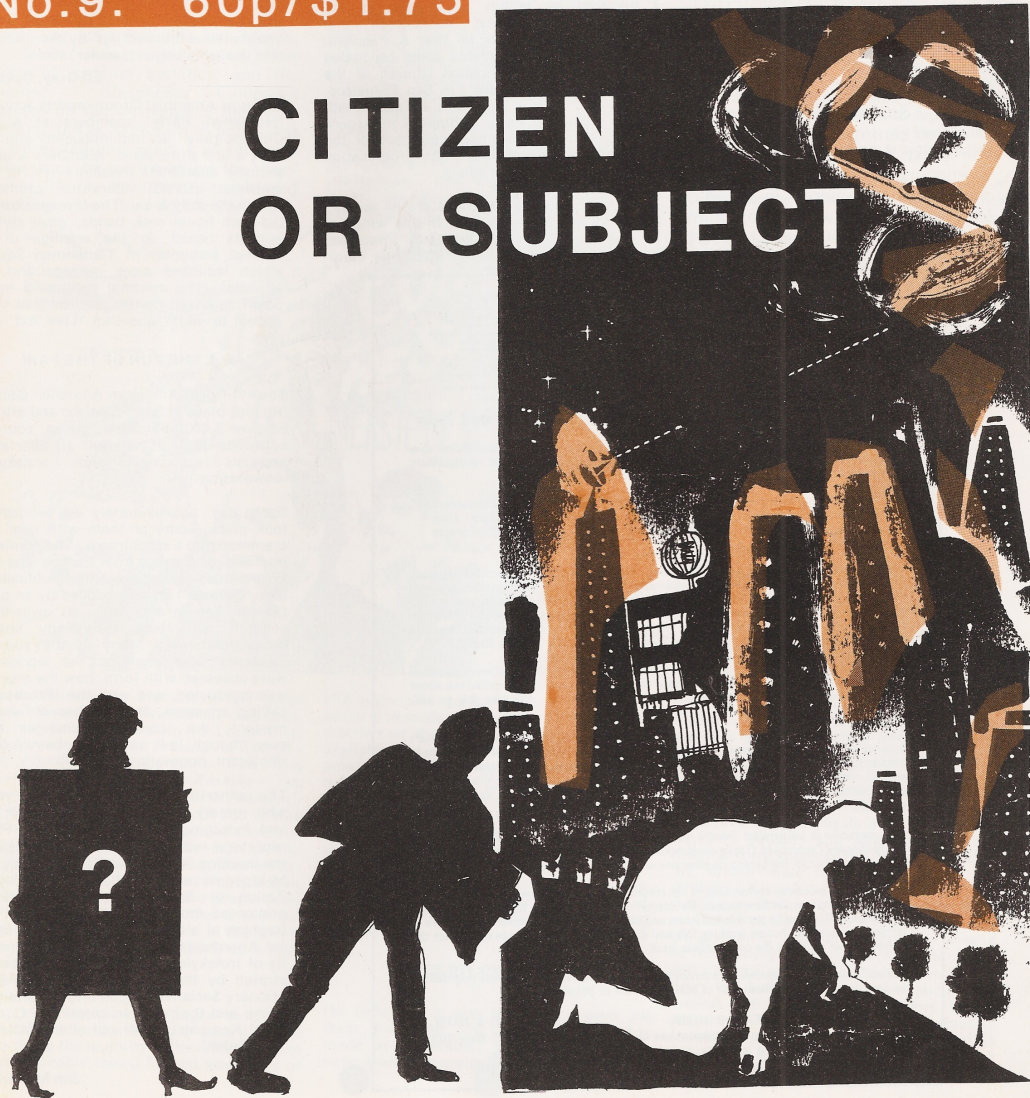


HERE AND NOW

Inside:
Rushdie Protests
/ Situationist Glamour.

No.9. 60p/\$1.75

CITIZEN OR SUBJECT



This issue was produced by the Scotland collective of the magazine.

The next issue will be arranged, edited & articles commissioned by the West Yorkshire collective. Letters, reports or features should be sent to their Leeds address.

All enquiries about Subscriptions, Exchanges, Back-Issues, copies for stalls, offers of distribution, payment/settling of sales etc., send to our new Glasgow address.

While the subject/citizen dimension explores an element of Statehood & nationalism, the appeal to readers to submit articles or letters has not evoked a response. However, we doggedly persist, whether it deals with third world, eastern europe or even 'celtic' issues, & request your views!

We also commend the example of the West Yorks Discussion Group & encourage the creation of informal circles anywhere. Go ahead, do it yourself & we'll supply any contacts that may be interested. Printed by Clydeside Press.

CORRESPONDENCE

Recalling your article in **H & N 3**, on the new groups in the leftist marketplace, I have information on a new political grouping.

In the San Francisco/Bay area a variety of opportunistic front organisations using titles such as Green Future, Green Party & Bernal Greens have been exposed as fronts of the Humanist Party. In Iceland, and spreading into parts of Europe this same grouping is more commonly known as the Humanist Party, and has adopted an apparently decentralist/non-violent quasi-libertarian left guise.

This party is run from top down by a wealthy Argentinian guru called Mario Cobos, known in his international 'Movement' as Silo. The Party has been denounced by bodies as diverse as the American Humanist Association and Information Network on War & Fascism. The latter have revealed some concealed links with the Unification Church of the Rev. Moon ['Moonies'] in San Francisco, although this is far from substantiated. The Humanist Party originated in Argentina during the intense repression of the 'Junta' and has linked to an organisation representing Industrialists.

Their recruitment methods are as authoritarian as Parties on the extreme wings of Fascism or Marxism-Leninism. Interested individuals are invited to afternoon meet-

ings in which they are eventually allowed to collectively engage in, after a personal intense briefing session using psychological techniques. The target for recruitment in Europe is impressionable teenagers, who are unused to coherent political philosophies and want to become part of a cause to save humanity. The goal is to recruit members to 'The Movement', 10 recruits ensures an individual can climb in the hierarchy, and opportunistic means such as engaging in community, green, and support for Chinese students have all been regularly used. When their policies are revealed, they stand for nuclear fusion as an alternative energy source and anthropocentrism and large scale harvesting of forests.

Hopefully the appeal of such a group, with bases in London and elsewhere will be as minimal as their politics, but many youngsters will be 'burned out' by their absorption in such a bogus 'secular' sect.

Ed Grey, Oakland

Glasgow Anarchist Group reports action by 'Humanist Party' members at a pro-Chinese rally they had innocently attended with a literature stall. Members acted to exclude anarchist, trotskyite (RCP), and bordigist (CWO) literature promotion within the rally area. The few speakers, in between banal rock bands, gave stylised appeals based on the emotion of the student slaughter in Tiananmen Square, which included mock outrage and soft appeals. The minimal politics, a hotchpotch, is based on the premise that youth appeal to youth and that 'Live Aid' lives on!

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

The 4th North American Anarchist Gathering took place in San Francisco and attracted over 2,000 anarchists, punks, counter-culturists and a handful of libertarian marxists (welcome) and trotskyites (unwelcome).

Each day approximately 24 workshops took place, some of them with over 150 crammed into a schoolroom. The dominant impression, coming from Europe was that the serious and well presented publications (see 'Listings') were produced by an older (25-40) age group with an overriding concern with how technology shapes social relations. Many of the younger elements who attended the workshops were obsessed with form, how the meeting was conducted, and with the 'Process' of calling speakers, the number of women present, the tone of exchanges etc., even though few anarchists betrayed an intolerant, dogmatic attitude.

The gathering included hundreds of youth who merely hung about, beating drums and indulging in 'weird' activity. Press reportage was restricted to this aspect, the invasion of the Financial District by 100 Mudpeople and the fiasco of a Day of Action in Berkeley where the police prevented most 'actions' apart from the trashing of a Coca Cola Lorry. The scope for Anarcho-leftism, given the unpopularity of trotskyism and stalinism, is demonstrated by the dissolution of the Revolutionary Socialist League into the anarcho-scene and their role in creating a Continental Anarchist paper out of the ashes of 'The Torch'.

Jim McFarlane

HERE
AND
NOW

The current issue contains:



An Invitation to rip, burn or defenestrate 'Here and Now'

Here and Now was launched in Glasgow in 1984 to universal acclaim. Billed as a magazine of radical tyres it punctured the inflated claims of a moribund revolutionary movement.

"The unending tolerance of the anarchist group produces an uneasy excrescence of cretins, sinners, animal libertines, buddhist pornographers, Irish publicans, windy builders, knife-artists, child abusers, pussycats and ice cream salesmen . . ."

Here and Now wants to turn your head around. We wish to re-arrange the dwindling stock of words which accurately describe the awful state of things, in pleasing symmetrical patterns. We consciously avoid the esoteric outpouring of sterile academicism, forever caught between analysis and critique, detournement and deconstruction, post-modernism and postman's knock. We consciously avoid the sterile outpourings of academic criticism as an end in itself. We despise big words. We're the fuckin' working class. This is England.

The so-called theorists of so-called change write their so-called analyses of every so-called struggle in the so-called world and think their so-called readers give a so-called shit about their so-called crap. Only **Here and Now** has the gen stuff. We take this as self-evident.

That the forces of opposition to the present system have manifestly bottled out doesn't surprise us. Nothing surprises us. We need a different kind of analysis from the plethora of contemporary theoretical novelties. Plus ca change. Readers of **Here and Now** need suspect nothing. We're not in it for the money and we haven't got a party. We have never met Colonel Gaddafi nor anyone associated with him. Some of us have been positively vetted.

The magazine is an artefact from a world that doesn't exist. It's a world where the Revolutionary Communist Group could never even have been imagined. Its a world where those who labour in the garden of ideas use only organic methods.

We abhor the ludicrous eschatology of the revolutionary left. We seek only to obliterate socialism, capitalism, fascism, racism, the internal combustion engine, liberalism, patriarchy and religion. We must be humble and warm and have lots of common sense. We will live in terraced houses with honest working folk and dig cobbles from the roadways. After the revolution we shall put the cobblestones back, tenderly, one by one.

We welcome all contributions. We do not despise large cheques. Rich people may deliver up their wealth to us without fear of personal abuse or physical injury.

All monies to- **HERE & NOW,**
c/o Transmission Gallery,
28 King St.,
Glasgow G1 5QP

HERE & NOW,
P.O. Box 109,
Leeds,
LS5 3AA

«The Tigers of Wrath»

After a brave foray into leafletting a Leeds March, John Barrett examines the Muslim mobilisation against the "Satanic Verses" and the liberal Rationality enshrined in Western notions of 'freedom'.

Probably against reason, two members of the West Yorkshire Discussion Group decided to leaflet the demonstration against 'The Satanic Verses' which was held in Leeds last March. The leaflet was printed up at short notice by another member, and the Legalise Blasphemy Campaign founded for the purposes of the intervention. It was important to imply that we were standing against *all* religions which seek to circumscribe the freedom of others. Brevity was considered more important than detailed polemic.

the case against restricting 'The Satanic Verses' to unbelievers like ourselves was put. There were a number of reactions. On the one hand there were some measured arguments delivered by some 30-40 year olds to the effect that the insult to Muslims contained in the book was so grave that banning it should take place 'just as *Spycatcher* was banned'. These people seemed quite happy to argue with us, although I think they doubted our motives. There were some older Muslims who simply said 'He has insulted our religion. You have insulted our religion', who were not open to argument. As the crowd grew some younger guys took up the argument in more strident

our intention was to present an example of reasoned opposition, not intimidation. We didn't persuade anyone, and I don't think we expected to, we were hoping to sow a seed of doubt in someone.

The "Rushdie Affair" throws out challenges to the radical movement which have been barely acknowledged. Billed as a struggle between radical scepticism and superstitious obscurantism, very real awkwardnesses have been stifled by such a simplification.

The first awkward reality is how the trend for a 'non-judgemental approach' towards other cultures (fostered by the very radical



The demonstration, overwhelmingly made up of Britons from the Indian sub-continent, marched from Chapeltown to Leeds Civic Hall. Slogans included: 'Freedom of Speech - Yes! Freedom of Insult - No!', 'Iran - You are not alone!', 'Come out Rushdie - You Mouse' and 'Down with Western Atheism'. Pictures of Khomeini were held and chants in what I assume was Punjabi, and shouts of 'Death to Rushdie' and 'Rushdie is the Devil'. The Yorkshire Evening Post estimated 2,000 people. Before we actually began leafletting it transpired that two people were beaten up by about 30 of the crowd for shouting 'Freedom of Speech' at the demo (if we'd known this, I don't think we would have begun).

and aggressive tones. A few of them were dressed in traditional robes. They asked us whether we thought *Mein Kampf* should be available for people to read. When we pointed out that it was available for people to read, they accused us of condoning the holocaust and screwed up some of our leaflets. There was both aggression and a willingness to argue, and stewards from the demonstration shepherded people away if the argument looked like becoming too heated. We didn't hang around, and after handing out a few leaflets to passers-by (some of whom affected to be frightened of receiving them) we left.

EURO-CENTRISM

Demonstrators quickly engaged us in conversations when leafletting began, with one of us doing the majority of the talking. Quite soon a sizeable crowd formed around us as

On reflection it was probably a good job there were only two of us, although this made us vulnerable. Numbers would not have made our argument any stronger, and

scepticism now challenged by the Islamic Establishment) has laid the basis for the conflict. The retreat from ideas, principles and ethics, and their replacement by a 'plurality of cultures' has been caused by a profound self-consciousness on behalf of radicals about the 'Euro-centric' and 'culturally specific' basis of their ideals of freedom, equality and solidarity. Indeed this self-consciousness has been reflected in the British State as a whole where the strategy towards cultures from abroad settling in Britain has been marked by a confusion as to whether assimilation and integration or cultural preservation should be the guiding principle. Broadly the Right and national government have favoured the first, the Left and local government, the second. It should not therefore be so surprising that the Muslim community should take the Left at its word and seek to enforce the dictates of Islamic law wherever there are Muslims.

In fact, written Muslim justifications for the banning of *'The Satanic Verses'* reflect the rhetoric of the assault upon *'Western Enlightenment'*. Mohammed Arkoun, Professor of Islamic Thought at The Sorbonne writes in *'Index on Censorship'*:

'..... the reaction that begins by invoking the names of Voltaire and Rousseau then goes on to human rights, the freedom of the artist and the writer etc. refers to known themes and to conquests of the spirit which are indeed precious to all of us. Nonetheless, you can't expect all other cultures to follow the trajectory traced for the last two centuries by France and Europe. To hold fast to this discourse alone would be to demand of other cultures that they enclose themselves in a specifically Western tradition of historical, intellectual and artistic development. This in turn would be a repetition of the colonial discourse, which 'legitimated' the domination of other people and cultures by exporting an indigenous civilisation elaborated in Europe.'

Here the same literary techniques as were exposed by Frank Dexter in the last issue of *HERE AND NOW* are used to make a complex relation a simple equation - Enlightenment = Colonialism. What began as an attempt to undermine the arrogant presumption of certain Western thinkers who extrapolated the particular of Europe onto the universal of the World, now finds itself being roped in to defend the persecutions of authoritarian priests. The fact that 'Enlightenment' and 'the West' are neither philosophical nor political unities is conveniently forgotten by the slippery Professor.

The crisis of confidence in the ideals of social hope does not only allow sophisticated logic-choppers like the professor to get his foot in the door, but far more seriously has generated a kind of cynical conservatism which has encouraged authoritarians from the streets of Leeds and Bradford to the mosques of Iran. The extent to which this conservatism has advanced can be seen in the approach of the British media to countries such as Iran (and which also, until recently, characterised much of the coverage of China).

In an article in the same *Index on Censorship* (5/89) Farzaneh Asari, an Iranian exile, outlined the conventional wisdom of the British media that Iran can only sustain either a Shah-type dictatorship or a Khomeini type theocracy. Such 'wisdom' condemns to nothing the aspirations of ordinary people in Iran for political freedom and social improvement which briefly came to the fore in the days of the Iranian Revolution before Khomeini took it over. The attitude is exposed by Asari in an article by Simon Jenkins in *The Sunday Times* (19/2):

'[The alternative to the Shah] was never a benign democracy. It was either a fierce military dictatorship or a primitive theocracy. Like most of the developing world, Iran was searching not for the best form of government but for the least bad. It got the worst..... No longer can we dismiss all 'strong leadership' governments as fascist and evil merely because they sometimes use authoritarian methods to maintain order and prosperity. Such a moral cosiness is simply out of date, a relic of Europe's 19th century liberal imperialists.'

REPORTS

Once again the necessary conflation (liberal imperialism) is used to support a despairing argument. Anyone using such a phrase clearly doesn't know anything about liberalism or imperialism, neither of which have much to do with the internally generated (and internally suppressed) aspirations of people in the 'developing world' for the 'best form of government'. Asari comments:

'What is significant in Jenkins' attitude is the permanent condemnation of the vast majority of humanity to a set of sub-human standards, according to which they may swing or hang between the Ayatollah and the Shah. Gone is the universal declaration of human rights, not as an immediate practical proposition, which it has never been, but as an ideal - without which full-blooded apartheid on a world-scale is the only logical proposition: a proposition with which Khomeini could not agree more.'

FUNDAMENTAL SUFFERING

The real sufferers from Islamic fundamentalism have been neither Salman Rushdie, nor Europe, nor America, nor the Soviet Union; it has been the Iranian people in particular and the masses of Muslim countries in general. Since the end of July 1988 over a thousand people have been executed in Iran, labour camps are now being set up to 'rehabilitate' over a million drug addicts (Independent 20/6), whereas the wider Muslim world holds the 1988 record for political executions. If we include the carnage of the Iran/Iraq war which left 1.8 million dead, it is fair to conclude that suspension of judgement for the sake of cultural diversity contradicts the radical spirit in whose name this suspension is performed.

Unlike Christianity, Islam from its inception has been attached to a state (The Prophet Mohammed was the ruler of the city state of Medina) and this might explain the difficulty Islam is experiencing when it becomes separate from the State. Which is not to say that there are not Muslims who are attempting to speed the process towards toleration, such as the Nigerian, Wole Soyinka, who has called on the U.N. to declare the 1990's a *'Decade for Secular Options'* and has condemned fundamentalism in the following terms:

'What response....Can we offer when.... horrifying events are sanctioned and promoted by a corporate existence which we call a state, when mass executions are routine, for no other cause than the courage of the victims which nerve them to resist state demands that they renounce their faith? A state where women are publicly lashed and even stoned to death for their refusal to submit to the jealously guarded dictatorship of male priesthood in matters of dressing or appearance? Where criminals, dissidents, adherents of dissenting faiths and economic saboteurs are lumped together under convent titles as 'agents of Satan on earth', 'enemies of the Living Faith' and other versions of religious rhetoric which then become their own authority for their consequent imprisonment, torture and dehumanisation'. (Index on Censorship 5/89).

But even acknowledging the presence (and past existence especially in the 9th century)

of a questioning Islamist faith does not expel the fear of the triumph of a totalitarian version of the religion in this country. Other factors militate towards it.

One of those factors is the continuing decomposition of the idea of a *'Black'* identity embracing Africans, Afro-Caribbeans and Asians from the Indian sub-continent. The polarity of black/white has not served Asians, and in particular Muslim Asians, well. An example of this can be seen in the Labour Party Black Sections movement insistence of a ratio of M.P.'s of 50:50 Asian and Afro-Caribbean despite the population ratio of 2.5 to 1.....The ferment against *'The Satanic Verses'* represents an assertion of Muslim identity separate from a *'Black'* one (as well as being separate from the host *'White'* one). The consolidation of the Imams power in Bradford has also been aided by the furore which seems to have silenced the Pakistani Left as feelings of entrenchment and isolation (some inspired by racial attacks, some inspired by bizarre notions of a Western conspiracy against Islam) serve to strengthen the traditional power structures. A side-effect of this affair should be the final burial of the notion that ethnic minorities are somehow a natural repository of radical and libertarian ideas. Nor has the parasitic relationship of the Labour Party with *'its'* ethnic minorities escaped exposure as the absence of radical socialist voices from the Muslim communities (with the exception of literati like Tariq Ali, or Rushdie himself) reveals Labour's failure to impart even the most basic of socialist principles, such as freedom of expression, to its once-captive constituency.

The self-assertion of Islam in Britain appears against a background of Muslim invisibility, either in the category of black, or as a passive constituency of Labour voting small shopkeepers. But there is also another awkwardness which has aided the resurgence of this religion in its fundamentalist forms (and which is reflected less dramatically in other religions). This awkwardness emerges from the perceived spiritual wasteland of the *'West'*.

Nobody looked very rich on the demonstration. Amidst the photos of Khomeini and the veiled-up women's section could be detected a defiance that went beyond the demand for the extension of the blasphemy laws. It was a ceremony a living faith directed against a cadaverous secularity which threatened to take even this away from them. Writing in the *Guardian* (27/2) Shabbir Akhtar said:

'Many writers often condescendingly imply that Muslims should become as tolerant as modern Christians. After all, the Christians faith has not been undermined. But the truth is, of course, too obviously the other way. The continual blasphemies against the Christian faith have totally undermined it. Any faith which compromises its internal temper of militant wrath is destined for the dustbin of history, for it can no longer preserve its faithful heritage in the face of the corrosive influences.'

Quoted in *'Labour & Trade Union Review'* (see note 1) -

SPIRITUAL WASTELAND

The true comparison for the Rushdie affair, and which has been expediently forgotten amidst the cant about Spycatcher, is the controversy over the film 'The Last Temptation of Christ'. There, despite the efforts of some priests and demonstrations outside cinemas the spirit of secularity completely defeated the Christian lobby. It is precisely this weakness which the Muslims do not want to repeat.

To Islam Christianity and secularity are indistinguishable. Picking up (again) from 'post modern' theorists on the exhaustion of the 'Western project' Islamists put their religion forward as part of the solution to the disenchanting Enlightenment:

'In fact I believe the teaching of the history of religions has particularly suffered from dogmatic secularism. The general culture of Europe remains impregnated by the philosophy of the Enlightenment, which has admittedly permitted real progress [notably in its affirmation of human rights], but within a cultural framework that today seems to me to be outmoded....The West's perception of human rights, grounded in positivist and historicist rationalism, only reinforces its misunderstanding with Islam, which has thought out the issue of human rights in the grander context of the Rights of God, by which I mean the space open to the Absolute of God, as defined in the metaphor of the olive tree.'

Mohammed Arkoun (I. of C. 5/89).

Such a statement represents both a caricature of the 'West' and if it had been more carefully targeted, a fair criticism of certain tendencies in the modern world (and that includes Islamic States). For the hegemony of technological forces and functional thinking has brought about, as G.K. Chesterton remarked, the kind of madness where one loses everything but one's reason. At this level Islam represents a real challenge to the bland, smug and complacent optimism of a rationalist-utilitarian establishment which considers that the world has somehow outgrown its capacity for radical evil. The notion that all the world needs is a further extension of technological expertise and market relations, which seems to be a common ideology of ruling classes East and West (with only the partial exception of Iran) clearly is beginning to grate on significant proportions of the world's population. And in as far as the 'irrational' idea of reverence for something is sneered at by all the secular ideologies, some understanding can be gained of the very public manifestations of faith which the British Muslims are exhibiting. And it is certainly that rejection of the limits of reason which has made Khomeini a surrogate (and now from beyond the grave) leader. In a lecture 'Veils of Darkness, Veils of Light' Khomeini writes:

"It has been said that 'Knowledge is the thickest of all veils', for pursuit of knowledge causes man to be preoccupied with rational and general concepts and hinders him from embarking on the path. The more knowledge increases, the thicker the veil becomes, and the scholar may come to imagine that the knowledge he has achieved rationally represents everything. For man is arrogant as long as his skin contains him, and any branch of learning he has studied and mastered he regards as the sum total of perfection'.

EVERY RELIGION IS A BIASPHEMY TO OTHER RELIGIONS & ALL RELIGIONS ARE OFFENSIVE TO ATHEISTS -

AS UNBELIEVERS, WE ACCEPT YOUR RIGHT TO INSULT OUR UNBELIEF & TO SAY WHAT YOU WILL

-BUT WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE RIGHT OF ANY GOVERNMENT OR ANY RELIGION TO TELL US WHAT WE MAY OR MAY NOT READ

IF A BOOK OFFENDS YOU - THEN DO NOT READ IT. WHAT HAVE THE FAITHFUL TO FEAR FROM THE FREEDOM OF OTHERS?



Khomeini also appeals to those who cannot accept modern capitalism's cult of the commodity:

'The criterion is attachment, the ties that bind man to things. These ties may make man an enemy of God when he sees them being severed at the end of his life, so that he then leaves the world in a state of enmity towards God. So, curtail your attachments: we will leave this world whether or not we are bound in affection to something'.

As long as the 'West' is associated with the culture of indulgence and immediacy, of the absence of the idea of the sacred, of the reduction of human experience to its functional necessities writ large, then Islam, and all the other authoritarian religions have an opening.

