ANARCHIST N.3

JANUARY 1971

SCIENCE AND SPACE

CHINA

VIETNAM USSR

INDIA ISRAEL

USA

IRELAND

RHODESIA

CAMBI

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Contents

Anarchy and Organization...by Murray Bookchin

What is a good soldier? by Jack London

Notes on "Le gauchism" of Daniel & Gabriel Cohn bendits

Authority, Submission, and Discipline Claude Laporte

Important

WE INTEND TO PUBLISH "RED & BLACK". A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST IDEAS. AGAIN. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN IT SEND YOUR ARTICLES TO c/ P.O.Box A 425, Sydney South, N.s.W. 2000.
THE CLOSING DATE FOR ARTICLES IS 30th of APRIL.
FINANCIAL HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.
Jack the Anarcoist

Published by Sydney Anarchists.
c/ P.O.Box M425,
Sydney South. N.S.W. 2000.

Anarchy and organization

There is a hoary myth that anarchists do believe in organization to promote revolution activity. This myth was raised from its rest place by Marcuse in a L'Express interview s months ago and reiterated again by Huey Newton his "In Defence of Self - Defense", which New L Notes decided to reprint in the recent Natio Convention issue.

To argue the question of "organization" ver " non-organization" is ridiculous; this issue ha ver been in dispute among serious anarchist, exc perhaps for those lonely "individualists" whose eology is rooted more in an extreme variant o classical liberalism than anarchy. Yes, anarchi believe in organization. Anarchist organizatio have ranged from loose, highly decentralized gro to "vanguard" movements of many thousands, like Spanish F.A.I., which functioned in a highly co certed fashion.

The real question at issue is not organizati versus non - organization, but rather, what kind organization. What different kinds of anarchist o ganizations have in common is that they are devel oped organically from below, not engineered int existence from above. They are social movements combining a creative revolutionary life -style wi a creative revolutionary theory, not political parties, whose mode of life is indistinguishab from the surrounding bourgeois environment and whose ideology is reduced to rigid "tried-and-tes ted programs". They try to reflect as much as i humanly possible the liberated society they seek achieve, no slavishly duplicate the prevailing sy tem of hierarchy, class, and authority. They a

built around intimate groups of brothers and sisters, whose ability to act in common is based on initiative, convictions freely arrived at, and deep personal involvement, not a bureaucratic apparatus, fleshed out be docile memberships and manipulated from the top by a handful of all-knowing "leaders".

I don't know who Huey is arguing with when he speaks of " anarchists" who believe all they have to do is "just express themselves individually" in order to achieve freedom. Tim Leary? Allen Ginzberg ? The Beatles? Certainly not the revolutionary anarchist communists I know - and I know a large and fairly representative number. Nor is it clear to me where Huey acquired his facts on the May-June revolt in France. The "Communist Party and the other progressive (!) parties" of the French "Left" hadn't merely "lagged behind the people", as Huey seems to believe; these "disciplined" and "centralized" organization tried in every way to obstruct the revolution and re-direct it back into traditional parliamentary channels. Even the " disciplined", "centralized" Trotskyist FER and the Maoist groups opposed the revolutionary students as "ultra-leftists", "adventurists", and "romantics" right up to the first street fighting in May. Characteristically, most of the "disciplined", "centralized" organizations of the French "Left" either lagged outrageously behind the events or, in the case of the "Communist Party and progressive parties, "shamelessly betrayed the students and workers to the system.

I find it curious that while Huey accused the French Stalinist hacks of merely having "lagged behind the people" he holds the anarchists and Danny Cohn-Bendit responsible for the people being "forced to turn back to De Gaulle." I visited France shortly after the May-June revolt and I can substantiate without the least difficulty how resolutely Danny Cohn- - Bendit, the March 22nd Movement, and the an-

archists tried to develope the assembly forms and action committees into a "structural progr (indeed, it went far beyond mere "program") to re place the De Gaulle government. I could show qui clearly how they tried to get the workers to rete their hold on the factories and establish dire economic contacts with the peasants: in short, ho they tried to replace the French political and ec nomic structure by creative, viable revolutionar forms. In this, they met with continual obstructi from the "disciplined", "centralized" parties of t French "Left", including a number of Trotskyist a Maoist sects.

