

FREEDOM ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

JAN 21'78

VOLUME 39 No 1

FIREMEN p2

E.EUROPE p4

SPAIN p9—11

15p

THE RIGHT TO BE OURSELVES

ANY FECKLESS, thoughtless, incompetent, ignorant, impractical, aggressive, baby-bashing woman can go to bed with, shack up with or get married to any feckless, thoughtless, incompetent, ignorant, impractical, aggressive baby-bashing man and produce a baby for them both to bash - and it's all right, because it is all in accord with God's Will, the right of every woman to fulfill herself by childbirth, going forth to multiply, the rights of unborn children to be brought into a life of maltreatment and abuse and all the gobbledegook of morality and religious crap.

If by any chance, or, what is ever so much more likely, by God's Will, the female partner in a union properly blessed by benefit of clergy or the Registrar, is infertile, or the male partner is sterile, then, by benefit of modern science it is OK for conception to be arranged by AID (Artificial Insemination by Donor) - as long as the Donor is anonymous.

This latter factor is also in the interests of morality. It would never do for the donor of the sperm used for artificial

insemination (ie, the someone who, somewhere, masturbated into a test tube) to be able, at some later date, to come along and claim parentage against the rights of the 'legal' father. Nor would it do for the mother to be able, at some later date, to be able to make a paternity claim against the donor. Still less would it do for the child, born of woman but sired by donor, to be able at some later date to claim inheritance vis-a-vis his natural (even if via test-tube) dad.

In other words it just so happens - and it ain't accidental - that morality goes hand in hand with property rights. Surprise, surprise!

Nor is it only in the operation (sic!) of AID that this business of anonymity is important. In adoption too, the natural parent signs away all right to the child, who is not encouraged to try to find out the identity of its natural parent - for fear of emotional and, need we say, property considerations.

An adopted child is expected to be brought up, at least during its tender and formative years, to believe that its

adopted parents are its natural parents and, for all the emotive rubbish about a 'natural' parent being the best person to bring up a child, it is obvious that a couple who deliberately and conscientiously go through the business of adopting a child, which they choose to do because they want and love it, are going to provide a more secure and emotionally stable background for it than many a feckless, thoughtless, etc couple who didn't want it and don't like it.

The child care and welfare authorities who make themselves responsible for assessing the 'suitability' of a couple to take on that responsibility also go to great lengths to ensure that the adopted child will go to a 'good home', in their own, admittedly bourgeois, terms. In every case recommendation will go only to a married couple of the 'proper' religion for the child's parentage and of adequate financial standing. One of the arguments used by those who oppose abortion, incidentally, is that there are so many good, suitable and responsible couples who want to adopt children that there is no such thing as an 'unwanted' baby. The fact that it is most definitely unwanted by the woman who finds herself unwillingly pregnant, who is appalled at the thought of going to full term and then 'giving the baby away' is brushed aside - as also are the arguments for the 'natural' parents being the best parents, when the argument goes the other way.

We therefore have the situation where orthodox thought accepts the risks to children of being born to irresponsible parents, who have this God-given right to produce as many as they like, even if they are all taken into care at an early age; it accepts in principle the right of women to have children by AID if they or their husbands are sterile and it accepts the idea of children being brought up by other than their natural parents, either through AID or adoption.

What is the common factor which makes all this acceptable to orthodox thought? Of course: heterosexual marriage. That good old institution which is the only framework within which sexual love is respectable, which has tradit-

(cont p93.)



‘THEY WON'T LET ME JUDGE ANY MORE
RACE CASES - BUT I'M SURE I'LL DO
BETTER ON HOMOSEXUAL ONES. AFTER
ALL, I USED TO BE A FAG AT MY
PUBLIC SCHOOL!’

FIREMEN — BEATEN BY POWER

THE FIREMEN - who returned to work this week - were in an impossible and agonising position from the very beginning. Their action was doomed to failure because, ultimately, only lives were at stake and not profits.

Their strike would have no effect on the balance of payments. No multi-national corporation would threaten to withdraw its factories because the firemen, rather than its own workers, were refusing to play ball.

What possible set of circumstances could have brought the firemen success? What could have proved decisively how essential they are? More fires? More dead? Headlines screaming across The Sun "100 die in orphanage blaze"?

They could only sit and wait. Short of actually starting fires there was nothing they could do but sit outside their stations knowing that however much personal and individual support they won there would be no mass action to tip the scales in their favour.

CONTEMPTIBLE OBJECTIVE

At first glance we could say that the Labour Government starved the firemen into surrender to preserve British capitalism. But the objective was even more contemptible than that shoddy ideal, if that is imaginable.

The firemen were marked down for sacrifice because Callaghan, Healey, Foot and their socialist colleagues love power. Not for an ideological reason but because they get a buzz from titles, offices and the whole absurd spectacle of politics.

This may seem simplistic. Anarchists are often accused of this. But perhaps anarchist simplicity perceives more clearly than the most complex intellectual theory.

Politicians don't choose their profession because they have ideals, visions of a better world for all of us. A better world for them is one in which they have an office.

They are interested in manipulation, in the thrill of dealing in half-truths, in pulling strings and bending reality, making speeches and doing deals. It is a game they enjoy playing: power for power's sake.

The Government is holding out for the benefits of North Sea oil to begin to drag the economy out of its inevitable doldrums. In six months or a year they will claim success, go to the country and - they gamble - retain power.

"All our sacrifices will bear fruit," they'll tell us. But what fruit? A repetition of the mindless consumer boom of the 60s? Or a shift closer to the dreary and deadly Welfare State the Labour "idealist" fumbles with when asked to describe his dream?

Either way the politicians will have their names in the papers when it comes. Grinning,

scoring points, shaking hands, leering at us from our TV screens, choking us with their smugness.

THE STATE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Let us consider exactly what the State has achieved.

It was able to use troops as strike breakers. The next time it will be easier. Who could demonstrate against it? Who would arrange a 10,000 strong picket to halt the Green Goddesses rushing to fight a hospital fire? Who would lie down in front of one in the name of the right to strike?

And it was able to do this without a single word of complaint from trade union leaders, not even the inspired leak that, say, Companion of Honour Jack Jones had privately expressed reservations.

These union leaders are, naturally, socialists. Which is to say they support the Labour Party. They have chosen their path to honour and influence and, as things stand, they feel their positions are safer with a Labour Government.

They are genuinely afraid of Margaret Thatcher's new populist gambit of trying to split the union member from the union leader. They prefer to be left to do this in their own way.

WHO IS N.S. ROSS?

The obvious question going through everyone's mind during the strike was: "Well, what should a fireman be paid?"

What are we to say? Less than a miner? More than a car worker? Less than a gutter journalist? More than a farmworker?

Why, for example, should N.S. Ross be paid £ 12,000 a year? Who is N.S. Ross? The Assistant Under Secretary of State who heads the Home Office Fire Department. He couldn't tell a fire from a file but the State thinks he is worth four or five firemen.

Why should a Field Marshal - who on any scale of values comes closer to a murderer

and arsonist - get £ 19,674 a year, £ 53.90 a day?

And the Archbishop of Canterbury, why should he be paid £ 9,628 a year plus the use of a palace? Saving our souls from the fires of hell is a dubious skill.

What industrial muscle do these men have? Have they ever held the country to ransom, "willing to indulge in thuggery of the worst kind", as one Liberal MP said of the firemen?

Of course they haven't. They never needed to, directly. The State does it for them, it exists for their benefit. It is an organisation designed to preserve the differentials - differentials in power and money - between them and the rest of us, the masters and the servants.

Anarchists, simplistic as usual, say there is only one fair way out of the dilemma of whose work is most socially useful, whose contribution is worth what. "From each according to his/her ability, to each according to his/her needs".

It is so clear that you have to blink to see what obstacles there may be to it.

"There would be no incentive" - Incentive to what?

"To acquire skills, to take responsibility".

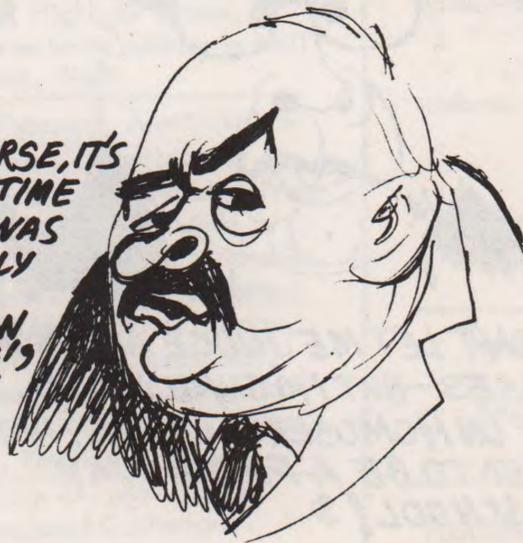
What skills has N.S. Ross or the Archbishop of Canterbury? In what circumstances do you imagine ever having to call in their help? They couldn't cure you if you were sick. They couldn't put out a fire or bake a loaf of bread.

What incentive did the firemen have when they left their picket lines to save lives? None. They weren't even getting strike pay. They had their pride in their skill as firemen and their compassion as human beings.

This is the incentive that would fuel a different kind of society, a better society in which every good and useful action did not have a price to be haggled over.

Harry Harmer.

"COURSE, IT'S
A LONG TIME
SINCE I WAS
ACTUALLY
A
FIREMAN
MYSELF!"



TERRY PARRY,
F. B. U.
BUREAUCRAT.

LESBIANS (from pg 1)

ionally given a man the right to beat his wife (though with a stick no thicker than his thumb!) - and his children - and is probably responsible for more private pain and misery than any other human institution except perhaps that main system of which it is a significant prop: the property system.

Hence the outcry last week about the public-spirited disclosures in the London Evening News that lesbian women were getting themselves artificially inseminated in order to become mothers without direct sexual contact with a man.

The Evening News insisted that its only concern was for the welfare of the children of such an 'unnatural' conception, parentage and upbringing. No thought was further from its pure and simple mind than to make capital (literally) through any increased circulation that might just come its way through its lurid headlines.

Nor, of course, did any such consideration motivate the reporter responsible for the disclosures, a Miss Joanna Patyna, who makes enough from her highly concerned exposures of the moral decline in our society to afford a flat at 318 Ben Jonson House in the Barbican. She had spent no less than two months posing as a lesbian who wanted to have a child by AID and had found her way, through the editorial offices of the lesbian magazine Sappho to a doctor who was prepared to perform the operation - for quite a modest fee, incidentally, so she was disappointed in having no 'racket' story.

This journalistic creep had previously been involved in 'disclosures' about Jeremy Thorpe, but whereas that brave Liberal had never had the guts to admit his homosexuality, but had kept his head down and had tried quietly to slip from view, this time our intrepid reporter (who has reached the ripe old age of 28 without a single, or married, skeleton in her cupboard don'tcherknow) had stirred up a hornet's nest.

As soon as Sappho got wind of what was happening it took out an injunction to prevent naming of names - for the Evening News was quite prepared to damage existing children of lesbian mothers - but, more importantly, the day after the headlines broke, the editorial offices of the News were invaded and occupied by over 30 concerned demonstrators who finally persuaded the editor to publish their reply.

Predictably, staunch defenders of the rights of children like Dr Rhodes Boyson took time off from demanding more corporal punishment in schools to denounce all this perversion. We have yet to hear from Mrs Whitehouse.

One of the alleged concerns of the Evening News was that the AID children of lesbian couples might themselves grow up to be homosexual. Well, of course, so they might - but should we not consider that all the homosexuals of today

are the 'products', if you like that word, of heterosexual acts - most of them within respectable marriages?