HORSES OF INSTRUCTION

However, perhaps the time has come to stop talking about the 'West' at all. The idea that all the phenomena of Europe, America and Australia can be wrapped up in one category seems absurd. For as long as rationalist-utilitarianism has held sway it has had its

indigenous opposition. It is as much a mistake to identify the 'West' as a consistent body of ideas as it is to identify the people of Iran with Islamic fundamentalism. For a start the proliferation of non-State religions indicate that the idea of sacred and the idea of authority can be separated.

The critique of the domesticating and pacifying nature of a rationalism that insists on reducing everything to the banality of the manipulable is as much internal, as external to the 'West'. As Ian Sampson identified in *HERE & NOW 7/8* the refusal of radical reasoners to recognise the real need for the idea of a spiritual homecoming has let all kinds of messianic tendencies out of the box, sometimes with terrible results. William Blake warned some time ago that *"The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction"*, and the horses are continually being surprised by the skin-deep nature of reason amongst people despite 'education'. However, it is equally a mistake to succumb to the temptations of religion which have prepared for the faithful an understanding of the world no less limited and disenchanting than that of scientific management. Secularity and toleration are achievements which once a society strays from tend to lead to tyranny and witch-hunting. In the 'post-modern' world the pre-modern is a perpetual attraction, but to succumb is only to prolong the agony of the return of doubt and freedom. The attempt to re-establish a mythical human community in Kampuchea (see *HERE & NOW NO.1*) was a secular version same impulse. Any idea of the Universal for human beings will have to include the apparent opposites of enchantment and toleration, spiritually and materialism, awe in the sacred and scientific understanding of the real. And, perhaps already glimpses of a possible reconciliation can be seen in the developments of modern science - an investigation which perhaps this magazine could encourage. The twin dangers of dogmatism and relativism have been exposed by the Rushdie affair - we cannot swing between these two positions forever.

John Barrett

Notes.

1) Labour & Trade Union Review is the journal of The Ernest Bevin Society, which seems to have developed from the heretical British and Irish Communist Organisation. Some of the ideas of this article have come from this journal available from 114 Lordship Road, London, N16 0QP. For an anti-Rushdie, pro-visionary stance see 'Rushdie's Insult' by John Michell, 11 Powis Gardens, London, W11.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND POWER ★★★★★★★★★★

A major gathering of writers, activists and anti-authoritarian individuals will be held in **Govan, Glasgow** between the 10th & 12th of January 1990.

One of the organisers, **Jim Kelman** says that the event has sub-headings, "a life task, a political task" and "tradition & existence". The philosopher and political activist **Noam Chomsky** has agreed to come and lead the opening forum. Other literary figures from home & overseas & radical/community activists have been invited.

If you would like to attend, or lead a discussion or simply want more details, write to the **Free University, c-o Transmission Gallery, 28 King St., Glasgow G1 5QP**. There will be social events in the evening. p.s. This has absolutely nothing to do with the European City of Culture shite!

Shroud a fake ~ Official !

New Times as the Euro-Communists update the 'British Road to Stalinism'. Alex Richards is amazed at the lack of substance behind the rhetoric.



Great claims have been made for the novelty of the 'New Times' relic now being clutched by the Communist Party of Great Britain. The self-described 'realistic Left' are continually genuflecting to 'post-Fordism', apparently a concept with a pleasing loose fit and none of that unpleasant tightness experienced when wearing the older Stalinist weave.

Post-Fordism gives the appearance of being a political concept which allows a grasp to be regained on the nature of modern societies. Most importantly for its acolytes, it seems to allow Leninism to be rejected without repudiation of past errors. Leninism is viewed as the natural form of socialist thought and action in the period of the mass worker, but one which is now outmoded as mass culture gives way to market-driven lifestyle fragmentation.

Whereas medieval relics had to be manufactured with the appearance of something ancient, the 'New Times' weave has to appear radically new. And examination of some of its threads shows that they are not as new as they are represented. For example, Stuart Hall's 'Brave New World' turns to Berman, Lyotard and Baudrillard to ring the changes, and in doing so, he shifts Baudrillard's critique of the pretensions of productivist Marxism, *The Mirror of Production*, to 1979, safely into the New Times era. Unfortunately, the book was published in 1973 in France and in 1975 in the USA. So if Leninism became obsolete through no fault of its own, when did this occur?

And when we find Centrepiece taken as a symbol for the new age, as occurs at the very beginning of Robin Murray's article 'Life After (Henry) Ford', we are entitled to ask whether this is the Sixties or the Eighties? For the notable feature of office blocks built in the late Sixties is their incompatibility with business requirements of the Eighties: they do not permit the false floors and ceilings needed for a wired office.

Overlaid on this apparent grounding in new conditions of production, distribution and consumption is a colour-supplement celebration of novelty for its own sake: smart cards, home banking, lifestyle analysis, it's all there, blending in with the now obligatory celebration of 'New Social Movements'.

'Robots and computers are familiar parts of

our workplaces, just as satellite television will become familiar in our living rooms.' Just as ... Perhaps this is a recognition that work and leisure are interlocking parts of the reproduction of capital? But no, the 'just as' is another celebration of modernity: later we find that the problem with satellite tv is that it will transform 'one of the most important acts of mass consumption, which is vital to the quality of information in a modern democracy'. The democracy of simulation of debate, the simulation of decision.

It might have been expected that Marxism Today's celebration of *Live Aid* as the beginning of the end for 'Thatcherism' would now be passed over in silence. But their ideologues have the strength of their convictions, for here it is again. Not a word about the merchandising of such events, about the career moves, about the politics of gesture, about spectator passivity. No, events from *Live Aid* to Red-Nose Day are manifestations of a 'progressive, humanitarian internationalism [which] combines many of the elements of successful opposition to Thatcherism. It has drawn millions into politics.' At which point Hans Christian Andersen could provide a textual critique: 'The Emperor's New Clothes'.

In among this pursuit of the new, some colours fade quicker than others. The clearest definition of the moment when the 'New Times' issue of *Marxism Today* was compiled comes when we find *Next* and its former boss, George Davies, depicted as the future—only three months before his sacking amidst rising losses incurred by his ventures.

Carbon-dating these threads, we find that they are not what they appear. The colours of the woven text are intended to disguise the shape under the shroud—the preserved body of Leninism. But as the chances of a politics based on Leninism ever again exerting significant influence recede, its adherents have to find some compensation in the real world. 'Progressive consumerism' will apparently fill this role, offering the chance to cut consciences to this season's fashions. In consumerism—'highly personalised, individualised, the area of life where people feel most expressed and free'—the ex-politicos will declare their preferences for Benetton over Burton.

Alex Richards

No Poll Tax rebellion

Will Poll Tax opposition in England avoid the stranglehold of Militant domination? Jim McFarlane draws lessons from the Scottish civil disobedience & cautions against optimistic & exaggerated interpretation.

The story so far.....

In *Here & Now 6*, the resistance in Scotland to the imposition of the Poll Tax was contrasted to the Anti-Census opposition in West Germany; the issue of a 'popular sovereignty' was developing, undermining Labour compliance with lawful protest; and effective opposition was polarising between a non-payment minority and those persuaded to, reluctantly or not, comply with its imposition.

Over a year since these comments it is evident, that despite a sustained assault by the Councils, established Institutions and media, that the Scottish Anti Poll Tax Federation and the Scottish National Party have persuaded hundreds of thousands of Scots to refuse payment of the Tax. A combination of disarray in Council collection and in the case of Strathclyde, deliberate silence on the scale of non-payment, means that it is difficult at this stage (July 1989) to identify how many citizens are prepared to refuse co-operation to the extent of having Benefit, Wage or Savings arrestments, and potentially Warrant Sales of luxury goods after their pointing under the Debtors (Scotland) Act of 1987.

It is likely that the scale of such resistance, not including those who delayed payment till the third instalment was due, will reach the 20% estimate mentioned in early Government statistics referring to the militant minority composed of non-registrants and non-payers. (1)

The architect of the Community Charge (Poll Tax), Michael Forsyth and the 'free market' Adam Smith Institute, have based their strategy 'on exploiting the discomfort of Labour Councils squeezed between a vocal minority refusing to pay and the 'silent majority' incensed at the level of the Charge' (*H & N 6*). The acid test of appealing unashamedly to the pure material self-interest will be the Regional Elections of May 1990. By this juncture the memory of Labour compliance will still be vivid, especially among those who have been pursued as debtors, the tactical subsidy of the 1989 subsidy to Strathclyde (worth £57 per head to each Glasgow citizen) will disappear, and Government levers on the Rate Support Grant will force Councils to either push up the level of the Poll Tax or accelerate the privatisation or dismantling of Council services.

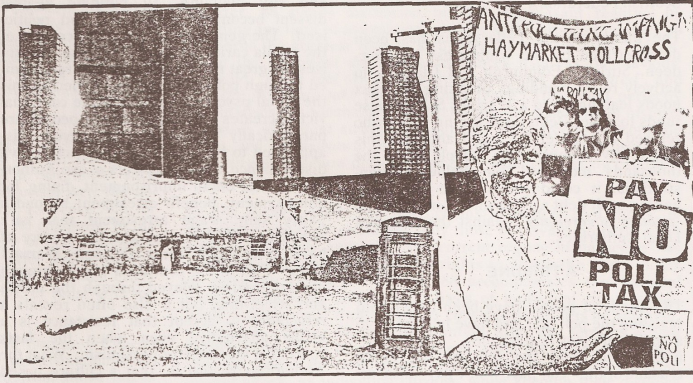
The electoral message of the Euro Elections in June 1989 illustrate that the Tory master-plan has barely shored up its middle class support in formerly high rated housing and is still suffering seepage to the SNP and Labour. The targeted local authorities for the low poll tax bribery are Lothian Region and Edinburgh District which have 'Left'

images (unlike their unapologetic collaborationist counterparts in Strathclyde Region and Glasgow) and SNP strongholds in Tayside and Grampian.

The Labour Party, through the Trade Union bloc votes, surmounted the challenge to be committed to Non-Payment in September 1988 at the Govan conference. Since the debacle two months later when Jim Sillars of the SNP won the Govan Parliamentary By-Election, riding the anti-poll tax and pro-Home rule bandwagons, they have arrested the tide by presenting non-payment as gesture politics that weakens Council finances (2) and promoting the cause of a Scottish Assembly based on 'A Claim of Right' (see Alex Richards commentary on this). At the Glasgow Central By-Election the strategy worked: rising the crest of mid-term Government unpopularity, the credibility that they could gain a majority over the Tories weakened the SNP case that chasing votes in the south of England wouldn't result

when the evidence of saturation postering gave an impetus for new groups to emerge.

The original opportunism of the Revolutionary Communist Party and miniscule Workers Party of Scotland prior to Registration in April 1988 was submerged by the policy of 'Militant' to make anti-poll tax opposition the cornerstone of its strategy to deselect right wing collaborationist Councillors and Members of Parliament in a groundswell of anger diverted into the Labour Party. The high powered mobilising appeal, especially geared to the young, was especially successful in housing schemes such as Pollok and areas of social deprivation in the east end of Glasgow. In these areas, 'Militant' operates on a totalitarian basis and the necessity to embrace pluralism in the form of participating in broad based local groups, and in the Federations has been a 'pill' that the Revolutionary Socialist League (i.e. 'Militant') has had to swallow to enhance the credibility



in the Poll Tax being abolished by voting Labour, aided ironically by 'Militant' canvassing which advocated voting Labour without endorsing its sabotage of anti-poll tax resistance and its expulsions of 'Militant' entrant Party members.

SATURATION

The 'Duke of York' tactics of Labour and Trade Union token opposition to the Poll Tax - leading the army up to the top of the hill only to lead it back down demoralised without a fight - has been outflanked in terms of community based resistance not by the SNP but by the Federations of Regionally and locally organised anti-poll tax groups. Although a comprehensive movement proved beyond the ambition of these groups, the early highpoint of anger generating local groups in Glasgow and Edinburgh (3) was re-stimulated in the non-payment period

of the Federations, which by and large, they dominate in terms of Executive power and Conference policy.

In Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and smaller towns such as Stirling and Montrose, the influence of 'Militant' has been less decisive and occasionally absent. In inner city Edinburgh, after the failure of early registration machinations, 'Militant' members have had to accept joint work in politically diverse groups. The Community Resistance network of libertarian socialists, together with miniscule sects such as the Revolutionary Democratic Federation & Scottish Socialist Party, have presented an alternative way of organising and regularly opposed 'stitched-up' token protests in connivance with 'Left' Councillors (4). The public profile of 'Community Resistance' also has stimulated in London, Leeds and other English cities

scores of groups operating on self-determining, pluralist and direct actionist principles.

In Glasgow, independent pluralist groups are less in evidence, partly due to less willingness on the part of Left groups (notably the Socialist Workers Party) to adopt a constructive approach, preferring a defeatist analysis based on Non-Collection through the Unions or nothing. The examples of non 'Militant' dominated groups range from 'Top down' groups like Govan led by Communist Party of Britain (i.e. 'Morning Star') figures; groups such as Pollokshields which have had constant battles between participating in the Federation and endorsing the tokenist 'Committee of 100'; Woodlands, the most libertarian influenced group, and my experience in Ibrox/Cessnock of a group with assorted leftists operating collectively out of the necessity of bolstering a minority in an area tarnished with Loyalist associations.

In such an area, the example of anti-poll tax organising is almost unique in recent years (leaving aside the electoral circuses of canvassing etc.), and the public profile of streetstalls, mass leafleting and Public meetings has bolstered the resolve of hundreds of individuals, who otherwise may have felt too atomised to have the confidence to withhold or refuse payment. This role for local anti-poll tax groups, rather than the fantasy of leading an 'Army' ['Militant'], has been to act as a 'tribune' of resistance countering the collaborationist views widespread in the media and to provide local substance of activity not directed by manipulative, demonic organisations (as the media has tried to represent 'Militant' and the Scottish Federation).

The mettle of the Federations has been demonstrated by the willingness in Aberdeen, Stirling, Edinburgh and Glasgow to actively resist poindings (marking of select goods leading up to a Warrant Sale to raise funds to offset Debts) concerning those who refused to register (S), and although this has involved much less people than the thousands mobilised for Rallies/Demonstrations, it could prove more crucial in halting such debt actions and in manifesting 'popular sovereignty' against the reluctant Local Authorities.

A TRIBUNE

Thousands of people have been drawn into resisting the poll tax, and have latched on to a political justification for "can't pay" inability to meet the bill, or the moral crusade of the "can pay: won't pay" dissenters yet it only represents a tiny fraction both of the ¾ million refusing to pay, and the 3¼ million happily or reluctantly paying "Thatcher's Poll Tax". The idea of active opposition, far less instigating organisations of opposition, has proved obstinately unpopular. Although much of the passive opposition arises out of family commitments, the drudgery of work, or of suspicion of leftist rhetoric & motives (including that of the SNP), this failure to rise up in rebellion throws up wider considerations.

26,000 people (at least) have disappeared from the Electoral Register and the personal strategy to evade payment will be repeated in the English cities, especially London. The combination of casual or 'black economy' work, with squatting and sub let housing accentuates this tendency of 'low life'

survivalism (far advanced in U.S. cities). The instinct to avoid a public profile may conflict with appeals to engage in long term local agitation.

DON'T PAY



The appeal of collective community based opposition largely 'falls on deaf ears'. The accumulated influence of Labourism, the Welfare State ethos of the 'great provider', and the living patterns reinforced by housing and city planning, all mitigate against dissent becoming generalised and politicised. The generally uncritical perception of the media caricature of protest also immunises the great mass against being transformed through political activity. Added to this the social psychology of being the continual victim creates a situation where people are paradoxically surprised and even disappointed to be told that, as an act of civil disobedience, that the powers of the Authorities do not entail imprisonment, fining for non-payment, benefit arrestment beyond a paltry sum, wage arrestment that isn't linked to ability to pay, and the seizure of basic household items through Warrant Sales. Part of the confusion arises through mis-information relayed through the media and street-talk, but it also often reveals a reluctance to accept that resistance is a viable alternative even when the facts contradict the need for pessimism. What the Authorities realise is, that a culture based on anxiety, fatalism, pre-occupation with personal factors, social atomisation, a diet of trivia and spectacular events, is a culture predisposed to change which centralises power and institutes means of checking movement among the population of Orwellian design.

The tendency in anarchism, exemplified by 'Class War', to attack leftists and seek notoriety for their cause, may be contradicted by the need to organise on an open, pluralist basis as the London Federation of anti-poll tax groups is currently demonstrating. As the Letter published in 'Freedom' (June 1989) indicates, rushing the platform and assaulting speakers is hardly a responsible approach to win fellow activists to ideas which in the longer process will undermine respect for the position of Politicians and Parties.

The outcome of the anti-poll tax protest is as yet undetermined. The implications could accelerate centralisation of power, transfer of wealth and break up the service provision of Local Authorities, and reduce voting to primarily accountable expenditure to keep Poll Tax levels down. On the other hand, Labour could rebuild its electoral appeal through the imposition of unpopular regressive policies which the Poll Tax, water privatisation etc. represents. Alternatively, if Labour fails to advance significantly, the electoral appeal of the SNP (and less so Plaid Cymru in Wales) will regain its post-Govan momentum and 'independence in Europe' could lead to a seed-change which could prefigure the break-up of Britain (especially in a 'hung' Parliament).

What is least likely, to be realistic, is that a momentum of community based opposition will persist significantly beyond the post-Debt recovery phase of Poll Tax opposition. The missing equation in all these considerations will be the extent and type of opposition that will be generated in England. If this is significant, possibly involving riots and/or the likelihood of willful non-payment after April 1990 (which can lead in England and Wales to imprisonment, with penalties for evasion too), then Scottish groups will persist as solidarity grouplets and the generalisation of a climate of opposition will be greatly enhanced. But this is a big IF!

Jim McFarlane, Glasgow.

Notes.

- (1) Including non-registrants, mainly people highly mobile or living in private rented or multiple occupied housing, but primarily non-payers. The authorities announced 98% Registration levels (having forcibly added names without their consent) and found in Lothian, for example, 20,000 applications for rebates from non-registered persons!
- (2) In fact 20% non-payment would reduce Council income by 4% and much of that would be recovered eventually through debt recovery. See also - Organise No. 1 back-page article from: P.O. Box 125, Coventry, CV3 5QT.
- (3) Elsewhere in Scotland registration was completed by the sending of forms. In the two main cities Registration Officers were sent round the doors to establish 'responsible persons', thus generating greater hostility.
- (4) See various issues of Counter Information, especially no. 22, from: P/H C.I., 11 Forth St., Edinburgh, EH1.
- (5) In Glasgow, Janette McGinn, widow of a leading folk personality and 'Workers City' (Clydeside Press) contributor was mistakenly singled out.

Afterthought

In Northern Ireland, no Poll Tax is planned. Our rulers know it would be a non-starter & potentially draw parallel resistance both sides of the sectarian divide on an anti-Rich basis. It is the one place where a re-enactment of the 1381 uprising was possible!

We need solidarity: not Charter 88!

A new initiative for community based resistance? Two critics of 'Charter 88' offer an alternative version

In the wake of intensifying public debate over civil liberties, this statement aims to reorientate campaigning efforts towards the experience and struggles of those whose rights are being systematically violated by the British State. Since the 1970's entire categories of people have been labelled as 'criminal suspects' and persecuted as supposed threats to national security, public order, or even the individual rights of others.

In this way, the official rogues gallery has been expanded: young black people become labelled 'suspected muggers', Irish Republicans become 'terrorist suspects', militant trade unionists become 'irresponsible wreckers', strikers become 'terrorists without bullets or bombs', and so on. Eventually the catch-all 'enemy within' encompasses those who resist oppression, whether it is the exploitation of labour or British rule over Ireland.

Those who struggle for social justice are cast as public enemies by the entire political system; the mass media, the legislature, the judiciary, the police and prison establishments. Extraordinary repressive measures have become the norm; special powers are used in the most ordinary situations. For all those actually persecuted, many more are made fearful of taking political action. Exemplary sentences and punishments act as 'long sharp shocks' to deter others.

In this climate of creeping criminalisation, violations of civil liberties are officially acknowledged, while being justified as necessary for the common good. Severe penal statutes, apparently for use against a minority who commit violent crime, are said to 'protect' the law abiding majority. This protection, however, hangs like a sword over anyone who dares challenge the imperatives of capitalist rule.

Effective actions are necessary to confront this criminalisation process, and clear arguments are needed to refute the official justifications. Needed most of all is solidarity amongst, and with, all those who have no alternative but to organise demands for justice, and better strategies for limiting the State's repression. Individual rights can only be guaranteed by collective power organised as a defence against the State.

In the face of such difficult challenges, Charter '88 fails to contribute anything meaningful; it indulges in illusion mongering which is worse than useless. It has nothing to say about such special laws as the so-called Prevention of Terrorism Act, the so-called Public Order Act, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, (or the para-legal 'shoot to kill' policies). It offers no challenge to the arguments used to justify such legal chicanery or the repression which such policies entail. Much less does it offer solidarity with the targets of these strategies. Indeed, Charter '88 could easily be signed by the people who drafted these laws, or those who use them to persecute the political opposition.

With its narrowly individualistic notion of civil liberties, Charter 88 ignores the State's targeting of groups for criminalisation. By its silence, the document dissociates itself from those forces which have done the most to defend civil liberties, both in the past and the present. It ignores the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, the Levellers, the Chartists, and the anti-fascists of the 1930's, as well as today's many committed grass-roots struggles. Turning its back on all these, Charter 88 bases its legitimacy on the State, to which it looks to guarantee our civil liberties. Indeed, the document's identification with the State coincides with the nationalist myths it promotes about the Glorious Revolution and World War II.

As a consequence of the 1688 Glorious Revolution, we are told, 'Britain was spared the rigours of dictatorship'. Yet we are conveniently not reminded that the new democracy applied only to a tiny minority who exploited the population at home and abroad, as well as persecuting Catholics. By presenting Charter '88 as somehow extending the 'positive side' of 1688, the document cannot avoid associations with British rule over Ireland. Opponents of that rule rightly saw last year's tercentenary celebrations as an affront to the labour movement and a calculated insult to the Irish community in Britain's cities.

To support this appeal write to the authors
c/o Leeds address.

Charter 88 likewise promotes historical myths in claiming that in May 1940, 'Britain defied the fascist domination of Europe', as if Britain's declaration of war was a 'democratic achievement'. In reality, through the 1930's the British State repressed anti-fascists, aided Franco in Spain, collaborated with fascist Germany and Italy while it was thought that Hitler would turn on Russia, and then entered the war only upon realising that the Axis powers threatened its own Empire. This was no 'anti-fascist' war except in left rhetoric: Britain interned anti-fascist Italians and Germans, with scant protest, as part of its national-chauvinist approach for ensuring continued capitalist rule in Europe after the war.

For Charter 88, the problem appears simple; apparently, we have for too long, been 'dependent upon the benevolence of our rulers', for our civil liberties. These liberties are now being curtailed by a process which is 'only in part deliberate' and can therefore be corrected by reason. Charter '88 proposes a new constitutional settlement. Finding the State deficient in its supposed duty as well-spring and custodian of liberty, the Charter proposes a Bill of Rights by which it is hoped to secure individual civil liberties.

In saying all this, the Charter ignores the outcome of previous calls for legal reform. The Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, for example, was supposed to extend our liberties but actually resulted in further codifying repressive measures and encouraged the legal system to apply existing measures in more repressive ways. Why should we expect anything better from constitutional reform under the present balance of forces? Charter 88's arguments contribute nothing towards building the stronger, active solidarity which is needed to turn the tide against the state: demonstrations, occupations, strikes, uprisings, amongst other activities.

Charter '88 avoids discussion of such unpleasant realities by avoiding any taint of association with the social groups that have so far borne the greatest risks in struggles for civil liberties. Meanwhile the document arrogantly announces itself as our saviour; it would, 'make real the freedoms we once took for granted', and 'for the first time take them for ourselves'. This claim perfectly summarises the document's dual delusion: its disavowal of history, a history of violent struggles fought to wrest freedoms from the State, and its disavowal of present reality, where signatures on a petition will somehow dissuade the State from reinforcing capitalist rule.

In this society, while the state claims to protect civil rights, in practice it can truly guarantee only those of private property - the right to own, buy and sell. The current regime in particular has systematically invoked individual rights to attack the social rights of collective struggle. Charter 88 accommodates this political shift by proposing unity on the basis of individual rights alone, while leaving social rights for later consideration. It is no surprise, then, that Charter 88 diverts attention from the terrains where collective protest is being criminalised. The document represents the vain wish of the professional middle class to protect itself from similar attack, as individual citizens, while keeping their distance from those social groups already attacked.

Nevertheless new alliances are being forged amongst those who have borne the brunt of repression. Black people picket police stations to demand justice for those brutalised by State-licensed muggers; black and Irish people organise joint rallies against a commonly used show trials. This movement, is attempting to re-define democracy in terms of mass, collective action to take power away from the state. Protesting the economic oppression which underlies systematic legal injustice, the movement puts human needs before property rights and profit.

