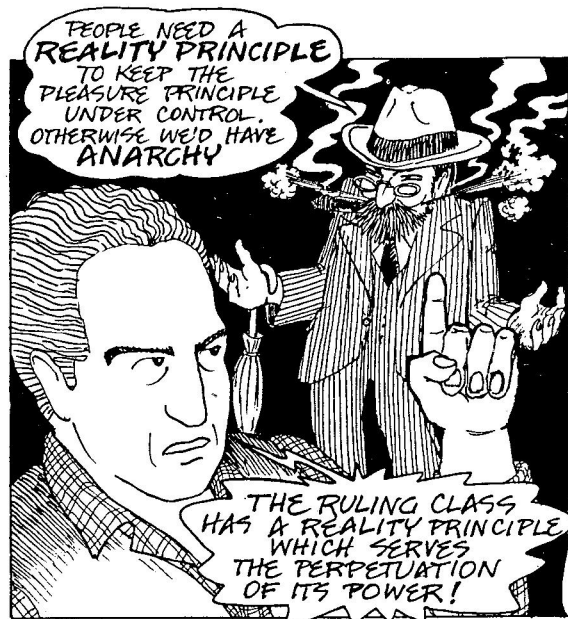
The writer seems concerned to use the magic word scientific to show anarchism in a better light. Well, he shouldn't. It is, in my view, a denigration of Anarchism.

Any political theory can only be based on, at best, a subjective interpretation of the past and present. It can never be scientific in any meaningful sense. To adopt that approach is to reduce humans, and is part of the broad ethos of which Marxism is its worst expression (well - Marxist-Leninism).

Science is the modern God. It needs to be de-mythologised, not accepted implicitly. I'll stop there. If I've misunderstood what the writer was trying to say, I apologise. However, it came over rather as a desperate attempt to prove anarchism.

Yours fraternally,

M. Telford.



REICH FOR BEGINNERS

by Dave Mairowitz,

Writers and Readers, £3.95

The central theme of Wilhelm Reich's work was an analysis of the psychological/sexual roots of authoritarianism - an analysis of how oppressive systems maintain and reproduce themselves in the mass psyche as much as through economic or political means; an analysis of how irrational ideologies come to have such a strong and deep-rooted mass appeal.

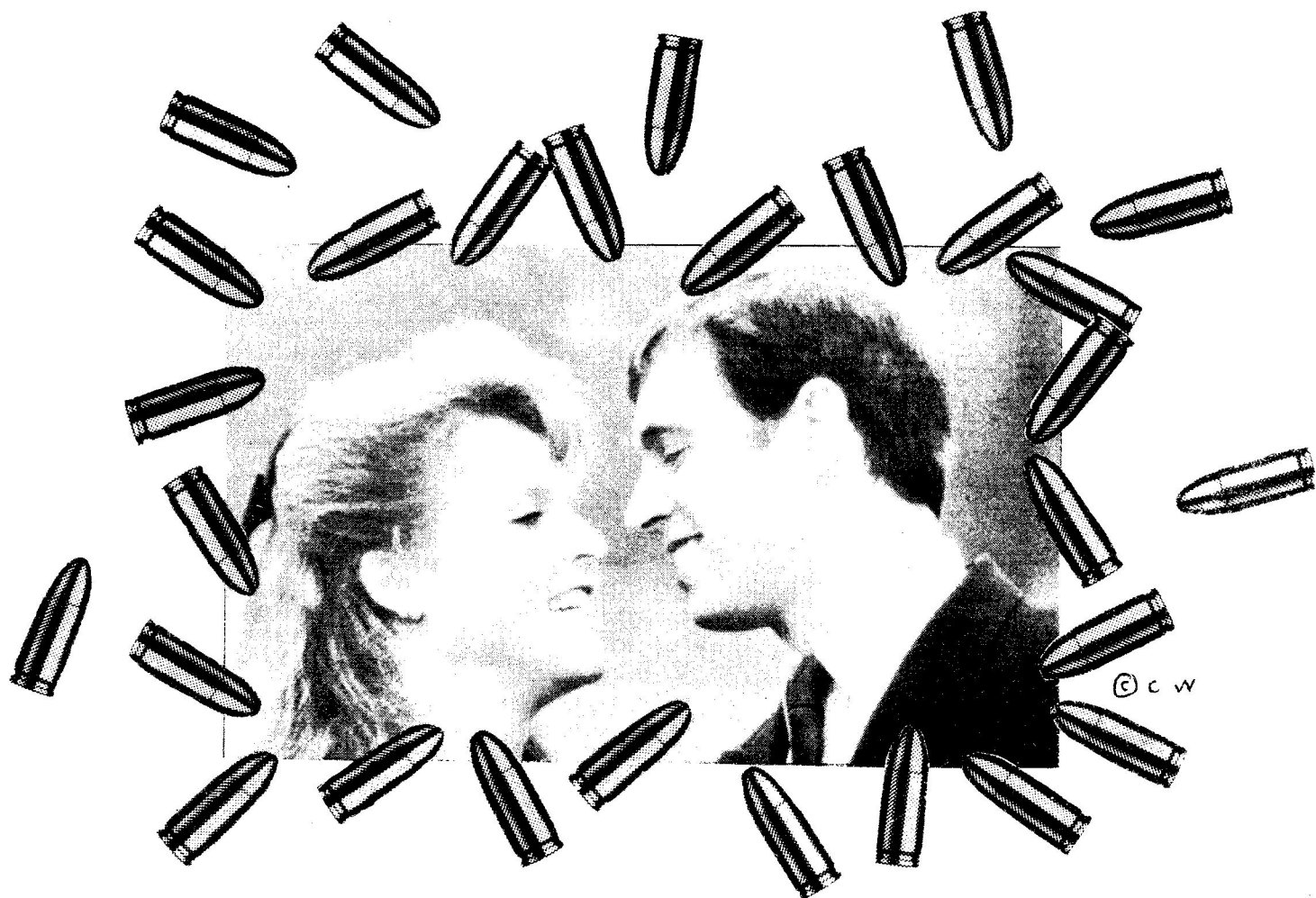
Writing about the rise of Fascism (which he lived through), Reich pointed out that at 'the crossroads between socialism and barbarism', the masses chose the latter path. Not because they were fooled or misled, but because they wanted it. We may not live in the Nazi era, but the craving for Authority is so pervasive throughout everyday life that libertarian revolutionaries can ill-afford to ignore Reich.