To date, there are alleged to be only about ten AID children born to lesbian mothers (but one never knows, does one?), as distinct from many born by traditional means. To our knowledge, nobody has come forward with any evidence that lesbians make bad mothers of either male or female children, any more than there is evidence that homosexual fathers are bad fathers to their children.

What the emergence of AID has done is simply to remove the necessity for physical contact between the sexes when this is repugnant to either party. As one commentator on the issue declared: 'If we went out on the streets and picked up the first man we met and got ourselves pregnant by him - nobody would turn a hair - so why should they be concerned if we arrange it by AID?'

Well, everybody feels threatened when they are declared redundant! In so many spheres of life women are showing that they can get on quite well thank you without men. The necessity for the male product for procreation was a sort of insurance that men will still be needed, at least for something other than the heavy work.

And let's face it - AID is rather side-stepping the issue (no pun intended). Some man, somewhere, has to provide that vital material without which the ovum cannot be impregnated, and until semen can be artificially manufactured, some anonymous male has his little contribution to make.

But the simple principle of the matter is that everybody must have the right to make their own decisions in this sort of matter as in every other. Few women would insist that adoption is more satisfying than giving birth; even fewer would maintain that getting pregnant by a doctor's syringe is more satisfying than the more traditional methods - given mutual agreement and some measure of attraction.

If this does not exist then every individual must have the right to find their satisfaction as they will - the only proviso being: no harm to anybody else. In the matter we are discussing, a child born to two loving women in a relationship as secure as one can be at the time of decision stands a better chance, on average, than one born carelessly into a loveless relationship, or deliberately as a cement for a creaking marriage or to bind one partner to another for economic reasons - or any of the shabby reasons for which God's blessing on a heterosexual marriage may be invoked.

But of course the reactionary uproar had nothing to do with concern for the children. The real sin committed by the lesbian mothers is that they are being disobedient, independent and free.

They are claiming the right to make their own decisions and to be themselves. And for authoritarians everywhere THAT is the cardinal sin.

PHILIP SANSOM

F.L.A.G.

A very profitable meeting of the Federation of London Anarchist Groups was held on 14 Jan '78 and many felt the need for positive action and a positive image. Much of interest to our London readers has escaped our Contact column, so here is a list of planned meetings:

- 1) N.F. headquarters demonstration planned for 15 April. Planning meeting on 1st Feb, 8pm PPU, 6 Endsleigh Street WCI.
 - 2) Anti-election campaign; a major and imaginative activity is planned--ideas welcomed. Planning meeting, 23 Jan at Earl Russel pub, Kings Cross at 8pm. Correspondence c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper St., London NI.
 - 3) Greenpeace libertarian ecological group hold regular meetings to plan action against environmental violence. 19 January, 6 Endsleigh St., WI. and every fortnight thereafter.
 - 4) Fun in the Supermarket: UAM c/o Tim 19 Park Square East, NW1 4LP. London phone 01-935 9043 eve/weekend.
 - 5) Essex weekend; see Contact column.
 - 6) 'BORROWED TIME' National Bulletin for internal discussion on lines of an American publication. First issue devoted to "Tactics". Contributions invited; also nationwide news of groups. c/o Box 100, Rising Free as above.
- Next meeting of FLAG, Feb 11, 12 noon punctually please! Details: Secretariat, Wynford Hicks, 3 Belmont Rd London SW4 A.A.

LEN EBURY

MANY LONDON readers of FREEDOM will be sorry to hear of the death of Len Ebury, the secularist orator. He died while having an afternoon nap on December 19th, 1977. He was 79. Len was for many years a familiar figure at Speakers Corner, Marble Arch and at Tower Hill. In fact, he first began public speaking 54 years ago. Although declining powers prevented his speaking at Marble Arch during his last years, he still carried on his verbal war against superstition at Tower Hill every Thursday lunchtime. The day before he died he had, as usual, been selling freethought literature at Marble Arch.

Len was cremated at the West London Crematorium at midday, December 30th 1977. About thirty friends and admirers were present, including Jim Herrick, the present editor of The Freethinker, and F. A. Ridley, the veteran socialist historian. Len's widow, Eva, said a few simple, yet moving, words before pressing the button for the cremation—and that was all. As she put it in her letter announcing his death, Len Ebury wanted 'no fuss, no service, no flowers, no nothing, not even transport, except for himself as he couldn't manage it on foot!'

S.E.P.

WORK & WAGES

WORK AND WAGES -

An Anarchist Approach continued.

IN AN article by the Education Correspondent of *The Guardian* of 31 December 1977 there is a plea by Professor Stonier of Bradford University for a change in the role of education in society.

In the first paragraph the Professor is reported as saying that in 30 to 50 years material needs could be provided by 10 per cent of the population. I would have thought that this is already the case in the West. In fact the people engaged in productive work now is probably much lower than 10 per cent. However that is only if one ignores the proposition that the rearing of children is productive work.

It seems that the Professor is accepting a future in which the world no longer requires people to reap and sow, to weave and build, so that rearing children will indeed be no longer a productive occupation, but creator of fodder for the Professor's revised education system to turn children into consumers of automated produced products and automated leisure.

"Education must fill idle hours
'in automated age'"

As the above headline shows, our mentors in the education field are still wedded to the idea of education as a means of processing for a world which they think is the real world but which in fact is one full of uncertainties and unrealities. One of those uncertainties is the nature of man himself and his relationship with his physical environment. The evidence is that the existing form of social relationship (which is hierarchical and privileged) has not been beneficial to man's total universal relationship with other people and his physical environment.

One of the features of human beings and the earth they live on has been its rich variety and it is this that is threatened by the automated world that the good Professor wants to shackle our education system to, for he carries the same erroneous idea of what wealth basically is. It is this ignorance that is the cause of the destruction of the earth's real wealth. To quote the article -

"Rejecting the claim that only manufacturing industry produces wealth, he said our most valuable resources were the skills and knowledge of the people. 'A good patent and copyright can produce as much wealth as a factory.'"

The whole paragraph is an example of shallow prejudiced thinking. For a start the automated age will of necessity do without the skill and knowledge of the vast mass of people who will be educated to 'fill the idle hours' while those who qualify in the education system will administrate and control its techniques. To the anarchist a technocracy is no more desirable than any other hierarchical state. Further, very little manufacturing industry actually produces wealth. That which does does so indirectly. Industry changes matter from one form to another and in doing so consumes a vast quantity of wealth either in the form of energy and materials and/or the pollution of the environment. Much industrial production is actually destructive, the packaging industry, the arms industry - for example - and there are dangers in fueling such an automated industry on nuclear energy. Many good copyrights and patents have also resulted in mass destruction. To pursue such a course will require enormous amounts of energy which will ultimately be supplied with increasing amounts of nuclear energy, dangerously ignoring the pressures on other scarce resources.

Problems of pay, work and pleasure

The whole problem of modern society is not new and it is not new for people to be aware of it. William Morris goes into it pretty thoroughly in his pamphlet 'The Beauty of Life' (Freedom Bookshop, 40p + postage). Significantly it was first published as 'Labour and Pleasure versus Labour and Sorrow'. While material conditions have been improved pleasure in work has certainly decreased, for example in agriculture the vast spectrum of skills required almost universally has now largely reduced to driving a tractor and pumping the milk out of as many cows as possible in as short a time as possible. I suspect that this applies to almost every other human activity. One significant fact concerning pay is that probably a month's dole in the West equals a whole year's earnings for productive peasants in the Third World. "The dole must become a sabbatical," the good Professor suggests.

Automated Education

Automated education at home, the Professor declares, (mainly on the grounds of cost) is "the future pattern of education". The problem of human society is one of relationships and these cannot be automated except at the cost of increasing loss of human freedom and a technology has to be developed that meets all these human needs. Work is a pleasure to the free man and woman and education is the passing on of the various skills of such people to their children without the privileged structure of society.

ALAN ALBON



You're all right, Jack

JAMES LARKIN JONES, retiring General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union, finds himself among some strange fellow Companions of Honour with his acceptance of the award in the New Year handout.

Jones refused a peerage on conscientious grounds. He said the aristocracy were descended from "cattle robbers, land thieves and court prostitutes."

But the order he has joined, restricted to 65 members, adds up to an equally bizarre assortment of "such persons as may have rendered conspicuous service of national importance".

There are William Whitelaw, Quintin Hogg, Selwyn Lloyd and Duncan Sandys - who all represent the Tory Party's age old charitable mission of encouraging imbeciles to enter politics.

And Henry Brooke, the former Housing Minister and Home Secretary who earned a well-deserved reputation for small-minded

viciousness in the Tory Governments of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

On the lighter side there are Arthur Bryant, purveyor of pap history to the upper classes, and Kenneth Clark, purveyor of pap culture to the rest of us.

But it is among the honorary members that Jones may discover the most interesting companion of all: Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore. They should find much to discuss about ways and means of handling workers.

Another union leader, Clive Jenkins of ASTMS, once described Singapore as a "right little, tight little dictatorship".

Lee operates a novel form of parliamentary democracy. He allows opponents to stand against him - and then locks them up after the election. This has earned his party a seat in the Socialist International, alongside Helmut Schmidt's Social Democrats.

The *Guardian* recently called Singapore a

"buttoned-up" society, making it clear that Lee intends to suffer no unbuttoning in his lifetime. "Ways will be found to deal with... workers whose demands would upset foreign investors, and intellectual or political critics of any variety."

Jones' honour is his reward for the part he played in the Social Contract. The *Sunday Times Business News* was in no doubt that this is how Jones will be remembered in years to come.

"Almost singlehandedly," it said, "he pulled off the colossal confidence trick of persuading trade unionists to accept a rigid pay policy, falling living standards and record unemployment without realising what they were doing."

The ribbon of the award is red with gold edging - symbolising, for Jones, that the State has its prizes for socialists willing to play the game by the State's rules.

Harry Harmer.

ANTI-FASCIST CAMPAIGN

Dear friends

I think the decision of the 'Libertarian Socialist Alliance' meeting to form a national anti-fascist campaign organised along specifically anarchist lines was a serious mistake.

I am active in the Waltham Forest Campaign Against Racism. It is an autonomous group. It sends delegates to the Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Co-ordinating Committee (ARAFCC). Like the proposed anarchist campaign, it is involved in grass-roots work and rank and file agitation. We had a successful local conference which attracted many non-political people. We canvassed all the local TU branches, but they were conspicuous by their absence. We continue to try and involve the unions. Unlike the proposed anarchist campaign it is completely non-sectarian. Our members include people in the Labour Party, Communist Party, SWP, Maoists (CPE-ML) as well as members of local ethnic minorities, workers in the Community Relations Council and unaligned individuals.

The essential task for anti-fascists at the moment is to create a large, strong and broadly-based opposition to fascism. We need to make the running in the propaganda war to make people realise it is not acceptable to be a racist. We have to make it impossible for the fascists to organise and spread their propaganda. This task demands cooperation and a basic unity among all anti-fascists. Any division among anti-fascists strengthens fascism. At the moment there are more National Front branches than local anti-fascist groups in London - though they probably have fewer active members. We need to build locally-based, rather than politically-based anti-fascist groups in every area and to draw in as many people as possible.

A specifically anarchist anti-fascist campaign, or any other ideologically

oriented campaign, weakens the forces of anti-fascism. I know that such a campaign in my area could not have drawn in as many people as WFCAR has done.

I sometimes wonder whether, when anarchists get involved in campaigns like this, they want to achieve anything, or whether they have some quirk that makes them actually prefer to fail. The aim of the anti-fascist campaign is to destroy fascism, not to form groups of ideological purity that remain lily white and impotent while the fascists continue to organise.