In these times, there is no middle ground. Those who want to defend civil liberties have to choose sides: either sustain illusions in the State, or help strengthen resistance to it by contributing time and resources to the many community struggles for social justice which are already underway. Most important, as special laws and legal strategies are deployed to criminalise political opposition, we need collective organisation rebellion to make them unenforceable. This is what it would mean for us to 'take back freedom for ourselves' - and surely not for the first time.

Martin Walker & Les Levidow.

FEATURES

An Insomniac's Dream?

Youth offers a target audience where hip techniques are formulated in Television. Larry O'Hara gives an in depth commentary on the manipulation & banal metalanguage of 'Night Network'.

Those who use nights for sleep may not know it, but in the early hours the nation's youth (and their imitators) up until recently were regaled with the ultimate in 80's television - the video-music-action programme 'Night Network' (hereafter NN), whose stated aim was to bring tomorrow's television today. Its recent demise has not meant that it can simply be written off, for the form and style were taken up by other programmes still running - 'Reportage', 'Rapido' and the soon-to-be chopped 'Club X'. In keeping with the dispersed nature of the late show and its imitators, I offer below a few scattered observations on techniques pioneered by NN and now widespread -

Camera angles are deliberately bizarre, with the aim being to look at everything from difficult angles - the side, below, above. This is done to disorient, to provide an *apparent* perspective of difference, something accentuated by continual 'messages' flashing on and off the screen, paralleling the current trend of 'rap' and 'scratch' music, bringing the ghost of Schonberg into the 1980's glare. Disorientation then is no accident, it is intended to numb the senses so you are ready for anything.

Topicality, being instantly (and sooner) 'up to date' is the flavour of the minute. Not that such programmes could be accused of having a sense of 'history' - other than that which could be snappily condensed into twenty second 'bytes'. So, the spectacle is constantly 'on the move', but like the Futurist movement it parodied actually went nowhere, except to ever more esoteric exotica to be 'consumed' like so much candy-floss.

Captions are ubiquitous, multiple speedy and *intentionally* distracting. Indeed, the chase to half-catch the message (in any case ephemeral) is the (simulated) process of learning.

Statistics are the 'heavy stuff' of such programmes. They are by definition spurious being a-contextual, never checked or indeed checkable, and the possibility of them being methodologically substantiated never arises - they are not on the screen long enough to be read more than once. Nevertheless, the impediments of 'knowledge' is flaunted before the viewers, thereby being exhibited as both available and irrelevant.

Presenters are often shallow in that *chic* way peculiar to the English, the 'professional amateur' having left the cricket-field, donned black leather and whizzed into NN's cavernous and chilly studios. To show the amateurs are really professionals underneath their (authentic Limehouse) chalk-white faces, they inject a synthetic 'urgency' into their game, by telling us incessantly 'What's coming up', and forever promising a 'return' to the street-cold reporter 'on the spot'. So, these promises confirmed both by anticipation and retrospect the 'importance' of earnest eminently forgettable 'snippets' of actual-life. 'Club X' have taken the cult of the amateur to new depths, having two Japanese frontwomen whose chief selling-point seems to be a (feigned) inability to communicate and a glorification of that fact. What was truly radical about NN was its attack on the disgraceful calumny that the young have short attention-spans - the programme assumes they have none, and need to be captivated by conjuring tricks.

Links between items thus, in the absence of much of substance otherwise, become the core of the illusion. In this way we have the zenith of liberal humanism immortalised - the message is the medium, everything was as good (or bad) as everything else except when amenable to empirical tests 'on the air' as the verifiable (and thus ultimate) truth, leading to the sanctification of sensual riot and hedonistic consumption as a para-religious act. Evermore dazzling introductory logos have become the order of the night.

The viewer [us] is asked to partake in a public conspiracy. We are already at the outset, 'hip' insiders who understand what the score is without even being explicitly informed of the rules. As we 'know' what on earth would we need 'explanations' for? Little matters it that the 'knowledge' is video-babble - who cares (or can tell).

Meeting the public [I]. By asking inappropriate people odd questions to which no-one could possibly know the answer, and then subtly mimicking their response, we are put in our (exalted) place. If the subjects prove difficult, not only is it easy to cut them off (as

on this programme it would look entirely natural!), the quick imposition of a 'label' on a response usually suffices. Failing that, a starburst of sympathetic bleating is evoked from the existentially-disoriented cast of hundreds milling aimlessly in the background, only having slightly less clue than the presenters where the 'action' is going to be next.



Meeting the public [II]. The summit of the 'vox pop' that was NN must be the 'phone vote'. In the supreme skit of bourgeois democracy at its most inane, yes/no responses were asked for on issues of trivial import, on the basis of ludicrously inadequate information, with the results having virtually no practical effect. So, after a one-minute snatch of a Judas Priest song, votes were asked for on the question of whether or not it had a *subliminal* Satanic message.

FEATURES

Now, not only is this something that would by definition not be ascertainable this way, if it *did* contain such an undercurrent then their viewers will have thus been exposed - or didn't it matter anyway - what the Hell. If the vote went the 'wrong way' e.g. to allow members of the public to strip on screen - then the result was ignored.

Subsequent 'refinements' on the phone-vote are little better, asking questions of such vagueness as to be meaningless - which is their real meaning.

Reality is fragmented enough as it is, but NN had a neat inversion that added yet more twists to the shattered helix. For unless the real is bizarre, it isn't 'normal'. The depth of this inversion was shown by the extensive and totally sympathetic coverage given by these gullible gourmets to the 'Transcendental Meditation' (TM) craze. Unanswered airtime was given to these androids both in a Runcorn colony and in the studio 'live', where we were treated to the spectacle of a successful (three foot!) world-record attempt at 'flying' (i.e. jumping in the air with legs crossed). In TM, the professed belief is that by applying will-power plus sufficient practise in the end the believer will *really* fly unaided.

Nobody was willing (or allowed) to make the obvious point that there is no connection between squat-jumps and unassisted flight. Peddling such harmless (waddle might not greatly matter were it not for the arbitrary dismissal in seconds on the same programme of other cults, by a mixture of usual door-step techniques and ridiculous on-air 'simulations' of the cult 'programming' process. What is questionable was not the criticism but the capricious selectivity of it, on the strength we must presume that it was only TM that could offer the 'participation' opportunity.

In the Psychiatrist's chair, assorted luminaries of the new Dark Age bared their innermost soul to the panting millions, and revealed themselves as the empty clones we had always suspected they were. This 'proved' anyone can be a star, why they still eat breakfast cereal and use the lavatory like ordinary mortals - what a relief! So, the dream is accessible, and the viewers can aspire to become true celebrities - 'famous for being famous'. The assumption of *ersatz* intimacy provided by Emma Freud's 'pillow-talk' has spread beyond these shores - 'safe sex' indeed.....

Simulation was for NN the peak of sense-experience, the best that could be hoped for. The programme was periodically awash with rushes of Gestalt-energy that would put that old faker, Jean Baudrillard, to shame while confirming his essential theses. So we had on-screen 'tests' of psychic vision, and the pinnacle of schmalz - gay people allegedly 'coming out' on screen to their close ones for the first time. Even were it the first moment all were appraised of each others sexuality, it was so false and artificial the participants dissolved in an orgy of self-congratulatory giggles - hardly an effective representation of a 'real-life' reaction - but then its only a *simulation* isn't it?

Truth, being relative in NN's view, was not anything like a guide to action - rather its an excuse for yet another game. So we had a 'True/False' section where we were sold 'plausible' stories e.g. about the 'bizarre' (in NN speak-normal therefore) which all fitted perfectly well with the rest of NN's frantic fare, and asked to judge which label applies - yet again another means of poking subliminal fun at the viewers, mocking them for their own credibility in consuming NN. There were some attempts at political moralising - for instance the successful criticism of shops near London's Carnaby Street for selling Nazi memorabilia. However, the basic format was so ingrained that the most concrete outcome was likely to be new customers for the shops so advertised and indeed latently glamourised. The fascist appropriation of the Celtic Cross as a symbol was accepted at face-value, and so the Cross joined other elements of the symbols of the damned, the essential extras for the street-wise consumer.

Jumbled images becomes the central social space, the *site* of credibility, the locus of style. So the 'hip' reporter alternately acts as brave 'street person' and knowledgeable (as of five minutes previously) 'rapporteur'.

Youth is the apparent target audience for such programmes, but it is not that simple. The real focus is on well-heeled 'youth', illustrated both by the plethora of 'consumption opportunities' pointed to and the adverts in breaks some of which so seamlessly merge with programmes you only realise they are such when the prices of clothes come up on the screen. I say 'youth' advisedly, for a substantial part of the audience, that with financial clout is

intended to be the post-teens seeking to, and this is it, *simulate* youth, recapture it. The way to do this is to engage in expensively 'authentic' fashion-wars, keeping a beat ahead. These conflicts are producer-led rather than organised from below I would contend. The basic problem for such shows is that the very people who make up their target audience, by virtue of being such, are exactly the punters out at the wine-bar or having moved on to the night-clubs, and garage parties, while they're on. Once the advertisers tumble to this, the days of such innovative programmes are numbered. Some might wonder whether NN was given much of a chance, being parachuted into an acknowledged 'dead zone' for TV programmes, 1 - 4a.m. on Saturday. However, if some of the subtleties of technique are combined with a more brash macho procedure, as in the James Whale Radio Show, where jokey insults and obscenity are the staple ingredients, then ratings can come.

Stylistically such programmes have a hidden code, by constant inversion seeking to replicate the fragmentation of meaning we all experience. Daily life is increasingly confusing, with symbols referring to symbols referring to simulacra..... Is this to be accepted or challenged, that is the question facing us in the satellite-TV dawn. The NN perspective was to accommodate to and exaggerate the lurch to meaninglessness - without it must be said the nastiness of the 'Sunday Sport'. Indeed, any programme which revived 'Batman' must have something going for it, though with this and other retreads NN was careful never to tell you at any time throughout the night they would be on, thus keeping an addicted captive audience till near the end. The insidious but none the less real charm of NN was such that a critique like mine is something they could well have 'packaged' and used to confirm their 'open-mindedness'.

So what? you might say, what is the upshot of such criticism. Well, it would be too easy to simply write it off, but the techniques have spread. There is no doubt it did to an extent fulfil its objective of entertaining - but likewise so did feeding the Christians to the Lions, public executions and today's form of public torture, game-shows. My basic point has been that much of the programme was too shallow, this plastered over by *speed* and *simulation*. Perhaps such pernicious products should be suppressed? However, it is not possible to ever totally suppress the search by the young for excitement, the real question is how to respond and help this in a socially responsible way. Surely none today would argue TV is 'irrelevant' to the working class, so it has to be to come to terms with it.

Some integral features of such programmes - especially the emphases on high-grade consumption and deliberate shallowness, are intolerable. These should be separated out from other elements - the desire to shock and disorientate has a noble history, exemplified for example in medieval mystery plays, gargoyles, and even the proto-Surrealist work of Bosch. One of the main problems today is not so much the variety of symbols as their corrosion by capital, utilising intrusive media like TV and video. It would be a mistake to *reduce* everything to conspiracies by such global forces - the now-defunct 'Chaoline' services provide perfect illustrations of the profusion of babble that will characterise the 1990's. Everyone talks, no-one listens, there are supposed to be 'monitors' whose only real function appears to be parading their egos and (like the mythical 'night-watchman state') spasmodically intervening to summarily disconnect the inhabitants of this latter-day Bedlam. The parlous state of Italian satellite-TV, complete with on-screen stripshows, portends what might be ahead for the U.K. Clearly, this does not mean that the current BBC/ITV/C4 monopoly is acceptable either, but if the far left does not intervene in these debates then it will continue to be sadly marginal. Other shows like 'Rapido' and 'Club X' have not only imitated but also 'developed' techniques pioneered by NN. For instance in the latter the pretence of meaningful communication is even further undermined by deliberate muffling of the presenters microphones. The teenage-oriented 'Chart Show' makes a virtue out of difficulty, constantly producing on-screen visual 'crackle' *simulating* the jarring resulting from operation of a video recorder. The fate of NN itself wasn't of great importance, nor even is the question of whether a suitably 'segmented' affluent audience could be attracted to a similar programme. Of more salience however, is the perhaps irreparable fragmentation of the symbolic universe such programmes foreshadow.

As will have been obvious, the 'problematic' by means of which I have approached NN irremediably marks me out as fully deserving the hippy warning to 'never trust anyone over thirty'. Nevertheless in conclusion I would suggest Night Network and its clones prove another warning is in order 'and never trust anyone over twenty simulating being under eighteen'.

REVIEWS

Rebellion Remodelled:

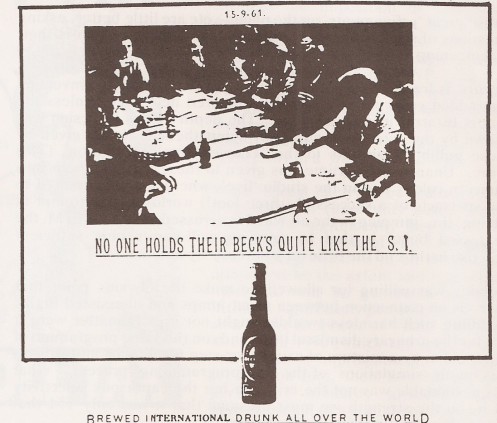
Pete Suchin offers an insight into situationist capers at the ICA & the cultivation of an Image.

Review of the exhibition 'On the Passage of a Few Persons Through a Rather Brief Period of Time: about the Situationist International 1957 - 1972', The Institute of Contemporary Art, London, June 21 - August 13, 1989, and of the conference 'Never mind the Bollocks, here's the Situationists', Saturday, June 24 - Sunday, June 25 (ICA London). The exhibition was at the Pompidou Centre, Paris from February 22 to April 9 (1989) and will be at the ICA, Boston from October 21 (1989) to January 7 (1990).

A reviewer of the Parisian version of this exhibition remarked that 'Few exhibitions have been so vital or ambiguous in recent years. Vital because the Situationist International is still rather unknown to the public, and also because the incendiary bombs launched by the SI between '57 and '62 have profoundly sustained subsequent generations'. (1) And indeed, from a didactic point of view the ICA Show does serve a 'Useful' purpose. There's a lot of stuff at which one can ponder and/or gawp. Indisputedly, 'classic' situationist bric-a-brac protrudes from the walls or rests beneath glass, accompanied by a selection of items the production of which was influenced directly or indirectly by the erstwhile scandalous activities of the SI - that's the curator's claim anyway. And though there is a kind of continuity between the two parts of the show the more recent material seems somewhat tenuously attached to the main body of work on exhibition. Those personalities and groups which are known to have had some considerable influence on the SI - the Surrealists, the College of Pataphysics, Isidore Isou and the Lettristes, the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus are largely ignored (2). Thus one is given a good selection of material from the SI itself but in such a way that the contextualisation is poorly carried out.

The situationist section of the exhibition is arranged into several categories or themes - detournement, device & psychogeography, Unitary Urbanism - and includes a number of psychogeographical maps (Debord, Rummey), Asger Jorn's detoured paintings, Constant's 'New Babylon' models, Pinot-Gallizio's reconstructed 'Cavern of Anti-Matter' (first presented in 1959) (3), and a large number of posters, publications and treated comic strips (notably Bertrand and Joannes' **Return of the Durutti Column**). The post-situationist or 'Fallout' part of the display includes work by the French conceptual artist Daniel Buren, Art & Language (a trio of maps, one of which is their **Map to Not Indicate** of 1967), Mario Merz, Marcel Broodthaers, as well as work by Sex Pistols' graphic designer Jamie Reid and various other punk-related items. Here too can be found quite a number of publications - copies of **Vague, Smile**, the parodic, anonymously produced **Smirk** leaflet, and an early printing of **The End of Music**.

The arrival at the ICA of a show comprised of situationist ephemera was by no means an unpredictable event. Previous examples of what might be called 'ICA culture' have generally been of the type to which the word 'radical' can be easily, if inappropriately affixed. Mock radicalism as consumer choice has long appeared to be what the ICA (like Beaubourg in Paris) is all about. The situationists had a theory of art and, or rather, of its dissolution and to find their texts and objects placed in a gallery/museum context is surely a strong contradiction, and this despite the excuses proffered in the essay which opens the book - dutifully sandpaper bound - that serves as a kind of catalogue to the show (4). Therein, one of the curators, Mark Francis, tells us that much of the material included in the exhibition was already in storage in the archives of the Silkeborg Museum in Denmark awaiting, as it were, a centre-stage presentation, a place in mainstream culture. He calls his piece 'It's all over'. This is **History** and History is that which resides in museums - the dead things. Yet by the twist of another paradox one can see the situation of this installation in an at least partly positive light, since one can hope that the displaying of this material might help a sceptical viewer to view things, including the exhibition itself, a little differently to that anticipated by the admirers of neat curatorial accomplishments (of which of course this show is a prime example). To take the situationists seriously is to realise that their critique of 'everyday life' is by no means 'out of date'. It is not a fashion item. Nor is it any kind of desolate regression to look back at work some thirty years old, as long as one's view is not merely an exercise in nostalgia. A present-day reading of this work should be one in which the intentions and objects generated by the situationists become something more than merely a memory.



As part of its presentation of situationism the ICA is putting on a series of screenings of related films, as well as setting up talks and even a two-day conference, 'Never mind the Bollocks, here's the Situationists'. The first day of this gathering brought together a variety of personages from the SI, the media and what I will call, in a generalisation, the arts. In the first session the audience - which was not very large - were offered, to my mind, the musings of Ralph Rummey and Mark Francis, chaired by Matthew Collings. Things became a little more interesting with the contributions of Stewart Home, Chris Rawlence and Terry Atkinson. Yet, this session was more a set of discrete statements than a coherent discussion on the proposed theme of recuperation and resistance in commodity culture. Notable contributions were Home's utterances on the topic of why situationism was on the agenda at all - he gave a group of points which revolved around the idea of situationism as the latest site of academic and cultural commodification - and Atkinson's clarifications of the (often collapsed) distinctions between radical social practice and (so-called) radical art. But aside from one or two interesting moments and points the session was disappointing. A few bits of 'audience participation' livened things up only slightly.

After the showing of a short videotape by Rummey (telling the tale of situationist bad behaviour at the SI congress held at the ICA in 1960 in an again tedious manner) and a break which allowed certain members of the audience to leave quietly, Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden (Art & Language) took to the platform to discuss detournement. Elizabeth Sussman from the ICA Boston acted as chair, and Georgio Gallizio, the only-present 'representative' of Pinot-Gallizio, completed the team. An audio-tape account, by Pinot-Gallizio's daughter, of the making of her now deceased father's 'Cavern of Anti-Matter' began the proceedings. This was followed by an extended account of detournement/the situationist project as a kind of dreamwork - Baldwin did most of the talking, his remarks interspersed with comments, sometimes confused, from the audience. Drifting away from and then back to the concept of detournement this section of the conference was another instance of bad planning in that there was little coherence to the 'debate'. Baldwin did at least make clear that he considered situationist thematics to be the product of a kind of fantasy reading of capitalist culture, a reading which had resulted in the promotion of a device - detournement - which held very little potential as a radical political tool, even if, as an art-making technique, it did a lot of work. Aligned with this interpretation was the clearly-stated claim that the very idea that such a thing as an art-led politics was a plausible modus operandi was itself a kind of fiction or fantasy. (These remarks echoed similar considerations expounded by Atkinson during the first sitting). It was apparent that both members of A & L shared the view that their inclusion in the 'influenced by situationism' section of the exhibition was the result of a curatorial move, an 'academic' attempt to cobble together the semblance

of a critical (art based) tradition. There was some chatty disagreement between A & L and Matthew Collings around the topic of a short film made by and shown on the BBC's **The Late Show** when the display was still at Beaubourg. Collings, who had interviewed A & L about the exhibition defended (from his seat in the main body of the theatre) the BBC's editing and presentation, whilst A & L contested the way their remarks had been redistributed and rendered into typical BBC liberalesque. Ramsden's comment during the interview, to the effect that if one had a genuine interest in situationism one shouldn't bother going to see the show had, we were told, been cut. Getting back to detournement for a moment, I should add that A & L seemed to view the world as already, in the 1950's, so much a collaged or distorted/detournement entity as to render the situationist practice of (further) dislocating meanings merely superfluous, a merely aesthetic re-presentation of events. As for the present order of things we were offered a short, sharp remark by Mel Ramsden: 'detournement today is shopping'.....(5)

When Sussman asked for Gallizio's comments on the discussion he immediately admitted that he didn't understand what had been said that afternoon.

The present reviewer did not return for the Sunday session. (6)

Peter Suchin.

NOTES

- (1) Nicolas Bourriard, 'Situationist International Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris', **Flash Art**, No. 146, May/June 1989, pp. 122 - 123. See also: Christian Schlatter, 'What Is Lettrisme?', **Flash Art**, No. 145, March/April 1989, pp. 92 - 95 and Giorgio Maragliano, 'The Invisible Insurrection', **Flash Art**, No. 147, Summer 1989, pp. 87 - 90. The latter article offers a present-day contextualisation of detournement with specific reference to the practices of 'postmodern' art.
- (2) This point is made by Stewart Home in his 'The Situationist International and its Historification', **Art Monthly**, No. 127, June 1989, pp. 3 - 4.
- (3) Pinot-Gallizio's roll-affixed 'Industrial Painting' is also included in the exhibition. The terms cited at the beginning of this paragraph refer to the following ideas or concepts: The realigning or distortion of the meanings of an aesthetic or cultural object [**detournement**]; a method or technique of 'drifting' through various ambiances [**derive**]; the analysis of specific effects of the environment upon the behaviour of individuals (**psycho-geography**); the theory of combining various arts and technical skills in order to produce an integral ambient space in line with psychogeographical (etc) experiments in behaviour [**unitary urbanism**].
- (4) The 'catalogue' - which hardly serves, after all the justifications proffered in defence of documentation - to **document** the exhibition 'properly' is in fact an anthology of situationist and other writings, photographs and diagrams. The sand-paper cover ('donated by English Abrasives and Chemical Limited', please note) refers to the cover of Debord and Jorn's **Memoires** (1958), a copy of which is to be seen in the exhibition. It is interesting that the first two essays in the catalogue, by curators Francis and Wollen are copyrighted, whilst the situationists, as is well known, refused to copyright their work. One wonders if this is intended as a kind of joke, particularly as Wollen appends the place and date of the production of his essay as 'Los Angeles, Capital of the spectacle 1989'. The full title and publication details of this work are as follows: **An endless adventure....an endless passion....an endless banquet A Situationist Scrapbook**, edited by Iwona Blazwick in consultation with Mark Francis, Peter Wollen and Malcolm Imrie, ICA/Verso, 1989.
- (5) See Art & Language, 'Ralph the Situationist', **Artscribe International**, No. 66, November/December 1987, pp. 59 - 62. An edited version of this text appears in the catalogue cited in the previous note (pp. 93 - 94).
- (6) It should be recorded that when a demonstrator, (Michel Prigent) handing out leaflets attacking the institutionalisation of the SI, ran out of same whilst positioned at the main entrance of the ICA representatives of the gallery photocopied some more for him. This was during the first day of the conference. The Sunday conference presentation concentrated upon situationism and punk/pop.

To make shame more shameful

A small press edition challenges marketization on the campus. Mike Peters marks its paper.

Matthew Salusbury **THATCHERISM GOES TO COLLEGE: the Conservative Assault on Higher Education** [Canary Press, BCM Canary -London WC1N 3XX, 1989, £4.95].

Every student should read this book. It will teach college and university lecturers more than they might want to know about what the present regime plans to do with the academic sector.

It's a pity that in present conditions there is small chance the information contained in these pages will reach them; the marketization of knowledge means that small-press productions like these cannot compete with the current '**Thatcherism**' book mountain, even though it is undoubtedly better value for money than many of them. Its most important contribution is its detailed account of how the Left was beaten at its own game on campus in the mid 1980s. The book shows how it was that the Right exploited rentacrowd tactics with greater sophistication than their opponents, & how the 'free speech' set-up (provocations by controversial visiting speakers) and the antics of the **Federation of Conservative Students** softened up the colleges for their economic restructuring, 'enterprise in the curriculum', student loans & the rest of it. It is a sorry tale, a miniature 'strategy of tension' worthy of **The History Man**, enough to make the greying ex-radicals of the student sixties (many now hoisted by their own tenured petards) hang their heads in shame.

The book itself is written with no such cynicism; it is a brisk and informative outline in 115 pages packed with names & dates which serves to remind readers of **what actually happened when**. Its findings can be used well even by those who would contest its arguments.

I personally thought the exposure of the links between the **FCS & the Heritage Foundation** the most useful thing the book provides, but the account of events at Bristol University in 1986 (centred around the figure of John Vincent), in which the author was personally involved, will be of the most immediate interest.