It should be good news then that a very readable and reasonably-priced book on Reich has recently been added to the "For Beginners" series of cartoon-documentaries. Unfortunately though, the author makes little attempt to apply Reich's mass-psychology to today's world, and Reich's theories on sexual repression and authoritarian conditioning are made to appear much more simplistic and mechanical than they actually are.

Mairowitz makes some important criticisms, but doesn't recognise the crucial contradiction between the anarchistic implications of Reich's work and his political practice. (Reich was a social-democrat then a Communist Party activist in Germany until the CP disavowed him in 1932-33; he then flirted briefly with some Trots but found them too boring!) It's also unfortunate that Reich For Beginners highlights only the most bizarre and speculative elements of Reich's later work on biological energy, while conveniently ignoring some controversial but nonetheless valuable research. Given that Wilhelm Reich died in prison for this work and the US State burned his books in 1956, this ignorance is pretty inexcusable.

Bearing in mind that Reich For Beginners tends to caricature its subject, this is still a very entertaining introduction to Reich and the coverage of his psychoanalytic studies is excellent. But have a look at Maurice Brinton's pamphlet The Irrational in Politics (Solidarity) for a much better account of Reich as a revolutionary thinker - though this too is fairly crude and a bit dated. Also Marie Louise Berneri's essay Sexuality and Freedom is an anarchist analysis based on Reich, and George Frankl's The Failure of the Sexual Revolution is a post-Reichian work by a fairly libertarian Marxist. The first few chapters of Reich's Mass Psychology of Fascism are a good starting point to learn directly about Reich's ideas, remembering that he was limited by his own Marxist thinking and that the version now available has been pissed around with to water-down its radicalism.

M.H.



all the best from VIRUS

royals and republicans

Yet another Royal Wedding is upon us. Once more a young man with an undistinguished military career has married an equally undistinguished young woman under the eyes of huge crowds and with the undivided attention of the world's press. The reason for all this, we are led to believe, is the youngman's family background. So what is special about Andrew Windsor's ancestry?

Well, young Andrew's family has a long history of murders, imprisonments, usurpations and other bloody intrigues. To begin with, the earliest kings of England from whom he can claim descent had very little faith in divine right. As the eighteenth century revolutionary Thomas Paine wrote of William the Conqueror:

"A French bastard landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself King of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it".

Most of mediaeval English history can be summed up as a series of particularly nasty wars over succession and the extent of the king's personal power. The civil wars eventually petered out at the end of the fifteenth century, perhaps because most candidates for the throne had either been openly murdered or had met with convenient

fatal accidents by that time.

Royal avarice, however, continued until 1648. Then, unfortunately for Charles I but to the delight of most other people, the royal line was interrupted by the momentum of the English Revolution and the business end of a headman's axe. But the bourgeois gentlemen who led that revolution became rather concerned about the egalitarian trends emerging among both the peasants and the urban poor. So in 1660 they restored the monarchy.

Kings turned out to be as troublesome as ever. James II was suspected (rightly) of secretly preparing tyranny and of being a closet Catholic, which was about the worst thing anybody could be at that time. In 1688 James was deposed in a bloodless palace coup (the "Glorious Revolution"). The lack of bloodshed was not planned, but the commander of the royal forces, John Churchill, later to become Duke of Marlborough and ancestor of Winston Churchill, was bribed to change sides at the last moment. So the modern monarchy was founded on treachery, bribery and a military coup. James was replaced by his more amenable daughter Mary, mainly because she was married to the safely Protestant William of Orange.

