Black Rose

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CERTAIN *IDEAS*
WHICH SERVE US TODAY AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE
MUST *NOT*
BE ALLOWED TO PREJUDICE OUR LATER DEVELOPMENT...

Why do people attach themselves ("adhere") to a particular branch of radical ideology and defend it against all criticism, even to the point of absurdity? Why does a large part of our radical thought find utterance in doctrinal catch-phrases borrowed from the 19th century (anarchism, marxism, populism) or, what amounts to the same thing, from underdeveloped regions (leninism, maoism)? Why do partial critiques (anti-nuclear, syndicalism, feminism, pacificism) repeatedly pass themselves off as complete? Is today's anti-authoritarian movement the vanguard of tomorrow's newly-revised and stronger-than-ever (rationalized, non-discriminatory) totalitarian state?

Originally, of course, I had hoped to answer all these questions, and more, in the space of this editor's introduction. Realistically though, I shall limit myself to asking them in some detail, and hinting at a few answers. It is my hope that some of you might be provoked to submit articles on these and similar themes— Black Rose *exists not to rehash old ideas but to encourage new thought. We look for the innovative and the outrageous.*

It is fairly common, although not universally accepted, to argue that the trade union struggles (approximately 1880 to 1940 in North America) did not in any major way oppose the growth and domination of the capitalist class. Rather, in this view, the union movement was instrumental in making the change from 19th century (industrial, nationalist, competitive) capitalism to 20th century (multi-national, monopolist) capitalism—trade unionism as the midwife of consumerism. (This is not an argument about the participant's consciousness, but about the function of their activity.)

There are many possible ways to support this contention (expansion of domestic markets, enforcing labor discipline in the factories, etc.); my main concern is to ask whether this dynamic (radical consciousness coupled with pre-coopted activity) is a feature of contemporary struggles—are we unknowingly ushering in a new era of domination by helping capital/state/bureaucracy to modernize itself? Is, for example, formal racial and sexual equality a necessary precondition for continued growth of consumer society? If yes, then those radicals who uncritically support "progressive" or "liberal" anti-racist or anti-sexist struggles without making important distinctions are doing themselves a serious disservice, acting to preserve the system in spite of their good intentions. To quote the somewhat stilted language of Solidarity for Social Revolution *(123 Latham Road, E.6, London, England. Issue #6, Dec. 78-Jan. 79):*

> *Capitalism, in order to survive, is now developing the means of ending oppression on the grounds of sex and sexual orientation, because the characteristic sex designations up to this stage of capitalist development increasingly conflict with the needs of the economy... But it is important to distinguish between the actions of sections of the bourgeoisie to modernize by internally developing the existing market (through encouraging a new consumption originating in a growing dissatisfaction with existing sexual life) and the self-conscious revolutionary movement itself...[We have] always struggled to be consciously revolutionary rather than an ideological instrument of economic reform.*

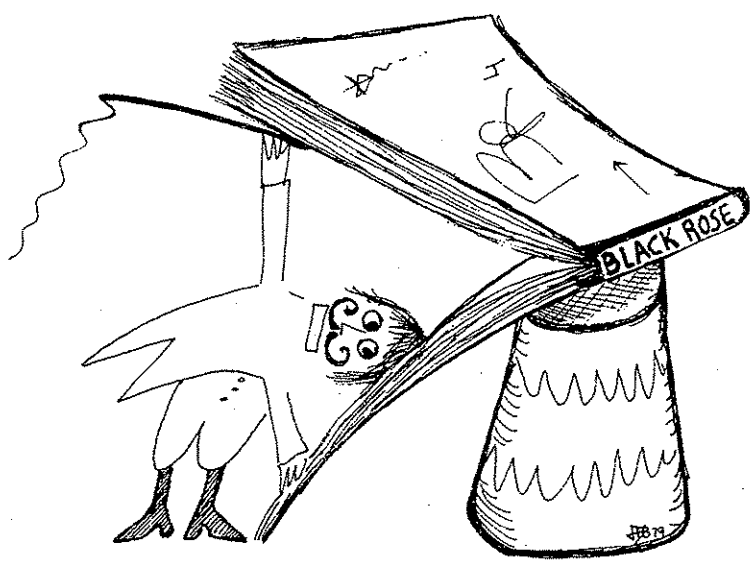
The pamphlet LIP and the Self-managed Counter-revolution *(available from Black and Red, Box 9546, Detroit, MI 48202) makes a similar point. Watch factory employees who took over the factory and ran it themselves, (buying raw materials, organizing their own work and paychecks, selling the watches through various channels), rather than liberating themselves from capitalist misery merely collectivized it, changed its form. By doing away with their bosses, but not with the capitalist system, they only abolished local symbols, and incorporated themselves more firmly in the system of global irrationality, as a "collective capitalist." Those who argue that the LIP workers achieved "all that was possible given contemporary reality," are asking (and answering) the wrong questions. Traditional anarcho-syndicalism, and its contemporary heirs, the movement for "self-management", have seen the overthrow of domination as a question only of form and only at a local level—the Spanish revolutionaries in 1936 did not abolish the state, but only collectivized their factories. It is necessary to see beyond one's own daily affairs, to understand the workings (and changing) of the entire society, and thus abolish your own misery.*

Failing to understand this, we are stuck in any number of self-defeating activities. Those in the anti-nuclear movement, for example, whose practice does not exceed opposition to nuclear power (regardless of tactical preferences), may in fact be acting to preserve or strengthen the energy monopolies, rather than weakening or abolishing them. Assuming we are correct when we say solar is more rational than nuclear, then doesn't our demand for the use of renewable energy sources boil down to helping them preserve and extend their power by putting it on a more dependable and less destructive and controversial basis? It is easy to envisage a national solar energy "authority" powered by gigantic collectors and orbiting energy satellites, which we will have helped bring into being. Theories about the liberatory potential of certain technologies don't guarantee a liberatory actuality.

This situation, where we plan our activities based upon theoretical notions which don't make sense, is in part a hangover from 19th century (and earlier) concepts about science and knowledge. Scientists such as Callileo and Darwin attempted to discover the fixed laws whereby natural events could be comprehended, predicted, and controlled. Their success is arguable. The difficulty arises when we search for the "laws" of human behavior, which was the project of the founders of social science. For better or for worse, human beings, singly and in groups, do not behave according to laws, either those of history, or of the temporal state; many of the significant events in revolutionary history happened contrary to the predictions and understandings of social scientists. Karl Marx (the originator of "scientific socialism") attempted to criticize this approach, but ultimately could not escape these types of errors—Marxists search for the "primary contradiction", the button which when properly pushed, will start in motion the overhaul of all of society. Other groups of radicals (anarchists, feminists, pacifists) criticize Marxism, not for looking for a button, but for choosing the wrong one. This mechanical model of society and the literal machines we use every day, both stem from a type of thinking that was prevalent just before and during the Industrial Revolution; without going into great detail, I think it's safe to say that advanced contemporary science has rejected this point of view. Computers, sub-atomic physics, and ecological science are all based, not on a concept where one aspect or component plays a dominant role, but where inter-relationships between parts are studied and/or arranged to achieve a desired end. I think it's possible and desirable for us to base our radical theory on a similar understanding of society as an evolving system of daily activities—sometimes in an institutional context, full of subtlety and inter-dependance—without embracing anti-intellectualism or a do-your-own-thing/anything-goes attitude. Let me end with one last example: Recently friends of this magazine attended a leftist rally which was to protest the deportation of Iranian students. When they displayed placards critical of Carter, Khomeini, and the Shah, they were asked to leave by the rally organizers, who said the rally was pro-Iranian and therefore pro-Khomeini. To paint the issues in this case as a choice between Khomeini and Shah/Carter or in general, to demand that I take sides in a confrontation between two groups who are contending for state power is to ask me to suppress critical judgement, indeed to suppress thought, and enlist in an army, to join a machine. Radicalism lies elsewhere.

—Charlie Gamble

*The title of this essay is a quote from *The Morning of a Machine Gun*, a volume of prose and poetry by Franklin Rosemont. (Surrealist Editions, Chicago. 1968)



LETTERS

Dear Marty,

At last I received *Black Rose*. I like the cover, especially when you tactfully used the word GEIST. The review by Will Petry is well written and a good presentation of the idea in *Aufruf zum Socialismus*; but, Gustave Landauer, being unknown in the U.S., should have been introduced at least as a social Prophet and a Shakespearian scholar to the reader by BR. Again, I like the review, but to say that GL and Martin Buber "were close acquaintances" is a irksome as to refer to Emma and Sasha as just good friends.

Petry is right about the title, but I don't know if GL was ever a member of the SPD. He was bodily thrown out at the Congress of the 2nd International, when he attacked August Bebel, calling him a liar, unless Petry refers to the time when GL was with the JUNGE.

Your "Why I am an Anarchist" I read first, and boy, did I enjoy it! You stiched off a yarn of happenings, events, ideas, people, whose interaction shaped society and attitudes and the person which you are, the modern Anarchist, you so skillfully reveal.

BR should be both Anarchist and Literary. Keep printing Poetry of the new and young, as well as the Ginsbergs. This will give you prestige. With social criticism BR should also print literary criticism. It should be a platform for constructive and creative rebellion in every human field.

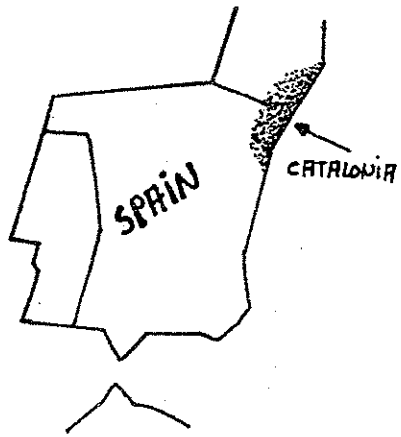
So! Sock-Em and Rock-Em with (A) greetings.

Jack Frager
New York City

Dear Black Rose,

I have read your first two issues and would like to comment. I enjoyed reading the magazine. It is fun and has a comfortable look and size. I do have two quibbles.

First, on page 35 in the first issue in the interview with Juan Goytisolo you refer to *Camp de L'Arpa* as a Spanish literary magazine. *Camp de L'Arpa* appears to be a Catalan not a Spanish title. Perhaps the magazine has a Catalan title and Spanish contents. I do not know. I have never seen it. In any case you appear either oblivious or callous toward those Spanish citizens who hope to maintain a vibrant and autonomous Catalan culture. As editors and writers obviously sympathetic toward anarchism I urge you to investigate the many nationalist and localist revivals throughout the world and especially in Europe. Nonstate nationalisms provide the possibility of smaller more democratic communities as alternatives to the large centralized states. A revived Catalonia encompassing both Spanish Catalonia and French Roussillon should be preferable for anarchists to the sprawling centralized oligarchic Spanish and French states.



A magazine like yours should be discussing the European nationalist revival because if you don't you will be abdicating the discussion to several doubtful political tendencies. Reformist liberals like Servan-Schreiber have been very favorable to the various national revivals in France because they see them as a possible way to rationalize both political power and economic markets in Europe in the context of a stronger and more centralized Common Market. Extreme rightists have always been attracted to localism. Charles Maurras began as a disciple of Frederic Mistral, the founder of the Occitan revival.

There are in Europe nationalist movements and writers with ideas with which you and your readers would be sympathetic. Catalonian leftists have discussed the relationship between nuclear power and modern technology on the one hand, and the cultural policies of the modern state on the other. Occitans have used their troubador heritage to support the feminist movements in new ways. Of course you do not have to discuss the nationalist cultural revivals in Europe. Please, however, do not accept the arguments of the centralized states that these cultures do not exist. When you use a Catalan word, identify it as Catalan, not Spanish. Catalan is an independent language not a dialect of Spanish. Occitan is an independent language, not a dialect of French.