I would urge the twenty or so people who took this decision to think again. Put your energies into your local campaign. That is where the grass-roots work is being done. You have to ask yourself, 'What will be most effective in destroying fascism - joining a strong group whose members we may disagree with on some points, or forming a sectarian campaign that makes public a division in the fight against fascism?' If you do go ahead with an anarchist campaign, affiliate to ARAFCC and work together with them.

Yours sincerely

Marshall Colman

'Conference Correspondent' replies: While I feel Marshall Colman raises valid points I also feel he tends to presumption in forecasting an 'ideologically pure' campaign in any dogmatic sense. This may arise from a certain ambiguity in the text of the original report in FREEDOM; there was, as far as I remember no wish to form a purely anarchist campaign so much as to inject a necessary anarchist contribution into an area that is dominated at present by authoritarians of the left, or at least by those who interpret 'fascism' in a very narrow sense. Actual campaign strategy was not really discussed... At any rate the editors would welcome comments from others present at the November conference.

BRIEF

"All Coppers:-?"

A new effort is being made by London's police to get through to the young and break down resentment and suspicion. Officers have been instructed to visit every primary school on their "manor" meet teachers and pupils and speak to each class at least once a year. Crafty old.....

GLC plans to check bus pass frauds among London's 1,000,000 pensioners have run into trouble. Plans to hand over administration to the Post Office have been postponed. Ideas of including a photo on the passes have also been delayed, as this cost more than the subsidy promised by London Transport. The latter estimate that "frauds", mainly due to pensioners lending their passes, cost at least £ 500,000 per year. Other sources estimate that the figure is at least £ 1,500,000.

Dialectics.

A man in Thailand has been given seven and a half years in prison for accidentally killing his friend in an argument over which came first, the chicken or the egg.

Comrades?

It has been suggested that Judge McKinnon was sympathetic to John Kingsley Read after some secret Masonic sign. "The Guardian" feels that this is unlikely as the last time this tactic was tried, in the Seddon poisoning case of 1911, the judge inserted an incensed diatribe into his summing up and sentenced the defendant to death. Fair enough, but don't they mean the last time known? More liberalism.

This morning's "Guardian" includes a column on McKinnon by the impeccable liberal, James Cameron. Being impeccable, after all, as he does not fail to point out the majority of his household are asian, he is able to use pronouncedly legal, if controversial terms in a spirit of irony. It is a pity that he spoiled it by saying "nigger and Aryan" Surely, James, you are a "honky"? NAAFI Talk,

"Free Nation", the organ of the NAFF, has recently espoused the cause of Andrej Klymchuk, recently helping the local constabulary with their enquiries into anti-Soviet activities. Unfortunately, on the same day as this issue appeared Klymchuk arrived back at Heathrow and gave an interview to the marginally less right wing (?) "Daily Express" - "I'm afraid that I really was guilty." Can we now await a "Free Nation" editorial, embracing him as a hero of the free world? You say tomato and I say...

Russian scientists are now able to produce tomatoes up to half a kilogram (1+1 lb.) by exposing the seeds to "artificial micro-lightening flashes" Fuddy-Duddy Image.

The above is the description of the "Daily Telegraph" for the Makgotla (South Africa) township organisation, which has just directed that girls under 18, out after 8.00p.m. are to be whipped. Boys are not included, but if they "force girls to have sex with them" they will be "liable for punishment"

ADVERTS

JUST OUT !!!!!

"LOOKING THRU' CLEMMIE CHURCHILL'S EYES"



EAST EUROPE

WHY IS IT important to be so interested in what happens abroad? Sometimes people get so angry about repression 1,000, 2,000 or even 12,000 miles away that they forget or avoid their own doorstep.

However, feeling solidarity with people all over the world is something natural - "While there is a soul in prison (anywhere) I am not free" - and cuts across all national boundaries.

The other reason we are internationalists is that we realise that the State divides us, the better to rule us, both within and between countries and that revolutions have flowered only to be crushed, isolated from fellow workers all over the world. The success of our social revolution will be in its vitality and strength to spread world-wide.

Having said all that, we have to ask - "What can we do?" - apart from symbolic protests and boycotts. Not a lot... but it can give people abroad courage to fight on against extreme repression to know we are watching and willing to act. Birds of a feather, flock together. The South Wales Miners donated large sums to the Spanish miners in the 30s and hundreds went to fight, showing that in extreme class confrontation the international working class begins to flex its muscles. Likewise, faced by a specific attack on the Anarchist movement in a particular country, it is the international Anarchists who respond as can be seen by the widespread rage over the threatened hanging of Marie and Noel Murray in Dublin last year.

But in the end the best form of solidarity is to agitate consistently and effectively IN THIS COUNTRY in our streets and workplaces for the overthrow of the British ruling class and to spark off an international revolution.

EAST EUROPE

I picked up a paper - "Labour Focus on E. Europe" - recently and thought it would be the usual load of boring Trotskyist analysis. Instead it contained information of resistance throughout the Iron Curtain countries which is encouraging in the light of the severe repression there. We hear a little about intellectual dissidents, but nothing about working-class action.

EAST GERMANY

During the 28th anniversary celebrations of the founding of this particularly nauseous state, serious clashes took place between young people and the police in East Berlin's main square lasting several hours and involving hundreds, some say thousands of people. This was a spontaneous response to the cancellation of a jazz concert after an accident, but quickly turned into a political riot.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A rock concert, part of an official folk festival in Kdýne, had been planned for

August 13th, but when the organisers saw 1,200 young and long-haired people they tried to cancel it. Everyone demanded their money back, and in the ensuing fight armoured cars sent in to clear the area were overturned and a train set on fire. Two police deaths were reported and 100 people injured. The police scarpers to a local school, their tear gas, truncheons and dogs having failed them. Many local people urged on the kids. This is the first large-scale confrontation with the State since '69. Meanwhile the Charter 77 human rights group is growing here.

RUSSIA

On 10th October 15,000 people in Lithuania marched through the streets of Vilnius overturning cars and burning police cars, and ripping down the 60th anniversary propaganda posters. Security police tried to get control but those arrested were freed by the crowd. The trouble started at a football match against a Smolensk team when members of the crowd began to shout "Russians go home" and "Katsapy", a derogatory word for Russians. A live broadcast mysteriously ended as the chanting was heard over the radio.

ROUMANIA

On 1st August, in reaction to a Pension Law which would have cut wages, miners in Lupeni struck and this spread through all the mines in the Jin Valley, involving 90,000 workers. The whole region was declared a "prohibited area" and the army was sent in to "restore order". This failed and the strike remained solid, demanding retirement at 50, no Pension Law, better working conditions and job security, a 6-hour day, free movement of labour, adequate food supplies, replacement of present mine managers, free working clothes, no unpaid overtime and a return to the rights won in the '55-'57 struggles.

Two central committee members were sent to negotiate and were arrested by the miners. Three days later Ceausescu (Um Big Chief) himself came and was greeted by 35,000 miners, shouting "Down with the proletarian bourgeoisie!". After five hours discussion with delegates he said he'd concede all the demands. However, on return to work, 4,000 miners were arrested, sacked or dispersed, the military occupied the mines and the Jin Valley was sealed off from the rest of Roumania.

The miners desperately tried to resist, sending delegates to railway workers in Bucharest for support. They also sent letters abroad - here are some extracts:

"We are being watched to prevent us communicating with foreigners, but perhaps at the risk of our lives we send this to you."

"Secret policemen who we call 'party cops'

have infiltrated the mines. As soon as they hear you muttering a word they take you away and beat you really badly."

"They started to sack us. I myself have worked down the mines for 23 years... I'm 46 years old, I am ill and have four kids."

"... there has been a strike in a Socialist State. There are more to come, and we think that all we have left is to set out to forge our own justice, with axes, scythes and anything else.... For every two workers there are five with briefcases. That's justice in Roumania for you!"

However, in September there were disturbances in the textile mills of Brasov and in the huge heavy machinery plant in Bucharest.

POLAND

Here the strongest resistance is growing. Political papers are appearing including "Robotnik" - "The Worker" - which aims to be a channel of communication for workers attempting to win their immediate demands in the face of the "moribund official unions". It carries information on strikes and defence groups and about repression in general.

In the universities a student organisation, with a consciously libertarian flavour, has been established.

Polish Party leader Edward Gierek said this in a private speech:

"The most active and best organised opposition to our Socialist State, and enjoying some influence among the young, has a revisionist pedigree with neo-trotskyist and anarchist links. It is they who launched a theory of a new class of exploiters and proposed a second socialist revolution"

We rarely carry news about what goes on in Communist countries and I hope this has been an eye-opener. The world over - the same class-struggle.

E.S.

BRIEF

Old Bill Fades Away

Over 4,000 police officers resigned from the English and Welsh forces last year, almost 1,000 from the Metropolitan Police alone.

Most resignations are among young coppers in their first two years of service - the time when they are just becoming useful to the State on the streets.

But over 1,000 resignations involve officers with up to 15 years service, experienced and hardened men the State can ill afford to lose at a time like this.

What the figures don't reveal is how many of these had to leave as a result of being caught with their hands in the till.

The State hopes that the Davies Enquiry into pay and conditions will conjure up something to boost recruitment and end the shrinkage.

But there's more to a copper's life than helping old ladies across busy roads and it's clear that increasing numbers are on the run from the tasks the State has in mind for them.



LETTERS

VEGA

Dear Freedom,

I was moved and a little distressed to read your contributor's short article on Louis Mercier Vega - moved, because what he was quoted as saying about Anarchism was so close to what I myself believe, but have never succeeded in defining so coherently. Distressed, because he ended his life because 'life had failed him' when he was almost two years younger than I, and because he believed in suicide.... 'even in the absence of hope.' Not long ago, I had message from a very young Russian - fourteen I think - asking me "What is an Anarchist?" I did my best to tell him, writing from my heart, not from textbooks. I don't know if my answer convinced him, but I mention it because this boy is desperately ill and his survival is doubtful.

Now I want to learn more about Vega himself and his brand of Anarchy. And what it was that failed him?

Hartfield, David Markham.
Sussex.

HELP !

Dear Sisters/Brothers,

I am a prisoner in Finland, staying in the penitentiary of Helsinki, convicted to 1 year 2 months imprisonment for stabbing, plus old parole time for a previous sentence of 4 years 7 months. I am not guilty of the stabbing and my innocence is clearly proven at present. My case has already been sent to the High Court to reduce the sentence. I ask you to be so kind and do me a favour and write a support letter for me to the High Court in order to hurry them up and handle my case without delay, as without acceleration the case will stay there from 3 to 6 months. It is very hard for them to release me as my political views are anarchist. I am a member and co-ordinator of HAPOTOC Family International, PO Box 10638, Amsterdam. The address of the High Court is:

Korkoik. Presidentti Curt Olsson
Korkein oikeus
Pohjespl. 3
Helsinki/Finland.

I appreciate the support letters of your members/readers very much and I hope that with co-operation in that way we can give you some kind of support in the future. I am,

With Revolutionary Love,
Kosti Lakus.

PO Box 40,
00551 Helsinki 55,
Finland.

DRUGS

Comrades,

It is not just the police, MI5, or the more overtly coercive agencies of the State who have "secrets".

Almost all so-called professional "workers" appear to guard their "tricks of the trade" against anyone who wants to know even a few little facts.

The medical profession is notoriously secretive. I will give you a personal example.

I have menier's disease, which gives rise to vertigo debility. For the vertigo I take "serc" tablets, which appear to "do the trick". But for the effects of the menier's disease two GPs, as well as an ear specialist, prescribe three "Diazafan 5gm" a day.