But before long the direct line of descent ran out. The descendants of James II were still obstinately Catholic, so didn't qualify. Parliament had to look elsewhere. They eventually discovered a minor German prince, the Elector of Hanover, who was rescued from obscurity to become George I. His reign was uneventful, possibly due to the fact that he could not speak English. In spite of the fact that he kept his wife locked up in a castle for 32 years, George miraculously produced an heir to the throne who succeeded him as George II (and managed to learn English).

George II became famous when he died by falling off a lavatory seat in Kensington Palace and hitting his head on a conveniently placed chest. As his son had already been killed by a hurtling tennis ball nine years earlier, his 22 year old grandson took over as George III.

The poet Shelley later accurately described this George as "An old, mad, blind, despised and dying king". On one occasion, while driving through the Royal Park at Windsor, he stopped his coach, got out and tried to shake hands with an oak tree that he believed was Frederick the Great of Prussia. Finally, in 1811, George opened Parliament by beginning his speech: "My Lords and Peacocks..." This was too much even for Parliament. George III was declared unfit to rule and was locked away in Windsor castle. His eldest son took over as Prince Regent, even though he was secretly married to a Catholic.

This individual seemed to spend much of his time being shot at by the unemployed, who sadly never managed to aim straight. What worried Parliament was that if one of them ever did, the first 17 candidates for the throne had no children who could legally inherit. The succession had to be secured and there was a flurry of Royal weddings. Eventually the Duke of Kent and Princess Victoria produced a legitimate daughter, Victoria. Parliament was profoundly relieved.

George III finally died in 1820 (still locked up in Windsor Castle), and the Prince Regent became briefly George IV. He was followed by his brother as William IV and then by Victoria.

It is around this time that the myth of the modern monarchy was built up. She was, unusually for an English monarch, highly respectable. She dutifully produced a large number of legitimate children, thus ensuring the succession. Her grasp of the real world can be assessed from the fact that female homosexuality has never been illegal in Britain; Victoria refused to believe that women did that sort of thing, so it was exempted from legislation.

Her successor, Edward VII, managed only to get a reputation for cheating at cards and to restrict his personal scandals to illicit affairs with actresses - nothing so criminal as secretly marrying a Catholic. His successor was George V who, on being told that a famous man was a homosexual, replied, "But I thought chaps like that shot themselves". Then, neither liberalism or intelligence have ever been necessary qualifications for occupying the throne.

The successor to George V was Edward VIII. He wanted to marry a divorced American commoner, Mrs Simpson. He was also a great admirer of Adolf Hitler. The British ruling class might not have worried about all this - they certainly had no objection to fascism so long as it kept the working class in order - if they had not seen war coming with Germany. Consequently Edward was forced to abdicate. He immediately dashed off to Berchtesgarden to meet Hitler, who described him as "an ideal fascist monarch". In fact Edward, who had been made Duke of Windsor, continued to support Nazism and maintained with Nazi agents throughout the war. In 1940 the Spanish foreign minister reported: "The Duke definitely believes that continued severe bombing would make England ready for peace". After the war Edward happily settled down next door to the equally fascist Oswald Mosley in Paris.



His brother and successor, George VI, broke with Royal tradition by marrying a commoner. This was Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, the current Queen Mother and a great admirer of failed white supremacist Ian Smith. Their eldest daughter is the present Queen and mother of a bevy of undistinguished princes, one of whom is the all too familiar Andrew.

There is a great myth that, while this revolting spectacle was being played out through the centuries, the English remained devoted, dog-like supporters of the monarchy. Obviously the English royal family has survived longer than most of their European counterparts, but throughout its history there has been a current of English republicanism. And republican ideas have at times won mass support.

It was Charles I, of course, who first discovered just how shaky the English throne could become. The chief theoretician of republicanism at the time was the poet and Cromwellian foreign minister, John Milton. Less than a fortnight after Charles' execution he published a book entitled: "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates; proving that it is lawful, and hath been held so through the ages, for any, who have the power, to call to account a tyrant, or wicked king, and after due conviction, to depose, and put him to death".

Just before the Restoration of 1660 he broadened his ideas into more general republican principles, arguing:

"People must needs be bad or strangely infatuated that build the chief hope of their common happiness or safety on a single person... The happiness of a nation must needs be firmest and certainest in a full and free Council of their own electing, where no single person, but reason only sways".

John Milton was no socialist. The revolution which he participated in was fought in the interests of the landlords and the merchants - the embryonic capitalist class - who led it. Yet the main strength of the revolution had come from the working people of the towns and fields and some of these developed more radical ideas. After

all, if kings were unnecessary, why bother with landlords or merchants? Republicanism had dangerous implications for the new ruling class. So the working-class radicals - the Leveller soldiers and the civilian Diggers - were smashed by Cromwell's generals, who then negotiated the return of the monarchy.