There is another myth that needs to be explo - the myth that social revolutions are made tightly disciplined cadres, guided by a highly ce tralized leadership. All the great social revol tions are the work of deep-seated historic forc and contradictions to which the revolutionary o his organization contributes very little and, most cases, completely misjudges. The revolutio themselves break out spontaneously. The "glorio party" usually lags behind these events - and, the uprising is successful, steps in to command manipulate, and almost invariably distort it. It i then that the revolution reaches its real period c crises: will the "glorious party" re-create anothe system of hierarchy, domination and power in i sacred mission to "protect the revolution", or wil it be dissolved into the revolution together wit the dissolution of hierarchy, domination and powe as such? If a revolutionary organization is no structured to dissolve into the popular forms cre ated by the revolution once its function as a cata lyst is completed; if its own forms are not simila to the libertarian society it seeks to create, s that it can disappear into the revolutionary forc of the future - then the organization becomes a ve hicle for carrying the forms of the past into th

revolution.It becomes a self-perpetuating organism, a state machine that, far from "withering away", perpetuates all the archaic conditions for its own existance.

There is far more myth than reality to the claim that a tightly "centralized"and "disciplined" party promotes the success of a revolution.The Bolsheviks were split,divided,and riddled by factional strife from October,1917 to March,1921. Ironically, it was only after the last White armies had been expelled from Russia that Lenin managed to completely centralize and discipline his party. Far more real have been the endless betrayals engineered by the hierarchial, "disciplined", highly "centralized",parties of the "Left",such as the Social Democratic and Communist parties. These betrayals were not accidental.They followed almost inexorably from the fact that every organization (however revolutionary its rhetoric and however well-intentioned its goals) which models itself structurally on the very system it seeks to overthrow becomes assimilated and subverted by bourgeois relations. Its seeming effectiveness becomes the source of its greatest failures.

Undeniably problems arise which can be solved only by committees, by co-ordination, and by a high measure of self-discipline. To the anarchist, committees must be limited to the practical tasks that necessitate their existance,and they must disappear once their functions are completed. Co-ordination and self-discipline must be achieved voluntarily,by virtue of the high moral and intellectual caliber of the revolutionary. To seek less than this is to accept, as a "revolutionary", a mindless robot, a creature of authoritarian training, a manipulable agent whose personality and outlook are utterly alien,indeed antithetical, to any society that could be remotely regarded as free.

No serious anarchist will disagree with t Huey's plea on the "necessity for wiping out t imperialist structure by organized groups". If all possible we must work together. We must reco nize too, that in the United States, the heartla of world imperialism today, an economy and technol ogy has been developed wi h could remove, almo overnight, all the problems that Marx once believ justified the need for a state.It would be a disa terous error to deal with an economy of potenti abundance and cybernated production from a theoret ical position which was still rooted in a techn ogical era based on coal,crude machines, long hour of toil, and material scarcity. It is time we st trying to learn from Mao's China and Castro's Cub - and see the remarkable economic reality under ou very eyes for all men to enjoy once the American bourgiois colossus can be tumbled and its resource brought to the service of humanity.

Murray Bookchin

What is a good soldier? - The answer is given by Jack London.

The good soldier never tries to distinguis right from wrong; he never thinks, never reasons only obeys. He fires without hesitation, though he knows the bullet will pierce the noblest heart tha ever beat in human breast.A good soldier is a blin heartless, soulless, murderous machine. He is no even a brute, for brutes only kill in self defence All that is human in him,all that is divine in him all that constitues the man, has been sworn awa when he took the enlistment roll. His mind, con- science, aye, his very soul, are in keeping of h officer. No man can fall lower than a soldier... i is a depth beneath which we cannot go".

Notes on "le gauchism" of Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit

Three points may as well be made at the outset regarding the thought of Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit. The first is that although their position is called "revolutionary leftism" it is indistinguishable from certain varieties of anarchism. Perhaps that would be clear in France, but it is likely to be misleading where anarchism is less well-known, as in English-speaking countries.

The second is that their book is not original. The authors acknowledge this when they point out that what they have to say could have been conveyed by collection of articles from anarchist, leftist and Trotskyist journals. Such an anthology, however, should have been of no interest to publishers-their interest was in a book bearing the name of Cohn-Bendit.

The third is that although they criticize vigorously the authoritarian socialists they take the libertarian socialists at face value. This is not because they believe that it is enough to have generous sentiments, but because they think that libertarian socialism had demonstrated its practicability. On this point their position has much in common with that of Daniel Guerin.