If there is still anyone who imagines that conservative policy on education is simply about cost-effectiveness or that the Thatcherite hegemony was won on the playing fields of democracy, this book will disabuse them. Control of educational institutions has always been crucial to the **political** strategy of both Right & Left (Higher Education is arguably where the British New Right was first spawned, with the '**Black Papers**' of 20 years ago), and the rise of Thatcherism has required intimidation and dirty tricks every bit as much as the winning of hearts and minds.

One reservation I would make about the argument of this book is that the familiar Leftist rhetoric about a 'Tory attack' on Higher Education may now be diverting attention from the complicity of managerial socialists in the brave new academic world. 'Socialists' if late have not been slow in lending their support to the disciplinary commercialism, standardization and cheapening of educational work (under such time-worn radical catchphrases as flexibility, decentralization and the breaking down of traditional structures and boundaries etc). And they have not found it difficult to give a progressive, 'feminist' and 'anti-racist' gloss to the **systematization** of British colleges. Insofar as this book still resorts to shibboleths like 'elitism' and 'hierarchy', it perhaps underestimates the ways in which yesterday's 'radicalism' can be made to serve the logic of total commodification.

Mike Peters.

Some Recent Developments
Among Those With

Nothing to Lose but their Jobs

Offering examples of combative, autonomous workers groups, **Phil Mailer** reviews pamphlets that chart their progress in a world unfriendly to permanent organs of resistance.



** France - Winter 86-87. An attempt at Autonomous Organization, Exchange et Movement 1988.

** The Cobas, Italy 86-88. A New Rank and File Movement, by David Brown, Exchange et Movement 1988.

** Sorting Out the Recent Post Strike by a Postal Worker. Dec. 1988.

** La Estiba, Voz de las Puertas, Barcelona Dockers, [various issues].

In November 1986 a 31 year old train-driver at the Gare du Nord Depot in Paris decided he was fed up with his job and passed round a typewritten petition which proposed to "have it out once and for all" with the Company, i.e. to go on strike forever until the Company agreed to better working conditions. By December 19th some 16,000 train drivers (99% of them) were out on strike and the whole of France paralysed.

When the Union of Communication Workers in Britain called a 24-hour strike in the Postal Services last December they must have thought they would have been in and out from the bargaining table in no time. Instead thousands of workers refused to obey the union and stayed out on strike, and it took a lot of maneuvering to get them back to work.

In Spain, for ten years now, a 10,000 strong organization of dock-workers called the Coordinadora has refused to join any of the competing trade unions. These dockers call their organization "Unitary, of the Class, Autonomous, Independent and Democratic". They are presently on a collision course with the governing Socialist Party.

In Italy successive waves of strikes over the past three years - involving bus drivers in Turin, pilots and other airport workers at Milan Airport, and hundreds of thousands of service workers including teachers from all over the country - have been led by organizations called COBAS (Comitati di Base) which have by-passed and even in some cases fought against the unions.

The decline of the unions in the 1980's - something evident since the oil crisis of 1973 - really underlines the decline in capital's need for organized labour in the first place as part of its need to transform traditional jobs through automation and the new technologies. While more and more trade unions have agreed to this capital transformation, dropping their last traditional vestiges of opposition, unions are seen as the mere brokers of labour power they are, and not even as very good ones at that. In France just 10% of workers are unionised. In the U.S., capital's heartland, eight years of Reaganomics has attempted to gain unimpeded access to all markets even the labour market. If capital had its way, its most coherent and preferred form of organization would be the temporary agencies, with workers hired and fired on demand and it is these rather than the vestiges of a senile union movement that are the true enemies of an autonomous resistance in the workplace. What has happened in this situation is that workers, in order to defend their jobs from the global appetite of capital, have been forced to go beyond the trade unions and set up their own organizations. This has been a tendency in all strikes in the U.K. since the miners' strike - a point made by Henri Simon in his book on that topic "To the Bitter

End" - a book still only available in French.

It is events like these that are described in the above pamphlets and newspapers. In most instances the unions have retaliated with a vengeance usually reserved for bosses and have systematically set out to destroy them through slander, fear or the use of the law.

These pamphlets have different vantage points and different degrees of analysis, the first two being more distant from what they describe while the latter two are deeply involved. But none of these pamphlets fit the classic leftist descriptions as social-democratic, Leninist, or anarcho-syndicalist. Instead they are representative of a new and growing current which takes seriously the motto of the First International, "the liberation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves" and sees the only transformation of society as being driven by hitherto powerless workers negating the categories of "capital" and "labour" altogether.

A French Winter.....

When some drivers decided to republish the aforementioned leaflet that had been handed around the Gare du Nord they called a strike for December 18th, calling on all trade unions to support the strike, warning that "the drivers will know what to do with trade union organizations that did not offer their support" and ended by asking, "If you agree with us, photocopy this leaflet and pass it round". Soon all engineers had seen the leaflet. By the 19th only one of the 94 depots

in France was working.

Strike committees were elected in open meetings in all the depots - subject to instant recall. Some union members were elected, but most were certainly not union officials. A national Liaison Committee was set up by the drivers of Paris-North and Sotteville. The CGT (the Communist Party controlled union) then entered the arena by condemning the Liaison Committee accusing it of "bypassing the usefulness of the representative trade union organization and of breaking workers' "unity". They called for reinforcing the strike through trade union representation - translation: take it over. A clear demarcation line between the rank and file workers and the unions emerged. Fearing the rank and file, the railway management took the side of the unions and called on them to negotiate, ignoring the existence of the Liaison Committees. As one worker (quoted in Le Monde) said "We can't negotiate. The management and the unions don't want us". Another worker forecast that "if the union takes over the strike, we will return to work". The Liaison Committees were not strong enough to resist this alliance of management, police, government and the unions. By January 4th ten smaller depots voted on a return to work and the CGT, knowing the strike was collapsing, launched a call for all-out support, essentially launching a parallel strike which they could lose. By January 12th, 55 of the 94 depots had returned to work and the strike was broken.

In the pamphlet by Exchange et Movement (who have produced some 58 issues over the last few years) these relationships are detailed and the weaknesses of the autonomous movement and the connivings of the CGT trade union documented. While the pamphlet is difficult to read because of both its style and presentation it is well worth the effort since it has a wealth of detail about the strike and the Liaison Committees.

The Italian COBAS.....

The same outfit produced another text which tells the reader that they abandoned "the original intention to produce a short documentary on the series of unofficial movements and strikes in Italy over the period 86-88" to (instead) "look behind the tendencies that allow the capitalist class to present Italy as a boom economy as well as the rhetoric of the unofficial movements". It is a pity however that no attempt to place these phenomenon into a historical setting was made as it would have made easier reading. Instead for half of the pamphlet we get an analysis "of how the capitalist class could deal with the internationalisation of markets" and while such analysis has some interest - given the 1992 Common Market date - the pamphlet really only gets interesting when it gets into the nitty-gritty of the movements themselves.

Quoting from interviews and descriptions in various national and local newspapers the author shows how the train drivers COBAS was not a spontaneous movement resulting from the deterioration of the drivers' economic situation. Instead it was "developed by small nuclei who had been involved in earlier struggles and had, on the whole, a series of relations with different unions". A series of wildcats carried out on the local level forced drivers to network, something which the CGIL union had not been doing. In fact membership of the CGIL had gone from 76% of the workforce in 1968 to 20% in

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1988. It was this liaison committee which began to call 24-hour national strikes. In mass meetings some rank and file workers wanted to continue the strike for two days (and two weeks even) and a split developed between radicals and moderates. An attempt to set up a national COBAS - with teachers and civil servants - further divided the drivers. The split formalised when a new drivers' union called for pay increases twice that which the COBAS had originally been asking for. What appears to have followed was a lot of positioning by the unions who had been upset by this development and had wanted the COBAS rescinded. Talks between the COBAS and the unions broke down when a draft alliance was rejected by the rank and file, best explained by one delegate from Rome who said that "The liaison committee cannot be dissolved as it represents an organizational form of union representation for drivers and has the aim of supporting self-defence and proposing democracy in the union movement". This was to be achieved by open mass meetings and recall of delegates.

Various COBAS were set up at roughly the same time in various places and different sectors. There was the Turin public transport COBAS. Turin, with a million inhabitants, the home of FIAT has no commuter trains and no subways but instead is governed by traffic snarls; and the Communist Party led Council didn't take lightly to this break in good relations. The COBAS there was eventually smashed. A teachers' COBAS called a nationwide demonstration in Rome drawing 400,000. Again the tactic used by the government was refusing to negotiate with the COBAS while dealing directly with the unions - with all the political jockeying, the balancing of seats in the government at stake. The ground crew at Rome airport also had a COBAS, the ins and outs of its struggle being described in the pamphlet. Efforts to unite these COBAS was not successful. Clearly the various governing coalitions - involving Socialists, Christian Democrats with the tacit support of the Communists - was reflected in the traditional union movement and just as clearly created a move away from those unions, another effort of the proletariat to consolidate itself as autonomous from both capital and the brokers of labour power.

While this pamphlet is steeped in a vulgar economic determinism, it does provide myriad details on the functioning of these organizations. Characteristically, this Exchange et Movement text doesn't even attempt to draw historical lessons, although bolder readers will certainly draw their own.

THE COMING DOCKS WAR: THE COORDINADORA.....

La Estiba is the official newspaper of the DEPB, the Barcelona dockers organization. The dockers refused to integrate into the fledgling unions being set up by the Communist Party (CC.OO) or the Socialist Party (UGT) after the death of Franco. In 1976 they started a struggle to re-hire some fired workers and a co-ordinating committee was elected for the duration of the struggle. The structure remained and became the Coordinadora. In a text read to Third International Congress of Stevedores of Europe they analysed how workers' organizations always had a tendency to bureaucratise and wrote that their organization would be "Unitary, of the Class, Autonomous,

postal workers that a series of wildcats followed. Seeing how unpopular it was the union then condemned it. Everytime there was a wildcat the union entered into secret negotiations with management. "They called a 24-hour strike which they thought would start and finish our struggles, but many workers just didn't bother to turn up the next day and thus began a national stoppage. The union responded with rumours to the effect that the strike was playing into the hands of the Post Office who wanted it to help Thatcher's reprivatisation of the postal services" and, the pamphlet continues "tried to sabotage the strike from within". Again there was the usual divisory tactics and attempts at manipulation by certain leftists. A front organization, calling itself the Communication Union Broad Left was dominated by Trotskyist Militant Tendency and the Socialist Workers' Party and was really no more than a wedge of the union itself. The author despises this kind of manipulation even as he criticises the positions which these manipulators had. After getting a form letter "Dear Mr 1. You again absented yourself from duty on.....in the course of industrial action although you had previously been warned about the consequences of work without authorised interruption and without normal instructions.....4. You will not, of course, be entitled to any pay in respect of any part of the period of your unauthorised absence from duty or your suspension from work..... 5. A copy of this notice is associated for your retention" - he declares himself sick to death of bosses as well as "organisations set up to sabotage and derail the struggles of the postal workers".

After management called for a return to work the union declared the strike official and proceeded to call on local branches to stress local issues while avoiding the large ones, packing meetings with their members for this purpose. And once they gained control of the strike the union leaders immediately called it off. The author concludes: "The postal strike was very significant in the sense that we proved to the ruling classes that we are not defeated or passive. The strike was a step forward compared to the miners, printers, etc. Our strike initially went beyond the union control which is a sign of maturation of class consciousness. This is not enough. We have to go beyond the Post Office and link up with other workers in struggle. We are facing the same enemies that all workers of the world are confronted with. We are back to work but not heavily defeated. We did not have much experience when we entered the struggle. We will be back much stronger and much more determined".

X-MAS POSTAL STRIKE IN THE U.K.

"Sorting Out The National Postal Strike" is a unique piece of writing. It isn't often that rank and file participants in labour struggles sit down and write about them right after the fact and certainly not in the U.K. where there is very little tradition of writing pamphlets or leaflets - unlike say France where there is always an embarrassment of leaflets.

The Union of Communication Workers (UCW), while not yet a Tory trade union, had not recently lifted a finger in the defence of its members. They'd defended the introduction of sorting machines and drafted a bonus scheme called Improved Working Methods which sacrificed many jobs. This resulted in so many divisions within the

LA ESTIBA

VOZ DE LOS PUERTOS

BOLETIN DE LA
COORDINADORA
ESTATAL DE
LOS
ESTIBADORES
PORTUARIOS

Independent and Democratic and Self Organised". And for 10 years, with various ups and downs, this has been the basis by which 90% of the 10,000 dockers of all the ports of Spain have organized themselves. They have produced invaluable documents some of which have been reproduced in their newspaper. **La Estiba** is usually an 8 page large format - focusing on the docks obviously, but with coverage of other labour struggles and attempts to democratise certain companies - like the SEAT car factory where one section of the old anarcho-syndicalist CNT recently won representatives over the Communist Party and Socialist Party unions - as well as many international articles, including the situation in Danish and British ports, Algeria, Poland and France. The article on the British ports for example was one of the most clear-headed and concise analysis of British capitalism at work in the ports that I have seen, even compared to the British papers.

The problems the Spanish dockers face are formidable. Given the technological modernisations which the Socialist Government wants to introduce (containerisation, roll-on/roll-offs, etc.) the government would like to reduce the number of workers; first they tried to negotiate separately with the two main unions - who have almost no representation in the docks. Finally they agreed to negotiate with the Coordinadora, and the Madrid agreement of February 88 was made. But, the wording was so loose that each side came away with different interpretations. In any case dockers in Bilbao and in Tenerife (Canary Islands) refused to ratify it, went out on strike, and won. The agreement had called for the

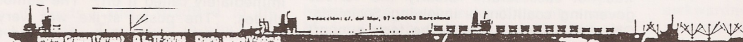
compulsory retirement of the oldest dockers who would not be replaced and a 'five year' employment plan whereby each Company would adjust its labour force to local activity levels with redundant workers being paid up to 18 months non-worked days by the State.

The agreement is something like the Guaranteed Annual Income which stevedores here negotiated in the 60s and was the price paid in order to move the ports away from the strong labour organisations in New York. Essentially this would be a divide & rule tactic and would aid the privatisation of the ports, the goal of the Socialist Party.

Large assemblies took place in all the ports; and while a majority of dockers have approved this agreement, there are really two interpretations of the complex terms contained within it and much is at stake - from the side of capital a freer hand in organizing labour, less work-time, and flexibility; from the workers side a guaranteed income, control over work-loads and control of the unemployment fund.

An article in **La Estiba** no.33 by a Barcelona dockerman, Paco Aroca, criticises the **Coordinadora** for having made the agreement too fast and without having consulted the assemblies enough. In fact after 10 years of isolation a long-lasting organisation like that can easily degenerate into bureaucracy and lose the original elan. The conflict continues on the docks and in the openness of the pages of **La Estiba** and the situation at present is one of brewing conflict.

□□□□□□



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NUISANCES No.8, "Abyss", English Edition, April 1989. From Compendium, 234 Camden High St., London N1 [£1.50?].

"...the demand for life itself has now become a revolutionary programme...those social forces which would once have been described as conservative are no longer concerned even with the conservation of the biological basis of the survival of the species".

This is a well argued critique of nuclear power as the quintessence of the nihilism of the technocratic elites. Nuclear power is simply the most extreme manifestation of the principle of the elimination of humanity from the realm of creation, in the name of economic rationality; both in that it needs minimal human labour, the factor which so endears it to its fans on the Right, and in its basic disregard for the continuation of human life itself. The logic of techno-economic rationality simply eliminates human beings from its calculations.

This is no mere theoretical exercise. It's packed with unpleasant detail concerning the workings of the nuclear industry, much taken direct from industry sources, none of it likely to help you sleep at night.

Jack Murphy.

FESTIVAL OF PLAGIARISM
Transmission Gallery, 28 King St., G1.

A poor videocopy of "Call it Sleep" by Isaac Cronin & an associate, didn't disguise an essential weakness in a film essentially translating the language of Debordist situationism into a documentary form. It also seemed to over dwell on the importance of Bolshevism & the Cadre mentality so that, in the era of Gorbachov 'Glasnost' in the Soviet bloc, it almost sounded like a reworking of the hysterical Right.

Far better was another video by the late Larry Law & 2 women 'presenters' from the Thames Valley mid 80s anarcho-situationist scene. The basic explanation of the history & logic of capitalism was clear & easy to digest and some humorous visual clips were well matched with accessible commentary. From time to time, as with a clip from the "Avengers", Law's choice meant an over-extended clip. Available through a Video collective in London, this copy was made available by Stewart Home as part of his contribution to the Festival. See "Smile Issue 11" for more of the background. A roughcut of the Stop the City demonstration a few years back finished us for video consumption. Some of the footage did at least dispel some of my preconceptions about the event & present the conflict of cultures (City/Anti-City) in

As in the case of the **Coordinadora** there is a problem as to how long such organisations can last under present conditions. The Italian **Cobas** and the French drivers didn't last long although such forms do keep re-appearing. There is also a problem of false liaisons, ones set up by the unions themselves or by leftists. Trotskyists are notorious for this kind of infiltration and have been responsible for turning these tentative autonomous moves back into old forms of opposition. And the State has sometimes used these coordinations to put pressure on the unions; modernise, or we will talk to the others. The coordinations or, liaisons have sometimes been more than ready to lend themselves to this kind of manipulation which pretends both sides have finally the same interests.

Self-organisation is not a question of democratic fetishes; its anti-capital and anti-hierarchical content is what is important. People must be conscious of what they are doing for this content to win. If it turns out that coordinations or liaisons merely promote passivity, if members merely vote on their leaders' already formulated demands, then these coordinations will not be by and for themselves and will degenerate quickly as yet another more modernised form of brokerage in which wage earners participate more fully in their own demise.

The proletariat, as negation, does not reform itself around the workplace but rather on the social terrain as a whole. Therefore these struggles will have to generalise beyond the workplace into the streets, parks, day-care centres, schools, hospitals etc.

Exchange et Movement is available from **BM Box 91, London WC1 N3XX, U.K.** while the Postal Strike pamphlet is available from **c/o TURC, Markhouse Road School Complex, Markhouse Road, London, E17.** The address of **La Estiba's** is **OEPB, Calle del Mar, 97, OB003 Barcelona, Spain.**

P.M. [New York] □□□□

a dynamic interview & action format
Jim McFarlane.

The Festival of Plagiarism [£1.95 from Smile BM Senior, London WC1N 3XX] is a pamphlet detailing the background organisation & debates around the London Festival of Plagiarism in February 1988. Supplement with articles on the same event published in issues 5&6 of **Variant Magazine** (now again from 76 Carlisle St., Glasgow G.22). This provides the necessary documentation considering & reconsidering the efficacy of such interventions. Also available from the same address are the **Art Strike Handbook** and **Number 11 of Smile Magazine** (30p + post) which features more critique of Specto-situationism, Skinhead stories & radicality in 60s & later arts projects.

Notes on Class Struggle in the U.S.S.R.: Subversion No.4. Very interesting history of workers strikes, criminal behaviour and resistance in the Labour camps in C20th Russian Empire. Avoids Kronstadt fixation and advances a somewhat limited critique of the civil society as embraced by Soviet oppositionists. c/o Raven Press, 75 Picadilly, Manchester M1 2BU.

Listings & Short Reviews

Because of the closure of the Glasgow Bookshop address we had used through to No. 6, the Post Office refusing to forward mail from a 'Pigeon-hole', and the possible failure of some Exchanges to notice the 'temporary suspension' of the Glasgow address, there has been a drying up of incoming mail, although receipt of American magazines was plentiful in San Francisco.

In "Europe Against the Current", a combination of publication stands, video, exhibitions and discussion will have similarly stimulated new contacts in mid-September, held in Amsterdam.

■■■■■■■■■■

SUBVERSION DISCUSSION PAPERS - No. 1 Capitalism and class struggle in USSR, 25p plus post from Box W, c/o Raven Press, 75 Peadarilly, Manchester M1 2BU.

THE RED MENACE - A3 folded free news-sheet with left communist articles. 3 issues so far have included World War 3, Satanic Verses, Teaching, Venezuela and other riot areas analysed. Donation to BM Wild, London, WC1N 3XX.

NO RESERVATIONS - Housing, Space and class struggle. From Box 14, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8.

BULLETIN OF ANARCHIST RESEARCH - No. 16 with reviews of Assault on Culture & Deep Ecology. From TV Cahill, Politics Dept., University of Lancaster, LA1 4YF £4[£3] sub.

BLACK CHIP (new series) - from Richard Alexander, Cwm Gwen Hall, Pencader, Dyfed SA39 9HA.

WORKERS INFO. RAG - No. 5 from PM, C/o Zamisdat Press, GPO Box 1255, Gracie Stn., New York, NY 10028, with donation.

BLACK EYE - No. 6, \$1.50 magazine, eclectic from 324 East 9th St., New York, NY 10009 USA.

BLACK WHEEL OF ANGER — By Peter Plate (& other poems/tales of revolt/city life). Contact 537 Jones Street. 8456, San Francisco, CA 94102, USA.

COLLIDE-O-SCOPE - Libertarian marxist magazine. Donation from 2140 Shattuck Ave., Box 2200, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA.

AGAINST SLEEP & NIGHTMARE - Post-situationist cum left communist 1 person effort. Includes the Spectacle's Critique of the Spectacle. \$8 sub. from PO Box 3305, Oakland CA, 94609.

DEMOLISH SERIOUSNESS!

We call on all theorists to pour coke on their word processors and cease to think between January 3rd 1991 and September 31st 1994. Thought is a virus let loose on the world by a self-perpetuating elite in order to market the paraphernalia of the thinker - books, papers, pens, art films, word processors, whisky..... Intellectuals are the pet gerbils of the bourgeoisie, fed and watered by them to demonstrate their essential cuddlesomeness. Thought creates the illusion that through activities that are actually waste this civilisation is in touch with a 'higher logic' which gives meaning to its activities. To call one person a 'thinker' is to deny another the equal gift of cogitation; thus the myth of originality becomes an ideological justification for the free market, mass culture and cancer.

We call on all cogitational workers to recognise the materialist account of the origins of thinking and admit their parasitic antecedents in the traditions of monasticism. As bodies surplus to production mediaeval, cogitational workers were immured in the monasteries and employed

Le Brise Glace no.2-3, Spring 1989 (25FF from BP 214, 75623 Paris Cedex 12) is largely devoted to two long articles. The first is a critique of "democratism", discussing firstly the position of law-based 'rights' between capital and totalitarianism, from the French Revolution to Castoriadis and Lefort, & later criticising radical calls for 'direct democracy' as supporting managerialism over action, citing examples from recent workers' struggles in France and Britain. The second article is the initial part of an analysis of the emergence of Zionism in relation to the industrialisation of Europe: a simultaneous destruction and reinforcement of separate Jewish community which weakened the classical workers' movement.

COUNTER INFORMATION nos. 22, 23 & JUMBO SIZE 24 (after slight break for Fund-raising) - Includes 'Inside Info' prisoners news. Donations/Stamps to P/h C.Info., 11 Forth St., Edinburgh.

SOLIDARITY - No. 20/Spring 1989 with article by Paul Anderson on CND decline. No 19 on Gorbachov's Reforms £6 sub. from 123 Latham Rd., London, E6.

INTERROGATIONS (POUR LA COMMUN-AUTE HUMAINE). - December 1988 issue. French & English editions. Includes Critique of 'The Proletariat'. USA influenced anarchism from I.S., B/P:243, 75564 Paris Cedex 12. [10F plus post].

GREEN PERSPECTIVES — No. 13, 'Ideological Conflict in the German Greens' vs Realo Yuppie voter appeal. \$10 sub. [10 issues] from PO Box 111 Burlington VT 05402 USA.

FIFTH ESTATE - Spring 1989 heralds the RETURN of the Son of Deep Ecology, by George Bradford (subtitled The Ethics of Permanent Crisis & the Permanent Crisis in Ethics). Summer 1989 is more eclectic with coverage of China, India, West German Autonomes, General Custer, The Bastille and Detroit's Incinerator Protests. \$7 sub. from Box 02548 Detroit MI 48202 USA.

ANARCHY: A Journal of Desire Armed - Issues 17, 19, 20-21. Like 5th Estate receives an amazing amount of correspondence and generates debate, especially in the realm of ideas about Technology, Sexuality, Ecology and Spirituality. 17 & 18 feature a debate on Luddism. \$12 sub. worth checking out! From C.A.L., P.O.B. 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446 USA.

An Endless adventure..an endless passion.. an endless banquest. A situationist Scrap-book (published by Verso/ICA) is what it says: a collection of scraps published in association with the recent exhibition on the Situationists (sponsored by Beck's Bier). An ineptly-edited version of Peter Wollen's historical article from the **New Left Review no.174** is the best thing in the book, which otherwise avoids critical assessment, preferring contemplation of expulsion lists (a modern form of the prewar intelligentsia's admiring glances towards Mussolini, Stalin & Hitler?).

EDINBURGH REVIEW no. 82 - from 22 George Square, Edinburgh. £12 sub. Including selective look at Leeds Libertarians in 1970's by Max Farrar.