The next great upsurge of republicanism began at the end of the eighteenth century. The chief mouthpiece of the English republicans in this period was the journalist Thomas Paine, whose comments on the origin of the English royal family has already been quoted in this article. Paine wrote many best-selling books and pamphlets, the most famous of which is "The Rights of Man". He launched an especially fierce attack on the concept of the hereditary monarchy:

"Hereditary succession is a burlesque upon a monarchy. It puts it in the most ridiculous light, by presenting it as an office which any child or idiot may fill. It requires some talents to be a common mechanic; but to be a king, requires only the animal figure of a man - a sort of breathing automaton".

Thomas Paine saw the American and French revolutions (of 1776 and 1789) as inspiration for lovers of freedom everywhere, and the spread of republican ideas as the guarantee of the new world. There were a few capitalists and intellectuals who to some extent, began to distance themselves from the idea of the monarchy. But active republicanism was a different matter. When the French revolutionaries executed Louis XVI, the British bourgeoisie joined other European nations in launching a savage war against the infant French republic.

Once again, republicanism proved to have dangerous implications for the ruling class. If, as Paine had argued, there was no justification for hereditary monarchy how could any hereditary social power be justified? Others did take the ideas of republicanism to that conclusion, the working-class radicals. Ever since, English republicanism has been inextricably tied to the socialist movement.

We anarchists should be proud to stand in this tradition and to proclaim our open hostility to the House of Windsor. The ideological battle against monarchy is still an essential part in our fight for a free society. Although the real power of the modern English monarchy is feeble - Charles III will be nowhere near as important a political figure as Charles I - the throne still represents and justifies the interests of the capitalist class. Only the working class has an interest in the overthrow of the monarchy. Two hundred years ago Thomas Paine understood what the English royal family stood for:

"Monarchy would not have continued so many ages in the world, had not it been for the abuses it protects. It is the master? fraud, which shelters all others."



child



sexual abuse

There is a lot of talk at the moment about child, sexual abuse; however, most of this is from a conservative stance, ie they wish to see the problem dealt with whilst still upholding the root cause of the problem - the family as we now know it. Those who decry child molesters and uphold the sacred family are hypocrites - the child is at risk from her/his father because the father's authority is protected by the very attitudes of family privacy.

Social workers do a very nice line in working to "keep the family together", ie exposing the child to having to live with her rapist in fear, until she is old enough and has money enough to leave home. Many children fail to tell anyone of the problem because they are not believed and, if they are, they fear the break up of the home which results and for which they wrongly bear the guilt.

All women have experienced molestation from male relatives to a greater or lesser extent. Remember Uncle ... who dandled you on his knee, your legs spread and he enjoyed it more than you did? Or Daddy insistently kissing you on the lips when all you wanted to offer was a cheek? The rest of the family colluded: "Give Daddy a big kiss", "Don't be shy". The whole pack egging him on and you had to conform. Several studies from the USA estimate that 1 in 4 women experience sexual assault from an adult male before they're 16. Do we really think children don't know what is going on? They may not have the words to articulate it but they are certainly aware of their powerlessness and the pressure to satisfy the male at whatever cost to their bodily integrity.

Girls are initially closest to their mothers but then they seek to gain their father's approval because he can offer access to the outside world. They may either try to imitate their mothers and use feminine wiles or be direct like their brothers and find themselves called tomboys and not taken seriously.

Mothers get blamed because girls do not realise mothers' powerlessness - after all, father is a meal ticket for both. Girls feel betrayed if mothers do not notice what is going on, even if they are not told. Mothers are closer and easier to be angry with. For mothers to face the truth about their husbands' behaviour is almost impossible (that's why the wife is always the last to know about adultery).

Gillick's attitude that children deprived of sex education will have no sexual desire is what causes the ignorance that makes children vulnerable. I was telling my younger daughter one day that she didn't have to put up with her male cousin pawing her and she was quite surprised to learn that she had the right to control her own body. That is not what her school, christian father or society had taught her. They had said that a female body is there to please males and is not her own.

It is now known that we all start wanking in the womb, so it's no good parents trying to prevent their children starting to have sexuality. However, this is not to mean that if a father rapes his daughter, she was "asking for it". Men will interpret anything as "asking for it" to absolve themselves. Women are pressured by society into wearing clothes, especially shoes, and holding our bodies in a way to attract men and then we are punished for obeying society's dictats. Men want it both ways - to abuse us and then for the victim to bear the blame. Men choose to interpret children's openness and affection as sexual, thereby abusing trust. Adult men discipline girls in violent and/or humiliating ways making them fear resistance. We all assume the right to touch children without their permission. Perhaps this is wrong.

Our world is built on male supremacy: his needs are satisfied. If men cannot take what they need from a wife (and she is blamed for not giving) or from another adult, there is always someone who has to obey - secretary, granddaughter, niece, schoolchild, daughter. Children are economically and physically dependent on their parents. How could they resist? Children's physical and economic dependence is exaggerated by their lack of civil rights and the protection of parents who use arbitrary discipline. The only solution is twofold: to deny that adults are in any way superior to children and should therefore be automatically obeyed and secondly to do away with the family as we know it. It is an unhealthy grouping of isolated individuals taking out their neuroses on each other.