Second, in Hess's review of Hess in the second issue, he says his neighborhood is a good one. It is good, he claims, because it is white and not poor. This statement is casually racist. Is racial composition of a neighborhood what makes it good or bad? Are white neighbors better than black? My experience has not supported that assumption. The same can be said for his automatic derogation of the poor. I raise the matter not because I think that Hess is a racist or anti-poor but because I think he is neither.

BS Levine
Hamden, Connecticut

EDITOR'S REPLY—*Hess's comments refer to the media image of what constitutes a "good neighborhood", (i.e. not-black, not-poor) not his own definition. The problems in his supposedly "good" neighborhood must then stem from some other cause than racial or economic oppression—this is his point.*

You were right, Camp de l'Arpa *is a Catalan title, but the contents are not in Catalan. In any case you raise an interesting and timely issue, one which traditional anarchism has not addressed. Perhaps one of our readers will be moved to submit an article on this or a similar issue.*

Anti-Psychiatry and the Search for Autonomy

Alan Mandell

"Too cynical for sentimentality and too sentimental for cynicism, there is, finally, no moral exhortation involved in all this, but there is the available vision of links of solidarity between people who are oppressed in widely different ways."
David Cooper

"People who are having difficulties in living and who seek help with their problems are not served by a system that maximizes their inadequacies and ignores their strengths, nor by one that implies that only incompetent people have problems."
Judi Chamberlin

What is "political"? What does it mean to *be* "political"? To act in a "political" way? One of the most significant aspects of the social and cultural movements of the 1960's in America, Europe, and across the world was to explode a rigid and narrow definition of "political" which—due partially to a legacy of marxian concepts—reduced it to a by-product of economics. By seeing the need to understand and to respond not only to imperialism and to racism, but to the authoritarianism of our schools and factories and to the sexism that defined many of our most intimate relationships, the confining boundaries of what had constituted the political became more and more obviously inadequate. We could no longer only one-sidedly examine and criticize a world of structures and powers and inequalities that were external to us. Neither politics-as-voting-electing nor politics-as-simple-and-necessary-response-to-economics could move us to revise our scant attention to the quality of our daily existences.

Importantly, this "critique of everyday life" (as some came to refer to it) demanded that the world of the "personal" was, in itself, tied to the social world in intricate and critical ways: ways significant to the understanding of the social critic and the activist. Psychology could not purport to describe and claim to know a distinct arena of individual activity or unconscious feeling. Although efforts to locate the connections between Marx and Freud were key aspects of the social theories of Reich, Adorno, Horkheimer, and later Marcuse, R.D. Laing's *The Politics of Experience* (1967) brought to popular attention some of the concerns and orientations of those within the field of psychiatry regarding the interaction between "self and others." Laing's early works (*The Divided Self* was first published in 1959; *Self and Others* in 1961) not only explored the need to locate "webs" and "networks" of *inter*personal activity—to see the self within a context, as constitut*ing* and constitut*ed* by a social world. His works also offered a continuing criticism of the prevalence and distortions of behaviorism, the medical model, and the taken-for-granted dichotomies between health and sickness. Although his writings often dealt with the micro-world of our experience—especially our families, sometimes to the detriment of a fuller exploration of larger constellations of societal interaction; and sometimes confused important differences between social change and therapy (an argument powerfully introduced in Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia*), Laing's success in describing the textures of our experiences, the violence we do to others and they to us in our everyday conversations and lives together, and his efforts to examine the alienation (the loss) of our experience and our need to "recover the wholeness of being human" represents a clear and crucial step toward an understanding of freedom and domination on both an individual and social level.

Laing's writings had reverberations beyond the level of theorizing. His work (and that of others in Britain and the United States) became one of the bases for an understanding of psychiatric labeling as a social and political process and of psychiatric institutionalization as another means to define possible experiences, control behavior, and imprison those who stood outside of the "normal." Illness could no longer be seen as having its roots *within* the individual; rather, it had to be understood as part of an interactional nexus constituted within the family. And David Cooper, an early co-worker of Laing's in London, was quick to point to the parallels between the mental hospital itself and the family constellation:

> In the mental hospital, society has, with unerring skill, produced a social structure that in many respects reduplicates the maddening peculiarities of the patient's family. In the mental hospital he finds psychiatrists, administrators, nurses, who are his veritable parents, brothers and sisters, who play an interpersonal game which only too often resembles in the intricacies of its rules the game he failed in at home. Once again, he is perfectly free to choose. He may decide to vegetate his days away in a chronic back ward or he may decide to oscillate between his family hell and the not dissimilar hell of conventional psychiatric admission ward—the latter course being the usual present-day idea of psychiatric progress. (1967)

Laing, Cooper, and others in England sought new forms of care where small communities could function without the imposition of staff-patient hierarchization, and without clinical preconceptions and medical strategies. Cooper himself was finally given permission in the middle 60's to convert a ward in a large London hospital ("Villa 21" described in his *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry*) into a unit where the issues of the meaning of care, of the differences between authentic and inauthentic authority, and of the needs of doctors, nurses, and patients to act toward each other in prescribed and stultifying ways were actively addressed through the on-going participation, discussion, and lived-experience of everyone in the unit. Laing and other Londoners interested in working with these kinds of issues formed the Philadelphia Association (from its origins as "brotherly love") and continued the search for alternatives to hospital outside of mental health institutions. (Kingsley Hall and other households throughout London served as early and important experiments in establishing such alternatives. In its own brochure, Kingsley Hall was described as a place where "everyone's actions could be challenged by anyone.") By the late 1960's, Cooper had used his experiences within mental hospitals to develop a critical perspective:

> The mental hospital as a social system defines itself by certain limits within which change is possible, but beyond which one cannot venture without threatening the stability of the whole structure. This structure as it has developed historically has acquired institutional sclerosis.

For Laing, Cooper, and a growing anti-psychiatry movement around the world, a new and more radical direction was clear: ". . . a step forward means ultimately a step out of the mental hospital into the community."

Since his *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry* (1967), Cooper has published

three books that have continued to explore the meanings and activities of a new politics that could confront the interconnections between self, psychiatry, and society. More than Laing (whose recent works have often isolated the self or speculated upon other bases of experiences in a kind of pre-natal biologism), Cooper's *The Death of the Family* (1970), *The Grammar of Living* (1974), and his most recent *The Language of Madness* (1978, soon to be published by Urizen in America), have all sensitively and provocatively deepened the discussion of therapy, self-exploration and personal change to include issues of the family, the limits of community health programs (their frequency in duplicating the "logic" of the hospital in miniaturized and more subtle forms), the power of the state, corporate capitalism, and what he more generally describes as "a structuring that evades political truth in the interest of Permanent Mystification." Most significant and edifying in Cooper's work is to watch the changes in his own descriptions, perceptions, and understandings: his challenges to his own formulations, and his attention to his own language and mood and to the language of others. (He described *The Death of the Family* as "a revolt" and says of *The Grammar of Living* that he "hopes to combine bitter attack with a quieter feeling.")

In fact, locating a kind of language that can serve to "break through" the "banalizing chatter of everyday normality" (whether this discourse takes the form of family "conversations" around a dinner table, or the "dialogues" of academics at a national conference, or the "negotiations" among super-powers) is a recurring theme of Cooper's analysis. Thus, the differences between the "romanticization" of madness (a dangerous and prevelant tendency in much of the writing—fantacizing—about "going crazy") and the "politicization" of madness (its *political* nature and *political* implications) becomes critical to Cooper. "The language of madness," he describes:

> is nothing more nor less than the *realization* of language. Our words begin to touch the other and that's where the danger of madness lies: when it tells the truth. One danger, the only danger of madness, is violent denormalization of trivial words and worlds of security. (1978)

The foundation of Cooper's new politics is the reality of movements of people toward a living "autonomy." These movements are denied, however, by the very forms and understandings of conventional psychoanalytic language and process—often perceived as *the* bastion of indivi-

dual freedom and autonomy within an oppressive and self-denying social world. instead of raising the question: what are the possibilities that the person 'being analyzed' has of *reaffirming* his/her self-perceptions, the analytic mold strives to defend and continually re-affirm "the analyst's role as the trustworthy person who understands objectively, who fully knows, by virtue of his own training, his own feelings about himself and therefore about his feelings about you and ultimately your feelings about yourself." According to Cooper, the "comforting abdication to the analyst's preceiving—a sweet, warm, passive, penny-in-the slot acquiescence—" negates any true sense of self-realization and undercuts associations based upon desire and choice. Importantly, it is the *refusal* of patients to accept "the evasive response that their political consciousness is an intellectual defense against 'deeper problem,' " that raises the real possibility of both personal and social change. Psychoanalysis itself has become "yet another agency in the employ of the endlessly devious, repressive and repressively 'tolerant' bourgeois system. A sort of CIA of the individual psyche." (1974)

When Cooper defines the term "autogestion" in *The Language of Madness*, he continues to more fully explore the goal of autonomy as a critical *political* category, one that seeks to resurrect and not to destroy the "absurd hopes, fears, joys of despair and despairs of joy of people who refuse containment by that system (capitalism):"

> If autonomy is laying down the law for oneself—the original autonomy—then autogestion is taking over the power structure of one's life and work, obviously not alone but with identifiable other people who work, kind of live, or live and work with oneself. It's simply not a matter of 'workers taking over factories': autogestion applies to every aspect of life. If one's personal needs conflict with those of the group of other people, that becomes tangible and frangible, we assume we can fight it out. The enemy of the autogestion movement is centralized state power. Autogestion does not mean autodigestion, eating up oneself, but means eating up our indigestible social system, chewing it, drying it out on our stomachs, vomitting it finally when we know its impossibility and flushing it down the toilet pan. (1978)

Clearly for Cooper, there are no "personal problems", only "political problems." In a world where "personal" problems reign supreme, ideologies of personal salvation will only present strategies that depoliticize, and that "will exclude from the concrete field of action macropolitical reality and the repressive systems that mediate this reality to the individual."

Judi Chamberlin's *On Our Own: Patient Controlled Alternatives to the Mental Health System* (1978, paperback, 1979) not only vividly recounts her own experiences as a mental patient and those of others, but describes the on-going, exciting, and often successful struggles of many ex-patients in the United States and Canada today to create true alternatives to psychiatric ideology and institutionalization based upon an understanding of their own needs and through their own efforts. (As Cooper would write: "We don't need a world like this that does violence to our every judgement. We need another world that we can alter *by our altering*.") Chamberlin's notion of a "true" alternative focuses upon the necessary realities of autonomy much as Cooper's does:

> What I define as a true alternative is one in which all basic decision-making power is in the hands of those the facility exists to serve. Such places are rare, but where they do exist, they show clearly how well people can help one another in environments that have been set up to maximize the strengths and abilities of each participant.

Chamberlin's discussion of real and false alternatives and her description of the daily lives of those living in a variety of facilities are excellent in beginning to show that the claims of "participation" themselves can hide more subtle sources of control—can tempt us to accept forms of authority and organization that further twist and confuse the differences between mutual care and help *and* an externally imposed benevolence that perpetuates submission and passivity. (Just as we come to accept the false equation between de-institutionalization and care.) The final "right" listed in the handbook prepared by the Mental Patient's Liberation Front in Massachusetts— "You have the right to patient-run facilities where the decisions that are made and work that is done are your responsibility and under your control"—becomes even more crucial when placed within the context of contemporary policies regarding hospitals, schools, and factories that use labels like autonomous decision-making, worker-participation, and student/patient/community control to buttress managerial propoganda and tactics for even greater control over peoples' lives.