GLASGOW LIMBO (including a poem HERE & NOW) - from Withers, 16 Belmont Cresc., Glasgow, G12 8EU.

GATEAVISTA (THE STREET PAPER) - an alternative magazine in Norwegian. From Helmsgt 3, N-0355 Oslo 3. * Offers to translate similar alternative/anarchist magazines in other Scandanavian languages, German, Dutch etc. would be appreciated on a voluntary basis.

DISSENT IN THE UKRAINE: A collection of Ukrainian nationalist samisdat publications with photo-reports on recent mass movements. From Ukrainian Press Agency, 78b Kensington Park Rd., London W11.

PPS BULLETIN 'SOCIALIST MESSENGER' News about the radical wing of the Polish opposition. Reveals connections with Left Labourism. From The Basement, 92 Ladbroke Grove, London W11.

ACROSS FRONTEIRS - Summer 1989 Vol 5 No.2 on Soviet Union, Poland and other East European societies. In depth coverage of struggles around Perestroika, Repression and Nationalism. Sub \$20 I.M.O.s and dollars only, from PO Box 2382, Berkeley, California 94702 USA.

ON GOGOL BOULEVARD - Vol. 2 Nos. 3/4 has briefly surfaced from the columns of Torch before future inclusion in a Continental anarcho-leftist publication. Very detailed and dynamic account of Polish Anarchism, by Bob McGlynn. \$1 plus post from 151 First Ave., 62, New York, NY 10003, USA. News from Soviet Bloc columns in Torch, PO Box 1288, New York, NY 10116. \$1.

in the production of the ideology that producing ideology was on a higher plane than producing food which in turn provided the theoretical underpinning for the notion that producing nothing was higher still. Only by breaking free of the bounds of their social function and ceasing thought altogether can cogitational workers hope to contribute to the movement for humanimal liberation.

Thought - who needs it? We proclaim the Thought Moratorium - a total assault on rationality. Millions of people have had a wank without ever knowing what a syllogism is. How can we think when some people don't even have a hat?

The Thought Moratorium will be launched at The Festival of Stupidity at Galleries far and wide (24th - 26th Dec. 1990=). Events already planned include short personal statements of bewilderment by several passers-by. The Festival will be immediately followed by a retrospective exhibition at the I.C.A. entitled "Thought: was it?"

DESTROY THE TRADITIONS OF THE DEAD GENERATIONS!
Karen Elliot. Further Reading:?

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- No Poll Tax Rebellion

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- Rebellion Remodelled
- To make Shame more Shameful
- Nothing to Lose but their Jobs
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No. 1 (Spring 1985)
Management of Schooling;
Nature of Modern Society
and Sites of Contestation;
Kampuchean Communism;
Lifestylism.

No. 2 (Summer 1985)
Fifth Generation Computing;
Remaking of the Community;
The Subversive Past;
Critiques of Germaine Greer
and Paul Cardan.

No. 3 (Spring 1986)
New Lines in the Leftist Marketplace;
Perceptions of the Riots;
Animal Liberation;
Poland 1980-6;
The Nomenklatura in the USSR;
Critique of Lasch.

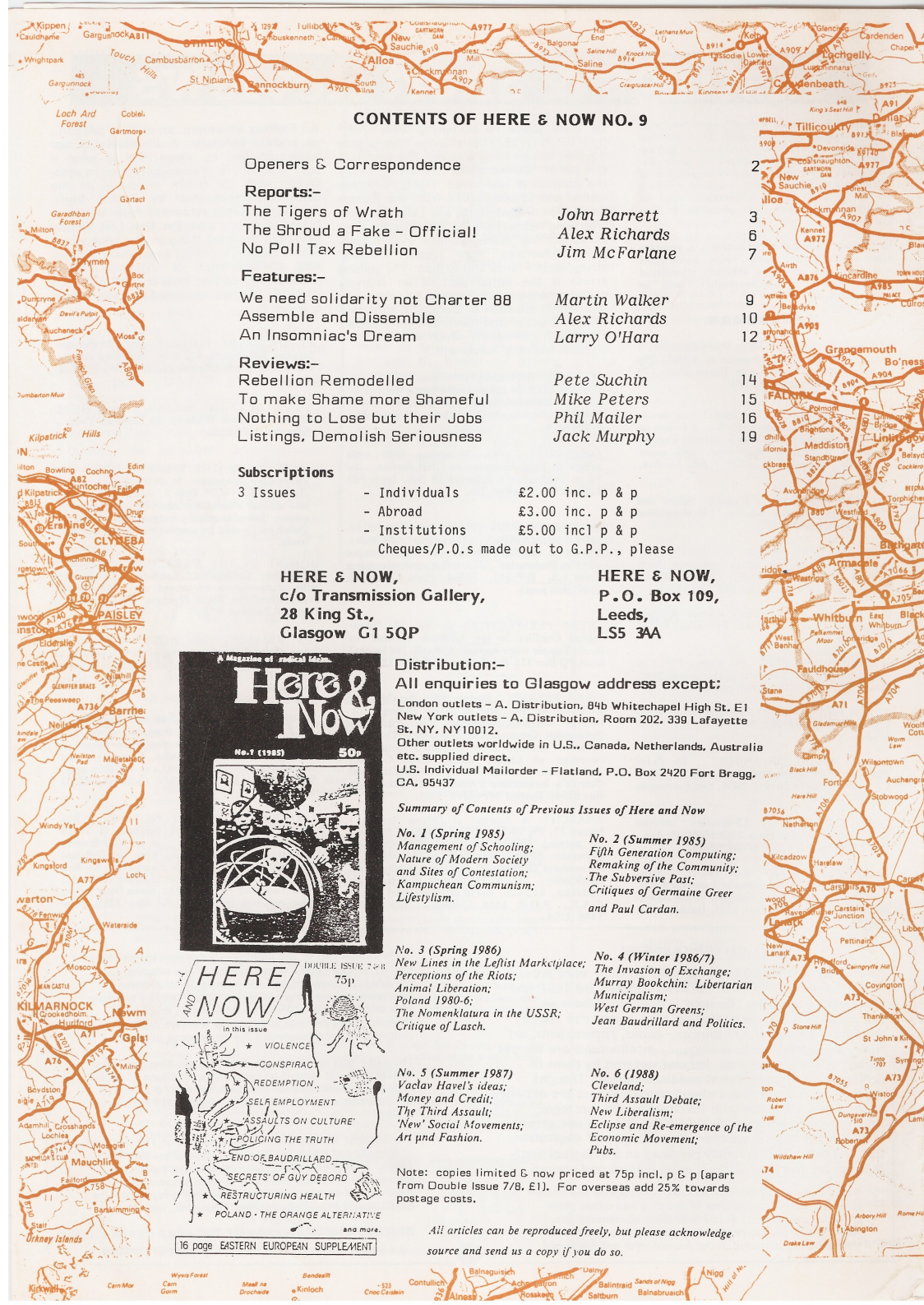
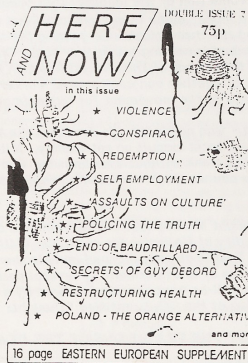
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Jean Baudrillard and Politics.

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The Third Assault;
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Art and Fashion.

No. 6 (1988)
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Third Assault Debate;
New Liberalism;
Eclipse and Re-emergence of the
Economic Movement;
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HERE AND NOW

ISSUE 10
90p

Euromania The Politics of Panic Art/Anti-Art Supplement



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*The cover incorporates a map (c.1595) drawn by Sir Walter Raleigh showing Eldorado.
(reproduced from Gillian Hill, Cartographical Curiosities, the British Library, 1978).*

Editorial

H

ERE & NOW IS NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF CHEERLEADING OTHER people's struggles. Nor do we try to reprocess current events to find vindication for our analysis. What is most welcome about the conservative revolutions in Eastern Europe is their very conservatism - for that was what was truly revolutionary in them. It will be a long time before Western radicals can re-learn for themselves what makes revolution worth undergoing.

Those who have made real revolutions in Czechoslovakia and Romania don't need cheap wisdom from slogan vendors and armchair terrorists; they will discover soon enough that the democracy that they fought for abolishes neither misery and corruption nor the secret police. It simply targets them more effectively. This is an undeniable improvement - like the ascent from Hell into Purgatory.

All the commentators have nothing better to do than commentate - to tell us what they are telling us to be happening and to emphasise it with exclamation marks. Nobody knows any better than either to applaud what others are doing or to grumble cynically about their rivals. History has overtaken those whose latest idea was to call it a day.

It is already being forgotten that the decade that just ended amid the euphoria of collapsing walls and fraternization had opened with hostile snarls and cold war hysteria. The Western activists who worked themselves into panics about a nuclear holocaust in the eighties (or about Nazi revivals in the seventies) have their own vested interests in the politics of insecurity. They have learnt to operate more diffusely, as the regime of the more integrated spectacle now dictates: AIDS, Child Abuse, 'Crack' are all relentlessly exploited as part of this agenda of anxiety. After the breaking down of the Wall - that concrete icon by which an entire generation has been instructed to visualise the concept of "boundaries" - there appeared in East Berlin, again as if on cue, Nazi graffiti in graveyards, duly exploited by the SED and its security police in their desperate hour of need. Above all our heads, the spectre of global death, the ecological millenium, must however be upheld to underpin the new social strategy: from its beginnings as a radical opposition twenty years ago, the ecology movement is now becoming the official ideology. Capital and its States have given the Green Light to controlled hysteria.

The revolutions in Eastern Europe - real popular revolutions as they have been - were officially authorised by the geopolitical powers-that-be and applauded at almost every stage in the international media. This is but one of the paradoxes which define the new social order which is being constructed behind the backs of the oppositions on both sides.

Radical change and fundamental social transformation are being demanded and enforced as their prime justificatory principle by capital, its managers and its governments whose past legitimacy was derived from myths of tradition and promises of stability. Established radicalisms - socialist or feminist or whatever they style themselves - are not merely complicit in the new social order, they provide the cadres, the cultures and the ideologies as well as the very energies by which this strategy of 'change-ism' is managed and implemented. Its objective? To continually deconstruct, disaggregate and demobilise the 'social', to churn up and entropize the very things in whose name they purport to be operating.

Freedom and liberation have become the watchwords of those who oversee the steps towards the totally administered society. Existence is shackled to the imperatives of exchange-value by the sweet talk of a life without chains. The psychic household (the last private realm?) of the individual and family has been remodelled into a financial counselling service. In the name of wilderness, nature is domesticated and managed; in the name of conservation, increased consumption is galvanised; in the name of management, an imaginary condition of perpetual crisis is established under cover of which a coherent agenda is implemented. Those apparently furthest away from the logic of full cost accounting, the mystics and the new religions reveal themselves as stockbrokers trading in the new markets of transcendence and spiritual well-being.

Here and Now will continue to disabuse both the radical and the new managers of the comforts of those changes which persist in being an alibi for the continued existence of their class.

Self-Congratulation and Piety in Glasgow

Sadie Plant reports on the 'Self Determination and Power' conference

THE PEARCE INSTITUTE IN GOVAN 'WELCOMES the strangers of the world' in its entrance and warns children to 'say no to drugs and strangers' on its noticeboards. Although a friendly consensus prevailed throughout the two day event, *Self-Determination and Power* was fraught with such contradictions and there were few opportunities to develop them. Events of this sort are rare, and the high demand for places proves the need for discussions and contacts which exceed the usual political agenda. Those who attended were certainly convinced that self-determination and power are good things which people don't have, but there was little discussion and no agreement about what they mean, why they are wanted, and how they can be gained.

In the 'Women and Self-Determination' workshop, for example, the "self" in "self-determination" was taken to be the individual, with questions as to the consistency of personal identity dominating a discussion which, not ten years before, would surely have concerned itself with women in a more social context. Elsewhere, self-determination was more conventionally taken to relate to the rights of nations, peoples and communities, but even here, there was an assumption that "the people" is an homogeneous group rallied against those "against the people" and free from conflict and antagonism. Romanian demands for the death penalty do not arise on a happy continuum with Scottish struggles against the poll tax, and there are contradictions between Polish leanings towards the free market and Green politics. *Conflicting interests emerge between all struggles for self-determination, and whilst this doesn't preclude their reconciliation, it is vital that differences, no matter how uncomfortable or disturbing they may be, are not papered over in the rush to declare the existence of a great movement of humanity towards a single, but ill-defined goal.*

Noam Chomsky's contributions, two wide-ranging and well-received considerations of the nature of government and the nature of humanity, did little to upset the cosy high tea and cakes feel of the event. Although he shunned the guru role into which he was forced by virtue of being the only Big Name, Chomsky suffered for the want of an opposing voice and there was no challenge to his faith in the existence of a humanitarian impulse or instinct for freedom which cannot and at the very least should not be repressed. Interesting attempts to marry the Scottish intellectual tradition of common sense philosophy with this position were made by both Chomsky and George Davie, but the level of debates in this area was not sustained in the more immediate discussions of self-determination and power.

At the plenary discussions, prefaced and concluded by a mixture of housekeeping arrangements and identifications of splits (variously between the thinkers and the do-ers, the thinkers and do-ers and "the people", and the personal and the political) which seemed to have escaped the attention of the participants, applause greeted every sentiment. Educationalists insisted on the need for unrepressive schools; women that more women should speak from the floor - perhaps to counter their absence on the platform; nationalists that MPs should be recalled every seven years; anarchists that all power corrupts; the pious that ancient symbols should be invoked; the disciples to know what Chomsky thought about anything and everything. There were discussion groups, to which members were assigned with varying degrees of success, and workshops, including those by Greens, postmoderns, the highly entertaining writers from Leningrad, *Here and Now*, and the Free University. Although both the latter and *Edinburgh Review* were involved in the organisation of the event, the proceedings were dominated by *Scottish Child*, a magazine about "Scotland growing up". And the image of the bonnie

playmate provided the event with its unifying symbol and purpose: its all for the children, for the next generation; the fight is not for us here and now (that involves confronting too many awkward questions) but on behalf of others. For a conference on self-determination, this was a particularly ironic and debilitating theme. Appeals to the innocence of wide-eyed children will always generate enthusiasm amongst those anxious to be on the right side of history, but when they lose the naivety of childhood, those same kids will judge their parents' political efforts and find them wanting unless the Govan consensus is disturbed.

Edinburgh Review

issues 84 and 85

Major features due in these issues include:

James Kelman on Noam Chomsky
Jenny Turner interviewing Christine Brooke-Rose, plus an extract from Brooke-Rose's *Verbivore*
Mark Thompson on William Empson
Tom Leonard's 'The Present Tense'
Robert Song on Alasdair MacIntyre
Martin Chalmers on Hans-Magnus Enzensburger
Poetry from Gael Turnbull
Prose from E.A. Markham
More from the controversial Encyclopaedia

'Cultural empathy only grows slowly, and needs all the space — and translation — it can get. Congratulations to Edinburgh Review for extending it some.'

Kate Soper in *END Journal*

'Unlike Granta, Edinburgh Review still has enough rough edges to strike some sparks... Pawky and cantankerous, it reminds metropolitans that Scottish culture not only theorised the market state but also created an antidote to it.'
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The Institutionalisation of

Bedford Fenwick relates some thoughts on 'Care in the Community'.

"Speaking for myself, I too believe that humanity will win in the long run; I am only afraid that at the same time the world will have turned into one huge hospital where everyone is everybody else's humane nurse."

Italian Journey: J. W. Goethe (1787).

1.

LARGE SCALE INCARCERATION OF THE 'UNFIT', those with a mental handicap, epileptics, inebriates, the 'feeble-minded', took place in the U.K. at the beginning of this century. It represented the triumph of a scientific ideology derived from Darwinism (eugenics) and a significant step in the project initiated by the Temperance and Purity movements for the cleaning up of a recalcitrant populace. The Mental Deficiency Act (1914) further refined the administrative classification of society, replacing the inaccurate and often chaotic classifications of the Poor Law and the Lunacy Laws. Here people received a finer grading, and receptacles for 'types' were rationalised so that idiots attended idiot asylums, the 'feeble-minded' feeble-minded colonies, criminals jails, and the poor the workhouses. In an age where science was coming out of the studies and libraries of gentlemen of private means into the corridors of power, power found new legitimacy in the slogans of Social Hygiene and Racial Degeneration. The emerging mass market was creating the conditions for a respectable working class, one that could (however partially) participate in consumption beyond absolute need. The price was the creation of a residual population, excluded from the bonanza, cut off from the means of self-sustenance by their expulsion from the land, who congregated in cities to live off the pickings of respectable society. They had a claim on respectable society through family links, but they also interfered with the social aspirations of their relatives. They became a problem, a constant reminder of the imperfections of capitalism as well as offending the rationalist spirit of the times by refusing to be educated, to settle down, to be assimilated, to behave. The colony, the asylum and the workhouse were an attempt to decontaminate society of its wayward members, both to 'encourage' the others and to provide laboratory conditions for humanity's examination by experts.

2.

Under the conditions of a closed institution the surveillance, inspection, punishment, training, education and reformation of inmates could begin in earnest. The closed institution provided captive material for the theorists of human control, who until then had been engaged almost entirely in speculative and academic enquiries. Where Bentham could merely theorise the conditions of complete control in his idea of the Panopticon at the beginning of the 19th century, Francis Galton was able to study human material directly in the Idiot Asylums of the 1890s. Binet and Simon, joint founders of the still-applied Intelligence Quotient test, experimented on the backward children to whom Simon was physician in a French asylum. Cyril Burt, the influential, although discredited psychologist, cut his teeth as a psychologist in a London County Council Asylum in the early part of the 20th century. Other psychologists such as Rivers, McDougall, Pear, and William Brown obtained their initiation into

the Community

the study of functional disorders and the techniques of psychotherapy in the special hospitals for the victims of shell-shock after WW1. Behaviourism, like eugenics another offshoot of Darwinist ideology, emerged in 1913 from academic psychology, thanks to the institutionalisation of animals in laboratories. From a mindlessly mechanical notion of evolution claims could be made about human behaviour from animal experimentation. Its later application in the institution has not stopped it catching up with its psychological rivals as a technique worthy of universal utilization. For it wasn't long before the practice of psychology spilled out of the asylums and colonies, and enlarged its territory from a concern with mental disability or academic disputations on the nature of mind to a comprehensive bid to be an all-embracing science of all human behaviour. From being a test designed to aid the French Ministry of Education to stream its pupils, the Binet-Simon scale rapidly acquired the stamp of authority and found itself applied by industry (for vocational assessment), criminology, and even by the U.S. Army in WW1, which used the test to assess 2 million army recruits. Burt soon found the attractions of examination and manipulation in the outside world more exciting than the grim life inside the closed institution. He joined the National Institute of Industrial Psychology which studied problems of 'staff selection and training, environmental conditions, motion study and methods of work, production planning, management of personnel . . .' (Hearnshaw. **A Short History of British Psychology**), while McDougall augmented his prospectus to cover global problems in books like **The Character and Conduct of Life** (1927). Indeed government itself began to urge the new psychological scientists to ply their trade outside the realm of mental disability. The National Council for Mental Hygiene in the UK stated after WW1 its aim to be the improvement of 'mental health in the broadest sense throughout the community'. Not that psychologists or psychiatrists required much encouragement. Speaking at the First International Congress of Mental Hygiene William White legitimated a dramatically extended brief:

'Mental Hygiene is on this account alone more important than ever before, and its significance can be seen to be gradually changing from one of simple prevention of mental disease, which is a negative programme, to the positive attitude of finding ways and means for people to live their lives at their best. Medicine has long enough maintained as ideals freedom from disease and the putting off of death. It is time that these were replaced by ideals of living, of actual creative accomplishment. The art of living must replace the avoidance of death as a prime objective, and if it ever does succeed in replacing it in any marked degree, it will be found that it has succeeded better in avoiding death than the old methods that had that particular objective as their principle goal. Health is a positive not a negative concept.' (1932)

Despite the consummation of eugenics in the death-camps of the Nazis, no one thought that such a fate invalidated the whole project of scientific classification and psychological assessment of humanity.

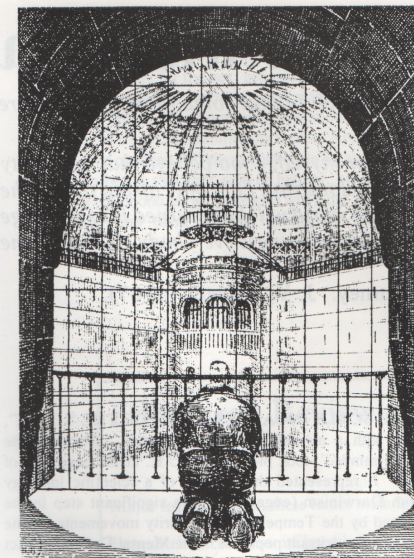
The proliferation of expensive psychotherapy on the couch for the rich and cheap psychology in popular magazines for the poor advanced in the wake of WW2. Freudianism and its derivatives became domesticated; shorn of subversive potential by the capitulation of its practitioners to things as they are, it assisted in the administration of the soul by the rationalisers of modern capital. Today psychology has penetrated vast areas of everyday discourse. Language and thoughts are processed through the prism of psychological prejudice, which has the effect of creating the conditions for further psychological colonisation, while at the same time legitimating that colonisation. This age represents the victory of the mental hygienist movement, not in its dream of people living at their best, but in the prodigality of psychological professionalisms and expertises whose pretensions to 'knowledge' would have been laughed into oblivion in any other period which did not have such a need for 'authority' as this one.

3.

For the incarcerated inmate, the attentions of psychologists and psychiatrists were for a great deal of the century confined to admission procedures, yearly reviews, and, of course, the ubiquitous 'study'. The actual 'care' was conducted by nursing staff of varying degrees of humanity and patience. Life was eked out at the margins of, or underneath the institution, in secret and surreptitious defiance of the eternal regulations which governed residential life. Far from being the victimised object of Foucault's or Illich's imaginings many inmates sustained their humanity and integrity, while it was the staff that most often lost theirs. From the 1930s onwards some of those incarcerated by the 'feeble-minded laws' (Chesterton's happy description of the Mental Deficiency Act) could find themselves out in society working in factories or mills, while many colonies to all intents and purposes functioned like the self-managed model of 'community' so favoured by many present day radicals. There were however countless individuals whose confinement was unjust in the sense that they had no mental deficiency and had simply fallen foul of the highly subjective categorisation of the Mental Deficiency Act, 'Moral Imbecile'. Their cases were brought to light in the agitation of, amongst others, the NCCL in the 1950s, and many were released in the 1960s. It was also around this time, and up into the 1970s that significant steps (hindered by a lack of resources) were made to make life in an institution more humane and less restricting. I mention all this because it undermines the righteousness with which decarceration is proselytised nowadays. There never was such a rigid system that required such a rigid reformation.

4.

The sixties saw a sustained assault on repressive institutions, from prisons to asylums. Anti-custodial solutions to deviance and crime were propounded by anyone from the Socialist Patients Collective to the U.S. Justice Department. It seemed that the closed institution's days were numbered. Looking back on what happened to those hopes is both depressing and instructive. Far from being a replacement for incarceration, non-custodial measures are an *addition* to the state's armoury of punitive options. In the U.S. the celebrated Intermediate Treatment Programme for 'offenders' 'treats' people who under the old system would have walked free. Cohen estimates that 45% of the members of these programmes were subject to no court order, yet they remained entangled within the psycho-judicial net, enmeshed in the web of caring professional restriction. In the U.K. despite the practice of community service orders, probation and suspended sentences the prisons are overcrowded as ever. Meanwhile, the latest solution to the primitive state of British penal institutions has been outlined in 'Punishment in the Community', in which electronic tagging, curfews and parental responsibility and liability is expected to reduce the number of custodial sentences. If the last 20 years are taken as an example, these measures look like only further integrating people into the penal/commercial complex who otherwise might have got away with a fine, while the size of the prison population remains essentially intact.



5.

Similarly in the fields of mental illness and handicap, despite a rhetoric of 'community care' which has come from governments since the 1930s, the asylums and colonies remain, albeit in truncated and half shut-down forms. Despite 20 years of appointments of community social workers and the like, despite a relentless propaganda against the mental institution, the population of mental handicap institutions for example, has been reduced by only 20%, 7,500 of whom now live in private or voluntary residential homes. The 40,000 who remain have to tolerate all limitations of incarceration, together with the neglect that accrues when you are no longer a fashionable career option. Of course, all this slow motion only fuels the engines of the decarcerative lobby further. The very destitution of the institutions, caused by limited shut-downs, proves the point of the community carers. New posts are created, local authority and NHS budgets are stretched to provide the necessary professions in place in the community ready for the next wave of expelled ex-residents, while the actual desires of the people all this activity is supposedly about go ignored, explained away in the jargon of managerial justification. On the pretext of community care new networks of professional superintendence are established in society. The professions which were born and perfected in the institution, can now infiltrate the community. In the sixties and seventies psychological intervention in the lives of residential inmates became more intense. Behaviourism, in particular, flourished as an apparently successful technique in the care and control of the mentally handicapped. With community care came the need for greater control of behaviour, in order to smooth the passage from colony to community. The effectiveness of behavioural psychology has given it a recognised status in the community, and not just for dealing with 'clients' (another laughable euphemism used by the caring professions to summon up the myth of choice for their charges) but also with the staff, who may not be adjusting adequately to the 'process of change'. Behind desks with the title 'Community Psychologist' exist the evangelists of psychological utopianism. Yet beneath their language of liberation and the ritual incantations of anti-institutionalism lies a consolidation and extension of power, for instead of the closed territory of the institution their domain now includes the open fields of society, a domain made more powerful by its refusal to recognise itself as such.