I found out that Diazafan is vallium. I, at present, refuse to take vallium regularly - not because I know anything about it, but because it is controversial. I have, therefore, asked a number of doctors - and friendly nurses have done likewise for me - what the chemical constituents are; what the immediate effects of, say, three a day would have; what the long-term effects would be, and would regular dosages be addictive.

Not one doctor will answer these questions. Each says that if another doctor prescribes a medicine, then, he will not criticise his decision!

What do your readers think? And can anyone answer the questions?

Fraternally,
Peter E. Newell

Colchester.

'A Doctor' writes: Diazepam is the active ingredient in the pills marketed under the trade name 'Valium' by the multinational drug concern Hoffman-La-Roche. The only difference between Diazepam BP (jargon for 'pure') and 'Valium' is the enormously inflated price at which 'Valium' is sold. The exorbitant profit made by Hoffman-La Roche was the subject of NHS litigation in recent years - therein lies the controversiality of 'Valium'.

Diazepam is classified as a 'minor tranquiliser' and is used at a low dose to calm anxious patients, and at a higher dose as a sleeping tablet. Three 5 mg tablets a day is a mildly sedative dose.

Diazepam was introduced to replace the barbiturates which used to be prescribed, amongst other things to help prevent attacks of vertigo and vomiting in Ménière's disease. Barbiturates are addictive and lethal in overdose whereas Diazepam does not usually kill, even in overdose, and is not, supposedly, addictive.

If Diazepam is not effective in controlling

Press Fund

15 - 31 DECEMBER 1977

LONDON SW7: O.L. £ 5; BRISTOL: F.C. £ 5; HOVE: H.C. £ 1; LONDON E7: J.R. £ 5; LONDON E11: L.T.R. 50p; CARDIFF: L.E. £ 2; BLACKBURN: D.C. 50p; BIRMINGHAM: G.O. £ 5; CARDIFF: T.B. £ 5; ABERDEEN: W.McM R: £ 3; TEDDINGTON: H.C. £ 1.50; LEICESTER: P.M. £ 2; WIMBORNE: D.M. £ 5; WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £ 3; J.K.W. 50p; CASTLE DOUGLAS: M.A. £ 1; LONDON SW18: J.A.P. £ 1; GLEN FARG: C/K/ £ 5; BRONX, N.Y.: H.G.S. in Memory of Joseph Spivak: £ 5.50; COLCHESTER: S.C. £ 1; MARKET HARBOUROUGH: M.S. £ 2; BOLTON: D.P. £ 2; GERARDS CROSS: W.C. £ 5; LONDON SE25: C.H. £ 5; BELFAST: P.S. £ 3; ALBURY: A.S. £ 5; BRABAND; Denmark: O.B.L. £ 2.36; GLASGOW: J.B. £ 2; LONDON NW6: T.M. £ 1; MORECAMBE: R.A.D. £ 2; SEVENOAKS: B.J.R. £ 5; LAUSANNE: M.F. £ 1; LONDON N1: S.B. £ 2; MANCHESTER: G.C. 50p; LONDON N16: L.F. £ 5; STEVENAGE: J.S. £ 5; TROY, N.Y.: D.W. £ 7.85; GATESHEAD: G.D. 50p; LONDON W.4.: R.W. £ 1.70; CAMBRIDGE: A.G. £ 7; In Shop: C.P. 20p, B.M. 15p, Anon 45p, U.S.A. 60p, C.M. 14p, P.T. 05.

TOTAL: £ 124.00
PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED: £ 1320.53

TOTAL FOR YEAR*: £ 1444.53

*IN ADDITION to which is the special donation (Legacy from Nicola N.) acknowledged in our last issue of 1977, reserved for typewriter account.

Many thanks to everyone. It has been very encouraging to us, in recording the many £ 5 donations in this and the previous Press Fund, from subscribers paying their 1978 subscriptions in good time, to know that so many readers think FREEDOM worth £ 10 a year.

Happy New Year.

Desires

FUNDS needed to finance first issue of new Irish Anarchist/Anarcho-Feminist paper. Can you help? Donations c/o FREEDOM, who will pass money on.

ANY COMRADES in the Greenford (Middlesex) area interested in getting together—contact Bob Mander, via FREEDOM

RETURNING TO GLASGOW after 4 years in London BILL TAIT seeks flat, bed-sit./place in shared house, any district of Glasgow. Offers to him c/o FREEDOM.

PRISONERS AID collects books (anarchist & non-anarchist) and publications to send to prisoners. Send lit. to RAF SALKIE, QUEENS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, England. And inform him if you know of a prisoner who wants literature.

Ménière's disease, or if the disease can be controlled on 'serc' alone, then it may be just as well to stop taking the tablets. Both Diazepam and 'Serc' can cause drowsiness, though, so you should be careful when driving or operating other dangerous machinery, after taking these drugs.



FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

NEXT DESPATCHING DATE is THURSDAY 2 FEBRUARY. Come and help from 2 pm. Folding session for Supplement No.2 on Thursday 26 January, 6 - 8 pm

WE STILL WELCOME news, reviews, articles Letters. Latest date for receipt of copy for next issue (no. 2) is MONDAY 30 JANUARY. No charge is made for use of the Contact Column, but notices for all events to occur between Feb. 4 and 18 MUST be received by Monday 30 January, and if possible earlier. Frequently valuable publicity for events is lost by comrades not taking into account our fortnightly schedule.

Groups

GROUPS & FEDERATIONS (U.K.)

- ABERYSTWYTH.** Mike Sheehan, Newadd Caerlaan, Victoria Terrace, Aberystwyth.
- BELFAST.** For a Belfast anarchist contact BAC c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast 12. (Correspondence only).
- BRISTOL.** Anyone interested in forming group contact Bob, Flat 4, 14 Westfield Park, Redland, Bristol.
- BOLTON,** contact 6 Stockley Avenue, Harwood, Bolton. (Tel. 387516).
- CAMBRIDGE.** Raphael Salkie, Queens' College, Cambridge.
- CORBY.** Terry Phillips, 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.
- COVENTRY.** write John England, 48 Spencer Avenue, Earlsdon, Coventry, Warwicks.
- EAST ANGLIAN** Libertarians, Martyn Everett 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex.
- EXETER.** Anarchist Society, Univ. of Exeter, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter.
- LEAMINGTON & WARWICK.** c/o 42 Bath Street, Leamington Spa.
- LEEDS.** Tony Kearney, 5 Toronto Place, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 4LJ (tel. 624096).
- LEICESTER** c/o Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross Street, Leicester.
- NEWCASTLE** Black Jake, c/o Tyneside Socialist Centre, 235 Jesmond Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2
- NOTTINGHAM.** c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St. (tel. 582506) for activities, or 15 Scotholme Ave., Hyson Green (tel. 708302)
- OXFORD.** Martin Harper, Keble College
- MANCHESTER** contact Al on 061 224 3028
- PORTSMOUTH.** Carolyn Cahm, 2 Chadderton Gardens, Pembroke Park, Old Portsmouth
- READING,** University Anarchists c/o Students' Union, University of Reading.
- SHEFFIELD,** Box 1A, 341 Glossop Road, Sheffield 10 (tel. 667029 or 731780). Mtgs. Tues. at 10 Hanover square (tel. 731780). Students Box 159. 341 Glossop Road.
- SWANSEA.** Dan Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Dunvant, Swansea.
- THAMES VALLEY,** Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 6 Congress Rd., Maidenhead tel 062 2974.
- WESTON** -super-Mare. Anyone interested in forming group contact Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Rd., Weston-s.-Mare, Somerset.

LONDON FEDERATION of Anarchist Groups

Anarchist Black Cross, 123 Upper Tollington Park, N.4. (tel. 691 6533)
Anarchy Collective, 29 Grosvenor Ave., N.5. (tel. 359 4794 before 7 pm)

Clapham, 3 Belmont Rd. SW4 (tel. 622 8961)
Dorking Libertarian Gp., Howard Fuller, 6 Oak Ridge, Goodway, Dorking, Surrey. (tel. 87814)

East London Libertarians, 123 Lathom Road, E.6. (tel. 552 3985)
Freedom, 84B, Whitechapel High St. (Angel Alley) E.1. (tel. 247 9249)

Hackney Anarchists contact Dave on 249 7042
Kingston Anarchists, 13 Denmark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames (tel. 549 2564).

London Workers Group, Box W, 182 Upper St., N.1 (tel. 249 7042).

Love V Power (write only) Desmond Hunter, 4 Swinton St., London WC1

S.E. London Anarchist Feminist Group, 54A Westbourne Drive, Forest Hill, SE23 2UN (tel. 699 0268).

South London College, Knights Hill, West Norwood (tel. 678 7886).

KENT ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Ramsgate, Peter Ford, 22 Royal Road.

Sevenoaks Jim Endesby, 70 Bradbourne Road.

MIDLANDS ANARCHIST FEDERATION, Sec.

Louise Crane, 13 Arden Terrace, Braunstone, Leicester (tel. c/o Sid & Pat 864511 Leicester)

NORTH WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION,

6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516). Mthly mtgs., newsletter.

ANARCHIST STUDENTS NETWORK, Secretariat:

Reading University Anarchists, c/o Students Union, Univ. of Reading, Whiteknights Park, Reading, Berks.

SCOTTISH LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION :

Aberdeen: c/o A.P.P., 167 King Street.
Glasgow: C. Baird, 122 Benneray St., Glasgow G22 (tel. 336-7895), also for Port Glasgow and Stirling.

INTERNATIONAL LISTING IN NEXT ISSUE

Meetings

LONDON Friday Jan. 27. 'Support Christiana' disco at Ladbroke House (N. London Polytechnic, Highbury Grove, London N.5. at 7.30 pm. (fund raising).

Monday 6 February, 6.45 pm prompt, Open Meeting in Room 406 Ladbroke House (as above) to organise further activities of and raise more support for the 'Support Christiana/England Group.

Further info. from Support Christiana/England Group, c/o Self Help Housing Resource Library, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5 2AD (please write address in full) or tel. 01 607 2789 ext. 5027.

READING 3, 4 & 5 February. Anarchist Student Network Conference. Anarchist Art & Posters exhibition; Discussions 'Anarchist Propaganda and the Anarchist Press', followed by workshop in the Typography Dept.; 'Anarchist Theory' and other topics. Saturday evening entertainment, with 'Clapperclaw', Sunday, film & possible football game (unrefereed). For info. on arrangements write Reading University Anarchists, c/o Clubs Office, Student Union, Whiteknights, Reading, Berks.

BRIDGWATER. February 25. Men Against Sexism South-West Regional Conference. Starting 10 am at Bridgwater Arts Centre, Castle St., Bridgwater. Creche facilities available. Suggestions for agenda to Colin

(tel. Bridgwater 2632) or Peter (tel. Bridgwater 652-135).

COLCHESTER Fri-Sun 27-29 January. S.E. Libertarian Conference at Essex University. Food, chreche, floor space. Registration Friday evening, film Saturday (?). Contact Libertarian Socialist Society, c/o Students Union, Univ. of Essex, Wivenhoe, Colchester, Essex.

REGULAR MEETINGS

CENTRO IBERICO meets at 421 Harrow Road, London W9 on Saturdays & Sundays 3-11 pm
Love V Power Every Sunday weather permitting 3 - 5.30 pm at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park (Marble Arch).

Anarchist Women's group (North & East London) meets fortnightly. New women welcome. Tel. 555 5248 or write 26 Huddleston Road, London, N.7. Discussion/study/action.