The issues of "helping" and of "caring" are significant to Chamber-

lin's criticism of professionalization and her understanding of what a truly supportive and "progressive" patient's association should be directed toward. The "admission of weakness" that seeking help with one's problems denotes will remain a reality "until seeking help is seen as a normal aspect of human behavior and people give and get help and support freely from one another." Within a "real" alternative to the institutions of mental health professionals, "having problems is seen as a normal component of living in a sometimes difficult and threatening world and not as part of an illness existing only in some unfortunate people." (Here, Cooper's thinking about a "natural" and "mutual" therapy is relevant. "All relationships are therapy or they are violence," he writes. "If one person in confusion seeks another person, in whose experience she or he trusts, a disciplined 'one-way' relationship for a while may be necessary—but on the way to free mutuality of relating.")

One element of Chamberlin's model for a real alternative service for ex-patients includes the following:

> Help is provided by the clients of the service to one another and may also be provided by others selected by the clients. The ability to give help is seen as a human attribute and not as something acquired by education or professional degree.

The distrust that patients are taught to feel toward one another (that has been described as "mentalism" which like racism and sexism "infects its victims with the belief in their own inferiority") the problems that they too come to define as "symptoms" which demand professional intervention to "treat", the practical dilemmas of finding work or a place to live which are handled by other experts (social workers) still within a larger psychiatrically ruled context are all barriers that many groups of ex-patients have sought to confront and break down. The world of the mental hospital and its de-institutionalized counterpart that of the single-room-occupany-dweller on the Upper-West side of New York who has few opportunities for any form of care, stands in stark contrast to the lives of individual members of a group like the Mental Patient's Association in Vancouver, British Columbia. The MPA embodies the on-going struggle of active people who refuse to be passive victims of an irrational system, but instead seek to find in their lived-experiences the meaning of autonomy.

This initial and limited discussion has not been able to deal with many of the issues that are critical to an understanding of the role and the power of psychiatry in the world today, nor to capture the particular activities of many individuals and groups (like the International Network in Brussels—whose Statement of Purpose Cooper includes as Appendix II in his *The Language of Madness*—or Project Release in New York or Network Against Psychiatric Assault in San Francisco both described by Chamberlin) who have opposed the oppression inherent in the medico-technocratic mode and the stigmatization of its victims. Instead, it has attempted to show how people like Cooper and Chamberlin through their thoughts and actions have continued to unravel and to understand complex personal and social issues without relegating either one to an easy reflex of the other. Because so many contemporary popularizations of "self-help" have in fact perpetuated the societal reduction of the person to an isolated monad concerned only with its own narcissitic delights, the efforts of many people to seek and define a new politics based upon a continuing attention to the interdependencies of self and society—to the significance of such goals as participation and autonomy—have remained in the background. The movement for patient's rights and towards alternatives to psychiatry raises issues and problems concerning what politics is, the quality of peoples' relations to one another, the meaning and the ends of social action, and the process of coming to understand and attain human freedom that are most significant for all of us to seriously face today.

REFERENCES

The literature on the topic of psychiatry and anti-psychiatry is vast. In the following list I have tried to include some titles and comments that could serve as a basis for further discussion of the topics introduced in the essay.

1. All of Laing's works are available in paperback. Aside from *The Politics of Experience*, the book, *The Politics of the Family* (originally given as the Massey Lectures over the C.B.C. in 1968) is an excellent and clear introduction to Laing's analysis of the family and its interactions. An example of Laing's later work is *The Facts of Life* (1976). A good introduction to Laing's work in the London community is J.S. Gordon's essay, "Who is Mad? Who is Sane?" It originally appeared in the January, 1971 issue of *The Atlantic* and can also be found (along with many other relevant pieces) in Ruitenbeek's edited, *Going Crazy*.

2. Cooper's writings are also available in paperback (as mentioned previously, *The Language of Maddness* is presently only available as a hard cover from Allen Lane in England—but will be published this year by Urizen). The book *To Free a Generation* edited by Cooper is a compilation of lectures given at the "Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation" (1967). It includes essays by Cooper, Laing, Gregory Bateson, Paul Goodman, Stokely Carmichael, Herbert Marcuse, Paul Sweezey, and others.

3. Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1955) represents a turning point in the discussion of Marx and Freud. The "Epilogue", "Critique of Neo-Freudian Revisionism," has stood as a key to the criticism of conformist psychology. Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Contemporary Psychology from Adler to Laing* (1975) utilizes and then moves beyond Marcuse's original insights regarding Freudian and Marxist theory, therapy, and social change. Interestingly, in a review entitled, "Freud Revisited," (*New Left Review*, Summer, 1963) Cooper addresses Marcuse's work, and develops the beginnings of an interesting critique based upon Sartrian categories.

4. There is a growing literature that attacks not only psychoanalytic theory and practice (as Cooper does), but popular therapies and an entire "culture of narcissism." Christopher Lasch's work as well as Richard Sennett's *The Fall of Public Man* are critical to this discussion. Much of this analysis is deeply indebted to the writings of the Frankfurt School. Max Horkheimer's statement in *The Eclipse of Reason* (1949) could be seen as a basic assumption of this perspective: "The theme of this time is self-preservation, while there is no self to preserve." Importantly, however, there are a number of authors who have recently sought to more sympathetically view the "self-help" movement although acknowledging its dangers and limitations. Marshall Berman's *The Politics of Authenticity* places much of the discussion of authenticity within a helpful historical perspective. Michael Rossman's *New Age Blues: On the Politics of Consciousness* and Theodore Roszak's *Person/Planet* are significant resources.

5. Judi Chamberlin's *On Our Own* includes an excellent bibliography. It also includes a list of alternative facilities, organizations, and publications relating to psychiatric institutionalization. In many ways, Chamberlin's book serves as an effective complement to Cooper's *The Language of Madness*. Its often "pragmatic" orientation deals with the immediate issues of patient life and ex-patient experience. It is both a practical "handbook" and a good introduction to many vital psychiatry-related social and political concerns.

6. A final quote from Cooper adds another dimension to the often ill-conceived bifurcation of self-knowledge and attention to the world:

> Interiority, paradoxically enough, is in fact a movement into the world in what seems to be the wrong direction but which uses the seeming to make the wrongness right enough. It may lead other people to feel locked out from oneself, but that's because they are locked into themselves. What seems to be a ruthless denial of the existence of other people is in fact an invitation to mutual liberation." (1978)

7. Special thanks to my friend, Merrill J. Goldstein for thoughts, advice, and insight on this topic. Her own caring for those she tries to aid often goes unspoken.

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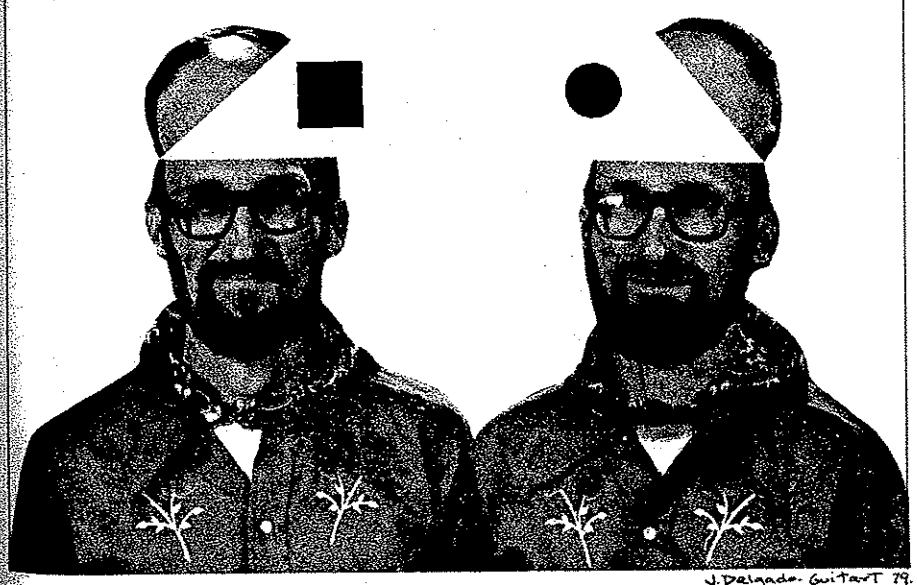


Restoring the Faith

Noam Chomsky

The following article is an edited version of a talk delivered at the University of Paris, March 22, 1979. Material specifically relating to France has been deleted.

If readers would like to pursue in depth the issues posed here, we refer you to a two-volume study on The Political Economy of Human Rights *authored by Chomsky and Ed Herman. Volume I is* The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism *and Volume II is* After the Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology. *Both books (cloth $15.00 and paperback $5.50) are available from South End Press, Box 68, Astor Station, Boston, MA. 02123).*

It is widely and correctly observed that the international system established after World War II had been significantly damaged by the mid-1970's. The Trilateral Commission Report on the "Crisis of Democracy" defines this international system simply and accurately. "For a quarter century the United States was the hegemonic power in a system of world order," the system that arose from the ashes of World War II, which of course left the United States in a position of overwhelming power, sufficient to materially influence historical developments though not to control them completely in its interests.

Despite the crises of the past years, there has been virtually no institutional or structural change, so it is only reasonable to suppose that the goals and policies of the past will persist, perhaps in a new guise. Therefore it is worthwhile to pause for a moment to see how this world system has been viewed by U.S. elites. There are actually two quite distinct versions of the U.S. role in the world, as described by American elite groups. First, there is what we may call "the State Religion," a system of doctrines and interpretations that dominates journalism and much of what is called "scholarship." According to the State Religion, the United States is unique among the nations of past or present history in that its policies are governed by abstract moral principles such as the Wilsonian ideals of self-determination, human rights, economic welfare, and so on, not by the material interests of groups that actually have domestic power, as is the case in other societies. Furthermore, the United States is not an active agent in world affairs. Rather, it responds to the acts of others, in defense of the moral principles to which it is committed. Of course, it is recognized that the historical record does not quite conform to the doctrines of the State Religion. These "deviations" are attributed to the complexity of history, error, the limits of American power, innocence, and other factors that have the virtue of being ideologically and socially neutral.

A radically different picture appears in internal planning documents, and often, in the business press. As an example of the former, consider the documentary record of the important War-Peace Studies project organized by the Council on Foreign Relations with the cooperation of the State Department from 1939-1945, which was devoted to planning the structure of the postwar global system. These study groups dealt with "the requirement[s] of the United States in a world in which it proposes to hold unquestioned power." They devised the concept of the *Grand Area*, a region including the Western hemisphere, the former British Empire and the Far East. The Grand Area was described as a region "strategically necessary for world control," which must be organized so as to guarantee the health of the U.S. economy, offering it the "elbow room" needed to survive without domestic adjustments. The latter qualification was crucial; it was understood that internal social change might eliminate the need for U.S. domination of the Grand Area, but no change in the internal distribution of power was considered admissible—not surprisingly, given the constitution of the study groups. It was recognized clearly that such frank assessments of the postwar reality were not for general consumption. One working group proposed that in the statement of war aims "the interests of other people should be stressed, not only those of Europe, but also of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This would have a better propaganda effect." The group was no doubt relieved,

when, a few months later, the Atlantic Charter was proclaimed, suitably vague and idealistic, to be intoned by journalists, scholars, and other members of the priesthood.

Needless to say, these very significant documents are under a strict taboo in U.S. scholarship, discussed only far from the mainstream. The same is true of other crucial documents, for example the high-level planning documents of the 1940's and early 1950's that appear in the Pentagon Papers, which are quite similar to those of the War-Peace Studies project—naturally, since the same interests and many of the same people are involved. The Trilateral Commission study just cited has met the same fate, as have many other critically important documents that do not serve the needs of the State Religion, although—or rather, because—they present an accurate picture of the thinking that guides policy planning.