The book is a product of the French events of 1968 in which anarchist tendencies were surprisingly prominant. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, for example, remarked that "the appearance of the black flag on the first barricades in Paris, from May 6 onwards, and the arguments it started, were one of the great facts of the May movement." The same observer remarked also that "There is no doubt that anarchist thought..had

a profound influence on a revolution which, as h
been emphasized, recalled the themes of revolut
syndicalism at the beginning of this century, a
above all, that of workers' control...In the same
way, the federalist direction which the moveme
often took owes much to the tradition of Proudh
and Bakunin." According to another commentator, Edg
Morin, "it was a time of intellectual revival f
anarchism, tinged with libertarian Marxism and si
uationism."

It appears that the Cohn-Bendits would want
see their role as one of enlightenment. They do n
mean to be patronizing or elitist, but their re
tion to the latter sentiment is highly ambiguous,
they might have appreciated had they studied th
radical critics of anarchism as well as the anarch
ist critics of Bolshevism. The idea is that activ
minorities will act openly and publicly to suppor
excite and clarify struggles against the existin
order. The members are to be drawn from diver
classes, united by "profound ideological agreement
and devoted to struggle. Despite their criticism o
Lenin the Cohn- Bendits here come close to Leninis
and Blanquist conceptions.

The suspicion of opportunism to which th
gives rise is not dissipated by their relativistic
definition of leftism as that which is most revolu-
tionary in the workers' movement. Leftism, so under-
stood, is asserted to be an historical tendency:
was left of Proudhon and Bakunin of Marx; Lenin was
left of the reformist social democrats and, in 1917,
of his own Central Committee and Political Bureau;
after 1917 the "Workers' Opposition" was left of the
other Bolsheviks and the anarchist Makhno was lef
of all the Bolsheviks. This not only leaves obscure
the character and policies of leftism, but leaves
one wondering why leftism and repression should be
thought to be antithetical.

Nonetheless, it would be unfair to lump the Cohn-Bendits together with self-conscious and cynical manipulators, for the historical occasions considered by them are sufficient to show what they want to bring about by way of social change. They want to see generalized and extended throughout society the forms of self- organization found by the masses in the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the Spanish Revolution of 1936 and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. These forms consist in councils or soviets of workers or peasants, locally organized to handle production and distribution.

The work of active minorities will accordingly include spreading knowledge of these examples, but it will also include attacks on rival conceptions of revolution in which priority is given to building a party and to obtaining power in the State. The reference is to Bolshevism, in its Trotskyinst and Maoist as well as its orthodox Communist forms. Bolshevism inevitably perpetuates repression; those who want a liberating revolution must set themselves against movements that use revolutionary slogans but would merely continue the enslavement of the masses.

The Cohn-Bendits, then, do not want to substitute a paty or organization for the masses, but to separate the masses from party and organizational hierarchies (i) by exposing these hierarchies as repressive, (ii) by exposing the inconsistencies between their declared aims and their activities, and (iii) by preventing their functioning in order to facilitate the birth of free forms of organization. This in itslef amounts to revolutionary activity, for if carried through it would both prepare the ground for overthrowing capitalism and the State and eliminate those who would take the place of the present rulers.

There is, of course, no guarantee that these active minorities will not take the place of the Bolshevik - type movements whose influence of the masses they wish to destroy. Great hope is clearly being placed in the spontaneity of the masses. What can be said in favour of their position is that it includes a critique of hierarchy as such, and not merely of selected varieties of hierarchy.

It is interesting that under the head of repression the Cohn-Bendits include the division between manual and intellectual workers, a division fundamental to societies of exploitation. The importance of education in maintaining other forms of inequality has been particularly stressed by Max Nomad, a writer who is not, however, considered by the Cohn-Bendits (this is doubly a pity, for the kind of criticism of radical doctrine that he makes is rarely taken into account by anarchists; Sydney libertarians, one or two of the London individualists, and the French group organized around the recently defunct Noir et Rouge are exceptions). To put this division on the agenda of immediate struggle is a further decisive mark of differentiation from orthodox Marxism.

The Cohn - Bendits' recognition of the manual/intellectual dichotomy brings us to their views on student and education. They do not identify themselves with students generally (which would be demagogery), but with those students who are struggling against repression. They want to see this struggle linked with that of workers and peasants against the bureaucracy of the State, the parties and the unions (as has already been hinted, the Cohn-Bendits see the "opposition" to the existing social order as doing no more than play a variation on the theme of colonizing the masses). There is more to their position, however, than the now fashionable hope for a student-worker alliance. As part of the attack on

the division between manual and intellectual workers they recommend a popular university that would be open to all, an abolition of the licensing function of education (by which differences in education are, as it were, frozen into status), and the breaking of the class character of what is communicated in university courses. The second and perhaps the first appear to me to be unexceptionable, but the third to be dubious.