Brixton Anarchist-Situationists meet every Sunday at 2 pm. Details from 674 6402.

BIRMINGHAM Libertarian Socialists group meets Sundays 8 pm in The Fox & Grapes, Freeman St. (near Moor St. station). Information from Peter Le Mare, 2 Florence Place, Ombersley Rd. Birmingham 12.

NEW YORK. Libertarian Book Club monthly lectures 8 pm at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Ave., 29 St. New York City.

Feb. 9: Film on Spain.

Mar. 9: Eric Gordon: "Anarchist Movement in Brazil".

LONDON . TOWER HAMLETS WEA. Series of 10 evening meetings 'Action On Unemployment'. Thursdays 7-9 pm. Fee for course £ 2.50. Starts Jan 19, Introduction by Dave Kanner of 'Undercurrents'. Subsequent speakers from Trades Council, Socialist Environment & Resources Assn, Docklands Action Group etc., All held at Docklands Action Centre, 58 Watney St., E.1. (near Shadwell tube.) Information from Vic Anderson, 23 Benson Road, SE23. Tel. 699 1464.

Subscribe

SEND THIS FORM to FREEDOM PRESS, 84B Whitechapel High St., London E1 7QX

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| one year | £ 5.00 (\$10.00) |
| Six months | £ 2.50 (\$5.00) |
| Six issues | £ 1.15 (\$2.30) |

name.

address.

MORE CONTACTS ON

PAGE SEVEN . OVERLEAF.

Published by Freedom Press, London, E.1.
Printed by Women in Print, London S.E.17
and Magic Ink, Margate.

HUGH THOMAS'S SECOND THOUGHTS

FOR THE PUBLICATION, at the beginning of 1977, of a new edition of Professor Hugh Thomas's notorious history of the Spanish Civil War*, the author was accorded the full treatment by the media. Somehow the man and his very gesture of revising the text and some of the interpretations after sixteen years were more important for the media than to ascertain whether in fact this "Third Edition Revised and Enlarged" is all that different from the original of 1961 or the first Penguin edition of 1965.

I would suggest that it is not. But first a word about the volume as such. Everything about it has grown; the format is slightly larger, the columns wider with more space between the lines and the type is larger than in the earlier Penguin edition—and this helps for there are no less than 1100 pages, including an abundance of footnotes, to this book the weight of which has also grown by another $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb, the thickness by another $\frac{1}{2}$ inch and, need I say, the price too has gone up, from 75p to £3.50. I have given these details not facetiously but because the serious student of the subject who already has the original volume could well ask whether he should invest in this cracked up new edition, and I think an honest reviewer must say "No," she shouldn't. That it has an additional 200 pages does not mean that the author has added all that new material because, as already pointed out, the typography is more generous, and therefore there are fewer words to the page. But for anyone who has not already got the book, at £3.50 this new paperback edition is by today's standards what the professional hacks would call a 'good buy'.

Whether it is good history rather depends on what you expect from a history about a military coup d'etat which but for the resistance of the people in the street would have been settled by the military and the politicians in less than a week. That the well planned military uprising against an unarmed people should not only have failed but that a month later, as one of the excellent maps (p. 402) in this volume shows, more than half the peninsula was still not under military control will, I think, be seen by future social historians as the most significant aspect of the Civil War, and not the military campaigns that followed nor the political fortunes of the people at the top with which Thomas's history abounds. For though it can rightly be argued that the civil war would not have dragged on for another two years but for the militarisation of the militias, recourse to a war economy, conscription, censorship - in a word, all the preconditions of conventional warfare and which are the material for military historians - what makes the Spanish civil war unique was the first week, the first month, almost even the first ten months culminating in the May Days 1937, but at street-factory-farm-syndicate-municipal-town-village-level but not at government-Party political-military-international political-level. At this level it was simply history repeating itself.

*

* THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, Hugh Thomas. Third Edition revised and enlarged (Penguin Books, 1977, 1115pp., £3.50 paperback edition).

In the new Preface Hugh Thomas now wants us to believe that in writing the book he was motivated by a desire - albeit a 'calm' one! - to counter Francoist propaganda which had been issuing a series of two-peseta ('tuppenny') pamphlets *Temas Españolas* which told how Franco and his allies had saved Spain in a "Crusade of Liberation from Communism, atheism and freemasonry." Thomas maintains that:



"Comrade—Work and Struggle for the Revolution!"

"this propaganda had gone home. But surely some kind of knowledge of, or truthful recovery of, the past was desirable if the future were to be faced with confidence. Perhaps a historical study might play some part in this if executed calmly? So in my book I sought to avoid polemics, to state the facts as far as I could with such serenity as I could muster and, so far as possible, avoiding recriminations."

One is surely justified in describing the foregoing as wishful thinking, or even perhaps as a case of middle-aged vanity (not at all surprising in view of the quite disproportionate importance accorded to his book internationally for nearly 20 years) for it is not supported in the first paragraph of



the Preface to the First Edition - all of which is otherwise acknowledgements - in which Professor Thomas wrote: "The time has come (1961) when a study can usefully be made of the Spanish Civil War."

Obviously that sentence has meaning only if we can be clear as to what the author intends by 'usefully.' In the next one he declares that "in addition to the vast amount of reporting and pamphleteering produced at the time, much valuable material has been published which could cause a revision of many of the preconceptions once held about the war." By whom? In 1960 the only people in this country still interested even remotely in the Spanish Civil War were on the 'left.' And what new, 'valuable' material did Mr Thomas consult if not and above all the official history put out by the Francoist government? I will return to this important question of sources. But let us first quote more from that opening paragraph:

"Many of the leading actors have written their accounts of what happened. Others, mellowed by time are willing to speak in the language of history to the dispassionate observer. A new and more objective general picture can now be formed in place of that prevalent at the time."

The author's approach to the events and to history are summed up in this paragraph, and what he means by 'usefully' can, I think, now be interpreted in context. His suggestion, therefore, in the latest edition of the History - that it was conceived to restore the historical balance upset by Franco's tuppenny bloods - does not bear examination. Mr Thomas also writes:

"I am aware that, if this book in its new form is read, people will point out alterations which prove that the author too has changed - moved to the Right, as he got older, for example, or moved to the Left, so as to keep up with the young."

This could be quoted as a shrewd remark especially in view of the author's own conclusions: "It may be that my angle of vision has altered: I am not aware of it." However, as I quote these words the *Guardian* reports that Thomas has joined the Conservative Party. When he published the first edition of his history he was a member of the Labour Party. If he is suggesting that the Tory and Labour philosophies are the same then it is as well that I have quoted our author at length if only to underline my own conclusions that you can no more trust these 'objective' professional academics than, on their own admission, they can themselves.

*

In order to be fair to Professor Thomas, let him tell the reader how this new edition is different from the original apart from typography, bulk and price. He writes:

"I have been harder, it is true on the socialist youth in dealing with the months before the war than I was in 1961, and probably rather harsher on the victor's lack of magnanimity after the war. I now think that the anarchists' ideas for the regeneration of society were more original, provided they were put into effect in a mixed society, than I thought in 1960."

He goes on to recognise that the political leaders faced tougher problems than were apparent to him when he wrote his book though "in the main (my) judgements on personalities survive." He adds, "Perhaps I am more rather than less, critical of General Franco." And the jacket of the new Thomas History is a full colour reproduction of a 1936 UGT (the reformist socialist controlled trade union) poster, which features a young armed militiaman, clutching a bunch of flags, foremost among them the red flag of the UGT. In the foreground is the word UNIFICACION (Unity).

Surely one is not being cynical in raising an eyebrow when the Professor belatedly discovers that he was not hard enough in his assessment of the 'socialist youth' (led by that political rat Santiago Carillo who sold out to the Stalinists in 1936 and who in 1977, true to form, has emerged as the Euro-communist rat par excellence) or if one underlines the Professor's discovery, after Franco's death, that he was not 'harsh' enough on the victor's 'lack of magnanimity after the war' and that "Perhaps I am more, rather than less, critical of General Franco." He now also feels 'fairer' to Manuel Azaña and thinks "that the anarchists' ideas for the regeneration of society were more original, provided they were put

into effect in a mixed society, than I thought in 1960." ⁽¹⁾ Actually he went further in an interview with Richard Gott in the *Guardian* (Feb. 9) where he states that the treatment of the POUM and the anarchists "now does seem very outrageous", but goes on to whitewash the Spanish communists firstly by blaming the 'foreign' communists for all the outrages - while the Spanish variety "not knowing and not daring to guess the truth, observed what was going on and cravenly applauded" - and secondly by pointing out, rightly, that "we must remember that the Liberals were wholly with the Communists on this and so in practice was the Catalan separatist government. They regarded the POUM affair as a very unfortunate and fairly negligible occurrence."

Of the latter Thomas told his interviewer: "I think that there's no doubt that the crime does echo down the years" and, one should add, no thanks to, indeed in spite of Mr. Thomas's History.

As to the Spanish communists 'cravenly' applauding the persecution of the revolutionary elements by the Russian and other foreign elements, they were, he now declares, "thereby causing the demoralisation of the republican cause in a way which they perhaps never realised." That Mr Thomas should still be whitewashing the Spanish Communists after all that has been written by some of the Party luminaries themselves, quite apart from all the evidence that has been available from the beginning and which he chose to ignore, is not all that surprising. To have done otherwise would have meant not

(cont pg 11)



SONS OF THE PEOPLE

¹ a quite uncritical admirer who only too clearly showed how little he and the *Guardian*'s sub-editor knew of the origins of the book when one of Gott's 'key' conclusions is used by the sub-editor as a seven column banner headline: "It is a courageous step for any author to examine with the detachment of middle age the passions of his youth", since we all know that in the first edition Thomas described himself as the "dispassionate observer" and in the present edition he declares that he is "not aware" of having "altered" his "angle of vision". A view with which I wholeheartedly concur!

the patchwork job he has done but completely re-thinking and re-casting the book; abandoning the myth of communist 'efficiency and discipline' and seeking to understand and interpret the resistance by the people in spite of an unwilling popular front government, and a completely ineffectual C. P. This really would be asking too much of an intellectual effort from an academic whose passionate political thoughts when the first edition was published in 1961 were for the Labour Party and who now in 1977 feels impelled to join forces with the Iron Lady in the Tory Party.

What hope then even when in the Guardian interview Thomas admits that:

"The Anarchist movement was a regenerative movement in Spain which had something to contribute. It was distorted by terrorism, of course, but its distrust of centralism, its distrust of the state, its imaginative ideas for a variety of workers control, both of land and factories in Barcelona was important. I think I didn't give it a fair enough analysis in the first edition."

§

I am not proposing to attempt a page by page comparison of the two editions, having better things to do with my time. Anyway there will be no shortage of graduates in search of a subject for a Ph.D willing and ready to spend many fascinating hours cataloguing and interpreting the variations.

What I think anarchist readers are entitled to ask is whether the new edition corrects not just factual errors concerning the revolutionary aspects of the Spanish civil war but the historic perspective of the struggle, in view of what Professor Thomas Thomas has written and said in and about this new edition of The Civil War in Spain.

The author has made innumerable minor alterations to the text and I will give a few typical examples. But the structure of the book remains as it was, in spite of the author's contention that he has "recast certain chapters and even rewritten others. The result is undoubtedly a new book", for he also maintains that he has tried to keep "the form of the old one as much as possible. Indeed I felt a certain obligation to my old readers to keep the structure much as I had it in the late 1950s though, had I started completely afresh now, I might have had a different approach to that also". The professor wants the best of all worlds.