In a democratic society, heretics who do study and analyze the documentary record and the application of the policies developed in this record are not burned at the stake, or even silenced or imprisoned. Rather, they are denied access to a broad public and their work is largely excluded from what the Trilateral Commission accurately calls the institutions responsible for "the indoctrination of the young." Or their views are presented in caricature, or simply dismissed as "naive" or "irresponsible." No serious effort is made to understand or respond to their work; as in medieval times, it is sufficient to point to a heresy, though the secular priesthood in the democratic societies does not attain the intellectual level of its predecessors, who at least attempted to refute the dangerous and heretical doctrines of the unbelievers.

As noted, the business press often feels less need to conform to the doctrines of the State Religion; businessmen, after all, are concerned with the objective world and need not constantly reaffirm the faith. Thus we read, for example, such analyses as the following, in the liberal journal *Business Week* in April 1975, just at the time of the final collapse of the U.S. position in Indochina: "The international economic structure, under which U.S. companies have flourished since the end of World War II, is in jeopardy. . . Fueled initially by the dollars of the Marshall Plan, American business prospered and expanded on overseas orders. . . No matter how negative a development, there was always the umbrella of American power to contain it. . . The rise of the multinational corporation was the economic expression of this political framework. . . [But] this

stable world order for business operations is falling apart," *Business Week* feared, with the defeat of U.S. power in Indochina. Such an analysis, which is reasonably accurate, would rarely if ever be found in the mainstream press, and only rarely in academic scholarship.

The failure of American arms in Vietnam was interpreted as dangerous in two major respects: first, because of the failure of American power to contain "negative developments"—that is, developments perceived as ultimately harmful to U.S. business interests; and second, because the doctrines of the State Religion became increasingly difficult to sustain in the face of the horrifying reality of the war, in particular, the doctrine of American benevolence—though contrary to what is commonly believed, the great mass of American intellectuals remained loyal to the faith throughout, and are now assiduously and effectively at work restoring the tattered image, as are their colleagues elsewhere in the "Free World."

In accordance with the doctrines of Grand Area planning, any form of economic nationalism is unacceptable, since it limits the freedom of investment and exploitation. Thus, the British imperial system had to be dismantled, while national capitalism was blocked in Europe as was so-called "Communism" in the Third World, where possible. Joan Robinson once referred to the American crusade against Communism as a "crusade against development." It would be quite accurate to regard it as a crusade against independent development. The same may be said of the current "human rights crusade," which has achieved such a spectacular propaganda success in the West. The U.S. Congress has designated seven countries as such severe human rights violators that the United States, as guardians of international morality, must not provide them with any aid. One of these was Uganda—obviously, no list could be complete without Idi Amin, though in this case the citation was a joke, since the economy of Uganda was largely supported by U.S. coffee purchases. The other six are Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Cuba, Angola, and Mozambique. These countries stand alone in their massive violation of human rights, as judged by that great historical defender of human rights, the U.S. Congress, acting to fulfill the pledge of the President to defend human rights everywhere. Only the small-minded would take note of another property that these unique villains share. Meanwhile, the Shah was hailed as a great humanist and progressive, not only by President Carter but also by the liberal press. Similarly, Brazil and Indonesia, for example, were not

stigmatized as prime violators of human rights. Only those countries that escaped from the Grand Area were so stigmatized.

The struggle to maintain American global domination reached its peak under the liberal democratic administrations of the 1960's, with the considerable amplification of the doctrine and practice of counterinsurgency and counterrevolutionary subversion and violence. A plague of neo-fascist states spread through Latin America and elsewhere as well. Brazil, because of its size and power, was a particularly significant example. After the U.S.-backed military coup of 1964, Lincoln Gordon, Kennedy's Ambassador to Brazil and later U.S. Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, described the "Brazilian revolution" as "the single most decisive victory for freedom in the mid-twentieth century." Similarly, the Indonesian coup a year later, with its huge massacres, was welcomed in liberal circles as a vindication of the U.S. policy of standing firm in Indochina. The revolution in Cuba, in contrast, was understood to pose such threats to human rights and civilized values that the United States subjected Cuba to invasion, subversion, embargo, terrorism, poisoning of crops and livestock—and now, after this record, stands in judgment over Cuba for its violation of human rights.

It is interesting to inquire into the relation between human rights violations and U.S. aid and support. There is, in fact, a correlation, which has been noted in several studies, one of them by Edward Herman and myself. We found, as did Michael Klare in another study, that the deterioration of the human rights climate in some dependent states of the Free World correlates closely with an increase in U.S. aid and support. Of course, one must be cautious with statistical correlations; the correlation in question should not be interpreted as implying that the United States is rewarding some ruling group for the increase in torture, death squads, destruction of unions, elimination of democratic institutions, decline of living standards for the mass of the population, etc. Rather, the correlation between abuse of human rights and U.S. support is derivative from deeper factors. The deterioration in the human rights situation and the increase in U.S. aid and support each correlate, independently, with a third and crucial factor: namely, improvement of the investment climate. The climate for business operations improves as unions and popular organizations are destroyed, dissidents are tortured or eliminated, real wages are depressed, and the society as a whole is placed in the hands of a collection of thugs and gangsters who are willing to sell out to the foreigner for a share of the loot. And as the climate for business operations improves, the society is welcomed into the Free World and offered the specific kind of "aid" that will further these favorable developments.

The correlation just cited, and the obvious explanation for it, reveal that there is indeed a relation between U.S. foreign policy and human rights, though not precisely the one that is heralded throughout the international propaganda system. No less striking than the correlation is the careful avoidance of all of these matters in respectable scholarship, which prefers to explain the unfortunate developments in Latin America, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere as indications of the limits of U.S. power. And in this context, it is possible for an American President to stand up and proclaim that human rights is "the Soul of our foreign policy," and to be listened to with respect—even critics limit themselves to noting "contradictions," "inconsistencies" and "deviations," thus reinforcing the basic principle of the propaganda system, that the U.S. is committed to a program of freedom and human rights (as is the West in general), one of the great lies of modern history, and an awesome indication of the power of the systems of propaganda that have evolved in the Free World.

The spread of neo-fascist torture-and-corruption states in the Third World under U.S. sponsorship has in part been a response to the lessons of Vietnam. General Maxwell Taylor explained that: "The outstanding lesson [of the Indochina conflict] is that we should never let another Vietnam-type situation arise again. We were too late in recognizing the extent of the subversive threat. . . We have learned the need for a strong police force and a strong police intelligence organization to assist in identifying early the symptoms of an incipient subversive situation." This was in December 1965, after the U.S.-backed military coups in Brazil and Indonesia, after the invasion of the Dominican Republic, events that revealed how well the lessons of Vietnam had been absorbed—ruling groups have a historical memory, a capacity to learn, and a high level of class consciousness.

By the 1970's, the world system based on U.S. hegemony and leadership of the crusade against independent development, while it had achieved many successes, was in disarray. There are many reasons, among them, the end of the era of cheap and abundant energy, the rise of a number of centers of competing industrial capitalism, and the enormous costs of the Vietnam failure. The response, at the global level, has

been what is called "trilateralism," though one should bear in mind Henry Kissinger's important footnote to trilateral doctrine as perceived by U.S. elites: other powers have regional responsibilities, which they are to fulfill within the overall framework of order managed by the United States. At the domestic level, the response to the crisis is to be a kind of "Brazilianization" of the home countries.

There is a striking parallel between the Trilateral theory as to how to overcome the political and ideological crisis at home and the liberal counterrevolutionary ideology developed earlier for application in the Third World. The American political scientist Ithiel Pool explained over a decade ago that in such countries as Vietnam, the Congo, and the Dominican Republic, order depends on restoring "passivity and defeatism" among "newly mobilized strata." This is exactly what is proposed now by Trilateral theorists for the industrial societies themselves. It is necessary to return the population to apathy, passivity and defeatism if democracy is to survive. It is necessary to destroy hope, idealism, solidarity, and concern for the poor and oppressed, to replace these dangerous feelings by self-centered egoism, a pervasive cynicism that holds that all change is for the worse, so that one should simply accept the state capitalist order with its inherent inequities and oppression as the best that can be achieved. In fact, a great international propaganda campaign is underway to convince people—particularly young people—that this not only is what they *should* feel but that it is what they *do* feel, and that if somehow they do not adopt this set of values then they are strange relics of a terrible era that has fortunately passed away.

This process of imposing passivity and defeatism is, of course, to be accompanied by other features of the Brazilian model: restricting real income and social benefits for the working classes, demoralization of unions and other popular organizations, and so on. At the ideological level, the process is already well-advanced.

Let us consider how the Western response to events in postwar Indochina fits into this pattern. It is first important to recall some facts which are too quickly forgotten. The attack on Indochina left these impoverished peasant societies devasted and demolished, facing virtually insuperable problems. The agricultural systems were destroyed and much of the population had been driven into urban slums in a conscious effort to undermine the rural resistance to American aggression. The productive

economy was in ruins and the foreign dole that had kept much of the population alive was abruptly terminated. It was a condition of survival to turn (or return) the population to productive work in the countryside; on this matter, every competent authority, from the U.S. State Department to the World Bank, is in agreement.

The victors in Cambodia, where the effects of the bombing aimed at destroying the productive potential of the country were particularly severe, undertook drastic and brutal measures, simply forcing the urban population to the countryside where they were compelled to live the lives of poor peasants. At an extremely heavy cost, these measures appear to have overcome the destructive consequences of the U.S. war by 1978. A Japanese Embassy delegation, anti-Commmunist U.S. journalists, and others who visited in late 1978 found the population generally well-fed, so far as they could determine, even after the terrible floods of the fall of 1978 which had a disastrous impact elsewhere in Indochina. Nayan Chanda of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* went so far as to suggest that the improvement of the internal situation and the international image of Cambodia was a major factor in the timing of the Vietnamese invasion—that is, that Vietnam felt that it was "now or never" if Vietnam hoped to escape serious international censure. Perhaps the best picture we will ever have of the society that existed in large parts of Cambodia by the end of 1978 is that provided by Richard Dudman of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, an experienced and highly qualified observer who visited for two weeks in December 1978, just as the Vietnamese invasion was beginning.

Vietnam, in contrast, pursued a very different course. The Hanoi regime actually diverted very scarce resources in an effort to maintain the artifically inflated living standards of the more privileged sectors of Saigonese society—those whom the Western media refer to as "the South Vietnamese"—while encouraging migration to "New Economic Zones" in which productive work could be undertaken. Until a year ago, the capitalist economy was largely untouched in southern Vietnam, an unproductive economic sector that the country could not tolerate for long. The economic measures of March 1978, closing private business and eliminating cash hoarding, were one major factor in the flight of ethnic Chinese, who expected that they would soon face a life of harsh agricultural labor. The exodus was accelerated by the intensifying conflict between Vietnam and China and the floods of fall, 1978. In a sense the

refugee flow from Vietnam in 1978 is comparable to the forced resettlement of the urban population of Cambodia in 1975.

Western propaganda generally attributes all of the suffering and tribulations of Indochina to the evils of Communism, without, however, suggesting some different and more humane ways to deal with problems of a sort that the West has never faced. In fact, if the leaders of the Communist societies were saints, it is difficult to see how they could face the problems that confront them without resort to Draconian measures. Surely there is nothing in Western experience to suggest a model.