6.

Of course the utopian dreams of the incarcerators of The Mental Deficiency Act were not fulfilled. Society did not behave, and the incarcerated did not reform. Whereas failure in the short-term could be accounted for by a failure of scientific expertise, by an inadequacy of the sample tested, long-term failure has demanded a more radical response. This perhaps is the most reasonable explanation for the State's apparent determination to institute the policy of 'community care'. Incarceration has failed. It neither tamed the inmates nor prevented society from being awkward and unmanageable. While there is truth in the theory which sees 'community care' as a government cost-cutting exercise, it ignores the deeper reasons for incarceration's existence in the first place. Incarceration was first and foremost about social control and only secondarily about the care and treatment of the indigent. In terms of control the State is finding the ideology of the community a far more effective means of maintaining good order than the threat of confinement. In the post-modern world the state is drawing on a pre-modern form. The traditional community represents the most effective Panopticon of all - control through mutual surveillance. Capitalism destroyed this. 'Prisons, workhouses, poorhouses, hospitals, mental asylums, were all by-products of the same powerful thrust to redeem the method of control-through-surveillance once the conditions of its traditional deployment proved increasingly ineffective.' (Baumann **Legislators and Interpreters**). The present age is attempting a resuscitation. Just as the traditional community policed itself because it gave consent to the ruling ideology, because people considered that their own interests were connected to the interests of their masters in a significant and truthful way, so present day power is seeking an imaginary identification with the interests of everybody. Only today that identification is hard to achieve and power must ransack the ideologies and rhetorics of previously popular movements to gain a footing. In microcosm this can be seen in the decarceration of the mentally disabled. The real wrongs of incarceration are exaggerated to the point of caricature. A victimised subject is created, who has no autonomy or independence in the minds of the decarcerator. Liberation becomes synonymous with the policy of the management. The management become the liberators, the whole exercise becomes a lesson in the virtues of the management - society is once again confirmed as being material to be managed, the struggles of the incarcerated to live like human beings in the institution is forgotten amid the praise of the liberators. The same kind of identification with one's rulers can be seen in the notion of the European *Community* - a homely word for an entirely undomestic concept.

7.

Without trying to add to the cliché mountain, we can say that communication is crucial to our times. Language is a significant instrument of power. The way language is used reveals the way power is deployed. In the early 20th century, when power was not so desperate to receive legitimacy from *any*, nor so arrogant as to demand it from *all* quarters, the terminology of indigence centred around a kind of scientific brutality - 'idiot', 'moral imbecile', 'feeble-minded', 'defective'. No consideration whatsoever was given to the feelings of those so designated. Today however a pedantic sensitivity informs the process of naming, as if the social reality of stigmatisation could be reduced to the kind of words one uses. Instead of brutality we have euphemism. The mentally handicapped are described as 'people with learning difficulties', the disruptive as 'people with challenging behaviours'. This does two things. On the one hand it seeks to confirm the state and its servants as *the* source of care and concern - a cut above the ordinary humanity of the citizen uninitiated in the arcane patter of the professional. On the other hand it seeks to disarm imagined prejudice by promoting nescience. Anderson in *Telos 76* says: 'Civil rights only took hold because we accepted moral facts and were willing to declare certain behaviours wrong. Mere tolerance of the kind which arose later in the 60s does not get you that far. It produces passivity. Perhaps we should not say that *any* philosophy of rights necessarily entails dependent

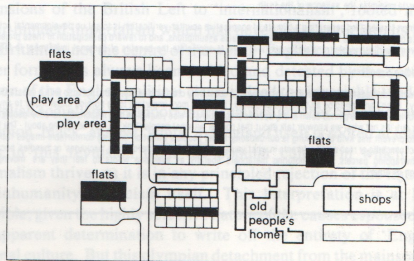
individualism and the bureaucratic state. It may be a problem mainly for versions of the philosophy of rights which takes relativism and ignorance as their starting point, thinking, mistakenly, that only blindness can engender tolerance.' In fact we could go further. The very attempts to restructure language in a benign fashion cuts off a means of understanding a not very benign world. As Adorno said in 'The health unto death': 'Just as the old injustice is not changed by a lavish display of light, air, and hygiene, but is in fact concealed by the gleaming transparency of rationalised big business, the inner health of our time has been secured by blocking flight into illness without in the slightest altering its aetiology'. The State (and its recognised corporate entities in the caring/commercial complex) seeks to monopolise the provision and nature of care. Its assertion of benevolence serves to demoralise society both by denying the unbearable reality of present society, and by undermining society's belief in itself, independent from expertise, as a responsible and reasonable substance. The State not only wants our obedience, but like other contemporary corporations, it demands our love. The ideology of the community is one way it seeks to achieve this.

8.

Our society seems to torment itself with the loss of community. Radical projects define themselves as a discovery of community, like the gay community, or the national community. It is hard to find a word said against it. Community stands for all the warmth, friendliness, comfort and cosiness which we believe to have left our society. It represents something authentic in a world we believe corrupted by institutions, culture and class. We believe in it so much we are prepared to accept the term 'community care' as representing something a million times more natural than institutional care. Yet the reality of community care *must* mean as much care by institutions as care was in institutions. The family, voluntary society or street are also institutions, just as mental handicap institutions could be called communities. The family or the street can be as vicious, repressive, isolating and 'normalising' as any closed institution, yet the laurels of authenticity can be showered upon these institutions and rigidly denied the hospitals and asylums. My point is not to redeem the hospital, which clearly has played an unhappy role in many people's lives, so much as to question the alternative now on offer.

9.

Community care, with its catalogue of professional posts and bureaucratic placements, does not conceal or destroy an authentic community. It simply hides the fact that the true community it caricatures does not exist, has never existed. The spectre of arbitrary power, psychic manipulation and enforced helplessness haunts the community as much as the institution. What is perhaps new is that the practitioners of power deny they are doing any such thing. Instead they cover their tracks with the language of empowerment, sensitivity and advocacy. The kangaroo court of the case conference is upheld as the superior form of decision-taking ('all interests are represented'). In reality their job is to integrate without too much fuss, indigent people into an unjust society. They could just say that, then at least they could acknowledge that they are as compromised as anyone else. But they believe in their own ideology, and worse, demand that everyone else goes along with them.



7

The community is a codeword covering a multitude of sharp practices. With its ideological commitment to deregulation and the proliferation of 'enterprise' the present faction in power attempts to disguise its bias by equating the community with private agency. Thus care in the community becomes institutionalisation in private residential accommodation. Following its own mythology of Capital and the market as natural givens, the provision of private nursing homes is seen as an authentic reflection of society where state provision is not. In fact the community has had what independence it had planned out of it. Private agency is simply the ideology of money made material. In order to conceal the fact that money is itself a faith like any other enterprise is portrayed as coming from some authentic sphere of demand. Attempts are made to make the community and the market synonymous. Community is an effective camouflage because it responds to a widespread nostalgia. It decorates the utterances of politicians (and prettifies irredeemably ugly activities - the 'Intelligence Community' is an example of this.) It is used to create 'belongingness', but only the belonging of mutual consumption is really envisaged.

11.

Cardboard City, the presence of disturbed people begging, or screaming incoherently at the traffic has inspired widespread revulsion. It is hard to say whether this is the revulsion of the respectable for the disreputable, or the revulsion one human being feels for the immiseration of another. Calls have gone out for the rehabilitation of the asylum. Other calls have gone out for a massive injection of funds into care in the community. Building houses would probably be a more successful solution than either.

The modern community aspires to universal auto-surveillance. Convinced that this is the best of all possible worlds the rulers have no shame about encouraging, informing, sneaking and spying. At the same time campaigns are run to knit individuals together against a common threat - drugs, acid house parties or strangers. By isolating the false category 'feeble-minded' in the 1900s administrators were able to justify the incarceration of a minority. By just treating *everyone* as if they were feeble-minded the state has been able to justify a plethora of control mechanisms and produced exponential growth in the soft professions of social regulation. Punitive methods of discipline are only the last sanction in a full programme of technologies. The aim is towards the preventative/integrative model. As the U.S. National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards puts it: '... as institutional walls disintegrate, figuratively speaking, the boundaries between the various human service areas will disappear as well - and correctional problems will come to be a range of professionals serving communities.' The job of these professionals will be to include rather than exclude, integrate rather than segregate. 'The new mode of domination distinguishes itself by the substitution of seduction for repression, public relations for policing, advertising for authority, needs creation for norm-imposition' (Bourdieu). We will have all the suffocating care and concern of Goethe's huge hospital, together with announcements declaring the victory of humanity and our arrival in a common democratic home. But we should not forget, it is the brightest rooms which are the secret domain of power.

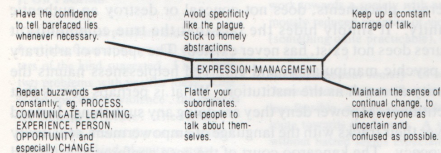
Found on noticeboard of St. James Hospital, Leeds.

Managing to Deceive

A crash course in Expression-Management

The key to effective dissimulation is simplicity. Never use words that require thought. The changes you want to bring about need to be only half-understood. Remember the formula: Successful implementation depends on incomplete comprehension.

THE SIX KEY COMPONENTS IN SUCCESSFUL MYSTIFICATION



1. Having the confidence to Tell Lies

This involves caring for the illusion needs of your workforce. Not many of us can stand too much truth and a caring organization will provide opportunities for individuals at every level to satisfy their need for fantasy.

Individuals will accept the need for lies if you can involve them in the process of deception themselves. An organization that encourages flexibility in cognition-management will be an organization in which other kinds of flexibility will be enhanced. If, as sometimes happens, certain individuals adopt narrow and rigid strategies towards factuality (see section on 'Coping with Truth-Mongers'), you will need to elicit supportive networks from relevant peer-groups in order to isolate the danger posed by such members.

A positive attitude towards overcoming fixations with truth-content can be reinforced by offering alternative versions of lies in order to minimize the salience of the truth.

A common strategy for generating a climate of cooperative counter-verification is to set up developmental activities and projects of various kinds which are premised upon false assumptions, and to reward participation in these projects. In this way even the most recalcitrant employees will learn to appreciate the benefits of personal investment in falsification.

2. Avoiding Specificity

The effective manager doesn't just have to cope with a constantly changing environment, but also with a constantly changing identity. It isn't enough to be all things to all people. It is even more important to be nothing in particular to anybody. You must not let yourself be pinned down to any specific propositions or else you will be held responsible for other people's problems. Simply put, it's not what we know or talk about that counts but what people think we may be talking about. The factor most likely to prevent this kind of thinking is our capacity to get people's attention fixed on comfortable images rather than on abstract concepts or real-world referents in what you are saying. Call your proposals 'packages' or 'bundles' because we all like unwrapping parcels. Use motoring metaphors liberally as everyone wants to feel they are moving in some direction or other.

3. Keep Talking

There is no substitute for communication. The fact that you are addressing words to people makes them feel important and shows that you care about them. It is not necessary to wander around the building having face-to-face interactions with staff. What matters is that everyone talks about what you have been saying. It is your words that need to circulate not your body. Successful expression management means being in control of the way people talk and the terms they use. Face-to-face interactions can dissipate this control.

4. Maintaining a sense of continual change

Restructurings are a vital part of the everyday life of an Expression-Managed organisation. Ideally every member of the organisation should be speaking excitedly about the New Structure whose emergence is imminent. To sustain a high level of commitment to change it is necessary to have a variety of change proposals in the pipeline but to keep your options open by preventing any definite plan being decided. Such decisions only produce closure and rigidity as individuals start to have expectations about the future. The watchword, as always, must be OPENNESS. A structure where everyone knows where they stand is one in which too many people will know where they are going. By keeping your options open, and encouraging the expression of every possible point of view, you not only find out how everyone is thinking, but you disarm conservative opposition by not providing anything for people to oppose.

5. Flatter your subordinates

Hierarchy is a negative concept. Everyone is against it. The progressive expression-manager must be in the vanguard of this radical denunciation of hierarchical, top-down structures. It is a truism that the life of an organisation is best understood at its lowest levels. Speak always from the standpoint of the grassroots even when you are in a position of high executive responsibility. You must be prepared to denounce all the things on which your own position is based. It is easier than you think. It is all a matter of commitment and conviction. Use radical slogans for every administrative arrangement being undertaken. Enforcement of regulations, disciplinary sanctions and other actions of authority especially require a radical even populist presentation.

It is on the interpersonal relations front that you can do the most immediate work in unbending the springs of resistance to your power. The best way to get your way is when you can get people to believe they are free to do what they want. The days when people were made to feel alienated from their jobs by rigidly defined roles must be banished forever. Increasingly the organisation will need to harness all the hidden potential of its employees' personalities. There is no room in the organisation of the future for repressed, unconscious residues: dynamic expression management must combine the tasks of job-design and psychotherapy. Individuals must be liberated from their alienated attitudes in order to realize their full potential in their work-roles.

Role-playing exercises are a normal and necessary part of the work of an employee today - in many ways these exercises are more important than the work-tasks themselves. As psychologists have shown (eg. Boguslaw's Anarchy of Needs), it is through playing games that people are most effectively socialized into conforming with the needs of organisations.

6. Buzzwords

The skill and sensitivity with which verbal behaviour is managed is the key to the successful outcome of any strategy of deception-management. Never call a spade a spade, but every organizational endeavour you are engaged in may usefully be called spade-work, and the injunction to call a spade a spade is a suitably earthy metaphor that can be deployed in any context. Buzzwords have very precise life-cycles and a rapid turnover. Your position in the pecking order largely depends upon the proficiency with which you can determine the rate of change in organizational vocabularies. Words change frequently but while they are in the ascendancy they must be obeyed unconditionally. Never be the first to use a particular expression but always to be second. Be prepared to take on board new phrases and progress them down the line as an essential part of your learning curve. Your own personal problem-solving strategy should centre around your competence in promoting flexibility. Being a change-agent is the name of the game, but it may not always be so. If and when change ceases to be the watchword, you will be in a whole new ball game and you must be prepared to respond to new circumstances.

Euromania

As moves towards European unity gather pace, Mike Peters and Steve Bushell examine the 'Europe' on offer, and the capital - political and economic - invested in it.

The Miraculous Europe-trick Exposed

THE PROGRAMME FOR EUROPEAN UNIFICATION has been one of the most consistent propaganda projects of the last fifty years. One measure of its ideological success is the poverty into which any criticism has been manoeuvred. Such criticism as there has been is confined either to doubt about the immediate feasibility of its goal (which leaves unquestioned the goal itself) or else a conservative nationalism which takes existing states as sacrosanct. Lively debate is, of course, permitted about what kind of united Europe might be possible, but unity and Europe are compulsory shibboleths.

The following reflections will blaspheme against these sacred slogans of unity and pour cold water on the mystifying pretensions of the name Europe itself. Nothing could be further from the truth than to reduce these critical notes to some kind of ulterior vindication of any English or British national orientation. That English nationalism currently expresses itself in a ridiculing of Europeanism doesn't provide sufficient basis for aligning the present argument with those of the **Spectator**, the **Salisbury Review**, or Norman Tebbit, or any other part of Britain's diffuse 'pamyat' tendency. Indeed it should be clear that English (or any other) nation-fetishism is what is being indicted here as an even more despicable real object of which Europeanism is simply a phoney simulacrum: Europeanism in its very phoinness expresses the false essence of all nationalisms. Moreover, it is the very meaning of the word 'Europe' that is being called into question, and the same questions could certainly be applied to any other names, especially 'England' and 'Britain'. When a nation's name is being invoked you can usually be sure that it is the actions of those who comprise its state apparatus, or those political forces aspiring to control it, which are in fact being referred to. And this masquerade is blatant in the case of 'Europe', which, if it refers to anything refers to a particular class of political professionals who staff the byzantine bureaucracy of the 'European Community'.

Many on the Left are aware that a new order is being constructed and that the people of Europe are being led like sheep into a system designed to manage life more thoroughly according to the interests of capital. As Hans Magnus Enzensberger says, the European Parliament is a joke, and "the only people represented in Brussels are the lobbies and the banks on the one hand, and the bureaucrats on the other". Even Chris Piening, head of the secretariat of the Institutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, has to concede the truth of the old adage that, if the European Community itself were to apply to join the European Community, it would not be allowed in, because it is not democratic enough according to its own rules defining democracy as a condition of membership. John Lambert of Agenor, and former Secretary General of the Strasbourg Rainbow Group, sees that "what is emerging around us, bit by semi-clandestine bit, is the outline of tomorrow's Euro-state", but this is a view rarely expressed

in Britain these days, and even he seems to believe it possible to modify those structures which have been designed expressly to prevent non-capitalist forces developing.

First of all: what and where is 'Europe'? This is no innocent geographical expression, and, despite the strange media obsession with maps it is hard to work up a continentalist mystique of land masses. Europe is an Asiatic peninsula and the fact that the Bosphorus is taken as a boundary seems arbitrary: it is much narrower than the strait between Denmark and Sweden and yet what is now Turkey was once 'Asia' itself: Europe's Other. The *concept* of Europe, however, owes nothing to geography, as the absence of any Eastern boundary shows.

It is 'History' and 'Culture' - those mystifying categories par excellence - which are invoked to define a spiritual community - the "common European homeland", not geography. Geography is too fixed. History and Culture can be manipulated more easily. Turkey is now 'in' Europe in spite of the symbolic role played by the Turks historically in providing the first evil 'Eastern' empire against which a Europe could be defined. Poland and Hungary should not need history lessons in this respect, nor should Bulgarians, whose recent persecution of ethnic Turks shows that this matter is not as dead as the NATO Council would wish.

The concept 'Europe' exists as an ideological category: it inhabits and distorts the imagination of radicals no less than conservatives. In one radical version 'Europe' can provide a locus for the social ills of racism, colonialism and imperialism, summoned up in the buzz-word 'Euro-centric'. How those who equate capitalism with the career of the great white european bogeyman will respond to the coming 'Asian'-dominated epoch in the history of the capitalist world economy is not my concern. When I use the word capitalism, I do not intend any such names as european to be its necessary adjective.

While part of the motivation behind this sudden conversion to 'Europe' on the part of British Socialists (erstwhile proponents of 'Ingsoc') must lie in pure cynicism - conforming to the Europeanist consensus in the political class - there is also the knee-jerk response to the duckspeak fetish of 'Thatcherism': the enemy of my enemy must be my friend, so if she is against it then it must be a good thing. But deeper than this, there is a way in which Europeanism appeals to the pretensions of the British Left to 'internationalism', rooted in the higher-minded imperialism which has never quite got it into its head that 'Britain' is not the centre of the world. English nationalism, in its cruder forms, has always been derided and detested by the socialist fraction of the English political class; indeed the invariable tendency of English socialism to support moral causes in other countries and to champion 'black' against 'white' in England itself is rooted at least as much in this revulsion from the popular culture in which such nationalism thrives as it is in any principled rejection of the injustice and inhumanity of racism itself. This interpretation is at least plausible, given the highly selective nature of the causes espoused and the apparent determination to write off the entirety of 'English' national culture. But this olympian detachment from the mainsprings

of English nationalism is a clue to the class perspective and state-consciousness which lies beneath the surface. Consider the terms in which the issue is always - and I mean always - posed: English nationalism is derided as 'parochial', 'narrow', 'insular', as 'little Englandism'. In what other nation, I wonder, do such terms exist? This contempt for smallness and this yearning for scale is a clue to the power-fetishism so typical of political elites. This is the language with which Edward Heath derides Thatcher as "a narrow little nationalist". It is the language of those in the British state who can only talk about the European Community as "a power to be reckoned with on the world scene".

Europeanism allows expression to the semi-conscious yearning for power and self-aggrandisement, 'national pride' (as it would be called in other contexts) which the educated English have for so long publically denied themselves.

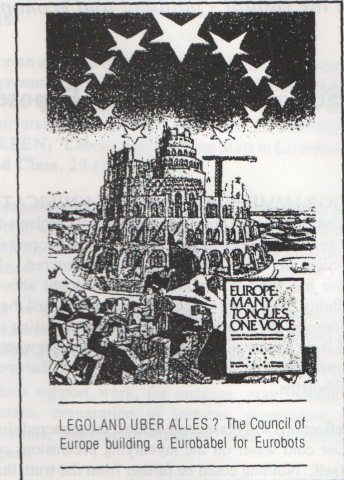
Europeanism in no way transcends the metaphysical fantasy of national thinking. It is in fact only meaningful because of it. National thinking creates an imaginary world in which reified - and often personified - 'nations' function as subjects. France feels this or that; Germany wants this, etc. The infantile rhetoric of politicians is always at home in this kindergarten role-play world. Media commentators compare 'national' economies for their 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' as if trade relations across frontiers were like sporting encounters between teams, with economists as self-appointed trainers and medical advisers. The way Eastern Europe has been dealt with in the language of the media is a goldmine for dream-interpretations: the solution to the crisis in the east is presented like a glorified 'Community care' policy in which the EC will look after the decarcerated inmate nations and assist in their 'normalization' as the poor souls decant themselves into the real world of multi-party political shopping. Poland will be healed from its sickness and rehabilitated of its 'institutionalization' by medicinal loans from the pharmacies of international finance and behaviour-modification programmes administered on an out-patient basis by the tried and trusted routines of democracy-therapy. One could go on. The 'common European home' is explicitly - and unblushingly - called a family (which makes the Eastern nations into either aged in-laws or prodigal children).

EURO-PHORIA

The political class is currently trying to orchestrate public enthusiasm for this vaguely defined Europeanism with renewed vigour. Over the clamour of national voices the inexorable rise of a new supra-national state takes shape.

We are forced yet again to affirm our virtuous internationalism by responding positively to the stupid loaded question: Are you FOR or AGAINST Europe? It has been made socially impossible to do other than answer YES. Perfect technocratic questionnaire design: the sign 'Europe' has on its side signs like unity and integration, and who is for division and disintegration? To quibble about what sort of social and political order is being constructed under the flag of European unity is to be automatically consigned to the oblivion of reaction, as if the only possible opposition would be an affirmation of bad signs like narrowness, smallness and insularity. This at least is how British brains are washed: since Europe represents the big power, larger stage, greater sphere of influence, its only logical obverse can be the bigoted little nationalism of refusal and prejudice and isolation, ignorance, complacency and so forth. British Europeanists presumably know what they are up against; they know the mentality of English nationalism so well that they can recite its shibboleths for themselves. Indeed one can deduce the main themes of Anglocentrism simply by taking the slogans of Europeanism and working back to the signs of which they are the opposites. That is where they have come from in fact. There is a peculiarly derivative, second-order flavour to the ideas surrounding Europe in the language of the British political class, as if what is attractive about Europe is what it appears to be an alternative to, what it is *not* (it is not-narrow, not-insular, not-little etc) rather than what it concretely refers to in

itself. Anyone not convinced of this should interrogate attentively an ardent Europeanist and note down the key words which keep the discourse going: and then ask oneself whether these are grounded in familiarity with and valuation of a European cultural tradition or whether they are driven by a desire of some other kind. Historically, it is not implausible to see Europhoria as the third of the great political enthusiasms of the British political class in the 20th century for larger unities in which 'Britain' could 'play a part', a big part, exercising 'influence' (even 'leadership') in the modern world. The first was the idea of 'Empire' (later 'Commonwealth') and the second was the Atlantic/Anglo-American special relationship (in which the USA would inherit the mantle of Britannia).



The death of one enthusiasm and its replacement by another underlies much contemporary British political conflict. The division in the British Conservative Party is complex and mysterious, but its clearest visible polarity is between an 'Atlanticist' (or more properly Americanist) ideological perspective on foreign policy and a 'Europeanist' perspective which defines immediate integration of the British state into a European superstate as the most urgent priority. Whilst this latter policy is equally ideological, this addresses the strategic economic and social needs of big multinational capital. The most important thing to note is that this is a political division *within* the ruling class, whilst at the same time it cuts across the current disposition of party alignments. More specifically, the 'Europeanist' perspective is not confined to the Conservative Party, being a long-standing preoccupation of both Liberal and Social Democratic Parties (whose representation within the ruling class is more significant than their membership at large). Recently the Labour Party has been captured by the 'Europeanist' faction, having for years been a battleground between these tendencies.

WHICH EUROPE?