Having admitted that I have not gone through the new edition with a fine toothcomb I propose to supplement my own impressions with those of two reviewers who have a special interest in, and knowledge of, the events of 1936-1939. Our comrade Frank Mintz, writing about the new edition in Black Flag says that "the biggest improvement is on self-management. Also it is obvious that Thomas has made a real effort to update his study and has framed it more strongly". To the question as to whether the book is worth reading he says, "Alas, yes! because it's a mine of information." He also puts his finger on the main problem which persists: "Thomas presents a huge volume of information but seems to dodge all synthesis about social problems."

The second review I would refer to is by Paul Preston (in The Times Educational Supplement (11.3.77) of all places!). The reviewer, himself an academic and sometime colleague of Hugh Thomas at Reading University², judges the new edition by the way it has dealt with the criticisms originally levelled at it. Those from Franco's then "centre for civil war studies" which attacked it for Mr. Thomas's "Republican bias" he dismisses out of hand, but he gives more consideration to others from the moderate Republican side, quoting one Spaniard who wrote that "indifference and incomprehension rather than objectivity and impartiality are what we find here". This is indeed a masterly summing up of the book. Mr. Preston's comments are equally interesting and to the point:

² and who has edited an interesting volume Spain in Crisis: The Evolution and Decline of the Franco Regime (Harvester Press, 1976) which has not been given the critical attention it deserves in the anarchist press, especially Mr. Preston's own contribution on "The anti-Francoist Opposition. The long march to Unity".

"A meticulous effort to see both sides' point of view is manifest throughout the book. Whether this classic liberal approach is the most appropriate one can only be a matter of opinion. It is a method which gives more weight to description than to analysis. Thus, while there is hardly any aspect of the Spanish conflict not covered in Hugh Thomas's comprehensive and detailed survey, it is sometimes difficult to see the wood among all the trees, the real issues among all the fascinating details."

Mr. Preston also considers the anarchist criticism: "that the book suffered from a major imbalance, with inordinate space devoted to the personalities of politicians and generals at the expense of the war's great revolutionary events". And he reflects that "the addition of 20 new pages on the revolutionary experience does not entirely, in a work of over one thousand pages neutralise that criticism". He however recognises structural improvements, commends the new edition above all for the additional material on "the military and diplomatic aspects of the war", and concludes: "Hugh Thomas's book is now reaffirmed as the fairest blow-by-blow account of the Spanish Civil War available to date." I wonder how Mr. Thomas has interpreted that conclusion? However even as a 'blow-by-blow account', I suggest that up and coming academics will in due course be publishing learned works to show that Professor Thomas is not even a serious historian, if only by analysing his alterations where alleged facts are concerned



"Spanish Poster"

A typical example of the editing that has taken place is the following paragraph (pp. 193/194 in the old edition and pp. 227/228 in the new edition): "a great cloud of violence" becomes "a cloud of violence"; "in which all the quarrels and enmities of so many generations as would find outlet" becomes "in which the quarrels of several generations would find outlet"; "within a month nearly a hundred thousand people perished" becomes "within a month thousands of people would have perished", and two sentences suggesting that the Spanish people in general were thirsting for blood in July 1936 have disappeared altogether from the new edition!

(cont pg 15)

“STAR LIGHT...”

SOME FEW WEEKS ago I ascended from out of the basement of Ward's Irish on the right hand of the barman feeling slightly sloshed and mildly happy and there on the Piccadilly pavement were the six man team of the Three Card Trick Gang setting up a large tatty cardboard box ready for the action. I stood there a lonely single solitary figure, an innocent among wolves for the cons had not had time to collect. There are six men in the Three Card Trick Gang and they are but one of a number of gangs who work for a tough evil-looking Godfather type. They meet for their orders in a side street off St. James's Palace and the Godfather sits in his huge car, wearing the ritual dark glasses even in November, handing them their 'float money' from a roll of bank notes of fives and tens as huge as a roll of lavatory paper. I know comrades that we as anarchists know all the answers to the world's problems but accept my advice and never believe that you can beat the Three Card Trick Gang, for even if they let you find the Queen the strong arm man standing behind you will punch you hard in the back of the neck and as you stagger to your feet the Gang and your money and your winnings will have disappeared among the West End crowd. Or if you are really tough then surprise surprise a plain clothes policeman will force his way into the argument flashing a card and arrest the Three Card Trick man and in the resulting brawl will threaten to arrest you for street gambling and you will skulk off losing face and money and surprise surprise the 'plain clothes policeman' is a member of the gang so comrades continue to save humanity and save your money. And I stood an innocent in a wicked world as the card man flung face down the three cards and called upon me to 'Find the Lady' and the 'Bright Boy' of the gang standing behind me urged me to put my money on the middle card but I smiled the smile of innocence saying that the 'Lady' card was the end card and the argument began and I insisted that it was the end card and refused to bet on it until the card man decided not to waste time on blessed fools and he turned up the cards showing that the 'Lady' was the end card as I had said. And in a matey fashion he asked how I knew and I said that he had not turned down the tiny bend on the 'Lady' card and I did not watch him throw the cards about but looked for that tiny flaw in the 'Lady' card for that is but one small part of the con game, and on my right the huge tough strong-arm member of the gang roared with laughter and called the card man a cunt and I moved off into the crowd. Why did I not bet on a cert comrades? Because I knew that if I had I would have ended up flat on my face on the Piccadilly pavement. Never fall for the hard sell or the soft sell comrades but examine everything in the light of pure reason, free from greed and in relation to your own weaknesses.

I,* at this moment in time, am the only member of the international anarchist movement who has seen 'Star Wars' 2.15 p.m. 27th December 1977 after the adverts and all that I asked for was to be entertained and amused, and for that I had not read a single pre-review and I went to the Dominion Cinema with a mind Blakelike in its childish purity and I found the film disappointing. It had the same hard sell as the Three Card Trick but surrounded by 14,000,000 small children and seven or eight thousand students on the long hols one expected to win, for there was no take-away money so therefore no threat of a strong-arm tough flattening you onto the pavement as you left the cinema. The soft sell was all the stories seeped into the news media that this was the greatest money making film of all time and the hard sell was all those posters and T-shirts sold to the children. I remember with pleasure George Lucas's earlier film 'American Graffiti' but with 'Star Wars' I failed to be amused for it had been oversold and even as a run of the mill science fiction film I hold that it is not that good. The story line is no more than, or is, a pastiche of the American strip cartoon comics that share a place with all the bums-and-tits porn mags and in spite of the alleged cost it seemed to me a cheap and tawdry affair. Let one be honest and say that the children enjoyed it but there was not a single child in that audience who did not know that what he or she (to hell with Ms) was watching was the

same well made plastic space models seen almost nightly on TV or in the windows of any model shop. One has to believe, and in 'Star Wars' one does not believe. There has been a re-run of the old 1936 'Flash Gordon' space serial with the ex-Tarzan Buster Crabbe in the lead fighting the Emperor Ming for control of the universe and though we may mock, if one cares to, Stephani's direction and Buster's bloomers, the tatty sets and the 'space crafts' bumping onto the plaster planets the fact was, and I am sincere in this, we believed that this was a window on the future. And no one in the Dominion cinema believed that those well made plastic space craft heralded our future. For, as with the film 'The Heretic', if we believed then we should have been hareing it to Wards or the nearest Catholic Church but no one believed. The Emperor Ming gave us bad dreams but by God we knew that there would be a Buster to save the universe. That a science fiction film that we can choose to believe in can be made was demonstrated by Kubrick with his 1969 mystical space odyssey '2001' and by Trumbell's 'Silent Running' 1971.

Kubrick and Trumbell gave us space craft that we can believe will be space vehicles of our living future and Kubrick posed the question of man's relation to infinity as we move beyond the known universe while Trumbell asked us to argue whether we should re-vegetate a barren earth or should man leave it behind him as a sterile planet as we move into living space and we believed the space craft and we accepted the argument. In 1926 Fritz Lang turned from the Teutonic fantasy of his Siegfried to his classic 'Metropolis', making his case for a paternal managerial society and the political intelligentsia used that film as a basis for many passionate and violent arguments, and again in 1935 we had Menzies' version of H. G. Wells' 'Things to Come'. In these three films, 'Metropolis', 'Things to Come' and 'Star Wars' we are offered a future of paternal regimentation ranging from Lang's cheering proles and happytime managers to Wells' ghastly regimented army of uniformed clean living young men putting a neatly squared

(cont pg 14)



'the Ravachol of literature'?

ANARCHISM IN FRANCE: The Case of Octave Mirbeau.
By Reg Carr. (Manchester University Press £ 7.95).

THIS BADLY TITLED book is based on Reg Carr's better titled thesis 'Octave Mirbeau and Anarchism' (Manchester University, 1971). It is the first full-length English account of the work of Octave Mirbeau, who was one of the leading French intellectuals associated with the anarchist movement during its most influential period - the thirty years before the First World War. He is known in this country, if at all, as the author of a couple of rather unpleasant novels which both expose and exploit the dark side of human nature and human society, so this study of his association with anarchism is welcome.

Mirbeau was born in 1848 (according to Carr, though most reference books say 1850), into a middle-class rural family in Normandy, went to a Jesuit school, studied law, fought and was wounded in the Franco-Prussian War, worked in local administration, and during the 1870s became a right-wing freelance journalist, writing for bonapartist and monarchist papers. But he was very much an individualist, and was attracted to naturalism in literature and impressionism in art. In 1885 he shifted rapidly to the other end of the political spectrum, becoming not a republican or liberal or radical or socialist but an extreme libertarian.

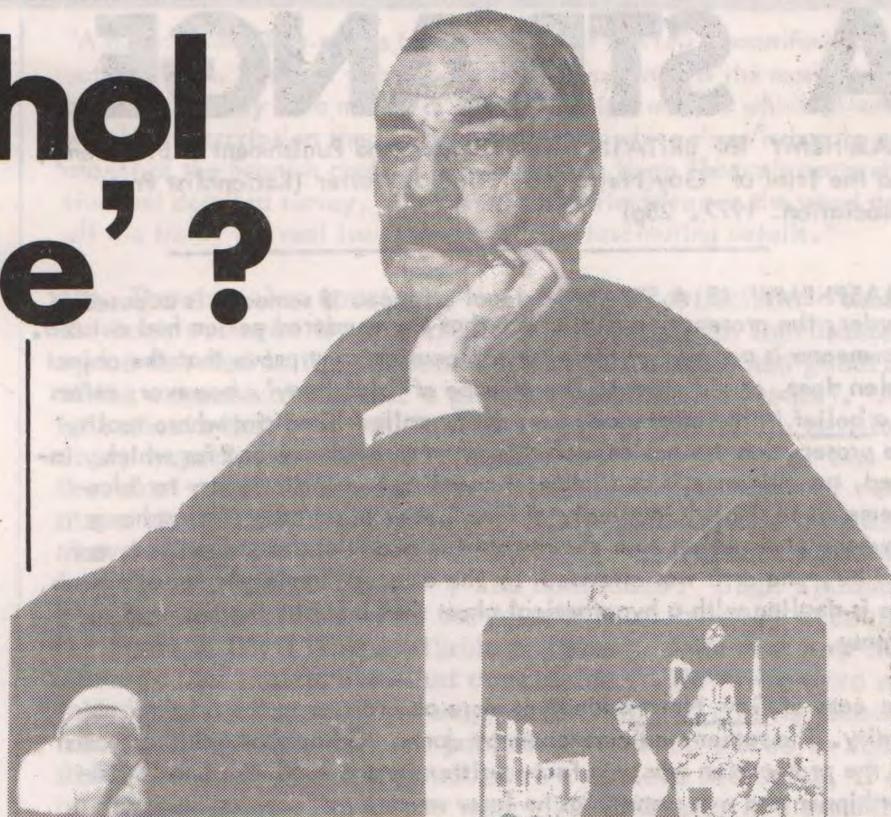
This shift coincided with a rise in the influence of and interest in anarchism in France - marked by the appearance of such books as Kropotkin's *Paroles d'un Révolté* and Zola's *Germinal*, and the transfer to Paris of the main French-language anarchist paper *La Révolte* (which Kropotkin had founded in Geneva as *Le Révolté* in 1879) and Mirbeau soon became known as what would now be called a fellow-traveller of anarchism.