What is more, while the West sanctimoniously deplores the failure to overcome problems that are largely the legacy of Western domination and aggression, it refuses to offer reparations or even meaningful aid—or in the case of the United States, even to permit trade or to respond to Vietnamese proposals for normalization of relations. In Laos, hundreds of thousands face death by starvation, while the United States, with the world's largest rice surplus, refuses more than a tiny trickle of aid, unwilling to forego the propaganda benefits of privation and misery. These victims of starvation and disease are being murdered by the West, which destroyed their land, no less than those who were killed outright by napalm and anti-personnel weapons. In Vietnam as well there is actual or impending starvation in much of the country, but Western moralists shed their crocodile tears only for the miserable refugees, while doing nothing to provide the desperately needed aid (or reparations, to use the proper term) that might alleviate the conditions from which they flee, or even offering a suggestion as to how these conditions might be met. The failure of the U.S. to offer substantial help to the refugees is shameful enough, but it is surpassed by far by the refusal to offer massive reparations to the great mass of the population that is attempting to recover from the American onslaught. I will not even speak of the display of mock horror on the part of Western moralists who "denounce the Vietnamese" but not their own past crimes, and crucially, their present crime of refusing reparations, or of those who have suddenly raised the banner of "human rights" after having accepted or even applauded the atrocities of the past decades.

The policy of imposing harsh conditions on countries that have escaped the Grand Area is ugly, but entirely rational. In the first place, harsh conditions can impede social and economic development, thus diminishing the so-called "domino effect," that is, the demonstration

effect of successful economic development outside the approved dependency model; it is worth noting that this was always the rational content of the "domino theory," though more lurid versions were served up for mass popular consumption. Secondly, harsh conditions will tend to enhance the authoritarian and repressive features of the victorious regimes. This consequence is extremely important for domestic propaganda purposes in the industrial democracies. A general public mood of hostility to Third World nationalism is very useful for the managers of the industrial democracies as they attempt to manipulate "North-South conflicts" to their benefit. In contrast, the sympathy towards third world independence movements that developed during the post-World War II struggles for national liberation, brutally repressed primarily by France and the United States, makes it more difficult to impose measures that will meet the requirements of the wealthy industrial powers. It is therefore important to try to arouse hatred, contempt and moralistic outrage directed against nationalist movements of the Third World that have escaped Western domination. Therefore it comes as no surprise that a major effort should be directed toward revesing the worldwide currents of sympathy towards the people of Indochina that were aroused by the assault of the U.S. war machine. That struggle came to be perceived as symbolic of the conflicts between the industrialized West and the former colonial domains. Thus, the refusal of massive reparations or even meaningful aid, or even trade, is a very rational policy, just as rational as the massive international propaganda campaign, orchestrated by the subservient intelligentsia of the Western world, that is focused on the repression and brutality to be found throughout Indochina, effacing the past and present Western role.

It is a bitter truth that the United States in essentials won its filthy war in Indochina. True, it did not achieve the goal of retaining Indochina within the American system, so that its people could enjoy the fate of the peasants and urban slum-dwellers of Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. But that was always a secondary goal. The primary goal was to ensure that "the rot would not spread," in the terminology favored by the planners—namely the rot of successful independent development. In South Vietnam itself, the United States did win the war. The ferocious battering of the peasant society, particularly the murderous post-Tet accelerated pacification campaigns, virtually destroyed the indigenous resistance, setting the stage for the Northern domination now deplored

by Western hypocrites. In Cambodia, the horrendous bombing campaign of 1973, which was directed against the peasant society and its agricultural resources, was a major factor—probably *the* major factor—in brutalizing the Khmer Rouge victors, a conclusion supported by U.S. government studies and other sources. In Laos, the prospects for peaceful development in one of the world's poorest countries were destroyed by American subversion and military attack. North Vietnam, while not conquered, was left in ruins—in large parts of the country, nothing remains standing and even the foundations of buildings crumbled to dust under the ferocious pounding while the remaining population faces starvation. The terrible prospect of successful economic development has been overcome for a long time, perhaps permanently. The postwar policy of refusing aid or normal relations with Vietnam succeeded in driving Vietnam into an alliance with the Soviet Union, as the only alternative remaining, again a consequence eagerly exploited by the Western propaganda system. By systematically creating conditions under which only the most harsh and repressive elements could survive, conditions under which existence is reduced to virtually the zero grade, Western power has attained its primary end throughout Indochina. The West has once again taught the lesson that European civilization has offered the world for centuries: those who try to resist the technologically advanced but morally primitive Western societies will pay a bitter price.

We can gain some insight into the significance of the international propaganda campaign with regard to Indochina by undertaking a few comparisons. Sometimes, history provides us with a virtual controlled experiment to verify certain theses. The 1975-1978 period is a case in point. Let us explore this matter.

The primary target of Western vituperation has certainly been the victorious Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, who inherited a country devastated by American attack. There is no doubt that massive and brutal atrocities have taken place in Cambodia since 1975. About this fact there has been virtually no dispute. But Cambodia is not the only country where massacres have taken place during the period in question. There is, in fact, another, not far away; namely, East Timor, where the Indonesian army, backed and armed by the U.S. and its allies, has been on a murderous rampage during exactly the same period. Let us compare, then, the events in East Timor and in Cambodia, and the Western reaction to them, carrying out the experiment that history has been kind enough to offer us.

There are, in fact, some remarkable parallels in the two situations, enough to offer a fair test of the meaning of the human rights crusade and of the clamor concerning Cambodia. The time frame is identical: 1975 to the present. The same region of the world is involved, so one cannot appeal to the general lack of concern for remote and exotic places to differentiate the two examples. In Cambodia, the harshest critics of the regime allege that perhaps 100,000 people or more were massacred by the Khmer Rouge. Much higher figures appear in Soviet-bloc and Western propaganda, but a careful look will show that these further estimates, where they are not simply invention based on no known evidence, include deaths from starvation and disease that are, to no small extent, chargeable to the American account; recall that high U.S. officials predicted in 1975 that a million people would die as a result of the conditions left by the American war.

Turning to Timor, it appears that approximately the same number of people have been killed in the course of the Western-backed Indonesian invasion, perhaps 100,000 or more. In this case, the estimates derive not from hostile critics, but from people who at first at least were willing to support Indonesian "integration"—in fact, even Foreign Minister Adam Malik of Indonesia offered an estimate of 50-80,000 dead, though he added, sagely, that perhaps they were killed by Australians. Relative to the population, the scale of massacres in Timor is perhaps 5 or 10 times as high as in Cambodia. Furthermore, these killings cannot be attributed to peasant revenge and similar factors that may well have been operative in Cambodia, given the history of rural violence before and during a brutal war. Rather the Timorese massacres took place in the course of direct aggression, which has been regarded as a rather serious matter since Nuremberg (at least when it is conducted by the wrong parties). As for the quality of the evidence available, there is no time to survey it here: I have done so elsewhere, and I think it can be shown that the evidence concerning atrocities and massacres in East Timor is at least as credible as what has been produced in great profusion in the case of Cambodia. In particular, it is worth noting that critics of the Indonesian massacres in Timor have not discredited themselves by repeated falsification, or by refusal to correct gross falsehoods, as has unfortunately been the case with many of the best-known critics of the Khmer Rouge.

So much for parallels. Consider now some dissimilarities. First, how-

ever awful the facts may have been in the case of Cambodia, there was very little that anyone in the West could do about the matter, apart from helping to encourage a Vietnamese invasion that is likely to lead to still further catastrophes, perhaps even the final end of Khmer nationalism as a viable entity. But this is obviously not at all true in the case of Timor. In this case, exposure and protest might well have mitigated or brought to an end the aggression and massacres for which the West bears direct responsibility. Thus by any reasonable moral standards—that is, standards that relate to the human consequences of one's acts—the case of Timor was vastly more significant for the West than the case of Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge. There is a second and closely related difference between the two examples. In the case of Cambodia, there has been an international outcry of unprecedented proportions, and the media, East and West, have eagerly seized upon any scrap of evidence, however tarnished, that might be used to demonstrate the iniquity of the Khmer Rouge, even giving vast exposure to well-documented fabrications. In the case of Timor, in dramatic contrast, there is a veil of silence, occasionally lifted for Indonesian or State Department apologetics circulated by the loyal and subservient press.

The contrast reveals with brilliant clarity the true significance of the recent "human rights" clamor in the West, specifically, the Carter crusade, which is, surprisingly, taken seriously even by normally rational Western observers. It tells us a good deal about the moral content of the alleged concern over the atrocities that have taken place in Cambodia.

The United States is by far the prime offender in the case of Timor; the Indonesian army was 90% supplied by the United States, according to the State Department, and in flat contradiction to false testimony by government spokesmen at Congressional Hearings, the U.S. government continued to provide armaments to Indonesia, including new offers of arms, in the early post-invasion period and indeed since. Furthermore, the continued flow of armaments has been crucial for the Indonesian aggression, since Indonesia has virtually exhausted its arms supplies in its efforts to destroy the Timorese resistance. What is more, the U.S. and the domestic media have been in the forefront of international efforts to conceal the facts about Indonesian aggression and atrocities.

To show that an honorable response was possible, we can turn to the case of Sweden. There, the Social Democratic opposition compelled the government to terminate arms sales to Indonesia. But nothing of the sort

has happened in the United States, where the bold standard-bearers of virtue and morality have other commitments and concerns. I should add that this is not past history. The aggression in Timor continues, thanks to the military and diplomatic support provided by the West and the servility of the intelligentsia who loyally keep their silence; and it could still be brought to an end if the West would withdraw from this massacre.

After Cambodia, the sufferings of the "boat people" escaping from Vietnam have been the major subject of Western sympathy and concern—though material support is much less in evidence, and as already mentioned this show of concern has not been accompanied by reparations or aid to mitigate the conditions from which they flee. But let us put aside that quite important matter, and turn to another experiment that history provides. The Vietnamese boat people are hardly the only refugees who flee oppression and misery. But while their suffering is bewailed on the front pages in a daily regimen, a little research is necessary to learn of some other victims. But they do exist. Thus in April and May of 1978, some 200,000 Muslims escaped from Burma to Bangladesh. They were not fleeing starvation or the fear of agricultural labor, but rather the ravages of a marauding army that was burning their villages and massacring those who did not escape. At the peak of the flight, their number was estimated at about 18,000 a day by UN officials, far higher than the flight from Vietnam. Somehow they escaped the attention of Western moralists, as did the 140,000 refugees who fled from the Philippines to Sabah in 1977 or the Haitian "boat people" who arrive in a steady flow in Florida, to be returned to persecution and misery in another land that has long benefited from American tutelage and concern, or the hundreds of thousands of victims of Israeli and Syrian bombardment in Lebanon, or the millions of refugees in Africa, many of them fleeing from murderous regimes bolstered by Western power, such as the Congo of General Mobutu. Only the refugees from Indochina, however, arouse the compassion of the West. To record this miserable display in the proper terms would require the talents of a Swift or an Orwell.

One can continue with parallels of this sort, but I will mention only one last example. Vietnam, incapable of recovering from the blows of Western imperialism and suffering under the harsh measures imposed by the West as further punishment for its resistance to imperial attack, is regularly denounced for its sins in the mass media. In the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, one of the saner journals dealing with international

affairs, we read that the Communists have created a "loathsome" society in Vietnam; the same journal applauded the American war for having permitted the West to construct a "second line of defense" in Thailand and Indonesia, for example. How have these latter countries, untouched by foreign aggression, fared under the Western aegis? We learn a good deal from the pages of the same journal, for example, from the discussion of confidential reports of the World Bank and UN agencies which reveal that for many tens of millions of impoverished peasants and urban slum dwellers, living conditions are constantly worsening in these relatively wealthy and favored societies plundered by the West and their own corrupt elites, backed by Western force. But the Western powers responsible for these continuing and massive atrocities are not denounced for having created "loathsome" societies. Rather, these developments are described in quite neutral and dispassionate terms, as the unfortunate consequences of technical errors, or of the evils of "Asian nature" (corruption is a way of life in Asia), or of the inexorable processes of history.