Parental authority is the greatest power short of the state. Because children have no status, money, place to go, the emotional and psychological dependence on adults is frightening. A girl is commanded to "love" her father and then if he confuses love with sex she is to blame. Sex is linked to shame and not openly discussed. Therefore the "problem"

of incest is first of all difficult to name. One way of coping with abuse you cannot name is to "forget" it but the effects still occur. Because wanking is prevented by parents or repressed to a hidden shameful activity, some girls may not know what the adult male is doing to her or why she has strange feelings about it.

My children were taught in school to avoid "strangers" and it took some persuading to convince them that the teachers were really too embarrassed to say "rapists". These rapists are not necessarily "strangers" but on the contrary could be fathers or family friends. It is more likely to occur in some homes than others - a third of offenders in a recent survey done by the Incest Crisis Line were policemen and many were soldiers - surprise! surprise! Needless to say I didn't concur with the school view that children should go to the police for help.

At first sight it surprised me that so much press coverage has been given to forcible incest, coverage that would encourage the victim to seek help and not feel alone. Is male supremacy weakening its grip? No, I think not. Like capitalism, patriarchy is very good at giving small reforms to prevent the major revolution. After all, reforms are mere indulgences which can and will be withdrawn again. The family is under threat from many sides and, if a few reforms will save the basic concept, all conservatives except the Moral Majority will be happy to allow these reforms for the greater battle of protecting the long term future of the place where authority is taught - the home.

GAY ANARCHIST NETWORK

If anyone, anywhere, is interested in establishing a network of lesbian and gay anarchists, to make contacts and keep in touch, exchange ideas, propagandise (maybe produce a paper) and meet when possible, then write to : MOJ, Box B.L.A.G., 37, Stokes Croft, Bristol BS2 3PY, or Paul, Box 19, 17 Chatham ST. Reading, Berks.

AFTER CHANNON: MAY ALL LEADERS AND THE RICH DROWN IN A SEA OF THEIR OWN

VOMIT !!

© C.W.



1. Since the summer of 1985 LOS has been meeting regularly to discuss aspects of libertarian theory and practice. In particular, we share the concern that anarchist ideas have remained fairly static, irrespective of repeated experience of failure and defeat. A rather "helier than thou" attitude has allowed anarchists to blame the state, authoritarians and other external conditions. The possibilities that the ideas as they stand may not have some kind of inevitable, transhistorical relevance, and that having these ideas does not in itself lead to good libertarian practice, continually escape attention.

We have therefore concentrated on the details of failure of libertarian organisation, trying to pin down what it is about anarchist principles and anarchists in action that may be at fault. We have been very aware of the fact that few precedents exist for this kind of criticism and self-criticism among anarchists.

2. There are several contexts in which this examination of libertarian organisation is important. Most obvious are anarchist groups or movements, and organisations whose structures have been strongly influenced by libertarian individuals or principles. But equally important are situations where ordinary people come together in groups and spontaneously choose basic anarchist structures. From the start we have tried to bring together analyses and critiques of these forms, stressing social and psychological factors rather than crude ideological rationalisations.

3. We began by focussing on specific personal experiences of libertarian groups or organisations breaking down or degenerating into authoritarian or hierarchical structures of one kind or another. These "case studies" included strike-support organisations, anarchist groups, housing co-ops and educational groups. From discussion of these, several prominent areas of concern arose. We then began to concentrate on these more general aspects of political groups.

4. Our first publication, a large pamphlet, is emerging from this work so far. In it we introduce our perspective, and discuss in some detail particular factors in political groups which we feel affect their activities profoundly. These include:

- The social ecologies in which groups operate,
- How admitting the impossibility of achieving absolute goals (such as a complete absence of authority) affects our understanding of anarchism,
- The effects of emotion,
- The development and influence of rituals.

These parts of the pamphlet are being written individually, and as far as possible we have tried to keep them rooted in the reality of groups as we experience, perceive, think and feel about them.

The final part of the pamphlet tries to assess where our activity up to now has got us, and where we might fruitfully go from there.

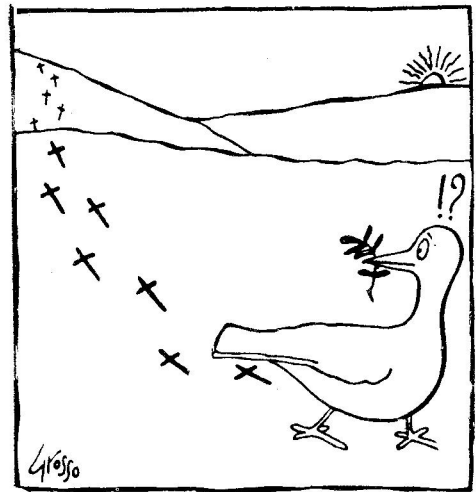
5. Our immediate intention is to get the pamphlet published. Up to now we have remained a small group of 5 or so individuals. We plan to expand somewhat, and to extend our contact with other anarchists and libertarians. If the pamphlet makes any impression we may try to continue in that vein and turn it into a semi-annual journal.