Mirbeau had written many short stories as well as the journalism he lived from, but from 1885 he began to write novels with powerful social messages which made him famous and also drew him towards the formal anarchist movement. *Calvary* (1886), an autobiographical story of an unhappy love, included an anti-militarist account of the Franco-Prussian War which brought the book a scandalous success. *Abbé Jules* (1888), a satirical story of a monstrous rebel against established society, included crude anticlerical and anarchist material. *Sebastien Roche* (1890), an autobiographical story of religious education and death in the Franco-Prussian War, reinforced the messages of both its predecessors.

At the same time Mirbeau's journalism took a strong anarchist line, though he continued to write almost entirely in non-anarchist papers, and from 1888 many of his articles as well as passages from his books were reprinted in *La Révolte*. Jean Grave, Kropotkin's successor as editor, used this technique to involve established writers in anarchist propaganda and to impress readers with the extent of anarchist ideas in high places. A powerful attack on the general election of 1888, which Mirbeau wrote for *Le Figaro*, was immediately reprinted in *La Révolte* and eventually circulated as an anarchist leaflet for several years.

Mirbeau was gradually drawn into more specifically anarchist activity, as one of the big names Grave used when he or other militants got into trouble with the authorities. In 1891 he defended Grave against the *Société des Gens de Lettres*, which was taking legal action against the use of copyright material in *La Révolte*; Grave used to get authors' permission to reprint their writings without payment, but the professional organisation objected, and Mirbeau led the storm of protest which forced it to withdraw the action. In 1892 he criticised prison conditions on the basis of information given him by Grave. In 1893 he wrote an enthusiastic preface for Grave's book *Dying Society and Anarchy*, and in 1894 he gave evidence for Grave at his trial for the cheap edition of the book.

During the bomb wave of 1892-1894 Mirbeau took the normal anarchist line of condemning the bombings but not the bombers, and simultaneously warning the movement of and defending the movement against the reactionary repression which inevitably followed. In 1894, at the height of the crisis, his home was raided by the police, and he even seems to have taken refuge in England for a time; but he continued his defence of the anarchists, although this had become



"LES MAUVAIS BERGERS"
Pièce en 5 Actes
de M. Octave MIRBEAU.

technically illegal, and he continued his protest against the authorities without pause. When the crisis passed after the Trial of the Thirty, he maintained his association with the anarchist movement, and in 1905 his home was again raided by the police after a bomb attack on the King of Spain in Paris. As well as continuing to write in Grave's new paper *Les Temps Nouveaux*, he also contributed occasionally to Zola's paper *L'en dehors*.

Mirbeau didn't identify himself only with anarchists. In 1895 he was almost alone in publicly defending Oscar Wilde, whose work he disliked but whose homosexuality he refused to condemn. (He was himself a misogynist heterosexual - a point which Carr mentions but doesn't discuss). And from 1896 he was one of a small but growing group which publicly defended Alfred Dreyfus. It was during the Dreyfus Affair that he published his first novel for several years, *The Garden of Tortures* (1899), a revolting story of sadistic fantasies which he believed to motivate authoritarian society, is generally read for its pornographic appeal, but Carr stresses its social significance. He also adds the interesting points that Dreyfus read it in prison and that it was the inspiration for Kafka's horrifying story *In the Penal Colony*.

While he was labouring over this extraordinary novel, he began writing successful full-length plays - *The Bad Shepherds* (1897), *Business is Business* (1903), and *The Home* (1908) - as well as a series of one-acters from *The Epidemic* (1898) to *Interview* (1904). He also produced more novels, which added to his fame but not to his reputation. *The Diary of a Chambermaid* (1900), his best-known novel, is a sordid story of the picaresque adventures of a servant. *Twenty-one Days in the Life of a Neurasthenic* (1901), a satirical story of comings and goings in a Pyrenean spa. *628 E8* (1907), a travelogue of a car tour in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, was made the vehicle for internationalist fantasies.

In 1908 Mirbeau left Paris and retired from active journalism, with a brief return in 1910 when he made an unsuccessful attempt to run his own paper, *Paris-Journal*. His last novel was *Dingo* (1913), an allegorical story of a dog seen as a symbol of the revolt of nature against established society. He was so surprised and shocked by the First World War that he relapsed into almost total silence, broken by statements which combined antipathy for militarism with sympathy for the French soldiers. When he died in 1917, his wife and the anti-militarist-turned-militarist Gustave Hervé forged a dying statement supporting the war, but almost no one accepted it is genuine.

(cont. pg 14)

A STRANGE OFFENCE

BLASPHEMY IN BRITAIN : The Practice and Punishment of Blasphemy, and the Trial of "Gay News". By Nicolas Walter (Rationalist Press Association, 1977. 25p)

'BLASPHEMY' IS A STRANGE legal offence. If someone is accused of murder, the prosecution must prove that the murdered person had existed. If someone is accused of theft the prosecution must prove that the object stolen does, or did, exist. The offence of 'blasphemy', however, refers to a belief in the existence of an entity called 'God' for whose reality the prosecution are not expected to provide evidence and for which, indeed, no evidence is available. According to my dictionary to 'blaspheme' is to "speak impiously of God", but in no case of blasphemy have the prosecution ever shown that the god blasphemed existed, nor that he, she or it was offended by the alleged 'impiety'. In such cases, one is dealing with a hypothetical ghost that inhabits the realm of fantasy.

The case of Gay News added yet more absurdities to the original absurdity. The rather mediocre poem by James Kirkup that was the reason for the prosecution was, in fact, written by someone who is a Christ-worshipper and was meant, as he later wrote, to "express passionate love of Christ". The trouble was that the love expressed in the poem was homosexual love.

The motive for the prosecution, therefore, was clearly not that a "theological" offence had been committed, but that homosexuality should be stamped on. Since homosexuals as such now have certain legal rights an outright attack might fail. A charge of blasphemy, on the other hand, might well succeed in view of the confusion surrounding the subject and with the right judge to exploit it. And that was in fact what happened.

Freethinkers have justifiably been concerned by this first successful prosecution for blasphemy in Britain for over fifty years and they have formed a Committee Against Blasphemy Law to ensure that this law is abolished once and for all. Nicolas Walter's well-written and informative pamphlet is obviously designed to further this end, but is more than a piece of advocacy. Not only does he give an excellent account of the trial of Gay News and its editor, he at the same time prefaces it with a succinct history of blasphemy in this country.

MIRBEAU (cont from pg.13)

Carr's book is a sober and solemn account of Mirbeau's literary and political work. The treatment is rather heavy-handed and long-winded, and the background is not always quite right - the development of propaganda by deed in the anarchist movement, and the reaction to the First World War by the anarchist movement, are both more complex than he realises. There is too little biographical detail, especially about Mirbeau's early life and private life. There is too little critical analysis either of his literary works or of his journalism. But the book is so interesting and informative that these defects don't matter much in the only available source of knowledge about this curious man.

The most serious practical defect of the book, for ordinary people at least, is that all the large number of quotations are left in their original French; so are the five examples of his work in the Appendix - the attack on the 1888 general election, the attack on the Société des Gens de Lettres, an article on Ravachol, the preface to Grave's book, and a defence of Grave in 1894. What is the point of doing this in an English book about a French writer? Nor is there enough information about where interested readers can get hold of Mirbeau's work. His books were reprinted in France during the 1930s and are being reprinted again now, and there have been a few English translations, but Carr says little about them.

After reading this book, I find that Mirbeau remains a mystery. He has been called 'the Ravachol of literature', but then Ravachol remains a mystery too. The closing words of the book are a reference to 'the violent, passionate, original and inimitable individualist that was Octave Mirbeau'; but this is an end rather than a conclusion. Carr fails to explain what made him violent and passionate, or how he was original or inimitable, or why his individualism turned into anarchism. It would be a pity for him to be forgotten, but it is a pity for him to be remembered so vaguely; it would have been better if Carr's study had been shorter and deeper. But let us be content with what we have, and remember one of the many forgotten figures who contributed to our movement, with gratitude to Reg Carr for making it easier.

N.W.

There is, however, a disturbing note in the pamphlet. On page 9 the author comments that, just as in the OZ trial of 1971, that of Gay News arose because "the extreme advocates of so-called 'permissiveness' provoked the extreme opponents into a 'backlash'." The inference is clearly that one ought to moderate one's language when dealing with subjects not to the taste of the traditional moralists. A rather peculiar view for someone who not only calls himself a freethinker, but an anarchist as well!

Indeed, it seems that Nicolas Walter is still maintaining the attitude of those respectable freethinkers of the early part of this century towards the wave of blasphemy prosecutions at that time. As he writes "The free-thought movement was reluctant to support such cases, the various organisations opposing both the matter and manner of the offending speeches" even though "in 1913 they formed a Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws". (A glance at a file of the Bradford Truthseeker, the organ of the 'extreme' blasphemers shows a less restrained view of the "reluctance of the freethought movement".) Maybe if the freethinkers of those days had carried the war more 'extremely' into the camp of their enemies by demanding proof of just who or what was being attacked by 'blasphemy' such an offence would not still be legal.

Fortunately, Nicolas Walter has not shown the hesitation in action that he shows in print and has fully supported Gay News and its poet.

Despite my criticism, Blasphemy in Britain is well worth 25p of any person's money.

S.E. PARKER.

Note. The address for the Committee Against Blasphemy Laws is c/o William McIlroy, 32 Over Street, Brighton BN1 4EE.

The Rationalist Press Association is 88 Islington High Street, London N1 8EW. The pamphlet reviewed is also obtain from Freedom Bookshop (post 10p)

STAR WARS (cont from pg.12)

up world back into neatly squared up order Stalinwise to Lucas's saved populace marshalled like troops on Brenda's (my Queen) birthday. We talk so easily and so glibly of brain washing and comrades there is only one answer and one escape from it: to be forced to make a choice by the sheer variety of the means of communication. Give me more books, more arguments, more papers, more TV channels, confuse me confuse me and force me to choose. 'Star Wars' makes its case for a benevolent banal and paternalistic future but I will reject Lang and take Trumbell and Kubrick. Even on the level of fantasy 'Star Wars' fails for we live in an age when the thinking reed having rejected God and fairyland honestly believes that the machine thinks and there is an unknown force that enables a man to bend spoons by simply rubbing them. When Lang turned from the world of witchcraft, monsters, gnomes and fairies to the machine-motivated world of the 'future' he knew his audience as surely as the Three Card Trick gang in Piccadilly. When year after year adult students carry around with them Tolkien's trashy fantasy rhubarb then one knows that there is a mindless audience for Lucas's 'Star Wars' and I do not believe that it is among the small children sucking their ices and leaning across the seats. There are no little men in the computer machines comrade for at three on a bleak winter's morning I have had to open the backs of those boxed-in circuses to find out what shit deliberately fouled up the relay actions to snatch a couple of hours' sleep. Never watch the pretty lines on the tube, never play the fool for plastic models and the built-in message and never watch the hands of the Three Card Trick card man but look for the tiny flaw on the back of the Queen card and I mean no offence Brenda.