What does Europe really mean? Before I can agree to its 'unity' I want to know what kind of thing it is. Does this name really provide a focus for common identification, or is it another mystifying fetish? Thinking about the use of names - and maps and flags, and all the other signifiers by which people allow themselves to be lined up as extras in other people's political games, one is forced to reflect on the phenomenon of nationalism itself - of which this Euronationalism is clearly a replicant.

I can say that it works well enough on me: I could easily be summoned to the call as a 'European'. What I know of history has given me the means to identify where I must 'belong'. I too can gaze at the map and name all the cities and nations; I can find myself related to places

which I may only have read about. I can agree that Budapest is less 'foreign' to me than Cairo. But so what? Why should I be expected to measure degrees of foreignness geographically or culturally? Muslim culture in England (and this word culture by now surely needs its pretensions exposing) is 'alien' to me, but surely that must belong within Europe now, or are we talking about something more sinister. Why indeed should I be made to think in terms of foreignness at all? To be asked to stand and salute my common European heritage is really to be asked to give allegiance to a separate power. Allegiance always in practice implies authority; let's not confuse it with simple loyalty or belongingness, or any other moral bond which might perfectly well do without institutions and administrative staffs.

If a European civilization - a cultural heritage - already exists, which I wouldn't ordinarily dispute, why should that require a state unless there are some boundaries, some enemies even, against which to rally? Nations themselves have historically been brought into existence by political strategies to build unities on the pretext of shared cultures, against particular enemies. I can think of no other point to nationalism. Against whom is the new European cultural unity being defined? If 'Communism' is no longer the enemy at the gate, is it America? Japan? or Islam again?

The current hegemony of the word Europe draws on a palimpsest of past identifiers (Christianity, 'The West', 'democracy' etc), but its power seems to derive today from the multiplicity of its meanings. A cursory wander through the various interested parties reveals quite a range of conceptions of 'Europe' - all different but seemingly mutually reinforcing. They cannot all be logically consistent and we are entitled to ask which represent hopes, which are self-delusions and which may be downright camouflage.

1. 'Europe' for the Poles, Czechs and Hungarians means 'the West'. It means freedom, democracy, shopping without queues, human rights and no more Russian troops.
2. For the British elite, 'Europe' means a chance to be part of a big power again, and for the British Left it means a vicarious counterweight to the British conservative regime and a refuge from the nastier side of English nationalism.
3. For the Scots, as for the Catalans and other nationalities, 'Europe' means a higher authority through which to realise their own nationalist aspirations against the nations within which they find themselves.
4. Whenever the Russian government talks about 'Europe' it is a code word for accommodation with Germany.
5. The closer the Germans and the Russians get the more the French renew their zeal for 'Europe' (for the French 'Europe' always means 'France' writ large).
6. The closer Germany gets to reunification the more they reassure their neighbours about the subsumption of a united Germany within a greater 'Europe' as a whole.
7. For the Europeanist propagandists, 'Europe' signifies internationalism and the renunciation of war.
8. For cold war propagandists, 'Europe' signifies a bastion of civilization and democracy against Eastern totalitarianism.
9. For racists in all countries, 'Europe' is a code word for white (in the political unconscious of many soi-disant anti-racist European intellectuals no less than in the explicit discourse of the French FN, who draw on a long tradition of racial thinking by no means confined to France. I have heard commitments to 'European' unity in bars in Hungary, Spain and England in identical terms: *'we're all white after all'*).

10. For big business, Europe means a big market from which to compete with Japanese and American rivals; it means economies of scale, standardisation, integration of operations, free access to customers, rationalization of production and all the rest.

THE REAL EUROPE ON OFFER

Contrary to the ideology that there is a 'natural' progression towards the creation of bigger states absorbing little ones (a concept utterly obsolete in the 'backward' Russian empire) the idea of Europe had to be worked for. The creation of a federal European state was the conscious objective of a determined group of people who wielded their influence for the most part behind the scenes. Foremost among these manipulators have been Jean Monnet and Robert Schumann, a Catholic and friend of another Europeanist, Frank Buchman founder of Moral Rearmament (MRA) (a precursor of the evangelical, anti-communist, pro-capitalist brain-tidying outfits that proliferate throughout the world today). Schuman wrote a foreword to the French edition of Buchman's speeches **Remaking the World** (1950). Other prominent members of MRA included Frits Philips vice-president of the secretive and very powerful Philips company. The present chairman of the European Business Round Table (the central committee of the big multinationals) Wisse Dekker is a former chairman of Philips who is open about the fact that the source of the pressure for the single market was the big industrial firms. He congratulates himself with the success of his pressure in making European unity an 'irreversible process' - a hallmark of the methodology of European integration. Even shadier figures include the Polish 'eminence grise' Joseph Retinger (for whom European unity was to secure the future of his own country) whose brainchild, the **Bilderberg** group provided the forum for the secret deliberations of the powers that be for the last 30 years. Capital too needs its vanguards.



The European integration programme today centres around the concept of the removal of barriers and the so-called 'bonfire of controls' - quintessentially 'radical' slogans for the agenda of economic liberalism. Such is the metaphysical investment of radical and Leftist thought in the idea of 'removal of barriers' that a critique of this programme is inhibited, and only fails back into the grooves of national-statism, reaffirming the need for more controls (which are envisaged as controls over capital and its movements, but which can only take shape as controls over labour and social activity). But at the present juncture the impossibility of such a national strategy only reinforces the statist element in the equation, on an enlarged scale. The enthusiasm of the British Labour Party for a European 'social programme' represents in fact a classic displacement: consolation for exclusion from state power at the national level by a fantasy of participating in a larger state-power, which can only be construed as 'socialist' by its association with the very bureaucratic-centralist mechanisms from which 'socialism' has been trying to disassociate itself. The idea that 'socialism' means simply 'planning' has reappeared

in a paradoxically more 'acceptable' form: state-regulation of society is presumably OK as long as the 'state' doing it is not the old familiar national state, but a new universal leviathan.

The liberal (anti-socialist) strategy is incomparably superior to the pseudo-universalism of supranational statism: instead of seeking to 'plan' and 'direct' economic activity by some apparatus above existing governments, it adopts the quintessentially capitalist method of equalization: the gist of this is that each national state is obliged to recognise every other state's rules. This 'liberalization' does not mean anything like the abolition of 'barriers' or 'controls' in the form imagined if those reifications are taken literally. What it means is a classic form of the way competition is described by Marx rather than the way the market is described by neo-classical economic theory: it is not that 'freedom' is ensured, but simply that a reduction is effected to the level of the capital with the lowest costs of production (costs-of-production here includes protective measures enforced by various national states: 'faux frais' like Health Service provision and the like). In other words by the simple Edenic device of mutual recognition of one another's state-regulations, those capitals based in states with the least controls over capital acquire an automatic competitive advantage over the others and, moreover, the regime of the most 'advanced' capital is generalized to the whole continent. It is a veritable capitalist charter: a solemn accord by which employers agree to allow the cheapest labour to make itself available for exploitation without prejudice against the accidents of birth. And if labour is cheaper to produce in Ireland or Italy then it shall be free to move to Milan or Munich without hindrance from local formalities.

What happens to labour reflects what happens to money. The European Monetary system (EMS) is really a new Deutschmark area. The 'strongest' currency, the D-mark determines the value of the ECU (European Currency Unit) and the other currencies are to have their relative values set by the external (i.e. dollar) value of the D-mark. The national central banks are to be obliged to do their buying and selling to keep these values within a defined band. In other words, while integration of the labour market is achieved by making the *lowest* costs of labour-power the standard, the integration of money is achieved by making the *strongest* national money into the standard.

This 'liberal' Euromarket, favoured by the German bankers (a kind of Cobdenism in which the freedom of trade produces uniformity) is only complemented rather than contradicted by the 'socialist' Europlanning favoured by the French, like Delors (the Delorean strategy ?), with its corporatist social charter. Either way, the social will be adjusted to the economic.

What seems to be happening in Europe now is an attempt to square the circle: to create a 'supranational' state to whom allegiance is based simultaneously upon a supposedly 'universal', and hence non-nationalist, appeal and, on the contrary, upon an encouragement of various other 'nationalisms' whose position within the structure is predefined: fabricated nationalisms from the top down. 'Sovereignty' is to be fused together, but national differences are to be preserved and polished up. This is all of course nonsensical. The only 'universal' value in Europe is exchange value and if all the nations of Europe are to be standardised in the same way that their flags are all the same shape, and united under a common monetary unit, with all 'boundaries' removed insofar as they constitute barriers to the free movement of capital and industrial rationalization, how can 'national cultures' flourish even with EC cultural-fund subsidies? A purely decorative nationality for which others pay? Nations themselves only ever came into existence as a means for state-creation, and the 'autonomy' of aspiring nations means nothing if not as a claim to state-hood. What does the vapid slogan 'Scotland in Europe' mean? Where else has it been for the last few hundred years? A national autonomy dependent upon an imperial bureaucracy in Brussels is a literally *provincial* autonomy; the only autonomy enjoyed being in the hands of the local satraps with new offices and salaries. This is the autonomy of the hundreds of principalities in the Holy Roman Empire.

The citizens of Europe are more realistic than their rulers. While the power elites (especially the ones who keep modestly away from the TV cameras) indulge reveries about their imaginary European Supernation, the population at large still fails to show the required enthusiasm for this new simulated patriotism. Public discussion of the nature and purpose of the Europeanist project has been deliberately confined to reiteration of highflown platitudes, lest too much discussion take place about what kind of state is being constructed and what kind of society is being planned. One popular theme - that a united Europe means no more war - has been played for all it is worth for fifty years. This has probably been the main basis of popular support for Europeanism all along. The pooling of sovereignty between state apparatuses does indeed represent an advanced diplomatic solution to the perennial problem of interstate conflict. But it should not be confused with some sort of dismantling of the state itself - or the emancipation of social life from state power as such. Nor should the construction of a supranational European state or a continental economic bloc be imagined to bring into being some fantastic European nation.

The fact that the pursuit of the European idea has been conducted in secrecy and only presented to the public in the most vague and abstractly idealist slogans suggests it has hidden agendas on which debate has been deemed undesirable.

What will this new European State amount to ?

1. a state designed expressly for capital, for what Kundera calls "those powers that pretend to be fate": a state whose territory has been put together to ensure a population of the right size and composition to provide for the labour-power needs of the big industrial and commercial concerns and to provide a big enough consumer market.
2. a state so designed that the workings of parliamentary 'democracy' cannot possibly interfere with the operations of business and the police.
3. a state in which cultures can be nurtured in their variety in such a way that they do not give rise to collective subjects with interests at variance with those permanently in power.
4. a state providing for 'peaceful' intercapitalist rivalries and competition that is without the need for dangerous political dependence on non-capitalist forces: the labour unions being able to be rewarded in proportion as they collaborate with the dominant capitalist blocs without posing risks to the system as a whole.



The whole structure of the Europolitical system will be such as to make any questioning or challenge of the structure of social and economic life impossible. Just as in the United States of America where the capitalist market is enshrined as the fundamental constitutive principle of the cosmos, so in the new federal Eurostate, there can be no effective politics outside the carefully designed system which excludes anything other than a capitalist interest.

The Politics of Panic: the Kedichem case

Mass action has often escaped criticism in radical circles. In this story Arjen Mulder and Geert Lovink show how, despite the anti-authoritarian make-up of the participants, manipulation and passivity emerged in a crowd engaged upon an anti-fascist action.

"Immer mehr bin ich davon überzeugt, dass Gesinnungen aus Massenerlebnissen entstehen. Aber sind Menschen an ihren Massenerlebnissen schuld? Geraten sie nicht völlig ungeschützt in sie hinein? Wie muss einer beschaffen sein um sich gegen sie wehren zu können? Muss man instände sein, eigene Massen zu bilden, um gegen andere gefeit zu sein?"
Elias Canetti, Das Geheimherz der Uhr.

"More and more I am convinced that mentalities spring from mass experiences. But are people responsible for their mass experiences. Don't they end up in them without any protection? With what should one be equipped, to be able to protect oneself against them?"
Should one be able to form one's own crowds to be immune against others?"
Elias Canetti, **The secret heart of the watch.**

DURING TEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN ORGANIZING mass actions in the Netherlands practical knowledge has been acquired about the planning of panic, both among those against whom the action is directed and among the activists themselves. But to be able to use this panic effectively in the street, in politics and in the media there has to be a taboo about its actual existence among the activists. No matter how much panic arises during an action, people will always deny that they have been in a panic and later on only the effect of the action will be discussed openly, but never the role of panic during the action. The only situations in which it is discussed are squat-bars, chaotic action-meetings and once in a while the underground media. They will look for two things there: 1) the people who instigated the panic and 2) how it can be avoided in the future. There will be an increasing desire for an organization of mass actions which could preclude panic. But the authoritarian consequences of this will, at least in the Netherlands, never be accepted by the activists who enjoy these actions as long as they are spontaneous, chaotic and without a rigid organisation. Such actions can lead, in the activists' own myth about what the old mass actions were like, to the most bizarre burglaries and attacks without lapsing into terrorism.

A classic example of planned panic is the so-called Kedichem-case. On March 29th, 1986 300 anti-fascist activists disturbed a secret meeting at Kedichem, a village in the middle of Holland, where two ultra-right splinter parties made an attempt at reconciliation. The hotel where they met was destroyed by fire, a number of party members were seriously injured and 72 activists arrested. Since 1982 the 'Centrumparty' (CP) had held one seat in the Dutch Lower House on a programme which declared itself to be anti-fascist and anti-racist, but which made out a case for the 'protection of the Dutch cultural values', a modern form of racism which particularly blames foreign workers in the Netherlands for housing problems, unemployment, pollution and overcrowded roads. Since that time increasingly firm measures were being taken by activists against public assemblies of this party, while at the same time a broad anti-fascist movement developed which was internally strongly divided on the question of banning the CP and measures that should be taken against it. This movement is grounded in the anti-fascist attitude and resistance in World War II. It can be seen as the way in which a new generation reshapes the memory of the horrors of fascism, which is still at the forefront in Dutch education, media and literature. Therefore everyone in Holland is concerned in the new movement, everyone is a 'natural' anti-fascist.

Ten days before 'Kedichem' a 'fascist' was elected as a municipal councillor for the first time since the war in Amsterdam. The swearing in of the new councillor would take place on April 29th and discussions about its prevention were in full swing. Aside from that, on the 26th of May parliamentary elections would be held and it was of vital importance for the CP that the internal disputes, which existed since 1982, should be settled. To this end the meeting in Kedichem was summoned. The violent disturbing of the reconciliation meeting prevented the formation of a reunited ultra-right party and led to the loss of their seat in the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament.

For a considerable time there has been a tradition of research into the wheeling and dealing of ultra-right and fascist individuals and groups in Holland. In this way it was found out that the secret negotiations would be on the 29th of March, but the place was kept secret, even in CP-circles. Two days before, a meeting was held between activists in Amsterdam where it was explained to about 150 people the crucial importance of not only disturbing the CP-meeting, but also how to disturb it. A small group of experienced activists assumed the responsibility for the organization. There was no discussion at all about the plan of action, apart from a vague reference to the 'Boekel-model'.

Two years before, the last convention of the CP took place in Boekel, a small town in the South of Holland. Activists from all over the country had entered into a physical confrontation with the 300 party members who were present. The 'Boekel-model' consisted of surrounding the conference room, demanding the fascists leave and, if they ignored this demand, 'smoking out' the conference room with tear gas or smoke bombs. In real terms however, there had been a great difference between on the one hand the non-violent 'demonstrators' who wanted to press charges against the CP in order to mobilize public opinion, and on the other hand the 'heavy' faction who were out for a direct confrontation and actually prepared themselves for this by taking along helmets, leather coats, clubs and smoke bombs. Because the latter faction was the first to arrive at the secret conference room, their strategy was directly put into action: windows were smashed, tear gas was thrown in and outside there was heavy fighting between the fascist thugs, the 'heavies' and the newly arrived 'demonstrators'. Afterwards there was a serious disagreement among the activists, but shortly before Kedichem this all seemed to be forgotten: it was assumed that everybody knew what the 'Boekel-model' meant, it was time to take action now, quarrels were put off until later, a typical feature in Dutch action tradition: act first, talk later.

On Saturday morning the 29th of March about 300 activists gathered at 9.00 a.m. in an old squatted hospital in Utrecht, a city in the centre of Holland. Because it was unknown where the CP-meeting would take place, this seemed to be the best location. It was known that a number of CP members would gather at the soccer stadium of Utrecht. These members were secretly followed by people on motor-bikes who regularly called up the meeting-point to pass on how many fascists were on their way and where they were going. Not until 2.30 p.m. did it become clear that the fascists had gathered in the 'Cosmopolite' hotel in Kedichem.

During the long hours of waiting in Utrecht there hadn't been one joint discussion about what exactly was going to happen. Only the almost magical phrase 'the Boekel-model' flitted through the place. *"In the ocean of time and the relatively cosy atmosphere in Utrecht it was explained insufficiently and too hastily what exactly was going to happen"* Marlie concludes afterwards in the autonomous weekly **Bluff!** *"Was it fear of confronting opinions within the group and heated discussions right before the action? Was everyone already occupied with their own fear of violence and the heavy odds of fascists we expected to meet there? Afterwards I could have kicked myself because I too only dozed around there, while in the back of my mind I had the hazy feeling that a lot of things were not completely right"*. Caspar, asked about it: *"In the rumours in Utrecht the fascists became more and more. And we went for more and more beer and drank it, because it all took a very long time. Our nerves went to pieces. For three hours all those people were waiting, drinking and smoking dope. And then we finally got on our way."*

Among the waiting crowd in Utrecht there was already a clear distinction between those who were sublimating their fear into a worthy demonstration and the 'heavies' who were cultivating their anger into a frenzy for attack. The fact that the crowd didn't interfere at all with the organization was because it appeared to be very professional. *"The organization had a mafia-like, secret-service style"*, says Caspar. *"They were driving motor-bikes throughout the country, people were tailing the fascists, everything was running smoothly, it all looked like a well-oiled machine. Everything was taken care of, you could hand it to them."* It was a comforting feeling that the power was delegated: in a subculture which doesn't recognise an organization, the people in charge are those who take up the practical organization beforehand. In case of trouble afterwards the guilt will be pushed across to them: the crowd will always be innocent, for the crowd only the fascination of being with so many counts. Ronald: *"When I went for something to eat I saw that the centre of Utrecht was swarming with people in leather jackets. It*

was really insane." The certainty of belonging to a crowd gives individuals a possibility to concentrate exclusively on their own emotions.

At 2.30 p.m. it became clear that the fascists had gathered in the Cosmopolite hotel in Kedichem. Because this is a very small hotel, the motor-cyclists thought that the fascists would first gather at this place. Therefore it was decided that the activists would first meet at the station of Leerdam, a town near Kedichem. Finally the waiting crowd was allowed to move: *"We burst into a cheer when we heard the word Kedichem. I'm dancing with joy. To the vans. People are shouting. We still have to make some arrangements. Who is the mouth-piece here? Several people appoint themselves. One of them wins. He organizes a car which will drive ahead to check out the situation. He says that a couple of things are still to be arranged, such as 'entering the scanner-frequencies'. No one asks what this means. Neither do I, but I think it will be alright. Then comes a message that there are only 18 CP-members in the hotel. But we don't really listen to this. The message isn't very clear anyway. We'll see when we are in Leerdam."*

At this point almost 100 vans and cars left Utrecht. In Leerdam the procession posted itself before the small station. In front was the 'commanding-van' of the leaders which was crammed with scanners to bug the police-radio. Around it the vans of the 'heavies' drew up so that they wouldn't miss a thing. When a police car came along and the scanners indicated that more police were on their way and when a message came from Kedichem that Cosmopolite was indeed the meeting place of the CP, the cars in the front decided to leave immediately. There had hardly been any contact between the separate vans and the geographical situation in Kedichem was unknown to everyone. Geert Burgomaster, who wrote the most controversial criticism in **Bluff!** (from which we also quoted the above passage): *"Suddenly we had to leave. Who gave the starting signal? That is not clear. We'll see in Kedichem."* In the waiting crowd in Utrecht something like an anxiety for command had formed: the forced apathy of the people could only be broken by the signal that they had to leave, the command of the leaders was felt as a relief.



The road from Leerdam to Kedichem is five miles long. The touristic experience brings about the 'we-sensation' which belongs to such an outing of 'the Movement'. Ronald: *"A long row of vans left for Kedichem, we made a mess of the traffic, ignored traffic lights and began to drive through the polder-landscape, a kind of caterpillar on those dykes. It was an incredibly nice route. You drove on a very narrow dyke along the river Linge, where no oncoming traffic could pass. Halfway we came across a police car which was parked on a parking lot and in which two frightened policemen were prattling in their radio-telephone. The road on which we drove wasn't straight but winding, so that you saw the procession ahead of you and behind you all the time"*. Betsy: *"It was a real caravan, a convoy"*.

Coming from Leerdam the Cosmopolite hotel is situated upon the left side of the dyke, with the village of Kedichem on the right hand side. From the dyke there is a road which leads down into Kedichem. The vans in front were of course the first to arrive at the hotel, they examined the situation and parked their cars so that they would be able to leave quickly in another direction than where they came from. When they got out of their cars the vans at the back were still about a mile from the hotel. When these arrived the long procession parked along the road on the dyke and the people began to walk from there in the direction of the hotel.

The proceedings in front of the hotel took place at a terrific speed. Caspar was part of the group up front who had decided for a direct confrontation with the CP-members: "When we got out we put up our balaclavas. We saw that a lot of cars hadn't arrived yet. We all had sticks and clubs and quite a lot of adrenalin and everyone rushed towards the hotel. We waited for each other so that we would be many. We were about 40. There was a police car in front of the hotel!". Ronald: "The police car said that we had to clear the area or 'violence would be used'. We all were in laughing fits, of course: 3-400 people with clubs and helmets and only one police car." The conservative newspaper *De Telegraaf* quoted a party-member: "We hadn't been in hotel Cosmopolite for 10 minutes when two policemen came in. 'We have some nasty information for you', they said, 'about 200 thugs are on their way and we can do nothing to protect you'. The policemen left immediately and at the same moment the first bricks came in through the windows".

The only thing the organisers can be reproached for is that they had knowledge about what crowds actually are and how they function, and that they knew how to use this knowledge.

Caspar: "We started to shout: 'Fascists, fuck off' and 'Fascist pigs!'. Then the hotel-owner showed up and the police said: 'Let's keep quiet'. The owner said that they were not fascists and that we should leave them in peace, he only wanted to make some easy money. But people started to throw stones toward the owner and shouted at him that he was a fascist-collaborator and that he should piss off. The windows were smashed and all kinds of things were thrown in. The police had gone away by then, up the dyke because they couldn't control the situation. More and more people showed up and windows kept on rattling and there was beating with clubs on the windows. From the cafe downstairs ashtrays were thrown at us. We also heard a lot of screaming inside, those people were really frightened." Ronald: "You couldn't see who was inside, the curtains were drawn and the light was switched off. You only saw shadows. Then the smoke bombs went in".

"More and more smoke came out of the front", Caspar continues. "We didn't have a strategy, only to smoke them out. So we thought let's throw in some smoke-bombs, let me do it; but almost everyone wanted to throw in his own bomb. I think there was too much ammunition. And too much adrenalin, because we had had to wait so long, the bottled up aggression. Then one smoke bomb got stuck in the curtains, I saw that too." Ronald: "If there is throwing during a riot everyone does one's bit. The pavement went to pieces at once and also the parking lot on the side of the hotel with those handy cobble stones. One smoke bomb got stuck in the curtains. It probably was an old one which had got wet and which combusts with a flash. Suddenly the white smoke got a little darker and the flames shot out of the building."

ARCADE
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**ON THE PLACING OF IMPOSSIBLE TEXTS
 at the opening of Arcades**

'It is not enough to think: one's got to think upon something.'
Jules Renard

The impossible text refuses to become the object of feasibility-studies, marketing analysis of target-groups and segments to be conquered. It stays outside social relevance, science policy and the culture of weekend-specials. The impossible text doesn't seek its readers but has already found its subject. Being written for the desk-drawer, it finds its ambulatory in the lobbies under the Arcades. In the shadow of the screaming avant-garde it is traded upon in the grey circuit of festering words. No final destination, no origin: circulation, openness to all sides, but with the back against the wall. Compact text, flopped magazine out of the reign of digital thinking, crafty writing which follows its own way in the secret planetary networks. The authors did accompany their subjects for a while instead of imposing it their way. Their standpoint was the Dutch language, the Dutch version. No **Helmat** needed. There didn't appear any polder-studies, but frontier-blurring essays. Arcades are no forum, but a foyer for salesmen of suspicious character. The discussion will not be monitored, ideas will be given away for the price of solidity, perseverance and the application for more impossible texts. Therefore the 300 of Arcades are invited. Your treatises, aphorisms, mental experiments, your travelling notes, free translations and summaries find a place, a point of departure, an entrance. They form the Academy for Ambulant Sciences.

Arcades.