In addition, LOS as presently constituted is thinking of producing more diverse publications, analysing particular historical and current situations as well as hoping to move in more pragmatically useful directions. All of this depends, of course, on decisions made by any new, larger LOS.

It may be the case that our kind of enterprise works best in an affinity-group culture. If so, the single measure of value in what we are trying to do would be the growth of other like-minded groups, rather than the complacency to be derived from selling large numbers of pamphlets.

6. We are extremely interested in contact and correspondence with people who see some value in what we are trying to do. Please get in touch at:

LOS
c/o Durham Community Co-op Bookshop
85a New Elvet
Durham City
County Durham



apology

We would like to apologise to all of the people who sent letters to VIRUS with the intention of having them published.

Unfortunately, as is all too obvious by the layout, we are acutely short of space in this issue.

If the SWP member would like a personal reply to his (very long) letter please send us a contact address.

The articles in VIRUS do not necessarily represent the views of the A.C.F. as a whole but should be seen as contributions, by members and others to free discussion. We actively encourage free debate and welcome contributions.

Sarah's brother and
sister in virus scare



TROTSKY AND WORKERS CONTROL

During a recent demonstration, members of the Militant Tendency were heard to call for the nationalisation of industry under workers' control. This demand for industrial democracy, within a structure of nationalisation, stems directly from points made by their mentor, Leon Trotsky, in his TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME of the Fourth International, 1938. Most Trotskyists, at bottom, base their tactics on this pamphlet, this being the master's programme for world revolution. The purpose of this article, is to show that Trotsky's, and by extension perhaps, Trotskyists' attachment to industrial democracy is at best tenuous.

All governments are exploitative and need to hide this fact from their subjects. Various ideological means have been tried, throughout history, to justify domination and exploitation. One ploy was to give the ruler divine status (the royal families of ancient Egypt, Peru and Japan up to modern times, claimed to be gods, or related to gods). Then followed

the idea that rulers were god's representatives on earth, the so-called 'divine right to rule' (England, France etc.). More recently, rulers have claimed the right to govern on the basis of tradition, patriotism and democracy. In the so-called 'socialist bloc', leaders have justified their control, in part at least, on the basis of 'science'. By applying the 'revolutionary science' of history and economics to society, Marxists have claimed the right to run their states. It must be said, however, that this so-called scientific understanding, in their eyes, only allows them to act as agents of the working class, who are in a deeper sense, the rulers (even if they do not actually govern directly). Trotsky was perhaps not aware of this contradiction in 'proletarian rule', for whilst in power himself, he talked of 'soviet power', as if the soviets had any real control over the state. The soviets, were in fact, mere transmission belts for the communists from very early in the life of the Bolshevik regime. In a near Rousseau like sense, Marxists claim to 'know' the general will of the proletariat, even if that class itself is not aware of it. In this way, Marxist rulers have been able to justify some of the most terrible acts of tyranny ever known.

Bakunin, writing in 'statism and Anarchy', had this to say about the likely effects of the application of Marxist science. "they will create a single state bank, concentrating in its hands all commercial, industrial and agricultural, and even scientific production; they will divide the mass of the people into two armies - industrial and agricultural armies under the direct command of the

state engineers who will constitute the new privileged scientific-political class". (Quoted in "The Political Philosophy of Bakunin" ed. G.P. Maximoff. p.289)

The stunning accuracy of Bakunin's prediction was realised after the success of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Towards the end of the civil war which followed the revolution, and when victory was in sight, Trotsky published his book "Terrorism and Communism" to justify some of the more extreme methods of the Communist dictatorship. The latter part of the book deals with the organisation of labour in socialist society. Several issues are dealt with - The compulsion of all to labour, the militarisation of the production process, a single, all embracing economic plan applicable to all the value of piecework and 'scientific' management, repression of 'slackers' and the subordination of the trade unions to the state in order to act as an other arm of management and the state.

In order to demonstrate Trotsky's commitment to industrial democracy, some quotations are in order. Remember, that in saying the following, that Trotsky claimed that his proposals were an expression of proletarian rule (as scientifically applied by himself and Lenin). Discussing the general organisation of labour, he has this to say. "The element of state compulsion not only does not disappear from the historical arena, but on the contrary will still play, for a considerable period, an extremely prominent part". (Terrorism and Communism, Ann Arbor paperback 1963, p.135). He continued by arguing that the great mass of humanity must be organised on military lines using military techniques to implement a single social and economic plan. And military techniques meant a direct transference of military discipline, command systems etc, to civilian life.