The common left-wing demand that universities admit more students from working-class families is rightly rejected (rightly, in the light of the Cohn Bendits' assumptions regarding the content of education). The nature of modern society ensures, in any case, that the poorer classes will be tapped for their brighter children. Truly revolutionary attack is directed, they hold, not at the class composition of the student body, but at the class character of what is studied. Unless the latter is changed, students will continue to absorb bourgeois and bureaucratic values, assuming that they have not already been imbued with them. Furthermore, as the universities license those who will occupy posts crucial to the running of industrial society, a more influx of students from the working class leaves hierarchies as they were, changing only the class origins of those, or some of those, who hold the good jobs.

Against this it can be said that it is far from being the case that all subjects of study are concerned in any immediate way with production and administration, and that it may well be the case that subjects that can most easily be opened up to the masses are precisely those that are least relevant to production and administration. The Cohn-Bendits are, I think, equivocal on the content of education: when they talk about the bourgeois monopoly of knowledge necessary to run modern societies they appear to be conceding the objectivity of much at least of

this knowledge; if the knowledge was not objecti it would be better from their point of view to s it away rather than to open it up to the masses.O can make this point without, however, denying t idiological nature of some subjects, e.g., the soci sciences and others which are used in the traini of the "psychiatric para-police" and such-like ty necessary to society as it is.

Furthermore, to break the bourgeois monopoly access to this knowledge leaves the problem of t maintenance of study and inquiry as activities, f if there is to be open access there must clearly something continuing to which there can be access But this question is not raised.

Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit are not phil tines, but one senses lurking at the back of s of their pronouncements on education what D. M Armstrong has recently described with reference controversies among Australian philosophers: " idea, advanced first by the bourgeoisie and now the New Left, is that philosophy should come out of the clouds and be of immediate relevance. this is clean against the spirit of philosophy. is the old philistine notion that philosophe should cease to be philosophical."

I want finally to discuss some of the more eral features of the book by placing them in a w context than that afforded by recent leftist str gle in France. One feature is that although much the book is directed against political and econo repression, the Cohn-Bendits are opposed to repr sion generally. They speak of what they take to a tendency to autonomy in behaviour and in relati with others, such relations being governed by t idea that a relation between human beings can founded only on the recongnition by each of the l arty and the responsibility of the other in the c

duct of his life." Moreover, "If one takes seriously the serios character of the revolution, if one understands that workers' management does not mean merely a certain type of man, then one must recognise that this tendency is fully as imprtant as a revolutionary indication as is the tendency of workers to combat the bureaucratic management of the firm. The revolutionary process of May-June only reinforces the certitude that one day we shall ourselves organize our lives. We do not do it for our children, for sacrifice is counter-revolutionary, and results from a Stalino-Judeo-Christian humanism, but in order finally 'To be able to enjoy without shackless' ".

Another feature is that, despite the reference to "certitude" in the quotation just made, they do not really regard a final goal as essential to struggle. Certainly, they believe that a non-repressive, non-hierarchical society is workable and possible to achieve, and that there exist tendencies favourable to its realization, but they do not believe that repression and hierarchy are worth fighting against only if one is certain that such a society will come into existence (see the interview with Gabriel Cohn-Bendit in Anarchy 99).

A tenable view of anarchism or leftism, Cohn-Bendit style, would be that it is a kind of perma - nent struggle. The Sydney libertarian critique of anarchism had distinguished its utopian side, concerned with a future free society, from its realistic side, concerned with here-and-now criticism of authority and struggle to live freely. The libertarian critic would presumably see the Cohn - Bendits' position as containing both utopian and realistic elements, with the balance weighted perhaps on the side of the latter. The Cohn-Bendits would desagree. They would want to argue that certain free forms of activity are real possibilities, some realized , others not, and if some are unrealized that is because life is organized in favour of certain dominant classes or interests or modes of thought, coupled with failures of imagination on the part of the repressed (hence the Paris slogan: "Be realistic, demand the impossible!").

Finally, it may be pointed out that the Cohn-Bendits are extremely conscious of their place in a tradition. That they do not regard themselves as innovators is of course brought out by their assertion that what they have to say in the book could just as well have been conveyed by a collection of articles already written by others. It is brought out also by their emphasis on the libertarian, self-managing side of earlier insurrections. That is the side of the revolutionary tradition with which they identify themselves, and that is the side on which they fought in 1968. The point is lost in the title given to the English edition of their book (Obsolete Communism) but is allusively conveyed in the French title, which may be literally translated as Leftism: Remedy for the Senile Malady of Communism.