Propagandists in the media and the academy are concerned to obliterate the distinction between two fundamentally different positions: (1) defense of radical nationalist movements from imperialist savagery, and (2) support for the programs and leadership of these movements, often called "Communist"—a term that has come to refer to movements led by a revolutionary intelligentsia that hopes to attain state power through the leadership of popular struggles and then to use this power to carry out forced programs of economic development in relative independence from international capital (hence the hostility of the West) and within a totalitarian framework. It is obvious why ideologists of state capitalism should seek to identify these two entirely different commitments—why they should, for example, regularly identify opponents of the American war in Indochina as "supporters of Hanoi," including those who consistently expressed their opposition to Marxist-Leninist doctrine and practice. In the first place, it is the duty of such ideologists to establish the doctrine that a principled opposition to imperialist depredations cannot exist: either one supports the imperial powers, or one supports their enemies. Furthermore, any repressive or authoritarian policies pursued by the latter can then be exploited to discredit opposition to counterrevolutionary violence and to undermine socialist programs of a sort meaningful in the advanced industrial societies, which share little

beyond the name with those undertaken by revolutionary nationalists of the underdeveloped world. There is no reason for the Western left to fall into this trap, though it often has, a major historical error that has severely weakened it since the time of the Bolshevik revolution.

Surely it is legitimate to criticize and protest atrocities in underdeveloped societies, including those that have freed themselves from Western domination, though not to ignore the historical and material circumstances in which brutality and oppression arise. And surely criticism of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and practice is legitimate—there is a long and rich left libertarian tradition, including Marxist currents, that has devoted itself to this essential task for 60 years, and at the doctrinal and theoretical level, long before. But what we are now witnessing is something entirely different, I believe.

When a "human rights" activist in the Soviet Union denounces the United States for its crimes in Vietnam or Chile, or defends the rights of the Wilmington 10, what he says may be exactly correct, but to determine the human and political significance of his protest we ask what he has to say about the crimes of the Russian state. It is cheap and easy to condemn the crimes of the enemy. The same moral and rational standards apply when the *New York Times*, for example, denounces Cambodian genocide, as it has been doing regularly since mid-1975, while observing a strict silence with regard to the ongoing massacres in Timor, backed and aided at every step by the United States—and by other industrial democracies that crave a share in the plunder of Indonesia.

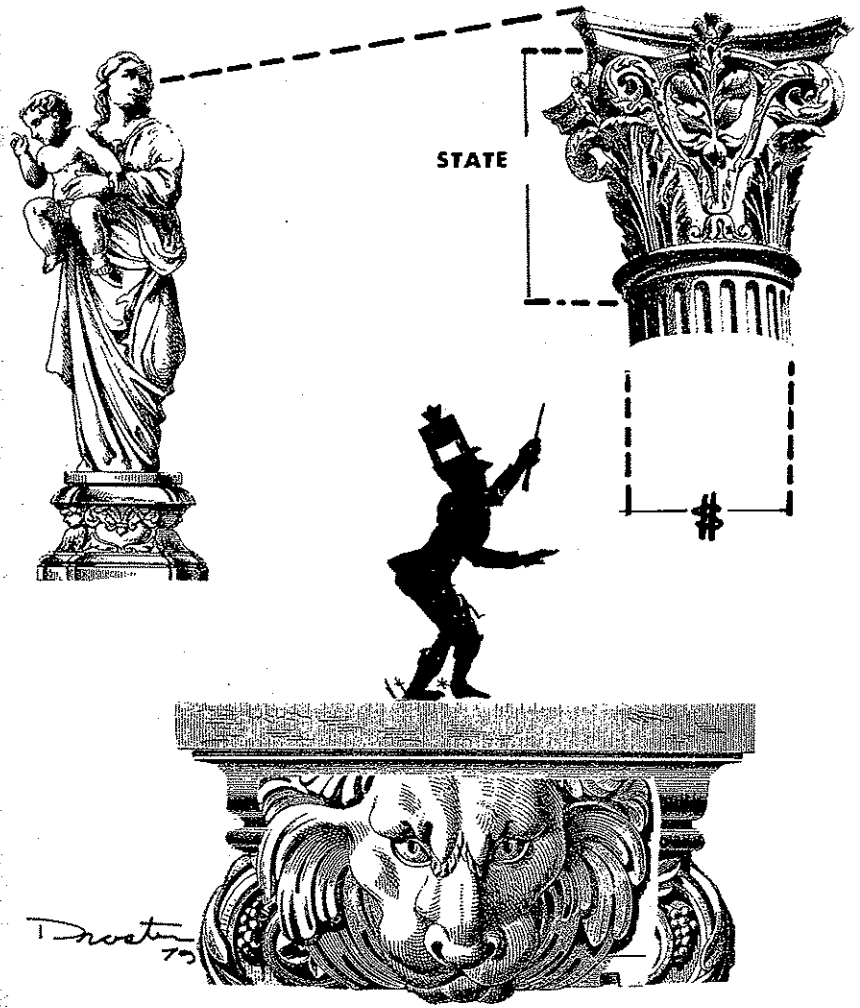
Much the same is true in other cases I mentioned, and many others that I did not. Individuals have their own motives and reasons, which I am not concerned to discuss. But I think that we can find some important systematic and institutional characteristics in the human rights crusade that was undertaken, with such fanfare, at just the moment when the lustre of traditional imperial doctrine had faded. These characteristics are obvious without further comment. The crusade plays its essential role in arousing contempt for the struggles of poor and oppressed peoples. It is worth noting that despite their enormous wealth and advantage, the Western powers have never conceived of undertaking serious programs directed to the welfare of the suffering and impoverished majority in the underdeveloped countries subject to their domination and influence, and would have no idea how to proceed even if, in some stunning reversal of history, they were to devote some effort to these ends. While West-

ern elites are always keen to denounce injustice beyond their reach, from their position of privilege that derives from centuries of brutal exploitation, the task of overcoming degradation and misery within their own domains merits no more than occasional flights of "Alliance for Progress" rhetoric, the precise meaning of which is evident enough from the record of the acts that accompany it. And they have demonstrated their talents primarily in devising new types of oppression and destruction when their own interests are threatened.

American business has long understood the importance of what is sometimes called "the engineering of consent"—controlling public opinion through careful supervision of the flow of "information" and analysis. Since World War I, and increasingly after World War II, the engineering of consent has been a major industry. The multitude and variety of programs directed to this end are rarely appreciated, and very substantial successes have been achieved in the U.S., where the conformism and subservience of the intelligentsia has reached unusual levels and where the class consciousness of business groups is also unusually high. One consequence of the partial failure in Vietnam was the recognition that existing measures did not suffice. Consequently, there has been a severe and rather effective attack on the press for its occasional minor departures from the State Religion, for example, for its lack of enthusiasm for the American war (which, in fact, closely mirrored that of powerful business circles) when the going got too tough. Such groups as "Freedom House" and "Accuracy in Media"—true Orwellian constructions, whose exploits I have discussed elsewhere—have been engaged in this campaign, which, once again, accords with the Trilateral model of domestic pacification. The Trilateral Commission Report on the "Crisis of Democracy" (by which is meant the direct involvement of popular groups in the political arena, hampering the freedom of the "elites" who deserve to rule unimpeded) contains some interesting indications of the paranoid response in ruling circles to the rare and limited instances of intellectual independence on the part of the national media and the intelligentsia as a whole.

How far the model of "Brazilianization" will be pursued in the industrial West, and with what success, one can only speculate. It will depend very largely on the seriousness of economic and other crises and the outcome of the campaign to induce apathy, hopelessness, cynicism and passivity throughout the general population. There is no question as

to the unity and commitment and resources of those who are committed to domestic pacification. The shape of the future will depend on the strength and commitment of those who choose to resist these developments and to devote themselves to a very different vision.



Reviews

Leaps of Imagination and Faith

OILERS AND SWEEPERS
George Dennison [Random House, NYC, 1979] 179 pp., $7.95.

Educators pretty much agree that the best book so far to come out of the revolt against traditional schooling is George Dennison's *The Lives of Children*, an account of the First Street School in New York where Dennison worked as a sort of therapist/uncle for some of the needier children. Dennison improves on Holt and Kozol and all the others by focusing on what no one else has quite shown us, the living breathing child. He is not writing a book on education so much as he is telling how he spent the day with his boys and girls. Pedagogy and theory are backdrop to this drama.

Though he once taught school briefly and worked several years with severely disturbed children in much closer quarters than the classroom, Dennison is not a professional educator. Neither is he primarily a psychotherapist, an art critic, or a housepainter, other pursuits that have given him a livelihood while he followed his calling as a story-teller.

While his stories have had enthusiastic admirers as they appeared every year of so in *The American Review* and other places, Dennison has not written enough to catch the attention of a very wide audience. *Oilers and Sweepers*, his first volume of fiction, is not a thick one. During the ten years since *The Lives of Children* he has published a number of stories with which he might have fattened his volume, but Dennison is a perfectionist. Of the four long stories and one play that comprise this book, at least two are as good as anything being written in English today, far beyond the shiny manufactures of Cheever, Updike, Barthelme, and Co. At his best Dennison can be compared with three women whose stories have already become classics of our generation, Doris Lessing, Grace Paley, and Tillie Olsen. Indeed, in some ways he excels them, although Olsen's fiction is more intense, her grip on the reader tighter, Paley has an ear for language and a spiritedness unsurpassed by any contemporary writer, and Lessing, like George Eliot, is the great chronicler of our times. Theirs are very impressive gifts and accomplishments, so that even to say that Dennison approaches them is no faint praise; and he is, I think, more daring as an artist, and more intellectual. Let me try to explain why I think so.

Whether or not there is a basis in human nature or in Western culture that favors one approach to literature rather than another, it is a fact that with a few exceptions like Doris Lessing our best writers are no longer trying to maintain a facade of photographic "realism". Consider for instance the little circle of Dennison's artist friends, the late Paul Goodman, who was his teacher, Grace Paley and her husband Robert Nichols, and the impressario of the Bread and Puppet Theater, Peter Schumann. Not really a "school" of artists—for their works are idiosyncratic and inimitable, undertaken in a variety of mediums, and ranging over almost half a century—yet they do have in common certain attitudes toward life and art that constitute, it seems to me, a single method or manner. Since each of them—Goodman, Paley, Nichols, and Schumann—has touched Dennison's creative life in important ways, I wish to draw attention to what he has found to admire in them, as a way of considering the nature of his own achievement.

Goodman's masterpiece, *The Empire City*, was an attempt to invent an alternative to realism—"expressionistic naturalism" in which "the acts and characters are reduced almost to X-ray pictures or schemes" while the "true causes of events, both sociological and psychological," become the center of interest. This was Goodman's own earliest notion of what he was doing, after completing only the first of his four volumes; and here is what Dennison had to say in a review written almost twenty years later, after the last volume had finally appeared:

> The figures of *The Empire City* are drawn larger-than-life—are so firmly drawn and implicitly contain so much experience that they create the illusion of generating the plot independently of the author . . . the realism of the book as a whole is poetic rather than naturalistic . . . it answers the widely-felt desire to re-establish the imagination itself as primary in the art-act.

Another dozen years passed, and Dennison, writing now after his friend's death, tried to place him in the context of modernism; Goodman was not a realist but a cubist:

> The closest formal parallel to *The Empire City* is actually the Cubism of Picasso. I mean that Picasso's attitude toward tradition, his use of it (exactly as a second Nature), his overt lyric play with properties abstracted from the history of art, are quite like Paul's in *The Empire City*. . . [Dennison gives examples:] Paul's characters levitate—after Nietzsche and Cocteau. They encounter "the friend downstairs"—after Freud. Plots are drawn from Buber and Malinowski, props from Kafka. Yet the effect is never one of fantasy, but of true event, clear meaning—and a radical extension of the genre which yet observes structural fidelity to it.