Trotsky was impressed enough by militarism to transfer army units to civilian work under a military system, rather than demobilise them. The military became involved as soldiers in civilian life and civilians were to be subject to military methods. To quote, "Consequently comrades, militarisation of labour in the root sense indicated by me, is not the invention of individual politicians or an invention of our War Department, but represents the inevitable method of organising and disciplining labour power during the transition from capitalism to socialism. (ibid. p.143).

Taylorism, scientific management combined with piecework techniques were roundly condemned by Trotsky as "the most concentrated methods of the system of sweating" within capitalism (ibid p. 146). In the new system, however, such methods became miraculously transformed (here he was echoing Lenin). He states that "Under socialist production piece work, bonuses, etc., have as their problem to increase the volume of the social product, and consequently to raise the general well-being. Those workers who do more for the general interest than others receive the right to a greater quantity of the social product than the lazy, the careless, and the disorganisers. (ibid p.149). Trotsky does not say how those who are weaker, older or infirm are to fare under such a system, perhaps he did not perceive it as a problem. In any case, piecework served to enforce strict labour discipline. He also conveniently omitted to mention the fact that Communist Party members, managers etc., received more than ordinary workers, regardless of their output.

True to form, Trotsky had little time for workers' self-management. Rather than work together, creating a cooperative enterprise, the workers were to try to outsmart each other. Different abilities should not be pooled, rather, under a system of one-man management, individual competition was to be encouraged. They (differing talents) "must be brought out and displayed in rivalry" (ibid p.166).

Capitalist-style, hierarchical management should not be viewed as some aberration, forced upon the Bolsheviks by the problems of the civil war, for as Trotsky made clear, "I consider that if the civil war had not plundered our economic organs of all that was strongest most independent, most endowed with initiative, we should have undoubtedly entered the path of one-man management in the sphere of economic administration much sooner, and much less painfully. (ibid p. 163). Industrial democracy was to Trotsky quite erroneous to the problems of socialist production - efficient administration was of far more importance.

Perhaps, even with one-man management the unions could have a significant role to play in representing the workers interests? No chance. Trotsky argued that "The young socialist state requires trade unions, not for a struggle for better conditions of labour - that is the task

of the social and state organisations as a whole.- but to organise the working class for the ends of production, to educate, discipline, distribute, group, retain certain categories and certain workers at their posts for fixed periods - in a word, hand in hand with the state to exercise their authority in order to lead the workers into the framework of a single economic plan"(ibid p.143).

Trotsky, in the above passages, prescribed all of the features which were to become the standard features of the process under Stalin. How then can present day Trotskyists advocate workers control (except in the most abstract form i.e. as a 'form' of proletarian rule)? The answer may be that Trotsky, having been defeated by Stalin had to do two things in order to try and wrest control of the international communist movement from Moscow. Firstly, he had to discredit the 'Stalinist system, and that meant demonstrating its anti-democratic features. Secondly, he had to try and present himself as the advocate of a more fair and democratic system than was available under capitalism. Thus, his TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME advocated, in a thoroughly opportunistic manner, industrial democracy.

The TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME advocated policies regarding industrial democracy which are poles apart from those of

TERRORISM AND COMMUNISM. NO talk here of compulsory labour armies, one-man management etc. Trotsky, for instance, advocated "factory committees" within capitalist enterprises as elements of dual power alongside "workers control" in a more general sense, to expose the "behind the scenes deals swindles" etc. IN regard to public works, he actually went so far as to recommend workers' self management, and ultimately, "On the basis of the experience of control, the proletariat will prepare itself for direct management of nationalised industry when the hour for that eventually strikes". (TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME, W.R.P. pages 20 - 23). Finally, in complete contradiction to his practise as a Soviet leader, he called for "Factory committees (which) should be returned the right to control production". (ibid p.51).

Trotskyists today are fonder of quoting the Trotsky of the TRANSITIONAL Programme rather than of TERRORISM AND COMMUNISM. Given the opportunity for latter day Trotskyists to exercise power one wonders if TERRORISM AND COMMUNISM might once again be given pre-eminence. Now, they stress democratic anti-capitalism. Given the almost inevitable crises which accompany all revolutions they may feel compelled to turn to the half forgotten text for dictators that is TERRORISM and COMMUNISM.

PSYCHIATRIC STRUGGLES **PART ONE.**

" Psychiatry is a very subtle method of repression in advanced capitalist society. Because of the subtlety few recognise the dangers shrouded by the mystification of 'modern medicine'. The psychiatrist has become the High Priest of technological society, exorcising the 'devils' of social distress by means of: psychosurgery - butchery of the brain; electric shock 'treatment' - plugging brains into the mains; and the use of heavy drugs - poisons that deform the central nervous system and create passive addicts." (1)

There are of course many dimensions of oppression in capitalist society besides class. We're all aware - hopefully - of sexism and racism in their various guises. Equally we recognise that the young and the elderly tend to get a particularly shitty deal in this society, as do sexual minorities. Anarchists have usually been much more consistent than the Party marxists in this respect, realising the importance of the self-organisation of all oppressed groups.