Ambulatory (æ'mbi:lätəri), *a.* 1622. [ad. *L. ambulatorius, f. ambulator.*] 1. Of or pertaining to a walker, or walking. 2. Adapted for walking 1835. 3. Unfixed in abode; movable 1622. 4. *fig.* Shifting, temporary, mutable. (So in Fr.) 1631.

1. A. exercise 1622, life 1796. 3. Many [schools] are a. 1845. 4. A man's will... is a., or alterable, untill death 1652. They... think virtue and vice a. Mrs. Piozz. var. Ambulato'rial (in senses 1, 2). Ambulatory, sb. 1623. [ad. med.L. *ambulatorium*; see -ORY.] A place (open or esp. covered) for walking in; an arcade, a cloister.

"When we saw that the hotel was burning we went to the back. I said to my buddy: 'Let's look if they can get away, it's getting quite dangerous'. Then we saw that nobody got out, but also that it was impossible to get in, for we still wanted to beat up some fascists. We got scared when we saw that they couldn't leave the hotel. I thought: there is water behind the hotel, they can jump in there of course, but yet... Later it turned out that there was another exit. I was really worried. Then I went to the other side of the hotel to see if they got away there. First I only thought: if they get away we can really give them a thrashing. But when we saw those flames coming from the first floor we thought: this isn't going to work, those people are all going to die in there", says Caspar.

Geert Burgomaster saw it like this: "All the windows are smashed out. The room is full of smoke, I look inside and can only see some shadows walking in the back. But the throwing of smoke bombs doesn't stop. Enormous whoppers are thrown in. In the panic - or is it enthusiasm? - everyone wants to get rid of his stuff. I think: this has been enough. But you are part of the stream, you have no say anymore. Your shouting fades away. And then: white smoke turns into black smoke. Suddenly there is the crackling of fire. I tear my helmet off my head, throw away my club and start to run: I don't want to have anything to do with this."

Panic is always fear of murder: the murder that can be committed against you or the murder you commit yourself. The assailants behaved like a classical baiting-crowd. Canetti says about it: "The baiting-crowd forms with reference to a quickly attainable goal. The goal is known and clearly marked, and is also near. The crowd is out for killing and it knows what it wants to kill. One important reason for the rapid growth of the baiting-crowd is that there is no risk involved. There is no risk because the crowd has immense superiority on its side".

The waiting crowd of Utrecht was not out for killing but was preparing itself for a confrontation with shadows. How many, how strong, unknown. But when the front ranks formed themselves on the Lingedyke, they had one goal: "In the van we talked all the time about fascist thugs, whom we expected to meet there. We were all really fucked up and we wanted to hit fascists. Everyone was 'in the mood for killing'. But there was nobody to fight with, nobody showed up" (Caspar). When they came near the hotel (and parked their cars as close to it as possible) and found out that they had a large superiority there was no restraint to prevent the group turning into a baiting-crowd. The people had concentrated on their individual fears of being beaten and on their desire to beat, but not on the collective experience which awaited them. They had protected their bodies with leather coats and helmets, but they were not protected against their own crowd. For the crowd there was no danger, it was definitely superior to its opposition. The real danger lurked in the crowd itself: as individuals they suddenly recoiled from the act which the crowd committed.

First the crowd was innocent: a white crowd. When the smoke turned black this changed: guilt spread itself among the crowd, it turned black. That guilt was the panic. The sense of being responsible for murder turned the crowd into a group of individuals whose only interest was to get away from the scene of the crime. And they succeeded in getting away, because their cars were free and within reach.

Consequently they all escaped, as individuals. Caspar: "We wanted to save our skins, threw away our gloves and balaclavas and went back to the van, without bothering to look back at the other people. We heard a lot of sirens and the police car came again and tried to drive right into us, but then we threw bricks at the vehicle. In the car we took off our black clothes because they would attract too much attention and we switched on the radio. In this way we dashed home. Every time we came to another junction I felt more relieved, because we were incredibly anxious, at least I was, about what might have happened to those people in the building. I thought of babies who would be sleeping on the first floor of the hotel." And Ronald: "Some of us were really panicking to get back to the cars, they left their clubs and helmets behind in the roadside. The dyke was strewn with them when the greater part of us had gone. We were quite relaxed when we drove back through the polder. But afterwards you had this feeling, was this alright, or was it a stupid action by a bunch of stupid people? We were convinced of the fact though, that we could have thrown in less smoke bombs."

For the group that came behind the assailants, the demonstrators, it was all very different. Oliver: "We had lost our way. When we arrived in Kedichem we parked the van in town and began to walk

up the dyke. I was walking in the direction of the hotel. It started to smoke more and more. The nearer you came, the more smoke you saw. From a distance it was a great spectacle. But I had no idea about what was going on there. I thought it would be a kind of siege, that we would go inside and expose those CP-members. In fact we arrived too late for the action. When the flames came from all sides of the building we heard: 'Back to the cars!'. I was still coming closer when the others were already retreating. 'Take it easy, take it easy!', people shouted."

Betsy: "I was halfway along the procession of cars. I had the idea that it was a demo. After a while we stopped and walked towards the hotel. Then I heard the shattering of windows and I saw smoke. But I never reached the building. Suddenly everyone began to run back: clear off! I saw a cop car driving criss-cross through it all, he didn't know what he was doing either. When we were back at the car we first waited for the others to come. The car turned round on the small dyke, it was all very chaotic. All cars were jumbled up, you couldn't get away. It was quite heavy, further away you saw all those clouds of smoke, quite a spectacle. I thought: you will never get away from this dyke, there were no side-roads. I found it stupid to go back, better to go straight on, but almost everybody turned their cars".



The demonstrators who had been waiting all day were initially strongly attracted towards the fire from which the assailants were fleeing. They had not yet, as a crowd, come to a 'discharge': they had not yet reached that stage when each individual who belongs to the crowd feels equal to all others. When they learned that for them the party had come to an untimely end, they had to turn back, but they formed, against all common sense, into a flight-crowd for which by definition the danger comes from behind. Only as a flight-crowd could they come to that desired discharge, to experience that attractive common equality. But forming a flight-crowd was for them the only possibility to avert the panic which they were part of, but which they didn't understand. And they had to deal with that panic (although they didn't know anything about the possible murder): "The incoming wave which threatened to crush the building suddenly turns back. On top of the dyke there is a jumble of vans which try to turn around. People are gesticulating wildly and shouting. Two vans bump into each other. An empty van tells two escapees to find their own van: you don't belong here. Meanwhile some of the townsfolk stop being just onlookers: they head towards us. Some of us get heavy blows but no one does anything: it is every man for himself now" (Geert Burgomaster).

Not only panic determined the behaviour of the fleeing demonstrators, but also their sense of not being guilty. Oliver: "Our car didn't start, on top of it all. We tried to push start it. Meanwhile we were harassed by locals who were holding their lighters near our gas tanks. They said: 'What have you done! You set the place on fire!' When actually we were the last to arrive there. It was only a wild guess on their part that we did it." The fact that the flight-crowd didn't feel responsible for the fire for which they fled, proved to be fatal: it resulted in the return of the apathy which characterised the waiting crowd of Utrecht.

After the chaotic reversing the procession drove back to Leerdam. But: "After a while a cop car came which posted itself right across the road, we all had to stop. Nobody knew what was happening. There were a lot of cars ahead of us. Then we got out of the cars. We were standing there for more than an hour, we were shut in at the front and the back. If you wanted you could still get away through the grassland, but I thought: we are in the middle of nowhere anyway" (Betsy).

All people from the cars were arrested and transported to Leerdam in a police wagon. There was no resistance. One person who hid himself in the reeds along the river until 9.00 p.m. managed to escape by joining a group of Turkish boys who were playing soccer on the dyke. All the others who managed to reach the Leerdam station were arrested on the directions of the locals from Kedichem. Oliver was already arrested in Kedichem itself: "We were running behind the car we were pushing. At the moment that the cops were two metres behind us the engine started. We got busted and another one of us was caught by the locals who couldn't keep out of it. It was funny: the car drove away and we were the first to be caught." The police car in which the three handcuffed detainees were kept blocked the road when the fire department came. The car had to be pushed to the roadside which delayed the fire engine for a couple of minutes. When they arrived at the hotel it was already in a blaze. Over the police radio the detainees heard that the leg of a woman had to be amputated. They didn't hear who the woman was.

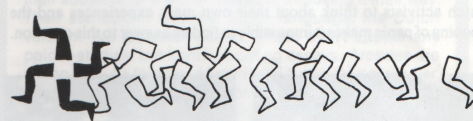
The CP-Member of Parliament Janmaat, who arranged the meeting, told **De Telegraaf** about the leg: "I fled with my secretary, Mrs Cosnelius-Schuurman, and some other people upstairs. From the window we could see the flames and the other people getting out 5 metres below us. Within three minutes everything was on fire, including the stairs. We tied sheets together. I was the first to climb down, to test it out. The sheets were too short, I had to jump. My secretary came after me. But hanging on those sheets she swung right through a big window and she crashed to the ground. She was bleeding terribly, I tried to help her, but later her leg had to be amputated. Horrible, a disaster. In this same suit, which is full of bloodstains, I will ask questions in the Lower Chamber: why were our people not protected against this rabble?"

For those who were arrested, of whom the majority would be detained for 4 days and eventually only a few would be sentenced to three months imprisonment, it was impossible to keep their clothes: after they had thrown away their helmets and caps, the police in Leerdam took all their other clothes for laboratory investigation into gasoline-traces. Oliver wouldn't even get his clothes back, ten days later he ended up in the street in his underpants.

The group of assailants returned unharmed to their home base: "We drove back with the group to a squat-bar. We didn't see any cops and we ran out of beer too. Back in the bar we learned that no one had been killed, that one woman was injured and we had a good laugh about it. We also heard about the 72 arrests and we found that really shitty" (Caspar). The assailants soon got over their panic when they were home: the murder had not been committed against people, but against a leg. They expressed their relief in a wave of laughter. Ronald, who went back to another bar: "We watched the 6 o'clock news and only then heard about the arrests and some

seriously injured people. This really chilled the party. Anyway, you can talk about if this was or was not a very clever action, but it really is a kick to see a hotel burn down".

At the same time a press release came from the organizers who called themselves 'Radical Anti-Fascists' (RAF) for the occasion. The phrase in this press release that "The events in Kedichem could be repeated" was immediately connected by everyone to 'The Leg'. The interpretation was that they would not shrink back from making new serious casualties in their fight against fascism. The shocking implication of this statement was that the organizers did not shrink back from admitting 'murder' and thus indicated that the panic was planned and that when the majority of the activists, once they were at home, exerted themselves to eliminate the panic of the action in themselves by discussing the effect and the strategy. Ronald went directly into politics: first by organizing lawyers for the people who had been arrested, and one day later in a press group which was formed "Because nobody liked the sound of the RAF press release. After that release we didn't see anyone of the leading organizers again. We tried to make the most of a hopeless situation". The first goal of the press group was to distract attention from The Leg, which was leading its own life in the media. "A news programme on T.V. had an interview with the bitch, lying in bed, without her leg. And that hotel owner also behaved like a madman. Our aim was to explain that it hadn't been our intention that a leg had to be amputated. Besides we wanted to bring forth our own arguments why we did it and subtly incorporate our criticism of how things went."



They also made a press release, signed with "The activists of March the 29th" which said: "We literally smoked out the fascists. That the Cosmopolite hotel went up in flames was not our intention. We regret if any non-fascists were injured". In this way the kick and the panic was written out of the Kedichem story. While the story for the big media was stripped of panic, the underground media explicitly pointed out the culprit of the panic. It was quickly found because the RAF itself had already claimed that they had included the panic in their planning beforehand.

In Bluff! Geert Burgomaster wrote about the spokesman of the RAF: "I think he is an incredible bastard. But I don't think he's the only one who is guilty. After all we are all responsible". And he goes on about the RAF: "It is a very small group of people who decide that Holland is ready for terrorist actions, but they are too spineless to do it themselves". And he concludes: "We have much more important things to think about. We shall have to learn to discuss and organize things together, otherwise the future movement will be ruled by ingenious madmen once again".

In the analysis Geert B. makes about the relation between the individual and the crowd, the individual is not to be blamed for the actions of the crowd. He sees the crowds of Utrecht and Kedichem as victims of those who know how crowds react and how to direct them. In order to exclude these evil leaders he suggests to form an 'own', 'good' crowd which will be able, through discussion and democracy, to withstand the devious leaders. The fear of violent anti-fascist actions and the suppression of panic is a result of the fact that an anti-fascist mass movement in Holland basically includes the whole Dutch population. Even the CP admits this. Their comment on Kedichem was: "They didn't serve the anti-fascist committees well, for there are a lot of good people in these committees".

Anyway, Geert B's characterisation "ingenious madmen" also shows respect for these leaders. But he doesn't ask the question why the crowd of Utrecht delegated power to them. Why did they let themselves be enticed into apathy? And why did the group of assailants let themselves be worked up to such an extent that they were prepared to kill? Geert B. circumvents this question by talking directly about "the perspective of the movement", since he is not able to conjure up his 'own' crowd in other than vague terms, he doesn't do anything else but to make the panic a taboo once again.

The very fact that the activists in Kedichem got into panic, proves that they were no fascist horde themselves. There is no panic in fascism. Fascist thugs or bureaucrats never shrink back from murder. The planning of the panic by the leaders was prompted by the assessment that it would enable them to get away quickly. This could gain them the reproach that they have a terrorist tendency, something Geert B. actually reproaches them for. But terrorists do not need a crowd to be able to operate. The only thing the organizers can be reproached for is that they had knowledge about what crowds actually are and how they function, and that they knew how to use this knowledge. All those who, with or without secret amusement, disassociated themselves from the RAF and by doing so stuck to their own myth of mass actions as a spontaneous and chaotic event within an unorganized structure, denied themselves access to this knowledge. They will end up "without any protection" in the next mass experience.

With what should one be equipped, to be able to protect oneself against mass experiences and to cope with them? The refusal of Dutch activists to think about their own mass experiences and the tabooing of panic makes it impossible to find an answer to this question.

Knowledge of books with cunning theories is not necessary, only a thorough digestion of the experiences of the dozens of actions à la Kedichem would be enough.

Afterwards the sons of the owner of hotel Cosmopolite said to a newspaper: "Two years ago we also had a fire in our home furnishing shop in Leerdam. By now it has almost been rebuilt. We have almost finished the job. We thought we could quieten down a little. But now we have this fire in Kedichem again. It was an unexpected blow. For me and my brother it only means a material damage of about a hundred thousand dollars. But for our father it goes much deeper. He feels it as an attack on his life".

This attack happened during Easter weekend, on the 29th of March 1986, but the movement in the Kedichem case came to a standstill two months later: "The 62 year old owner Mr. In den Eng bought, according to the police, a second-hand mechanical shovel to take up the demolition of the hotel Cosmopolite himself. Earlier the facade of the building was pulled down by the local authorities for fear that it would collapse. On this Saturday the owner wanted to remove the remains of his hotel on his own. Because the shovel didn't want to start he had placed a battery on a pair of steps between the right front and rear wheels. He had to connect the battery with wires to the starter inside the machine. As soon as the connection was made the heavy machine unexpectedly set itself in motion. Mr. In den Eng, whose way out was blocked by the pair of steps, couldn't get away and was run over in full length. He died on the spot. The machine crossed the dyke, sweeping away a crush barrier, piercing an iron bar through a window at the other side of the dyke, and, thanks to a security system in the shovel, came to a standstill".



Rushdie Matters

Following on from **John Barrett's** article 'The Tigers of Wrath' in *Here and Now* No. 9, **C. W.** explores the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in the British context, while **Ali Hussein** reveals how the Rushdie Affair has exposed real fissures in the mythical monolith of Islam.

JOHAN BARRETT'S REPORT, 'THE TIGERS OF WRATH' in *H & N* No. 9 attempted to address the ambivalences found within Left and Radical responses to the 'Rushdie Affair'. This ambivalence *isn't* found within the New Right or within Neo-fascist groups for quite unexpected reasons. New Right and even Neo-fascist groupings have positively *welcomed* the forces and tendencies released by the Rushdie Affair in the *same* terms as those found within the Muslim community itself. All talk of a 'rightwing backlash' misses this point.

Growth of the New Right has been accompanied by development of the New Racism - a racism which finally buries biological claims of racial connotation and inferiority in favour of a celebration of cultural difference. Cultural, religious and ethnic 'diversity' is to be encouraged and enhanced in the notion of *independent but separate development* for ethnic minorities. This can take more or less 'acceptable' forms from the encouragement for 'opted-out' separate Muslim schools at one end of the spectrum to the BNP's and NF's fascination with Gadhafi's and Khomeini's regime. Despite the different political and historical bases for these claims and 'solutions' within the Right (primarily resting upon conflicting views of 'nation' and 'national identity') they *do* bear an uncanny resemblance to both Islamic fundamentalism *and* certain aspects of 'moral' anti-racism and multiculturalism found on the Left.

These competing claims and solutions as responses to cultural, religious and ethnic 'diversity' sowed seeds within muslim communities which enabled restoration of patriarchal localism and Islamic fundamentalism. Moreover, a path has been laid for ethnic absolutism or essentialism as a way of life, a self identification for individuals and groups and as a preferred 'solution' to white racism within the Black and Asian working class.

In *H & N* No. 5 I referred to the dangers inherent in the 'New' social movements of Anti-sexist and Anti-racist struggle. Firstly their easy cooption into a debilitating social democratic or 'socialist' localism wherein public relations exercises and careerism come to replace radical action and change. Secondly, even radical political theory and action can be reduced to a community based 'localism' which eschews wider alliances drawn from a universalistic notion of justice addressed to systemic injustices. Furthermore, because this approach goes along with an 'identity-exclusion' type of politics conferring moral superiority upon 'black' or 'womens' experience a paralysis is induced amongst the actors and their allies. Thus moral anti-racism in attempting to corner the market in oppression induces a paralysis for widening or extending struggles which then becomes a constraining condition for all subsequent parameters of debate and action.

In connecting this argument with the Rushdie Affair I might be accused of conducting an exercise in self-vindication. The opposite is the case - these arguments didn't go far enough because they only anticipated negative outcomes for radical action and social movements.

Furthermore, they left untouched the *internal dynamics* and directional range of the movements. They were unable to penetrate, looking as they were, from the outside, a logic which could lead to surprising, unanticipated and 'positive' outcomes. Islamic Fundamentalism, in Britain, has become such a movement sharing important characteristics with the Anti-Racist movement as well as important differences.

Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses' and later Khomeini's edict were catalysts in bringing Muslim demands for self-determination and self-assertion into the public domain. This took authoritarian forms as moral and religious 'policing' within the muslim communities (especially of youth), and initiated by local Imams. But also encouraged more or less organised physical and symbolic forays into public space - in city centres and inner city areas - by Asian youth. Space which had hitherto been the preserve of white intimidation.

Cultural, religious and ethnic diversity is to be encouraged and enhanced in the notion of independent but separate development for ethnic minorities.

My argument has not addressed the very real force of ideas and motives generated by Islamic fundamentalism as this found expression in Britain. I am not immediately qualified to discuss these and Ali Hussein operates an 'internal critique' of Islamic fundamentalism elsewhere in this issue. Meanwhile John Barrett's report raises the general issue of how a secularised rationalized society which reduces moral and ethical questions to supposedly 'technical' decisions gives rise to populist authoritarian reaction. According to Barrett, Islamic fundamentalism as a spiritual reaction to meaningless materialism and commodification both reveals denial of access to these materials and commodities for ethnic minorities in Britain, and encourages tyrannical political solutions elsewhere. As both a response to rationalism and as foundation for a Just society, fundamentalist religion is judged profoundly flawed, whilst indicating alienation and disenchantment.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that on the ground there is considerable ignorance within muslim communities about the intentions, efforts and political frameworks of the Anti-racist movement. For example, one argument having general currency is the British state's inconsistency on censorship policy - 'If Wright why not Rushdie?'. Another is that Rushdie has *also* insulted the British establishment - 'the Queen, the government and the British way of life.' Indeed he has! Many of these comments are authoritarian and statist and show through their political naivete just how much the world has been perceived through adherence to the tenets of revealed truth - 'ignorance is bliss'.

Looking at Islamic fundamentalism in its own terms I am in broad agreement with Hussein and Barrett. In terms of social and political effects Islamic fundamentalism as a new social movement in Britain is a surprising and unintended consequence of the ways in which the Left and the New Right have responded to and generated discourses around 'race' and 'racisms'.

Specific levels and types of racism in British society were reduced to a general theory of racism in the Anti-racist movement and subsequently this was embraced by large sections of the Left. Whether in its 'soft' (multicultural) or 'hard' (anti-racist) versions there resulted a culturalism or ethnic essentialism never challenged and in an important sense embraced (for strategic reasons) by the Left. Meanwhile this opened the ground for New Right cultural racism - 'separate cultures' - which in however bizarre ways drew support from conservative and

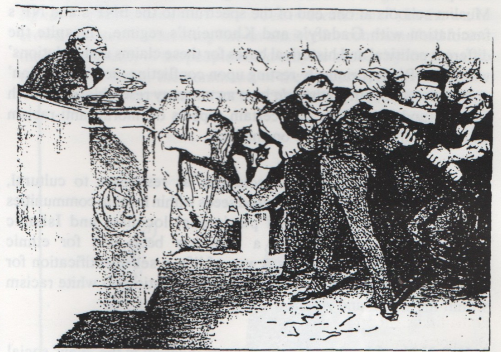
reactionary elements within the muslim communities. If fundamentalist religion is an outcome or expression of this so has been an increased physical and public confidence amongst Asian youth, especially in smaller primarily working class towns, where 'political organisation' amongst Asian youth has been weak.

Whatever the effects of fundamentalism upon the hearts and minds of Britain's Muslim communities the notions attached to all forms of 'cultural', 'ethnic' or 'religious' essentialism should be jettisoned. The equation identity (or 'race') = experience = religion, or culture = politics in any absolutist or essential sense is untenable both as a means of struggle towards and realization of a truly democratic and just society. The projection of religious or cultural dispositions into the public realm necessarily undermines political freedoms and material justice. A just society would protect and guarantee cultural and religious freedoms and diversity as private matters in the conduct of life not as claims on or privileged access to power.

A Writer's Freedom to Imagine

DURING THE HECTIC DAYS OF MUSLIM FUNDAMENTALIST mobilisation in Bradford against **Satanic Verses** a Sudanese friend who had just started reading the book told me that Islam is a proper target of literary enquiry, but literature (*adab* in arabic - which has the additional meaning of gentility of manners) and conduct employing cussing and abuse, is a contradiction in terms. I ought to add that the man is a well known opponent of muslim fundamentalism and spent eight years in jail not least because of it.

It was clear in the months which followed, as reports appeared about muslim writers' attitudes to *Verses*, that he was not alone. Naguib Mahfouz, the Egyptian Nobel laurette, emphatically endorsed the legitimacy of Rushdie's enquiry, adding the reservation: 'but this is not the way to do it'. The man should know: his novel '**Children of Gebelawi**' was banned in the '50s, by a fatwa, for mocking god. With minor variations, scores of others, under pressure from the media to give a verdict echoed the same sentiments. Yes but no. Reading these responses, made thousands of miles away from the consternation and fury which engulfed this country, they sound complacent, even accomodating. The truth is, of course, theirs is a limited literary observation conditioned by a long standing battle raging between modernists and muslim fundamentalist critics over modern arabic letters. They are hardly aware of the twin issue of the affair - the racial dimension which gives muslim fundamentalists' reaction a moral weight and a secular language in a liberal democratic context. In the Middle East the *Verses* affair wouldn't have arisen for obvious political reasons. The novel would never have been published in the first place. On the occasions where a work with a similar theme has been at the centre of a furore, modernists have confined themselves to the literary merits of the work in question. Tactically, it is suicidal to broach publically the political question of freedom of expression. The pervasive religious orthodoxy at the heart of muslim states, aided by a growing fundamentalist mass movement, defines religion as the limit of a writer's freedom. The balance of power in the wider society ensures a writer's pen scrolls are within this boundary.



"You Have the Floor, Explain Yoursself." - H. D. 1855.

A similar conflict in a British terrain was bound to produce a naked and unrestrained political contest, and as things stand now, with unaccountable consequences. We are asked by muslim fundamentalists, to set limits to a writer's freedom. A writer's freedom to imagine. I will discount the naive outrage which greeted their demand. Neither is the demand outlandish in the light of others regularly emanating from Right wing forces or government, albeit for reasons of state. Antecedents of this sort of demand and intervention stem directly from a curious brand of moral anti-racism espoused by race relation officers, born-again blacks, over-the-counter activists who seize on the genuine misery and suffering of ordinary black victims of racism, then substitute it for their own in order to hector and guilt-trip the white working class as the source of racism. After successfully dispersing support, the victim is left to their isolation and misery, and they move on to the next. They are the post-Scarman new black middle class. Their intervention has given the language of racial dignity to religious fundamentalism, and in a real sense, it is its most powerful weapon.