Grace Paley, also an admirer of Goodman's fiction—especially early stories like "Iddings Clark" (1933) and "A Cross-Country Runner at 65" (1936)—has her own way of upsetting conventional realistic expectations.

At a recent public reading sponsored by Black Rose she was asked why she risked "those leaps" in her stories, where other writers put transitions. She replied by comparing her stories to poems: what reader balks at the shifts and discontinuities of lyric?

But "leaps" is too casual a term. Events in Paley's storied move as in dreams, that is, usually with the same verisimilitude as waking life, but sometimes against all experience or common sense, depending instead on an inner logic that makes ordinary plausibility irrelevant. In "The Long Distance Runner," for example, Faith, the narrator, is jogging through the Brighton Beach neighborhood where she grew up, now populated by blacks. Suddenly she finds herself surrounded by a hostile crowd—in a scene that seems at once true-to-life and surreal. Faith boldly converses with the crowd, and the hostility slowly melts into banter and mutual recognition. Next she enters the building that she lived in as a child, and on the stairs she talks about her mother with a young black girl, Cynthia, who begins to cry when she imagines her own mother dying. Faith tries to comfort her, says she will always have a home with her—but this is perceived as a threat. Cynthia's hysterical screams bring the mob into the building and Faith flees to the third floor, where she pounds frantically on the door to the very apartment she grew up in: "It's me! I cried out in terror. Mama! Mama! let me in!"

Structurally this moment is the means of getting Faith from one part of the story to another—a leap from the encounter with the mob to the recollection of childhood which now begins. Behind the door lives a black mother and her two children, who take Faith in as a sort of visiting mother/child. It is Faith's own maternity that she is "running" from in the story, the long distance back to her old neighborhood and the memory of her mother.

All of this resonates in the "leap" of transition, the cry "Mama! let me in!" It would be hard to believe in this sequence by ordinary standards of plausibility: the mob springs up too suddenly, Cynthia grows hysterical too easily, the black mother shelters Faith too readily and too long. Yet it all makes perfect sense at another level—dramatically brought into focus by Faith's pounding on the door of her past.

There is something thrilling here beyond the convergence of meanings and the daring of the leap—it is the thrill of watching the artist in the moment of inspiration. I am reminded of something else Dennison said about *The Empire City*: "the narrative voice is placed so squarely in the center of the image that the art-act—the act of imagination—is itself one of the liveliest elements of the work." For a fellow artist, there is nothing so moving as to glimpse the muse in this way.

Bob Nichols has written plays, poems, and stories. His best work is a utopian novel, *Daily Lives in Nghsi-Altai*, being published serially by New Directions (the fourth and last volume has just appeared). The trouble with most utopian novels has been that they cannot escape the present, the platform on which the imagination must stand. Some authors have solved the problem by embracing the past—I am thinking particularly of William Morris' *News from Nowhere* and Austin Wright's *Islandia*—but Nichols, whose ecological anarcho-syndicalism has much in common with these agrarian visions, has discovered a new way to see into—not quite the future, but the possibilities of the present. ("It was meant as current events," Nichols has said.)

His technique is basically *montage*, innumerable glimpses of familiar and unfamiliar sights, drawn from daily experience, from cultural anthropology, from modern technology, from history and literature. This crowded world comes to life in its juxtapositions—monorails and wooden plows, shamanism side by side with progressive education, participatory democracy merged with the racetrack or Yankee Stadium to suggest what a parliament of 80,000 might be like. Nichols invents widely, but nothing is that impossible, or even very unusual. The surprises come in the connections he makes, the improvisations. This is his formal method, and it is also his utopian message—the mixture is plausible both as civilization and as novel. The structure of neither is "realistic," that is, grounded in systematic verisimilitude, a mesh of cause and effect organized according to conventional expectations. That is what weighs most utopian novels down and makes us dread their coming true. Here we feel the rush of life itself, as full of complexity and obscurity as ordinary awareness.

From Kropotkin to Goodman, the one great virtue of anarchist thought is to accept confusion and human fallibility as a given, and make room for it. Nichols' art does the same thing, by means of his improvisational technique. It was this method that Dennison praised when he reviewed *Daily Lives in Nghsi-Altai*: "It is overtly imaginative, overtly a product of mind, classical in spirit, but drawing freely on the broad repertory of modernism, especially the *collage in time* of modern poetry, which is handled here with great verve." The comparison to modern poetry recalls Paley's explanation of her "leaps" and Dennison's description of the "realism" of *The Empire City* as "poetic rather than naturalistic." But even more than modern poetry, it seems to me that the freedom of imagination displayed in *Daily Lives*

has its analogue in a kind of theatre.

Both Nichols and Dennison have been close to Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre almost since its beginning in the early Sixties. In *Oilers and Sweepers* there is a quick portrait of the troupe: "Masks were donned. The gigantic figures came to life. A narration was spoken through a megaphone. The trumpets and fiddles were heard again. I won't try to describe the play to you . . . when it ended there was silence. We could not applaud. It had been like a prayer. Yet finally we did applaud, as there was no other way to break the spell."

I think Dennison is wise not to attempt any closer description of a Bread and Puppet performance. The faithful description of spontaneity takes the heart out of it. To do it justice one must be willing to renounce one's own art and audience, as another friend of Dennison's has done. (See *The Theatre of Vision: Robert Wilson*, volume 1 of Stefan Brecht's mammoth history of *Original Theatre in the Cityof New York, Mid-60's to Mid-70's* (Suhrkamp Verlag). His record of The Bread and Puppet Theatre is scheduled for volume 4.) However thankless his task, Stefan Brecht is an excellent chronicler of our non-literary stage, and understands—as well he might—the crucial issues in post-Brechtian theatre: "Schumann's theatre," he has said, "bypasses characterization and motivation. This might be a way for theatre to retrieve its liberty of fabulation, freeing story from the restrictions of plot-construction (as ridiculous nowadays as willful rhyme), and allowing instead the arrangement of dramatic sequence for effective impact, through eyes and ears, on emotions so as to agitate rather than lull creative drive in the audience."

The Bread and Puppet Theatre thus has its analogues in the leaps and improvisations, the larger-than-life characters and the bold display of the creative moment itself, that I have been discussing in Goodman, Paley, and Nichols. Whoever has seen Schumann's group will know what I mean.

The title story of Dennison's new book is dedicated to Peter Schumann and his theatre. When it was first published a few years ago in *The American Review*, this story was called "Oilers and Sweepers Cantata"—"cantata" in the Bread and Puppet sense, a variation on the form invented by Schumann in works like "The Grey Lady Cantatas," where the interwoven scenes and tableaux make a pattern of superimposed images rather than a linear sequence of events. Some sections of Dennison's story can be imagined as actual Bread and Puppet stagings; others are more literary conceptions that have the feeling of dramatic collage, somewhat as in Nichols—for instance the section on Fred's Feet:

> His feet are crippled, the right in such a way that only a shoe meant for the left will fit him.
>
> He remembers how the unworn shoes had accumulated in his closet, and how he had sat at the card table in his furnished room writing phrases and crossing them out until finally, with a curse, he had written: *Man with two left feet . . .* "To hell with it!" he had cried. He had crumbled the paper and hurled it to the floor. Soon, however, he picked it up . . .
>
> *Wanted, man with two right feet, to swap or purchase shoes.*
>
> *Wanted, man with foot trouble to swap or purchase shoes*—and more, until he had fancied he could see figures coming toward him as through a mist, some limping, others walking slowly with canes, still others swinging their bodies like pendulums between crutches.
>
> *For sale, eighty-five shoes, right foot only.*
>
> But the hobbling figures kept emerging from the mist.
>
> "No, no!" he had cried, clinging to his solitude. He had torn the paper to bits. He had put the shoes in a box and had put the box beside the garbage can, saying to the world at large, "Take 'em! Take 'em!"

The cululative effect of such vignettes, comic and pathetic, sorrowing but without despair, is extremely moving. This power to move is more than a matter of content. The form itself contributes tension and release—not the slow, steady unfolding of human fates that we are used to in realistic narratives, but returning again and again to the same few objects of concern, assembled like a set of snapshots of the same person or scene caught in characteristic moments. This is the difference between anecdotal biography and ethical portraiture, except that here the portraits are multiple, a galley arranged according to a formal conception.

The emphasis on juxtaposition and episodic repetition is what justifies the musical term, though of course Dennison's story is no more a cantata than it is a portrait gallery. Neither is "Oilers and Sweepers" really like drama, in spite of having been inspired by the Bread and Puppet Theatre. To be sure, it reminds one of many theatrical forms—silent movies, mime, circus—yet finally it is simply what it is, a work of fiction that foregoes the overpowering fascination of narrative for the sake of other formal virtues.

But if "Oilers and Sweepers" is not a scenario for a Bread and Puppet play, it is nonetheless strongly influenced by Schumann's experiments in pageant and puppetry. Indeed, every work included in this collection has some deep affinity with the stage, so that instead of seeming out of place among short stories, Dennison's vaudeville play "The Service for Joseph Axminster" fits right in. "The Author of Caryatids" is cast in the form of a monologue—"taped interview"—with a playwright, and the fullblown realistic story "The Smiles of Konarak" is also about a playwright, its crucial scenes all perfor-

mances of one kind or another—an organ grinder and his monkey, a poetry reading, Shakespeare in Tompkins Square Park.

Dennison's love of theatre is near the heart of his creativity—as it was, for example, in Dickens—but it does not follow—again as in Dickens—that his plays are his best work. Delightful as "The Service for Joseph Axminister" may be, it is finally just a variation on Beckett. At the other end of the specturm, "The Smiles of Konarak" seems too far removed from theatre even though it is about it, too grimly determined to tell the truth without costume or illusion. Dennison is a poet of celebration. When he has something to praise, he soars. When life does not present him with such themes, but with boredom and pain, he accepts these subjects at a risk. The factory and barracks life presented in "Oilers and Sweepers" does not make the reader despair, because the cantata form reminds us that there is more to life than these doldrums. "The Smiles of Konarak" stays closer to conventional realism, and thereby becomes ensnared in its subject. It is a lament for the Sixties, a dirge for New York City, and the narrative sags under this weight. Only one scene, the murder of the organ grinder's monkey, comes to life with the power of Dennison's other stories; otherwise the imagination seems buried under the world represented, our world. It makes no sense except as a transcription. The plot is invaded by real people out of our own life and times, reality overwhelms art.

To my taste Dennison's own perfect story is "Larbaud." The subtitle "A Tale of Pierrot" warns us to read it as a modern version of *commedia dell'arte*, full of hilarious and absurd improvisation, but at the outset the manner is as realistic as that of "Konarak." Although we are told that the hero Minot Larbaud is an extraordinary man, his presentation has nothing unusual about it, until on carnival night he appears dressed as Pierrot and wearing a mask of his own face in *papier-mache*. Then, on the way to the festivities . . .

> Searchlights played over a building, and settled on a window two stories above the street, the shutters of which promptly opened. A lovelorn maiden leaned out. She held a paper rose, and while our horns and violins sighed for her lugubriously, she threw up her arms to the moon. Suddenly a handsome prince, a miraculous emanation from the shadow, ascended into the air, pedaling rapidly with his feet. He rose almost to a level with the maiden, and then dropped out of sight. In a moment, to her great joy, and to the joy of the crowd, he reappeared . . . but I shall say no more of these aerial lovers, except that the prince's flights were powered by twenty bears in the darkness down below, catching and throwing him in a canvas net.

This is the setting for the astonishing events to follow. Late that night, in the dancing crowd, Larbaud's head and shoulders are seen rising above the others:

> He dropped out of sight. A moment later he emerged again, and there was laughter and a flourish of trumpets. Many voices called, "Larbaud!" He pretended to sip from his glass. This gesture, and his elevation in the air, made the grave face of his mask seem hilarious. He soared upward again—to a surprising height. The band greeted him with a crescendo, and we dancers, all of us, without ceasing to dance, cried, "Larbaud!" We were no longer a mere social group. We were the dancers of the dance called The Leaps of Pierrot. And our glee brimmed over into joy, confused, disoriented joy, for he performed what one would have thought to be impossible.