ARTHUR MOYSE

*

We would like to deplore Comrade Moyses individualistic arrogance, his exhibition must have gone to his head. "Star Wars" has been on release in the USA and, we hear, in Rhodesia. While there are probably few members of the International Anarchist Movement in the latter we are led to believe that there are a number of Transatlantic comrades.

SPAIN

(cont from pg 11)

In the old edition p. 195 he wrote that on the 18-19 July "new consultations were held between Azaña, Martínez Barrio and the Socialist leaders Prieto and Largo Caballero. The latter urged that there was no alternative to an issue of arms to the trade unions". In the new edition the passage I have underlined has been removed. Why? What new facts has he since discovered to warrant the excision? Indeed what source did he consult in the original edition for its inclusion?

The same questions might be asked in all the following examples. Compare p. 210 O.E.: "In Barcelona the rising had been completely subdued by the evening of 20 July. The Atarazanas barracks had surrendered by half past one after a prolonged battle", with p. 248 N.E.: "In Barcelona the rising had also been subdued by the evening of 20 July. The San Andrés barracks, the main armoury of Barcelona, surrendered to the anarchists during the night and made available to them some 30,000 rifles (they had only had 200 the previous day). The Atarazanas barracks next surrendered at half past one after a prolonged battle, to the anarchists." Similarly on p. 547 O.E. "In the meantime the CNT did nothing to prevent the worsening of the situation" becomes on p. 656 N.E.: "In the meantime CNT representatives visited Tarradellas and Aiguadé. The two councillors promised that the police would leave the Telefonica".

On the POUM persecution and the anarchists' attitude to it he wrote on p. 580 O.E.:

"The CNT National Committee sent a protest to the Government on 28 June about the treatment of the POUM but seem still to have regarded the whole affair as one among Marxists with whom they had even after the May riots 'nothing to do' " and we are referred to Peirats' History Vol. II p. 334. In the new edition he omits the underlined passage and in its place actually quotes from the document in Peirats' history to show that the anarchists were unequivocal in their determination to see the end of the Communist inspired persecution of the POUM!

§

My last example, which ought to be called 'The Berneri Who-dunnit', illustrates par excellence the superficiality of the research and of its author whose single reference to Berneri, consisting of two lines and a footnote in a 1000 page volume, has been tinkered with by him in all three editions and still the facts elude him. Nor has he yet thought it worth reading what Berneri had to say in those vital early months of the civil war, in spite of his *New Look at the anarchists!*

One can quote all three editions verbatim without taking up much space.

Edition 1: "A leading Italian Anarchist intellectual, Professor Camillo Berneri was murdered."

Penguin Edition 1: "Two leading Italian Anarchist intellectuals, Professor Camillo Berneri and his collaborator, Barbieri, were murdered."

Penguin Edition 2: "Two leading Italian anarchist intellectuals Camillo Berneri and his collaborator Barbieri were mysteriously murdered."

And the footnotes:

Version 1: "Who by? Despite allegations that the murder was the work of the OVRA, Mussolini's secret police, everything points to Communist guilt. Since Berneri was apparently hailed in Italian, while walking home, the assassins may have been Italian communists."

Version 2: "Who by? The two Italians were arrested by twelve men, presumably PSUC or Generalidad police, at about 6 p.m. as 'counter revolutionaries'. They were never seen again. Berneri was said to have been working on a voluminous dossier listing relations between Italian Fascism and Catalan nationalism (Peirats II p. 198). He had become a kind of intellectual centre for the backers of 'revolution without delay'."

Version 3: "Who by? Despite allegations that the murder was the work of the OVRA, Mussolini's secret police, everything points to Communist guilt. Since Berneri was apparently hailed in Italian while walking home, the assassins may have been Italian Communists."

Well, that little collection of rumours, hypotheses, conjectures and facts will keep some academic dilettantes researching merrily in the future. If they bother to look up the Peirats reference given, they will find however that there is no mention of "the voluminous dossier etc. ..." as described by Thomas. But they will learn that Berneri and Barbieri were in fact arrested at their lodgings and that their bodies were recovered soon after. The findings of the post mortem were also published. The details are briefly stated in Camillo Berneri: Pensieri e Battaglie (Paris 1938) and in considerable detail as an Appendix: Il Caso Berneri by the Editors of a volume of his writings with the title Pietrogrado 1917—Barcellona 1937 (Milan 1964). (Neither work appears in Thomas's bibliography.)

There has never been any mystery about Berneri's assassination except in the minds of nit-picking historians like Thomas. It is surely time they were exposed for the intellectual mediocrities they are.

V. R.

These comments will be followed shortly by reviews of the anarchist histories recently published in English: Peirats's Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution; Abel Paz's Durruti: The People in Arms; Murray Bookchin's The Spanish Anarchists.

PADRE PADRONE



PADRE PADRONE is a film directed by the brothers Taviani and currently appearing at Camden, WE. In Sardinia a boy is taken out of school by his father, who wants to make a shepherd of him. But grown up and the father's authoritarianism no longer acceptable, the son leaves him, returns to his studies and obtains a degree in the Sard dialect.

The film is a kind of pamphlet against the family, against patriarchy - one of the institutions most dear to authoritarian philosophies. It got a prize at the Cannes festival. Not surprising. Although the ideas expressed in the film are libertarian, the making of it was not. Among the technicians who made the film there is still the rigid division of labour, a hyper-hierarchy, exactly as in the commercial cinema. That is why it got a chance at Cannes.

Nevertheless the directors are not aiming to deceive the audience. At the start of the film the author of the book from which the film is drawn is shown giving advice to the actor who is to play the role of the father. At the end he appears again and has a discussion with us, the audience, explaining the relationship between the film (fiction) and his book (which is autobiography.) So what the brothers Taviani are saying is that they are presenting us not the reality but a fiction - there is thus no identification of audience with actor. The audience is thought adult enough to understand that the protagonists of the film are not real people living actual lives but simply actors who play a fiction for a camera - our eyes.

Freedom Press

IN ANGEL ALLEY
84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.
LONDON E.1
PHONE 01 247 9249

(Aldgate East underground station,
Whitechapel Art Gallery exit.
Angel Alley is a few yards to the
right of the Gallery.)

The bookshop is open: Tues.-Fri 2 - 6 pm (Thursdays until 8p.m.)
Saturdays 10 am until 4 pm.

We carry a wide range of anarchist and related books, pamphlets and periodicals. When ordering by mail please add postage as in brackets.

Some recently-received titles: (Titles marked * published in the USA)

PAUL GOODMAN : Three volumes edited by Taylor Stoehr

- *Drawing the Line : Political essays £ 6.95 (54p)
- *Nature Heals : Psychological essays £ 6.95 (54p)
- *Creator Spirit Come : Literary essays £ 6.95 (54p)

THE LITTLE PRESS SCENE

The Association of Little Presses (U.K.): Catalogue of Little Press Books in Print (4th Edn.) 1977 JUST OUT! £ 0.45 (19p)

*Len Fulton (editor): Small Press Record of Books in Print (6th Edition) 1977 £ 4.95 (54p)

JUST OUT!

- Alexandra Kollantai : Love of Worker Bees £ 2.50 (19p)
- *Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon (Eds.): Nowhere at Home : The Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman & Alexander Berkman NEWLY IN PAPERBACK £ 4.95 (54p)
- Guy Debord : The Society of the Spectacle NEW UK EDN. £ 0.75 (12p)

(Fred W. Thompson & Patrick Murfin : The I.W.W. : Its first Seventy £ 2.75 (33p)

BOOKSHOP NOTES

- * Mikhail Bakunin : The Confession of Mikhail Bakunin, transl. & ed. by Robert C. Howes and Lawrence D. Orton £ 9.50 (54p)
- * Michael Pali : The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno 1918-1921 : An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution £ 10.95 (86p)
- Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review No. 3, Autumn 1977 £ 2.00 (33p)
- Dave Lamb : Mutinies 1917-1920 (Solidarity UK) £ 0.50 (12p)

BARGAIN BASEMENT

- F. A. Ridley: Spartacus : The Leader of the Roman Slaves hardback £ 0.75 (15p)
- Pope John & the Cold War £ 0.25 (12p)
- Ray Hemmings : Fifty Years of Freedom, a study of the development of the ideas of A. S. Neill £ 0.90 (29p)

SOME FREEDOM PRESS PUBLICATIONS

- MALATESTA : His Life and Ideas, Malatesta's thinking on Anarchism, on Revolution, on Organisation, Working Class Movements, Crime and Punishment, Production and Distribution, Anarchism & Violence, Ends and Means, Propaganda, An Anarchist Programme, &c., translated and compiled from his writings by V. Richards. 309pp. £ 2.00 (36p)
- ABOUT ANARCHISM, What Anarchists Believe, What Anarchists Want, How Anarchists Differ. . . Nicolas Walter £ 0.25 (9p)
- ABC OF ANARCHISM, Alexander Berkman, £ 0.50 (12p)
- ANARCHY, Errico Malatesta £ 0.35 (9p)
- BAKUNIN & NECHAEV, Paul Avrich £ 0.20 (9p)
- LESSONS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, V. Richards £ 1.50 (54p)
- COLLECTIVES IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, Gaston Leval, cloth £ 4.00 (66p)
paper £ 2.00 (66p)

SELECTIONS FROM FREEDOM. Annual volumes of important and representative articles published in FREEDOM from 1951 to end 1964.

Vols. 1 & 2 out of print. Vols. 3 - 14 40p per vol (paper) 55p (cloth) post 36p single volume.

The set vols. 3-14 offered at the special price of Paper £ 5, cloth £ 6.50, post free.

ARTHUR MOYSE

THIS IS NOT exactly a critical review of an art exhibition. I lack both the necessary knowledge and, in this case, impartiality, to make any such claims. Rather it is a tribute to a man, a friend and an artist, and if I put 'artist' third in line, that I am sure is how he would want it.

Arthur Moyses had a one-man show at the Angela Flowers Gallery, London W.1 from December 19th 1977 to 7 January 1978. For once the man who has not only been art critic and regular contribution to FREEDOM for more years than most of us can remember but has also written and drawn copiously for anarchist journals around the world from Chicago to Hong Kong is on the receiving end of the plaudits—and the brickbats—of the 'critics'.

For those who know Arthur's work only from the small cartoons regularly featured in FREEDOM there would be many surprises in store. Sixty exhibits, watercolours—which Arthur himself regards as his finest work—, collages and large-scale pen and ink drawings in that fascinatingly complex insane-yet-real style which, like his writing, is utterly unique. There is only one Arthur Moyses.

As one who has known and admired Arthur's drawings for many years, I was yet unprepared for the sheer wit, imagination and expertise of the collages, and whilst I could not have imagined Arthur Moyses in technicolour before, his watercolours retain the sardonic humour, the complexity of his drawings, and add an extra dimension whilst, to me surprisingly at first, nothing is lost.

The superb technique of brush, pen and whatever are the tools of the collager's art—you see, I don't even know that—are apparent to all, but always as the servants of a vision



OUR HERO &
HIS DOG.

and an imagination, political as well as artistic, never merely as their master. I don't think Arthur would accept that kind of division twixt the political and the artistic in any case, the one would always have to incorporate the other totally.

But what shines through is the humanity of the man—and if you think that sounds pompous I apologise but there's really no other way to put it; and if the opinion of one who as far as art is concerned is of necessity unbiased through ignorance, is of any worth, those who found their way to the Angela Flowers Gallery in Portland Mews, D'Arblay Street, off Berwick Street, W.1. within those couple of weeks gave themselves a treat.

J. H.