However, the massive repression and human damage inflicted by psychiatry has been almost a non-issue on the Left in recent years. The work of the pioneering 'anti-psychiatrists' - Szasz, Laing and Cooper - reached a mass audience in the '60s and early '70s, then sank into relative obscurity (in Britain at least). (I can remember an article by one of the Party hierarchy in an SWP internal bulletin a

few years ago holding up for ridicule branches who had held meetings on mental illness instead of concentrating on Leninist dogma...)

This silence must be broken - not only because of the human suffering involved, but also because of the increasing influence of the 'therapeutic' technocrats and their attempts to medicalise more and more aspects of dissatisfaction and dissent. (2)

The prevailing ideology in psychiatry is that 'mental illness' is a medical problem. Thus behaviour which is categorised as 'mentally ill' is treated as though it is caused by a physical disease process - usually a 'biochemical abnormality'. When someone has delusions, or is severely depressed, or feels continually suicidal the problem is said to be some faulty mechanism in the brain.

Naturally, emotions are accompanied by physiological and biochemical changes in the brain and nervous system. But feelings of, say, anger or despair or misery aren't the result of chemical malfunctioning; they are reactions to a particular situation or set of circumstances. What psychiatry does is to identify certain thoughts, feelings and emotional states as 'mad' - as pathological, senseless and in need of a physical cure. Such a judgement is invariably an ideological one.



Here are a few blatant examples of the way that psychiatry can operate as a weapon of political control:

i) A production line worker in a large factory is ordered to do extra tasks by his supervisors. The supervisor is told to piss-off. Shortly, the proverbial 'men in white coats' arrive and cart him off to a mental hospital; it takes three weeks before he can get himself out. The only evidence of 'insanity', besides his 'irrational' behaviour on the production line, is that he had been to see a psychiatrist over ten years earlier.

ii) An elderly, completely institutionalised man has spent much of his adult life in a mental hospital which is being closed due to cuts. Like many others, he will be dumped in a bed & breakfast lodging house where he will spend the rest of his life with no friends and virtually no ↗

money. He protests in the only way he can, by wrecking the ward. The psychiatrist pronounces that he has had a 'serious relapse' of his illness...

iii) An anarchist comrade, Michael Davies, in a Liverpool mental hospital wrote the following in a recent letter to The Sheffield Anarchist,

"...some psychiatrists from an ordinary (ie. not maximum security) mental hospital interviewed me with regard to being moved there. I was asked about my politics and espoused my pacifist-anarchist beliefs. The psychiatrists later told someone in authority here that they could not accept me because I had 'sadistic political fantasies' !"

While many equally vivid examples could be given, the politics involved are usually more subtle. Take the way that psychiatry deals with people who genuinely are distressed. Usually, if we care to look, confused or despairing behaviour is an intelligible response to confusing or painful circumstances in everyday life... An adolescent becomes the emotional scapegoat in an oppressive and claustrophobic family - is she then insane if she feels paranoid, or if she expresses her experiences in symbolic fantasies? Is the deadening depression felt by a woman whose life revolves around the monotonous drudgery of housework really a biochemical problem? Next time you feel so pissed-off that you want to hide away in a corner and curl up into a ball, make sure there's not a shrink about or you might suddenly find out that you're a catatonic schizophrenic...

The medical model of mental health - and it makes little difference whether it's the genetic or environmental version - has a definite ideological function. It equates 'abnormal' (ie. not socially-expected) behaviour with disease. It cannot recognise that the real roots of acute distress, or deep fear, or pent-up rage may be entrenched in the experience of everyday life in capitalist society; or in the values, roles and relationships associated with it. Medical psychiatry cannot recognise that when peoples' sex lives are riddled with lovelessness, manufactured fantasy and manufactured anxiety this will create problems in living. Or that there may be a rationale to the way that some people respond to boring, shitty work or the damaging effects of living in an authoritarian family.

The political issues involved in psychiatry are of real relevance to anyone fighting for a free society. In the U.K., 11% of men and 17% of women receive some kind of hospital psychiatric treatment at some point in their lives. Women are categorised as 'neurotic' or 'manic depressive' at over twice the frequency of men. A highly disproportionate number of people admitted to psychiatric institutions are from poorer working class areas. The facts underline both the extent and political character of the issue.

The second part of this article will deal with the other side of medical psychiatry - its techniques of enforced treatment ('sectioning'), heavy tranquilisation, electroshock and other repressive practices - and the re-emerging resistance to it.

NOTES:

(1) from the manifesto of the CAMPAIGN AGAINST PSYCHIATRIC OPPRESSION, c/o 18, Seymour Buildings, Seymour Place, London W1H 5TQ

(2) see the article "Killing with kindness" by D. Ingleby in New Internationalist no. 132, 1984

Asylum, a radical magazine dealing with the politics of mental health, is available for 50p + stamp from 19, Edgeware Road, Fulford, York YO1 4DG.