By swift degrees that surprise the reader into delighted acquiescence (our own "disoriented joy") Larbaud is swept up into competitive "leaping," and becomes an international celebrity, winning the Olympic high jump with a monstrous leap of nine feet—straight up! for his leaping is as unorthodox as it is superhuman.

> His body arced upward in the glare of light, an arc like a motion of the mind, so pure it was, and so free of the restraints of our heavy earth. To the purity of this arc he added, as he soared outstretched across the bar, a gesture of grace, or joy, that swept us all into a delirium of pride: he lifted his head and spread his arms like wings.
>
> We many thousands stood there singing—or so it seemed. There were, in actuality, complex emotions scattered through the mass. A voice cried, "*Mein Gott!*" Another: "He didn't do it!" There were shouts of rage and indignation. But the torrential jubilation swept everything away. The stands were a waterfall of human bodies pouring toward Minot. He was lifted on shoulders and hands, was carried about the field like a banner, was placed alone on the platform on which other victors had received their prizes.

Incredible as its premises may be, the scene of Larbaud's triumph does not fail to move a reader as much as it does his audience in the story. But whereas the crowd cheers him for his leap, we are touched by a more complicated emotion. For us, the meaning of such a feat is not in the accomplishment itself, but in the reflected glory. At the remove of art, we are closer to the significance: Larbaud carries humanity with him when he transcends limitation and becomes, not a bird but an angel. We too are uplifted.

After this miraculous moment, what is there further to say? The effect is very like the breath-taking moments in Bread and Puppet productions, when the huge constructions of *papier-mache* and cloth suddenly come to life—but in those spectacles the miracle itself has no plot, the events of the story are not intertwined with the artistic medium, and the transmuted masks and draperies are merely the Queen of Spain waltzing with the Viceroy until the actors once more lay them down.

Dennison, having taken his readers so far into willing suspension of disbelief, now does something even more daring. He brings the artistic

miracle directly into the plot, by surrounding the central fairy-tale event with more or less ordinary realistic causes and consequences. Without a blink we gaze on the unfolding of Larbaud's subsequent career: he continues to leap until the world finds itself no longer able to believe in his gift—but the reader still believes!—and then, amid accusations of fraud, he retires, changes his name, assumes a disguise, and disappears. The rest of his story—his marriage, illness, scholarly pursuits, death—is told at length. His leaping is not forgotten by the reader, but Dennison makes no effort to remind us of it, nor does he add any new miracles. We come to feel that Larbaud's entire life is a miracle, a greater one after all than the stupendous flight of his youth.

As the story progresses in episodes more and more realistic in content, Dennison moves into the literary manner of "Oilers and Sweepers." The leaps are now the leaps of art, especially at the end when the narrator, Larbaud's nephew, recalls a series of childhood memories of his uncle, the final shimmerings of his life. The reader does not feel any basic discontinuity—either between Larbaud's feat and its aftermath, or between the story and ordinary life—but one is aware of a very great distance stretching back to the day when he was carried round the field "like a banner." That victory was glorious for us too, yet it has already faded into myth, and seems small in comparison with the rest of life.

I said at the outset that Dennison's work is remarkable for its combination of daring and intellect. "Larbaud" is the best example of this, for here his experiment in form is clearly based in, and resorted to, for the sake of ideas. The placing of miraculous feats in a context of ordinary human strengths and weaknesses sets up important formal sources of meaning on which Dennison can then draw at will. Larbaud's wondrous ability makes him a mythic hero who reflects human powers and aspirations—and also human cynicism and despair, when the world comes to resent his stature and seeks ways to belittle it. Then, once the miracle has been accepted by the reader but rejected by the world, a special bond exists between author and reader, both of whom know that Larbaud's feats are genuine—because we have collaborated in their existence. This shared responsibility differs from the complicity of realism, where author and reader agree that life *is really like that*. Here we say rather, this is what life *means*.

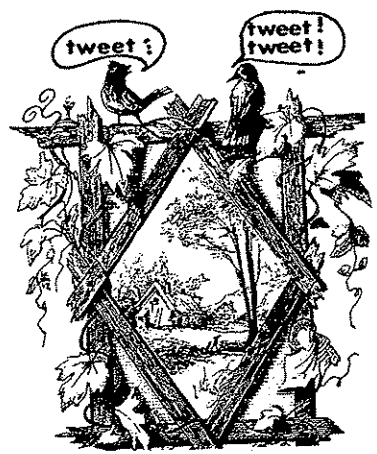
As the story progresses beyond the miracle, all the later events of Larbaud's life turn out to be commentaries on his experience. He buries the past: and dreams of flying. He suffers a breakdown: the result of isolation

and loss. He recovers: the first sign of renewed interest in life, reading a book about birds. He becomes a scholar: ornithology. When he dies, his ashes are scattered, the last of his merely physical existence gone: "I mean that I am at home, Jacques. I know you will understand."

As Dennison himself has pointed out in discussing *The Empire City*, the idea of levitation has a modern lineage in Nietzsche, Cocteau, and Goodman—nor is Breugel the only artist of the past for whom the myth of Icarus has provided a subject. However, Larbaud's transcendence is not in his flight, joyful though it is, but in his coming back to earth, coming back, one might say, to us. After Larbaud becomes a writer, he describes his scholarly work in terms that apply to his whole story: "We take our books for granted," he says, "but you know, they really are magic. I don't mean their replication, though that's quite wonderful, and it's certainly true that my existence has multiples. No, I mean that spirit becomes matter and matter again becomes spirit. Any primitive could tell you that an object capable of such a thing is magical."

This is true of Dennison's story as well, an effect of literary manner as much as it is a matter of plot or theme. The shift back and forth from ordinary standards of plausibility helps the reader understand that all story-telling is magical, because for once the magic is not taken for granted but kept in awareness. This finally, is Dennison's wonderful ambition, and explains his love of theatre, where the magic is often vividly present. It is the imagination itself he yearns to lay bare, and thus transfigure reality.

— Taylor Stoehr



Taylor Stoehr teaches English at UMass Boston. He has published two books this year (Nay-saying in Concord: Emerson Alcott and Thoreau and Free Love in America). *He is currently working on a biography of Paul Goodman.*

Last Writes

BLACK ROSE LECTURE SERIES WINTER/SPRING 1980

Feb. 1: *Anarchism and Movie Style*—Nick MacDonald
Feb. 22: *Art and Revolution*—Liz Henderson
March 7: *Worker Control in the U.S.: Prospects and Strategy*— C. George Bennello
March 21: *Anarchism and Gay Liberation*—Jim Kernouchan and Mark Sullivan
April 18: *Political Music in Boston*—Marcia Deihl and Friends

MIT • ROOM 9-150 • FRIDAYS • 8PM

First, a few things to read (if *BR* wasn't enough), then some announcements, and then I'll ask you for money.

• Partisan Press (P.O. Box 2193, Seattle, WA 98111), a libertarian publishing group, has now completed its first year of activity. They have four books soon to be available. You can write to them for more information, prices etc.

The Practice of Utopia is a collection of essays by Louis Mercier Vega, the lifelong militant anarchist who, among other activities, was one of the founders of the Durutti column in the Spanish Civil War, and in the 70's, the editor of the multi-lingual anarchist journal *Interrogations*.

Festival and Revolt is an anthology of writings on the recent activities of the anti-authoritarian groups in Italy. A wide range of subjects, from the metropolitan Indians to the Red Brigades, is addressed, not by observers, but by the participants themselves.

The Christie File is the autobiography of Britain's most notorious anarchist, Stuart Christie. The book details his activities in and outside of England, and his career as the object of investigation and surveillance.

Without a Trace, subtitled "A Manual for Disorder", is a technical manual on police investigation methods, intended for those who wish to evade such.

• *No Nuclear News* (c/o Boston Clamshell, 595 Mass. Ave. Cambridge, MA 02139) is a monthly compilation of articles and graphics clipped from the various printed media. This is a very useful source of information for those who are writing or speaking about the issue of nuclear power. Subscriptions are $7.50 per year, or send 50¢ for a single copy.

• *North American Anarchist* (P.O. Box 2, Station O, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4B 2B0) is the newspaper of the Anarchist-Communist Federation of North America. Subtitled "The Newspaper dedicated to direct action," it is a bi-monthly mix of news, reviews, and commentary. The first issue appeared in October; subs are $5.00 per year.

• The First International Symposium on Anarchism will be held February 18-24, 1980. This event will include lectures, films, theater etc. For more information write to the Anarchism Symposium Committee, LC Box 134, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon 97219

• Howard Besser (Film Resources Information Group, 11 Eshelman Hall, U of California, Berkeley, CA 94720) is working on a *Filmography of Anarchist Films*. If you know of films presenting images of anarchism (either positive or negative), or espousing anarchism, or made by anarchists, please contact him.

• Kamalla Miller, anarcha-feminist, IWW and anti-nuclear activist, has been arrested and charged with kidnapping her own daughter.

Some time ago, when Kamalla and her former husband, Arthur Miller, were unemployed, they gave their two children to her parents for temporary care. Eventually her parents initiated a custody hearing. They alleged Kamalla and Arthur were unfit parents for several reasons, one of which was that Arthur was a "fanatical communist IWW organizer."

The judge, in awarding custody to the grandparents, cited their money and "good home" as important reasons for deciding in their favor. Kamalla's son, Jason, died while in the grandparent's care. Soon after, Kamalla took her daughter Ishka, from the grandparent's California home and brought her to the hills of Arkansas to live.

When Kamalla was arrested for kidnapping, Ishka was put in a foster home. Social service workers find her well adjusted; the Orange County, California social service is on Kamalla's side; and Ishka does not want to return to her grandparents. However, Governor Jerry Brown of California has signed extradition papers for Kamalla and it's uncertain what the Governor of Arkansas will do.

Our help is needed. Write letters to Governor Bill Clinton, State Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas arguing against extradition. Funds for support are urgently needed and should be sent to Committee to Support Kamalla, 3304 Clinton Avenue South, Minneapolis, Mn. 55408. Letters of support to Kamalla may be sent to her at *Bayou La Rose*, 2115 Esplanade Avenue, New Orleans, La. 70119

• Like every other alternative and/or radical publication, *Black Rose* is permanently on the brink of solvency. Since we don't have access to Fort Knox or Moscow gold, we have to ask our readers for money. The most dependable source of finance for us is subscriptions—if you bought this issue at a bookstore you probably paid between $1.75 and $2.00 for it, and we had to spend between 10¢ and 20¢ to mail or ship it to the bookstore. In addition, we only got $1.00 to $1.25 of your bookstore purchase price. Considering the $6.00 subscription rate, and the cheap mailing rate we get from the Post Office (6¢ each), simple arithmetic will reveal that subscribing is cheaper for reader and publisher alike. We look upon bookstore sales as a means of introduction to the magazine, a way to build up a group of readers (and participants—see editor's introduction) rather than as a permanent distribution network. If you would like to distribute *BR* in your area, or sell it in your bookstore, please write and let us know. Also, please subscribe, give gift subscriptions, and encourage your local libraries to subscribe, and don't forget to renew your subs before they run out.

As part of our campaign to continue our existence, we've been sending promotional letters to people who might want to subscribe to *Black Rose*. One aspect of this is trading subscription lists with similar publications. We hesitated before doing this, because we know some people might object, but then we went ahead and did it anyway—we traded lists with Murray Bookchin's *Comment*. Let us know if you object to this, and if you want to opt out of any such future trades.