Kenneth Maddock

AUTHORITY, SUBMISSION AND DISCIPLINE

In our present social structure discipline, for economic and political reasons, has become an important criterion. The desire for psychological security tends to promote predisposition to various forms of constraint. Family environment and education make us afraid of appearing different from the rest; of opposing the established values; and inculcate in us a respect for authority and tradition according to which the thoughts and the sentiments of the age are declared to be the best.

Education and social pressure enforce enformity. The aims of education are to foster elitism, provide good employment and to learn how to manipulate people. This result in an empty and uninteresting life. We are trained for profit and security; for profession in the frame of a structure based on exploitation. Conditioning to see life in terms of success, prevents many from visualizing a free society. Those who cannot perceive a free society conform to authority i.e. a master, a party, a bible because it seems advantageous.

Authority and constraints are norms imposed by priests and bureaucrats. They want to be rich -and the more rich they are, the more brutal they become. They rob their victims, and then give them back a part of the plunder - and call it philantropy. For them, richness and ideas outweigh human life; thus our lot is emptiness and violence.

They who support the sovereignty of their country, destroy their children by sucrificing them to the cult of the state which is a projection of their own selfs; they sacrifice their sons and daughters for their personal satisfaction. They love arms, the sight of military force, uniforms, rituals, clamour and violence. Their everyday life is a reflection of this brutality, andthey destroy each other by envy and irrationality.

Hopes, fear, and the desire to achieve an interior security create religion. Servitude, imitation and submission come with the Saviour, the master- that is, the cult of authority. Man always suffers because he is exploited in the name of God as well as in the name of parties and ideologies.

Religions are organized beliefs with their dogmas, ritual, mysteries and superstitions. All of them have sacred books, mediators, priests, theories

of domination and use threats. Religious education is a weapon in conditioning the individual. The process of conditioning brings into play the antagonism among sects and various appartenances, it makes man to hate man; and by doing this, it robs him of his individuality. Those who preach love of their neighbours base their doctrines upon reward, punishment and chatisement and instil fear in man. We become sensitive to patriotism because our racial egocentrism is stimulated by the school books and organs of propaganda which flatter the national hero permanently, and declare our country and customs superior to any others.

Our vanity, from the cradle to the grave is nourished by the spirit of patriotism. Repetitive aberrations are an indication that we are integrated into political or religious groups; integrated into a nation which boosts our ego to the point that we are prepared to kill or be killed for a country, ideology or race. Patrotism and nationalism are cultivated and exploited by capitalism which is looking for a surplus of power and an increase of wealth. The conquest of new countries and peoples, procure more markets for products and ideologies. All this is generated by the thirst for gains and the desire to identify oneself with something bigger than self. But what finally counts, is the autonomy of our thoughts; not what we are taught to think by authorities. To conform to a tradition is to be a replica of the others. It is in conformity that we biult cult of knowledge as a step to success and domination but by doing that we surround ourselfes with contingencies, antagonisms and the struggle for daily existence. To aim at success is to declin free oneself from fear; the desire for success is accompanied by the fear of failure. The longing to be always among the "firsts", among the bests - leads to envy, competition, hate and, in the fins analysis - to war. Sincere cooperation and affec-

tions cannot exist between those who hold the reins of power and the wretched who submit to it. Domination leads to fear. Principles of rewards and punishments enforce egocentrism and enslave and make dull the spirit. A spirit searching for easy security is bathing in fear. Once the subject is regimented, the keeness and the intelligence of the spirit are annihilated. Where the idea of rewards is predominant, respect does not exist, because the seeked advantages or the dreared punishments are more important than respect. Similarly, where discipline is established, the system takes precedence over the individual and confines him.

Authority, which always is accompanied by coertion, is a product of the search for escaping conflicts of consciousness. To follow authority, is to descard intelligence; to accept it, is to submit to it. Now all submission to authority is a denial of one's individuality, a denial of intelligence, and above all a denial of freedom. Today the bondage of the routine makes the majority of the individuals feel - and very often they are - empty at 45 or 50 years of age, if not before. They are empty because they are docile and submit to an authority, despite the fact that from time to time they try to struggle, but in a frame of a society that does not allow much except for those who hold power and believe that they are secure in their existence. Whatever the case -discipline, authority and law do not generate order. Order is a product of intelligence, fraternity, and above all freedom. In conclusion, it can be said, that it is not worthwhile rebelling against an established orthodoxy - while succumbing to a new one.